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How information communication technology can reshape missional ecclesiology: the making of a technomissional church

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GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

HOW INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY CAN RESHAPE

MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY:

THE MAKING OF A TECHNOMISSIONAL CHURCH

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY MICHAEL D. HEARN JR.

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George Fox Evangelical Seminary
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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DMin Dissertation

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This is to certify that the DMin Dissertation of

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has been approved by
the Dissertation Committee on March 14, 2013
for the degree of Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Global Perspectives.

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Ten years ago, I started a journey and enrolled into college to finish my undergraduate degree. I never would have thought that the Lord would invite me on a pilgrimage to learn about Him, His word, and find my calling in the way that I have over the last decade. My wife, Tiffany Hearn, has sacrificed daily to afford me the privilege of higher learning. Her tender words, encouraging spirit, and generous heart allowed me to pursue endeavors I never would have dreamed. This dissertation is dedicated to her. Someone once said, "behind every great man is a greater woman." Although, I do not consider myself a great man, I do consider my bride a great woman.

As I ponder the corridors of my past, I am reminded of several other individuals who have been a part of this journey, to these I want to say thank you. To my parents who have taught me the value of hard work and sacrifice; to my grandfather who encouraged me to pursue my doctorate; to my pastor, mentor, and one of my greatest friends, Joel Carwile, who pushed me to start my first master's degree and never stopped pushing me to pursue education; to my cohort who taught me the value of difference and became a safe place for spiritual formation; to the facility and staff of George Fox Evangelical Seminary: each of you have exemplified a servant's heart and a pastor love; to my editor Rochelle Deans for being so patient with me; to my dissertation advisor Cliff Berger for reading, reading, and reading some more the endless comments, questions, and papers that I have sent you; to my cohort lead mentor, Jason Clark: your spirit reflects the spirit of Christ in a way seldom seen lastly, but certainly not least, my two boys, Trey and Philip: you have sacrificed time with your father and I pray that the Lord will bless you for allowing me to be obedient to Him.

I stand on each of your shoulders, for it is you, who, like Aaron and Hur, held up my arms when I was tired so that I could continue another day. May God bless you and keep you and cause His face to shine upon you. It is with the sincerest of hearts that I express my thanks for I can never repay your investment into my life.

ABSTRACT

As a result of recent technological advancements and the growth of the Internet, new highways are being constructed that afford the church new opportunities as it interacts missionally within the world. These opportunities bring with them unique challenges as well as tremendous potential to reach the world with the love and message of Christ. As the church navigates these new waters, it must have a proper understanding of its ecclesiology and combine that understanding with a healthy missiology in order to become a faithful presence within these new contexts. As today's youth come of age and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) continue to evolve, the church will have an opportunity to become techo-missional in order to interact with her members in an increasingly globalized world. These new techno-missional endeavors will be constructed around the use and integration of ICT. In regards to the future of missions and the church Information Communications Technology will be the greatest tool the 21st century has to offer in decentralizing the missional task by breaking down barriers that separate individuals, religious institutions, and various organizations. In order for one to begin acquiring a healthy framework for these conversations several areas must be discussed.

Chapter one will give an introduction to the rise of technology and the diffusion of innovation of that technology throughout society. My thesis regards the future of technology and its relation to the church. Chapter two will begin to construct a healthy conversation about the New Testament picture of the church and her place and purpose within the world. Chapter three will build upon the newly developed ecclesiology and introduce a proper missional ecclesiology. This missional ecclesiology is needed to begin

constructing the making of a techno-missional church. Chapter four takes the beginnings

of a techno-missional church and begins developing why culture is poised for such a

transition. This transition is not without obstacles but there are underpinnings that will

help sustain its construction; this discussion begins in chapter five. Chapter six will

uncover the cultural desire to create content and how current ICT advancements in social

media will open this new highway of interaction between the church, her members, and

the world. By understanding the youth of today and how technology breaks down

centralized structures and promotes flatter organizations with cooperation and

collaboration the church will have to decide how it will interact with these new mediums.

Chapter seven will challenge some current efforts and results in missions and propose a

new way of missional ecclesiology as it relates to the future of ICT and how it may be

used to connect to body of Christ.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

> If you build it, he will come
>
> —Field of Dreams

"Baseball, hotdogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet" was a jingle that came out in 1975; it was found in a featured Chevrolet commercial and quickly caught America's attention. Although I was not born until 1979, I remember singing this song as a young child. "Baseball, hotdogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet" was at the center of American culture. It is amazing how certain words, lyrics, songs, jingles, or commercials can capture the attention of a generation. As apple pie was to Chevrolet, so is baseball to a 1989 movie entitled "Field of Dreams." This timeless movie, filmed and directed by Phil Alden Robinson, was an adaptation from a novel, *Shoeless Joe.* Kevin Costner and James Earl Jones lit up the screen as they ushered in our nostalgia towards America's pastime, baseball, while weaving together a beautiful story of faith, vision, and love.

One day while walking in a cornfield, Ray Kinsella (Costner), hears a voice that whispers, "if you build it, he will come." A series of events propels Ray to cut down his cornfield and construct a baseball diamond, to which an argument ensues about how Ray will be able to pay the bank the debt he owes on his land. Soon after this conversation, Terrence agrees that "people will come," to relive their childhood innocence. Eventually, ghosts of some of baseball's greats, along with Ray's father, appear, over time, to "play ball." By the end of the movie, crowds come from miles, Ray is able to see his dead

father to play catch, and the audience is left with the understanding that money will no longer be an object because the people came.

Over the past two decades, I have heard numerous ministers of the gospel alter the famous quote from Field of Dreams to say, "If you (we) build it, they will come." Referring to the fact that if their church builds a new sanctuary, adds a children's wing, creates a family life center, or constructs a larger foyer with built-in coffee shop, the people will come. For the better part of the last 150 years, the church, both the people and the building, has been the center of society. First Baptist Church of Wherever was located in the middle of the city, oftentimes at the heart of downtown. Over the past thirty years, however, our world has dramatically changed. The culture has shifted and societal life has followed. The church building no longer attracts people as it once did, and many Christians are questioning the premise that we must build anything for people to come. The mantra of today seems to be shifting; a culture of "if we live among them, we will reach them," has overtaken the once-pervasive "if you build it, they will come."

At the heart of this new conversation are the notions of community, relationships, networks, people groups, niche groups, and how people and topics like these fit together. Today, as a result of globalization, technology, mobility, migration, integration, and urbanization, the church must begin a dialogue about her future and how she will interact with an increasingly fluid world.

On a typical day, many Americans awake in the morning, take a shower, drink a cup of coffee, click on the television, look at their Facebook updates, and quickly glance at their email notifications all before they leave their homes.[1] These individuals perform

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[1] "Coffee Drinking Statistics," Statistic Brain, July 7, 2012, http://www.statisticbrain.com/coffee-drinking-statistics/ (accessed September 12, 2012).

all of these functions oblivious to the environments and technologies around them that make those tasks possible. Many people are not cognitively aware of or reflective about the technologies around them. It is a natural anthropological response for people to become comfortable in their current environments, resulting in the dismissal of any questions to how or why they live the way they live. As a result, when their environment changes, they question those things that disrupt their daily lives. One of the greatest societal and cultural shifts over the history of mankind, one that has fundamentally changed the environments in which humanity lives, is the introduction of digital technology, more specifically, information communication technologies.

"Many people believe that since the mid-1970s we have been going through a third great technological transformation – from the machine age to the information age (also called the third wave and the knowledge revolution.)"[2] Computers, satellites, fiber optics, transportation, and high-speed communications have changed the face of how people live, work, and play. Among these changes are computers and their ability to gather, organize, and assimilate data on just about anything. With unbelievable speed, accuracy, and volume, the computer began to change how society works. As the computer continued to evolve, computer programmers advanced in their understanding of how computers might assist not only governmental programs, but also daily business applications. Operations that once were thought to require human intelligence now operated within a world of 1's and 0's.

"The Synergies created by computers, user-friendly software applications, satellite mediated communications, the Internet, containerization, and rapid and relative

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[2] Morton E. Winston and Ralph Edelbach, *Society, Ethics, and Technology* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012), 9.

inexpensive air freight made possible the kind of geographical distributed production systems that are characteristic of the contemporary era of globalization."[3] As modern-day culture has responded to these shifts, new doors have opened within ecclesial life to partner with people all over the world to advance the gospel and meet the needs of communities from many new areas of the world. The systems and networks that have been created are now roadways for the spread of the gospel, much like the Roman Road was to the time of Christ and the spread of New Testament Christianity.

Thomas Friedman, the Pulitzer-Prize-winning foreign affairs writer for the New York Times, is one of the leading personalities in how technology relates to globalization. He states:

> Computerization, miniaturization, digitization, satellite communications, fiber optics, and the Internet…the synergies created by these technological innovations advances the claim that at the beginning of the twenty-first century we are embarking on a new age of globalization, Globalization 3.0, that is flattening the global playing field even more dramatically. The key 'flatteners' are information technologies that allow new forms of collaboration and cooperation from widely dispersed groups of individuals. [4]

This Globalization 3.0, as Friedman titles it, does not just reflect the nature of how we work, live, and interact with the world by secular means, but also how churches live in community, partner with each other, go into all the world, share the gospel, govern their affairs, share resources, and begin ecumenical conversations. This new, flatter world affects everything and is perhaps the catalyst the church needs to empower the body of Christ for the work of missions. Among the primary drivers of this flattening within society are open-sourced software, blogs, and other user-generated content, which feed

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[3] Ibid,. 19.

[4] Ibid., 154.

this shift with continual development of Information Communications Technologies. The issue that the church must grapple with is not whether Information Communication Technologies are right or wrong, in the essence of some moral dilemma, but how the church should use them faithfully, with integrity and balance, in order to further the Kingdom of God. In order to accomplish this, the church must understand technology and the effects that is has upon society with discernment, authenticity, and clarity.

"The forms of media and technology - regardless of their content – cause profound changes in the church and culture. The power of our media forms has created both challenges and opportunities in the ways the people of God are formed."[5] For two thousand years people, in the church has argued over whether to accept or reject various technological advances. The church's relationship to media and technology is much likened to a child playing hide and go seek. When the youngster places a blanket over their head, he or she thinks that since they cannot see the person seeking, the person seeking cannot see them. As children grow in their cognitive process, they eventually learn that just because they cannot see someone does not mean that they cannot be seen. With time, their perception changes and as this change occurs their interaction with people alters. The church must follow suit; as society and culture change and technology advances, she must learn how to engage intelligently instead of covering her eyes. This juvenile method of conversing about technology and the church must discontinue and healthy dialogue and analysis must begin.

If one were to peer through the veils of time, conversations about technology would be found in Plato's *Phaedrus*. In this dialogue, where Socrates instructs a pupil,

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[5] Shane Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2006), 23.

one finds an early analysis of communication technology. In this conversation, Socrates

tells a story of two Egyptian gods, a king named Thamus and an inventor named Theuth.

> Now the king of all Egypt at that time was the god Thamus…To him came Theuth to show his inventions, saying that they ought to be imparted to the other Egyptians. Thamus inquired into the use of each of them, and as Theuth went through them expressed approval or disapproval, according as he judges Theuth's claims to be well or ill founded. It would take too long to go through all that Thamus is reported to have said for and against each of Theuth's inventions. But when it came to writing, Theuth declared, "Here is an accomplishment, my lord the King, which will improve both wisdom and the memory of Egyptians. I have discovered a sure receipt for memory and wisdom." To this, Thamus replied, "Theuth, my paragon of inventors, the discoverer of art is not the best judge of the good or harm which will accrue to those who practice it. So it is in this; you, who are the father of writing, have out of fondness for your offspring attributed to it quite the opposite of its real function. Those who acquire it will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of by their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a receipt for recollection, not memory. And as for wisdom, your pupils will have the reputation for it without the reality: they will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction, and in consequence be thought very knowledgeable when they are for the most part quite ignorant. And because they are filled with the conceit of wisdom instead of real wisdom they will be a burden to society.[6]

Neil Postman and Brain McClaren both use this story in their writings on technology to

illustrate that Thamus and Theuth, although each raising valid points, fail to view the

topic at hand with both eyes open instead of with one eye shut. In this story, as in today's

era, technology and the media it produces dramatically impact philosophy, theology,

culture, and the way church is done. One can argue this point until they become blue in

the face, or one can begin understanding this point and engage with answers, results, and

possibilities into what God is beginning to do among the body of Christ.

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[6] Plato Hamilton and Walter Hamilton, *Phaedrus and the Seventh and Eighth Letters* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1973), 96.

Innovation and Technology

Much study has been devoted to understanding how environments change over a period of time and how people accept or reject new innovations in those environments. One such study is the Diffusion of Innovations by Everett Rodgers.

> Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Given that decisions are not authoritative or collective, each member of the social system faces his/her own innovation-decision that follows a 5-step process:
>
> 1) Knowledge – person becomes aware of an innovation and has some idea of how it functions,
> 2) Persuasion – person forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward the innovation,
> 3) Decision – person engages in activities that lead to a choice to adopt or reject the innovation,
> 4) Implementation – person puts an innovation into use,
> 5) Confirmation – person evaluates the results of an innovation-decision already made. [7]

People will accept and implement an innovation if they believe that it will enhance their lives in some way. "Those individuals must believe that the innovation may yield some relative advantage to the idea it supersedes."[8] Further anthropological study reveals that people are, on average, prone to avoid risk or at least very contemplative about the possibility of failing do to the potential risk.[9] This results in the acceptance of most innovations to be delayed until adequate time, testing, and early adopters have revealed the innovation as acceptable. Because people and organizations are different and their personalities and make-up vary, this diffusion of innovation follows certain trends. "Diffusion scholars divide this bell-shaped curve to characterize five categories of system

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[7] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 5, 162.

[8] Ibid., 208.

[9] Matthew Leitch, "The Real Reasons We Avoid Risk," Internal Controls Design, August 6, 2010, http://www.internalcontrolsdesign.co.uk/riskweighting/index.shtml (accessed November 27, 2012).

member innovativeness, where innovativeness is defined as the degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a system. These groups are innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards."[10]

Technology, especially Information Communication Technology (ICT), has changed much of the world's environments over the last thirty years. Internet usage has increased exponentially in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, Latin America, and Australia. The growth of the Internet from 2000 until 2011 has ranged from 152.6 to 2,988.4 percent. The population penetration ranges from 13.5 to 78.6 percent within those same areas.[11] The shift started with innovators, continued with early adaptors, settled in with the early majority, and is transitioning into late majority – with some countries already seeing a shift from late majority to laggards. Within the United States, the growth over the last eleven years has been 152.6 percent, with 78.6 percent of the population already adapted to its usage. Regardless of a person's opinion on

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[10] Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 262. Additional article information: Innovators imagine the possibilities and are eager to give it a try. Early adopters use the data provided by the innovators' implementation and confirmation of the innovation to make their own adoption decisions. Much of the social system does not have the inclination or capability to remain abreast of the most recent information about innovations, so they instead trust the decisions made by opinion leaders. Additionally, much of the social system merely wants to stay in step with the rest. Since opinion leader adoption is a good indicator that an innovation is going to be adopted by many others, these conformity-loving members are encouraged to adopt (319). So a large subsection of the social system follows suit with the trusted opinion leaders. This is the fabled tipping point, where the rate of adoption rapidly increases. The domino effect continues as, even for those who are cautious or have particular qualms with the innovation, adoption becomes a necessity as the implementation of the innovation-decisions of earlier adopters result in social and/or economic benefit. Those who have not adopted lose status or economic viability, and this contextual pressure motivates adoption (265). The last adopters, laggards, can either be very traditional or be isolates in their social system. If they are traditional, they are suspicious of innovations and often interact with others who also have traditional values. If they are isolates, their lack of social interaction decreases their awareness of an innovation's demonstrated benefits (265). It takes much longer than average for laggards to adopt innovations.

[11] "World Internet Usage Statistics News and World Population Stats," Internet World Stats, December 31, 2011, http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed September 12, 2012).

technology and its effect within American culture, one would have to admit these numbers are staggering.

Unfortunately, ICT has not been as widely embraced by many churches today. FACT data shows that the larger the church, the more common it is to have a website. Only 40 percent of churches with 150 people or fewer have a website, compared to 73 percent of churches with more than 150 people in attendance. Likewise, suburban churches are twice as likely to have websites as rural churches.[12]

> The FACT report shows that a website alone won't drive church growth, but an active website supported by an online community will make a huge difference… To sociologists of religion, it makes perfect sense that adapting the latest technology will bring growth. A church that's willing to change and adapt to people's new lifestyles is poised to grow. It's part and parcel of contemporary American culture," said Thumma. Technology in the church offers a flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs and desires.[13]

Recent Lifeway statistics state that 78 percent of Protestant churches have a website, which is on par with the average amount of Americans currently using the Internet. However, only 52 percent of churches use the Internet to connect people to ministry opportunities, and 35 percent update their site once a month or less. Seven percent update their site less than once a year, which brings to question the usefulness of the site. Pulling the 7- and 35-percent groups out of the picture shows that only 36 percent of Protestant churches have regularly updated websites where content is being added weekly or

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[12] Kirk C. Hadaway, "Worship, Websites, Conflict Affect Growth in Congregations." Faith Communities Today. December 11, 2006. Accessed September 12, 2012. http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/worship-websites-conflict-affect-growth-congregations (accessed September 12, 2012).

[13] "Churches Using the Internet to Their Advantage," Insights into Religion, September 3, 2009, http://www.religioninsights.org/churches-using-internet-their-advantage (accessed September 12, 2012).
"Lay people are faster to use latest technology than church administrators came to light last June when Southern Baptists elected an upstart candidate as president of the 16 million-member denomination largely on the strength of a few blogs. These blogs, and the pastors who wrote them, disapproved of the endorsed candidate, the Rev. Ronnie Floyd, and instead threw their support to Rev. Frank Page, who was then elected."

biweekly. Even fewer use their site for more than informational purposes.[14] Scott

McConnell, director of LifeWay Research, stated:

> Many churches are using their website like a Yellow Pages ad characterized by basic information and infrequent updates. This is in sharp contrast with churches that use their website like a bustling church receptionist registering people for upcoming events, collecting prayer requests and obtaining volunteers.
> There is nothing wrong with using a church website to simply give directions to the church or state the church's beliefs; however, we must realize that more and more people expect to be able to interact online without having to drive or make a phone call to the church.[15]

Further analysis would yield that the many Protestant churches, according to Everett

Rodgers *Diffusion of Innovations,* are still trekking on the Decision stage of the five-stage

process, with leanings on being categorized within the late adaptors or even laggards. The

result is a gross underutilization of ICT and its capabilities within the body of Christ.

Many churches claim the reason that they do not utilize ICT effectively is because

of the lack of resources or expertise within its creation, implementation, and adaptation

among its members and organizational needs. "Among the factors that keep churches

from providing more content and services online are limited time among church staff

(46%), limited financial resources (41%), limited time among volunteers (39%) and little

interest expressed by the congregation for more online content or services (35%)."[16] In

many instances, this can be the case; however, often the reason why people or

organizations fail to adapt new innovations is because of ignorance or lack of belief in

regard to its effectiveness. Stripped down to its core, the reason why ICT is not utilized

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[14] Eric Dye, "Lifeway Provides Statistics on Church Website Use," ChurchMAG, January 27, 2011, http://churchm.ag/lifeway-provides-statistics-on-church-website-use/ (accessed September 12, 2012).

[15] David Roachon, "LifeWay," LifeWay, January 21, 2011, http://www.lifeway.com/ArticleView?storeId=10054&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&article=LifeWay-Research-Churches-divided-web-use (accessed September 12, 2012).

[16] Ibid.

fully among churches, denominations, and cross-denominationally is because of fear that technology will replace community, personal connectivity, spirituality, and the foundational elements of human relationships. They fear the making of a technological society. This fear leads them to not fully and intelligently embrace ICT and its integration within ecclesiology and missiology.

When deconstructed, technology gives way to additional variations: technical, technician, and technophobia are just a few. Probing the depths of this word reveals the Greek word *tekhnologia,* which is also where one finds technology's meaning. It is compiled from the Greek root *tekhnē,* meaning 'art, skill'[17] and *logos*, which is commonly defined as "the study of."[18] The Greek roots come together, then, to mean "the study of an art or skill." The original word, *tekhnologia,* had the connotation of "systematic treatment."[19] This understanding helps redefine the common misconceptions about technology, specifically that it deals with the material itself. This re-definition reveals a bright insight into technology as it relates to humanity:

> In the minds of many technology is cold and capricious, all head, no heart, and no soul. One might even say that technology is the antithesis of humanity. Nothing could be further from the truth. Technology is the study of human art and skill. In the struggle to differentiate human beings from other animals, anthropologists have sometimes pointed to our propensity to fashion and use tools…But technology is not our tools. In a nutshell, technology is part of what defines us; it is a part of what makes us human.[20]

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[17] *Dictionary.com,* s.v. "Technology," http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/technology (accessed September 13, 2012).

[18] Stephen K. Spyker, *Technology & Spirituality: How the Information Revolution Affects Our Spiritual Lives* (Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths Pub., 2007), 2.

[19] *Dictionary.com,* s.v. "Technology," http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/technology (accessed September 13, 2012).

[20] Spyker, *Technology & Spirituality,* 37. "A technology is a way of using tools to do something." 37.

Surveying the landscape of history, it is apparent that the technologies we adopt affect the essence of what type humanity we develop. In ancient times, the creation of the wheel revolutionized transportation, arts, agriculture, tools, and weaponry. Several centuries ago, the Gutenberg Printing Press fashioned similar results. Today, ICT are that next big cultural humanity shift. "The tools we choose to use and how we use them affect how we think, how we make decisions, how we relate to one another, how we construct knowledge, even how we think about God."[21] Eventually, every new technology will in some way influence culture, affecting our sense of identity and our engagement with the world.

The creation of the Internet and the tools it affords has begun re-forming humanity's identity and engagement within the world. Knowing that technology is the study of art and skill in relation to how humanity forms, crafts, and uses new innovations, the church must develop the proper understanding of ICT and its uses in society, in order to better take advantage of its proposed benefits. This new information about technology helps educate individuals about the tools they use and how those tools shape individuals. This knowledge will help the church better utilize ICT's strengths and minimize its weaknesses, resulting in healthy integration of ICT into humanity and the body of Christ.

The Narrative

Sam White is a young adult and a member of Forest Side Community Church. Sam grew up at FSCC and has been influenced by her throughout most of his formative

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[21] Ibid., 3.

years.[22] Recently, Sam began talking with other young adults from various parts of the city about opportunities to reach their communities with the love and message of Christ. Shortly after conversing about a few ideas, this group of young adults decided to speak with the FSCC leadership about future thoughts into how this might be accomplished. In response to these conversations, many individuals at FSCC desired to create several initiatives of their own in order to begin reaching the vision these young adults brought to the church. The next two years were spent researching, raising monies, testing out new methods, and programming various ways this outreach could begin. Before long, tens of thousands of dollars had been spent with little to no real impact. In response to growing tension between what was being done and how Sam and his friends envisioned this outreach taking place, Sam began to question the methods they were using to accomplish this vast new effort. Upon Sam's rebuttal to FSCC responses as to why they were going about outreach in this fashion, Sam shared some insightful information to their leadership. Upon this disclosure, Sam's ultimate thought, which he shared with the leadership, was, "there has got to be a better way to reach our city and the world for Christ than the same old 'every man for himself' mentality."

Since its organization in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to over 16 million members who worship in more than 45,000 churches in the United States. Southern Baptists sponsor about 5,000 missionaries serving the United States and its territories, Canada, and the Caribbean, as well as sponsoring more than 5,000 foreign missionaries in 153 nations of the world. Forest Side Community Church (FSCC) is part of the Southern Baptist Convention, with just over 5,000 members. The average age of this local body of believers is around 42 years old.

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[22] The Narrative outlined in this section has been altered to protect the identity of those involved.

Within her given demographics, it is estimated the over 70 percent of the population are Internet users, while over 90 percent of the city has access to high speed Internet in their homes. FSCC, like most churches, encourages individuals to log on to their website for information about upcoming events and activities. This website is a one-way content stream that members visit frequently. However, among its 5,000 members, there is no systematic way of communicating and interacting among each other. The majority of the email communication is one way (church to congregant), and many in the church fail to understand what mission opportunities are available on a given day. Outreach initiatives that the church undertakes are mostly ventures they create within their own operations, only to subvert (unknowingly) other Christian organizational efforts in the city. This results in wasting monies that the church used to prepare, invest, and research their venture that could have been better appropriated if they would have teamed up with another church or organization already active within that given area. Within the FSCC zip code, there are an additional nine Southern Baptist Churches, and within a twenty-mile radius from FSCC, there are still another 50 plus Southern Baptist Churches. Given the amount of people within their denomination alone, not to mention the hundreds of other churches and organizations across the city, FSCC still feels like they must start their own missional activities and do not understand how to empower their members to actively engage in missions where they currently live, work, and interact while guiding them with a clear understanding of what is taking place within the body of Christ throughout their given region.

This issue is not an isolated problem within FSCC, but a larger issue within the SBC and the body of Christ. On a global scale, churches have the exact same problem.

Instead of partnering up with local organizations and other churches as they minister locally or globally, they create their own programs, often resulting in unnecessary competition and redundancy. These situations could often be avoided if the church would better learn to communicate to its members, empower their members at the micro level, and share resources among itself, other churches, various denominations, and other organizations.

The churches that are members of the SBC do give monies to partner with the convention at large. As a result, the SBC is able to accomplish some amazing things through their cooperative program. The SBC encourages its sister churches to give 10 percent to organizational efforts but does not mandate it. Recently, the SBC launched a campaign to challenge each church to raise their giving 1 percent from what they had been giving.[23] The question must shift away from "will each church give more monies," although more money is definitely needed. A better question is, "how can the church better use their monies apart from what they give the convention in order to connect the body of Christ together?"

How can FSCC connect its 5,000 members and focus their energies while at the same time remaining a part of the 16 million members of the Sothern Baptist Convention, and simultaneously to the hundreds of millions of believers across the globe? How can the church utilize its resources, energies, and ideas where its members are currently working and living and how can this translate itself on a global scale? The answers and the future of missional outreach and networking lie within the understanding and

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[23] "Cooperative Program (CP) Missions." Cooperative Program (CP) Missions. http://www.cpmissions.net/2003/default.asp (accessed December 21, 2012).

utilization of ICT. It is no longer about building bigger systems and organizations but creating better networks and empowering and connecting the entire body of Christ.

Many people question the benefits of ICT and fear that it hinders genuine relationship. I claim that ICT will be the greatest tool the 21st century has to offer in decentralizing the missional task by breaking down barriers that separate individuals, religious institutions, and various organizations. ICT can promote missional ecclesiology. The real question is how can the Southern Baptist Convention utilize ICT missionally in both their micro (individual churches) and macro (denomination at large) contexts, and how can this can promote a free-flowing exchange of resources between her and the global (between denominations) church? The church must begin to use ICT to accomplish its holistic and evangelistic missional outreach by empowering its people through the creation of an online environment of shared resources to systematically meet the spiritual and physical needs of others around the world without overlapping redundancies and unnecessary competition. Before a person can divulge the purpose of a particular person, place, or thing, he or she must understand the object of their focus. In order further investigate this subject, one must start at the beginning of the Church.

CHAPTER TWO:

EKKLESIA: A BIBLICAL LOOK TOWARDS MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

> It is not a place that is called church, not a house made of stones and earth…it is the holy assembly of those who live in righteousness.
>
> —Hippolytus

Throughout the New Testament, the nature of the Church is revealed to its reader. "The church is the body of people called by God's grace through faith in Christ to glorify Him together by serving Him in the world."[1] Peter describes it this way:

> But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.[2]

The word that is translated as church is *ekklesia.* As one begins to consider the church, one must start with a proper hermeneutic of the word *ekklesia*. To begin this understanding, the Scripture is essential for developing the foundational thoughts, images, and descriptions of what *ekklesia* actually means. Throughout the New Testament, the word *ekklesia* is used some 114 times, with 109 of those times referring to the Christian assembly.[3] In much of Greek culture, we see that the word *ekklesia* was used to describe an assembly called to perform a "specific task."[4] This understanding yields a certain bearing and gives weight to the purpose of the church defined later in this paper. The etymological basis for the construction of the word *ekklesia* is derived from

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[1] Mark Dever, *The Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2012), 3.

[2] 1 Peter 2:9-10.

[3] Dever, *The Church*, 7-8. (Three times in Matthew, 20 in Acts, 66 in Paul's writings, once in Hebrews, once in James, three in 3 John, and 20 in Revelation).

[4] Ibid., 7.

two Greek words. The first, *kaleo,* which means "to call" plus the preposition *ek* which means "out of," yielding the picture of "the called out ones."[5]

"Fundamentally, the church of Jesus Christ is neither a building nor an organization. Rather, it is a people, a special people. A people who see themselves as standing in relationship to the God who saves them and to each other as those who share in this salvation."[6] The early Christians' picture of themselves directly influenced their actions and lifestyles within the culture and the cities in which they lived. Their image of themselves were called out ones, called together; they were "a people brought together by the Holy Spirit, a people bound to each other through Christ, hence a people standing in covenant with God."[7] 2 Corinthians 6:16 weaves this concept together with great precision, "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The emphasis that we see in the New Testament is on a living organism of true believers in Christ. The New Testament church began at Pentecost with the empowering of the Holy Spirit and will continue until that time when Christ returns for His bride. It is within this moment in time that the *ekklesia* will be re-untied with her Father, Creator, and Savior. "The church, the living organism and organized cell of believers is God's way of doing business in local communities in this dispensation."[8] Acts 1 provides the

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[5] Grenz, 464.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 465.

[8] Mal Couch, *A Biblical Theology of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1999), 26.

first insight gives into this: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach…But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." "Walyoord explains, "the verb began indicates that Acts continues the account of the ministry and teaching Christ began on earth. He is still working and teaching through His people today."[9] It is here that we first begin to see what the *ekklesia* is "called out" to accomplish after Christ's death and resurrection.

A New Missional Ecclesiology

> The church is the mirror that reflects the whole effulgence of the Divine character. It is the grand scene, in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe.
>
> — Charles Bridges

By understanding the word *ekklesia*, we begin to see a clearer picture of the New Testament Church. Within this understanding, there derives many questions as to the responsibilities and methodology to which the church must adhere. The resulting theological discipline formed in order to guide this understanding is ecclesiology. "Ecclesiology is the study of the theological understanding of the Christian church (*ekklesia*). Specific areas of concern include the church's role in salvation, its origin, its relationship to the historical Christ, its discipline, its destiny, and its leadership. Ecclesiology is, therefore, the study of the church as a thing in itself."[10] This theological discipline did not become a part of systematic theology until the "time of the

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[9] Theological Seminary. Dallas and John F. Walvoord, *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Victor, 1983). Accessed online.

[10] *Webster's Online Dictionary,* s.v. "ecclesiology," http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/ecclesiology?cx=partner-pub-0939450753529744:v0qd01-tdlq (accessed April 19, 2012).

Reformation."[11] Ecclesiology did not gain much interest in the early church or the Middle Ages. Writers of antiquity, the early church fathers, had numerous things to say about the church but ecclesiology was not looked upon as a discipline. Even Augustine failed to offer any special attention to the church, although his writings help formulate our view of the church.

It was not until 1433 and 1435 that the first writings of ecclesiology were published, *Tractatus de Ecclesia* of Johann of Ragusa and *Summa de Ecclesia* of John of Torquemada were among the first.[12] As time has continued, ecclesiology has been written about, discussed, researched, and organized into various traditions. Whenever ecclesiology is defined in some type of systematic theological field, there is always a lens which filters ecclesial findings and definitions. These traditions or lenses are Roman Catholic Ecclesiology, Lutheran Ecclesiology, Reformed Ecclesiology, Free Church Ecclesiology, and Pentecostal or Charismatic Ecclesiology.[13]

Regardless of what tradition is bent towards a particular individual's theology, the church, *ekklesia,* is universal even though it is manifested with local bodies. "The New Testament assumes that all Christians will share in the life of a local church, meeting with it for worship (Heb. 10:25), accepting its nurture and discipline (Matt. 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1), and sharing in its work of witness."[14]

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[11] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 9.

[12] Ibid*.,* 11.

[13] Kärkkäinen explains each of these ecclesiologies further, although there may be others he does not attend to, with continued focus on Contemporary and Contextual Ecclesiologies. One such Contemporary Ecclesiology is Missionary Ecclesiology. Lesslie Newbigin pioneered much of this work. This area of ecclesiology will be considered in greater detail further in this work.

Essentially, the church is, was, and always will be a single worshipping

community, permanently gathered in the true sanctuary which is the heavenly Jerusalem

(Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22-24), the place of God's presence. Here all who are alive in Christ,

the physically living with the physically dead (i.e., the church militant with the church

triumphant) worship continually. In the world, however, this one church appears in the

form of local congregations, each one called to fulfill the role of being a microcosm (a

small-scale representative sample) of the church as a whole. This explains how it is that

for Paul the one church universal is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-26; Eph. 1:22-23;

3:6; 4:4), and so is the local congregation (1 Cor. 12:27).[15]

Today, many people are disillusioned by the visible, local, and universal church.

Individuals leaving corporate practices of assembly as believers are no longer the

exception but the new rule.[16] We must remember, "while we are born again as children of

God through personal relationship with Jesus, those who are born again are also born into

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[14] J. I. Packer, "Church: God Plants His People in a New Community," Monergism.com, http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/packer/church.html (accessed April 19, 2012).

[15] Ibid.
Additional article insight "It is customary to characterize the church on earth as "one" (because it really is so in Christ, as Eph. 4:3-6 shows, despite the great number of local churches and denominational groupings), "holy" (because it is consecrated to God corporately, as each Christian is individually, Eph. 2:21), "catholic" (because it is worldwide in extent and seeks to hold the fullness of the faith), and "apostolic" (because it is founded on apostolic teaching, Eph. 2:20). All four qualities may be illustrated from Ephesians 2:19-22.
There is a distinction to be drawn between the church as we humans see it and as God alone can see it. This is the historic distinction between the "visible church" and the "invisible church." Invisible means, not that we can see no sign of its presence, but that we cannot know (as God, the heart-reader, knows, 2 Tim. 2:19) which of those baptized, professing members of the church as an organized institution are inwardly regenerate and thus belong to the church as a spiritual fellowship of sinners loving their Savior. Jesus taught that in the organized church there would always be people who thought they were Christians and passed as Christians, some indeed becoming ministers, but who were not renewed in heart and would therefore be exposed and rejected at the Judgment (Matt. 7:15-27; 13:24-30, 36-43, 47-50; 25:1-46). The "visible-invisible" distinction is drawn to take account of this. It is not that there are two churches but that the visible community regularly contains imitation Christians whom God knows not to be real (and who could know this for themselves if they would, 2 Cor. 13:5)."

[16] Hebrews 10:24-25, ESV.

the church."[17] John Calvin writes about the church in regard to our mother, as to the visible nature of the church:

> But because it is now our intention to discuss the visible church, let us learn even from the simple title "mother" how useful, indeed how necessary, it is that we should know her. For there is no other way to enter life unless this mother conceive us in her womb, give us birth, nourish us at her breast, and lastly, unless she keep us under her care and guidance until, putting off mortal flesh, we become like the angels (Matthew 22:30). Our weakness does not allow us to be dismissed from her school until we have been pupils all our lives. Furthermore, away from her bosom one cannot hope for any forgiveness of sins or any salvation, as Isaiah (Isaiah 37:32) and Joel (Joel 2:32) testify. Ezekiel agrees with them when he declares that those whom God rejects in heavenly life will not be enrolled around God's people (Ez 13:9). On the other hand, those who turn to the cultivation of true godliness are said to inscribe their names among the citizens of Jerusalem (Isa. 56:5; Ps 87:6). For this reason, it is said in another psalm: "Remember me, O Jehovah, with favor toward thy people; visit me with salvation: that I may see the well doing of thy chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the joy of thy nation, that I may be glad with thine inheritance." (Ps. 106:4-5; Ps. 105:4) By these words God's fatherly favor and the especial witness of spiritual life are limited to his flock, so that it is always disastrous to leave the church.[18]

Many would argue that the church today does not reflect what the *ekklesia* is portrayed to look like throughout the New Testament. This argument leads to a resolution for some to proclaim that they will no longer live with the church, amongst her brokenness and blemishes. This line of thinking must be seen in constant tension with the fact the Scriptures teach the church is also the bride of Christ.[19] "Luther claimed that the believer is simultaneously blemished and faithless as a harlot in one hand, and spotless as Christ bride on the other."[20] Perhaps even through the church's tumultuous history, one

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[17] Brad Harper and Paul L. Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology: An Evangelical and Ecumenical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009), 11.

[18] John Calvin, John Thomas McNeill, and Ford Lewis. *Calvin: Institutes of Christian Religion* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1016.

[19] Ephesians 5:25-32; Revelation 19:6-9.

[20] Harper and Metzger, *Exploring Ecclesiology,* 12.

might see that the bride of Christ, though imperfect, is made up of God's most beautiful creation, His children. This creation, once set apart, becomes the bride of Christ. This bride is something that Christ thought so important that He gave his life as a ransom. It is through the visible manifestation of His bride, in the form of the local body, that the world catches a glimpse into the Kingdom of God on Earth.

From Sticks and Bricks to Community and Fellowship: The Building of Missional Ecclesiology

The *ekklesia* is the church, "the called out ones."[21] Hammett states, "In ancient Greece, the *ekklesia* was the assembly of the called out citizens, who came together to conduct business of the city."[22] This picture of being called out also portrays the image of being called to. Called to *what*, one might ask: a specific task, function, or purpose?

"The new conciliar understanding of mission is based on the idea that the essential nature of the church is missionary, rather than being a task given to the church."[23] This fundamental concept is rooted in the idea that God by His very nature is a sending God. In Scripture, we see that man is made in the image and likeness of God. God sent Adam and Eve to tend the Garden and be "fruitful and multiply." God sent Abraham to a new land he did not know to start a nation of people separated for Him. God sent Moses to free the Israelites from Egyptian slavery. God sent the Old Testament Prophets to proclaim God's pending judgment if Israel did not repent; and God sent

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[21] John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 26.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 151.

Christ to live a perfect life, die a horrible death and defeat the grave.[24] This sending did

not stop with Christ, but Christ sends the church into the world to make disciples. This is

apparent in numerous passages of Scripture.

- John 20:21, Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."
- Matthew 28:19-20, 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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."
- Luke 24:45-47, Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
- Mark 16:15, and he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
- Acts 1:8, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

If man is by his very nature made in the image of God, then man's chief

responsibility is to reflect God in and through his life and ultimately bring glory to God.

The church, as a result, is uniquely designed to bring glory to God. According to the

Bible, God's "intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God

should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms. According to

his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord."[25] Dever elaborates

on this point by stating that, "No lesser matters are at stake in the church than the

promulgation of God's glory throughout his creation."[26] At the heart of displaying God's

glory to all the nations is the ecclesiology of missions, to take the gospel into "all the

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[24] Genesis 1:27-28; 12:1-2; Exodus 3:7-10; Isaiah 6; John 3:16-17, ESV.

[25] Ephesians 3:10-11.

[26] Dever, *The Church*, 77.

world." It is through the church being present "everywhere," "to all nations," that the world might truly see Christ manifested here on earth and through that manifestation that the Holy Spirit might work to draw a people unto Himself.

Two theologians that have been instrumental in the development of missional or missionary ecclesiology are David Bosch and Bishop Leslie Newbigin. However, before even these two individuals contributed their research into this theological discipline, Karl Barth was the first individual to yield the idea of the *missio Dei*, although not using these words exactly. It was at the Willingen Conference in 1952 that for the first time missions was placed not only into ecclesiological conversations but also in the context of the Trinity. "God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit…Father, Son, and Spirit sending the church into the world."[27]

Bosch proposes that the very essence of missionary ecclesiology is rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity. "Our mission has no life of its own: only in the hands of a sending God can it truly be called a mission."[28] In this new image, mission is not the primary activity of the church but an attribute of the Trinity, of God Himself. It is not the church that has the central task of seeing salvation brought to all who believe throughout the entire world. It is the mission of the Son and Spirit through the Father who uses the church as an instrument for accomplishing that mission. "The church is present because there is a mission, not there is a mission because there is the church."[29] The honor is ours:

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[27] David Jacobus. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 390.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

the body of Christ has the privilege of participating in the movement of God's love

towards a people lost and without Him.

Matthew 28 sets forth a vision and picture of the mission of Christ. Jesus and His

word are at the center of mission. All authority has been given Christ. He is the one who

commanded the disciples to go, and it is in His name that those saved are baptized. It is

Christ's teaching that all are to obey; and it is Him who will be with them as they go out.

The term mission is derived from the Latin word for "*sent.*" Jesus sends His followers out

into the world to share the gospel, the good news, about what had just taken place. It is as

these followers make disciples and those disciples make other disciples that we see

perpetuity.[30]

> The church is God's mission strategy. At the heart of God's plan to bless the
> nations are the people of God. The church is formed by mission and for mission.
> By the word she proclaims and the corporate life she lives, men and women
> throughout the world are commanded to repent and invited to live. The gospel
> word and the gospel community are both indispensable to mission because that
> has always been God's strategy.[31]

Both local and global missions remain the responsibility of the church. The

apostle Paul was largely responsible for the sending capacity of the church at Antioch. It

is through Antioch that much of the Gospel was spread. Paul assumed local churches

would take hold of common mission, "providing funds, coworkers, hospitality, and

prayer to support common vision. He organized the Jerusalem collection as a sign of the

reconciliation of Jew and Gentile in one church under Christ."[32] When we understand that

we are made in the image of God and that missions is an attribute of God manifesting

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[30] Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Total Church: A Radical Reshaping around Gospel and Community* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 101.

[31] Ibid., 104

[32] Ibid., 108. For supporting Scripture, see Acts 15:39-16:5; 20:1-6; 2 Corinthians 8:1-6; Ephesians 6:19-22.

itself through the Father, Son, and Spirit, while existing in perfect harmony, it stands to reason that missional ecclesiology should also be ecumenical among the body of Christ, the church.

Lesslie Newbigin was a pioneer in these very thoughts. His call is earthed in his careful exposition of John's gospel, but it draws as well on thinkers such as Martin Buber, Michael Polanyi, Hans Frei, and Alasdair MacIntyre, synthesizing their reflections into a powerful, unwittingly postmodern-friendly apologetic. Newbigin encourages us to tell the stories of the gospel as part of the grand sweep of the biblical drama. This is vital if an increasingly biblically illiterate generation is going to hear the gospel for the first time. We must explain that the stories of Jesus, true both historically and experientially, are the only way to understand how our individual stories make sense. We must demand a personal decision to follow the Lord of all history. He argues that the church needs to humbly, yet boldly, enter the public sphere with a persuasive retelling of the Christian story—not as personal spirituality, but as public truth. The church, not the individual, is the basic unit of evangelism. A community that lives out the truth of the gospel is the best context in which to understand its proclamation…The unity of the church matters to the mission of the church. Disunity undercuts the gospel of reconciliation that we claim to bring to the world… Whatever we need to do to help this generation to hear the gospel, we need to do together.[33]

"How much greater is the reconciling message of the gospel when churches work together in common missionary endeavor…It is the church who is made to represent God

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[33] Krish Kandiah, "The Missionary Who Wouldn't Retire" Christianity Today, January 2010, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/january/1.44.html?start=3 (accessed April 20, 2012).

on earth, God made us as persons in community to be the vehicle through which he would reveal His glory."[34] This community requires unity to function as it was created.

New Testament Imagery of the Church

> The Church must be seen as the company of pilgrims on the way to the end of the world and the ends of the earth.
>
> —Lesslie Newbigin

Stories create powerful imagery in our minds. Stories are things that we lose ourselves within only to find ourselves at their centers. The foundation for the proclamation of the missional mandate of the church should begin and end with telling the story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. It is within this story that the body of Christ is unified and it is through the articulation of this narrative that one finds their lostness and receives redemption. In order to better understand what the church must look like within this grand narrative, the New Testament provides rich imagery that paints a marvelous picture of the church living within the world. "Biblical teaching on the church is not limited to passages containing the term *ekklesia*. Indeed, it could be argued that the primary way the Bible teaches us about the church is through numerous images and metaphors of the church found throughout the New Testament."[35]

Among the numerous images for the church in the New Testament, three stand out as the central imagery that supports all other images, the people of God, the body of

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[34] Chester and Timmis, *Total Church,* 108, 47.

[35] John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 31. Most scholars identify 3 or 4 specific images of the New Testament Church: The People of God, The Body of Christ, and the temple of the Spirit are the most common. Paul S. Minear, in *Images of the Church in the New Testament,* identifies 96 possible images of the church, although there is not sufficient doctrinal support for some of the 96 he identifies.

Christ, and the family of God.[36] In 1 Peter 2:9-10, the terms "chosen people" and

"belonging to God" give us the image of "a people of God." The Old Testament calls

Israel the "people of God" in numerous passages.[37] The question remains as to whether

the church or Israel is God's chosen people. Depending on one's theology, this answer

will differ. The Scripture seems to be clear that Israel is the covenant people of God in

the Old Testament. Jeremiah 31:33 says, "'This is the covenant I will make with the

house of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put my law in their minds and

write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"[38] Proper

understanding of this imagery reveals continuity between both Old Testament Israel and

the New Testament Church. "There is one and only one people of God. In the Old

Testament, that people is Israel; in the New Testament, it is the new Israel, or spiritual

Israel, the church. Though the church may enjoy the richer blessings of the new covenant,

it stands in continuity with Israel under the overarching covenant of grace."[39]

The Abrahamic Covenant was given so that through Israel all nations would come

to know God. This in no way constitutes Universalism but that through Abraham's seed,

God would call out a people unto himself (Israel); the Messiah would come and through

His life all might find salvation who believe in Him.[40] With this coming of Christ, it is

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[36] It is noted that Paul S Minear in *Images in the New Testament* identifies the people of God, the new creation, the fellowship in faith, and the body of Christ as his main major images. While John H. Hammet, in *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches,* omits the family of God and includes the temple of the Spirit.

[37] Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:20, 7:6, 28:18-19, 29:9-10; Psalms 33; 104; Isaiah 41; Hosea 1:10; 2:23.

[38] NIV translation used.

[39] John S. Hammett, *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 32.

revealed He came to save His people from their sins through the cross of Calvary, after which he tells His disciples to wait for the coming down of the Holy Spirit; at that point, He calls this new group of believers the church. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit sets these individuals apart from the Old Testament people of God; it is the Holy Spirit who makes these "called out ones" the people of God.[41]

The understanding of the image and nature of the church yields a connection between the Old Testament Israelites and the church. The bigger picture of missional ecclesiology continues to take shape as God's great purpose is manifested through calling himself a people. "For God's people become his people as a result of His call. Most importantly, the people of God's image remind us that the church is much more than a human institution. Eleven times the church is called the church of God…the church is shaped in every way by relationship to God."[42]

The body of Christ is also an image used in the New Testament to picture the church. Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:15-16, and Colossians 2:19 indicate that we are the body and Christ is the head. It is Christ who governs and rules the body. The body is subject and under submission to the head and it is in and through the head that the body receives direction. Ephesians 4:15-16 says, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined

[40] Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 262. Supporting texts: Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-10; John 3:16.

[41] Hammett, *Biblical Foundations,* 32-33. Scripture references: Matthew 1:21; Acts 2, 11;18; Revelation 21:3.

[42] Ibid,. 34.Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 1:2, 10:32, 11:16, 22, 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Thess. 2:14; 2 Thess. 1:4; 1 Tim. 3:5.

and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working

properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."[43]

The metaphor of the body of Christ carries within itself tremendous insight into

how that body should function. One such great illustration is in 1 Corinthians 11:20-33,

concerning the Lord's Supper. Upon closer examination of this passage, great truth is

revealed.

> Disputes have raged over what constitutes an unworthy manner, over what is the
> body to be discerned and how this discernment proceeds…'This failure to discern
> the body is why many of you are weak and ill and some have died,' The context,
> however, emboldens me to venture two comments. Eating in an unworthy manner
> does not establish the rule that only sinless should sit at this table; rather, it
> establishes the principle that this is the place where in self-judgment the
> participant must recognize the Lord's judgment. (Vs. 31-32) To discern the body
> includes the discernment of their communal solidarity in Christ. Such discernment
> produces mutual courtesy, mutual concern, and an active sharing of resources by
> those who have with those who have not. (Vs. 21-22. 33-34) This discernment can
> be produced only by genuine participation in the body that has been broken for
> others. The absence of dying to self-interest and living for others profanes the
> body and blood of the Lord…it is such an interdependence of the Crucified with
> his own that a denial of *koinonia* with them is in fact a denial of *koinonia* in
> Him.[44]

This exegetical summary can only be understood in light of the church being the body of

Christ.

The body of Christ is also used in 1 Corinthians 12:16-17 "And if the ear should

say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' that would not make it any

less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of

hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?" In this

passage, the body is used in reference to the church and the gifts she has been given to

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[43] Wayne A. Grudem, *Making Sense of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 40.

[44] Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 188.

interact within the world. In this case, the head is not Christ but individual(s) who make up the body.

The family of God is the last of the major images that will be identified. When a family is pictured, numerous thoughts come to mind: protection, security, unity, acceptance, vulnerability, guidance, teamwork, strength, support, identity, nurture, friendship, and sacrificial love. The New Testament uses numerous images to create this picture of a family. Paul writes to Timothy and tells him to act as if the church were members of his family. He continues in Ephesians 3:14 by describing God as our Father. In 2 Corinthians 6:18, we are sons and daughters, and in Matthew 12:49-50 and 1 John 3:14-18, brothers and sisters within God's family. This description continues as the church is portrayed as the bride of Christ and the roles of husbands and wives are given with Christ and His bride as the example (Eph. 5:32).[45] Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that Christ will be presented with His bride, the church, at the culmination of all time. The family of God is also reflected in the body of Christ and the people of God. In fact, it is the single metaphor that brings everything into focus and sheds light onto our purpose.

These are not the only images in the Scripture. The believer's responsibilities to be salt and light are also tremendous imagery for the church as she engages the world. In Matthew 5:13, Jesus states, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet." Salt was a valuable commodity in ancient times. Salt purified, seasoned, and protected things. "The analogy is used as a warning, occasioned by the tendency of the group to lose its saltiness or to neglect its assigned function. The

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[45] Grudem, *Making Sense of the Church,* 39.

worthlessness of the church apart from its use for salting the earth is explicitly

underscored."[46] As long as the church fulfills her purpose in the world and maintains her

message of God's grace in and through the sharing of the gospel, the church has her

usefulness, but the moment she forgets and no longer influences the culture in which she

resides, seasoning everything she touches with the glory of God, is the moment she is

lost. Colossians 4:4-6 says, "that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech

always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer

each person." The picture of salt in this passage is the sharing the gospel.[47] The reason

they will listen is demonstrated in Matthew 5:14:

> You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do
> people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to
> all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they
> may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Light always symbolizes the presence of God.[48]

It is through the fruits of the Spirit and our love for each other that the world

might see the glory of God.[49] It is the light that reveals truth and illuminates darkness

(Eph. 4:18; Psalms 119:105), the church is to live as children of light (Eph. 5:8-9) and

have within them the light of life (John 8:12). When the light of Christ shines inside the

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[46] Paul S. Minear, *Images of the Church in the New Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 31.

[47] Edward L. Hayes, Charles R. Swindoll, and Roy B. Zuck, *The Church: The Body of Christ in the World of Today* (Nashville: Word Pub., 1999), 204-205.

[48] Ibid., 205-206. 1 John 1:5.

[49] Galatians 5:22; John 13:35.

body of Christ, the church, the world cannot help but see the truth and glorify God as the truth sets them free.[50]

In various places throughout scripture, the church is referred to as the branches, a field of crops, an olive tree, a new temple, a building, the pillar, and a new group of priests.[51] This wide range of images in the New Testament should remind us of the richness and beauty that is the body of Christ. It is this commonality, all being part of the same family, that the church shares; this understanding should increase her love for one another. The bride of Christ should increase in holiness and purity while growing in the Christian life. As the temple of the Holy Spirit, one is reminded of the ever-living presence of Christ wherever one goes and as that temple. It is the body of Christ's responsibility to share the gospel to everyone everywhere.[52]

While this sharing takes place, life continues and troubles come; but as the family of God, we are waiting and ready to take care of each other. Christ died so that all might live, and the imagery found in the New Testament points towards the church striving in unity with each other while fulfilling the Great Commission. This is missional ecclesiology at its best.

Throughout Scripture, we see images and read passages that identify the church. Upon reading the Great Commission in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts, one learns, "Disciple making is not a call for others to hear the gospel, but a command for the church, the people of God, to share the gospel. A command for us to be gospel living and

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[50] Hayes et al., *The Church,* 204-05.

[51] John 15:5; 1 Cor. 3:6-9; Rom 11:17-24; 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Peter 2:5.

[52] Grudem, *Making Sense of the Church,* 39-40.

gospel speaking in every moment and every context we find ourselves."[53] Currently,

there are over seven billion people on planet earth. Out of this, almost three billion people

are considered unreached, which means they have no active gospel presence. That is

7,109 ethnic or people groups without any member of the body of Christ who can share

the gospel.[54] There are about 300,000 Protestant churches in America. If those churches

would partner together with 43 other churches, each group could combine resources and

every unreached people group would have the gospel brought into their communities.[55]

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 10:13-15,

> For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they
> call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him
> of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone
> preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written,
> "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.

"Paul's meaning is that when any nation is favored with the preaching of the Gospel, it is

a pledge and proof of divine love. There is no preacher of the Gospel who has not been

raised up by God in His special providence. It is certain, therefore, that God visits the

nation in which the Gospel is proclaimed…The Gospel does not fall from clouds like

rain, by accident, but is brought by the hands of men to where God has sent it."[56]

The church is "called out" to be "called to" the central task of gospel

proclamation. This proclamation is not limited to spoken word only but, as we will see

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[53] David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2010), 93.

[54] "Joshua Project - Unreached Peoples of the World," Joshua Project, accessed April 20, 2012, http://www.joshuaproject.net/. Unreached / least-reached peoples has been identified based on the criteria of less than 2% Evangelical and less than 5% Christian Adherent.

[55] "Fast Facts about Religion." Hartford Institute for Religion Research. http://hirr.hartsem.edu/research/fastfacts/fast_facts.html (accessed April 20, 2012).

[56] Jean Calvin et al., *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 231.

later deeds, is a part of her calling. Our deeds are worthless without the gospel and the gospel is worthless if people do not hear. God has called the church unto Himself and sent the church by His very nature to bring God into all nations. Further study into missiology will create a foundational understanding that missions was not created for the church but the church for the mission. This new paradigm will help us begin to recognize that technology is allowed by God and it was God who gave man the ability to create it. It is because of semiotics and a proper understanding of ecclesiology that one might say technology is an extension of the church in order to fulfill the *missio Dei*. Fulfilling the *missio Dei* is the foundation of missional ecclesiology and the purpose of the church; accomplishing this in the 21st century requires the use of ever-changing means.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE INTERSECTION OF ECCLESIOLOGY AND MISSIOLOGY;

THE RISE OF A TECHNO-MISSIONAL CHURCH

In studying missional ecclesiology, further analysis is needed into missiology for

the proper understanding of what constitutes missions and how missions is to be

accomplished. Missiology is a relatively young discipline. Understanding its complexities

and integrating its scientific and theological attributes in ecclesiology has only taken

place since 1867. The origination of missiology stems from German and Scottish

heritage, and contemporary theologians have only recently acknowledged its theological

acceptance.[1] Ecclesiology is concerned with the study, nature, and functions of the

church. When included together, they construct the nature of missions within the church.

This construct, when analyzed, reveals a picture of missions not being created for the

church but the church being created for mission. Although this paper is not a complete

biblical hermeneutic for missional ecclesiology, some hermeneutic is needed to construct

the foundational elements necessary for an accurate understanding of the church's role in

missions. Specifically how she is able to accomplish that mission with the tools and

resources God affords them through culture.

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[1] John Mark Terry, Ebbie C. Smith, and Justice Anderson. *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 1-50.

What is Missiology?

Simply put, missiology is the study of mission. It includes biblical, theological, historical, contemporary, and practical reflection and research.[2] David Jacobus notes:

> Missiology, as a branch of the discipline of Christian theology, is not a disinterested or neutral enterprise; rather, it seeks to look at the world from a perspective of commitment to the Christian faith. Such an approach does not suggest an absence of critical examination; as a matter of fact, precisely for the sake of the Christian mission it will be necessary to subject every definition and every manifestation of the Christians mission to a rigorous analysis and appraisal.[3]

In order to fully grasp the depth of missiology, a person must begin at the foundation of its etymology. The term *missio* comes from Latin origin and the word *logos* originates from the Greek. Creating this terminology has not come without contestation; many scholars wince at the thought of both Latin and Greek being used to construct such a word. Despite tension regarding the word's origin, missiology is accepted as the "English *terminus technicus* for the science of missions."[4]

In comprehending missiology, one must also understand that "Missiology is the science of missions. It includes the formal study of the theology of missions, the history of missions, the concomitant philosophies of mission and their strategic implementation in given cultural settings."[5] The understanding of missions hinges upon missiology and how the body of Christ, both at the individual level (micro level) and at the corporate level (macro level) must engage the *missio Dei.* "Missions means 'sending,' and it is the

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[2] Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 25.

[3] David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 9.

[4] Terry, Smith, and Anderson, *Missiology*, 2.

[5] Ibid.

central biblical theme describing the purpose of God's action in human history, with

God's people (now the church) being the primary agents of God's missionary action."[6]

Missiology provides this generation with a platform of discussion and learning in order to

be better prepared to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ across the world.

Missiology and theology must be combined in order to fully integrate in

ecclesiological life; both of these entities must be interdependent and symbiotic in nature

and implementation. This combination yields an unmistakable potential in the

demonstration of who Christ is, what Christ has done, and what He is doing for a lost

world. The church can become a part of the perpetual promise of ushering in the

Kingdom of God. The underpinnings that support the implementation of missiology

cannot remain stagnant, but must grow and inseminate into a globalized world. By

combining both the Latin and Greek words used to create the term "missiology," we see

another understanding coming into focus. The term *missio* refers to the *missio Dei,* which

means "mission of God," and the term "logos" stemming from "the nature of mankind."[7]

These two parts placed together reveal what happens when the "mission of God comes

into holy collision with the nature of man."[8]

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[6] David J. Hesselgrave, Ed Stetzer, and John Mark Terry, *Missionshift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010), 494-510.

[7] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 16. The redemptive mission of God to the whole world through the work of his Messiah. See also Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 389-83. God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit…Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church.

[8] Terry, Smith, and Anderson, *Missiology*, 8.

Missions

In today's culture, the word mission, or missions, is used to communicate numerous ideas. In the Christian realm, saying the word "missions" provokes the thought of something done in a far-away land. People may perceive "missions" as a verb – as something done. Although this is not incorrect, it is void of substance and falls short of capturing its essence. Saying that missions comes from the Latin verb *mitto,* "to send," still does not accurately encompass all that missions entails. For the purposes of this paper, I will use Christopher J. H. Wright's definition of mission. "Mission, if it is biblically informed and validated, means our committed participation as God's people, at God's invitation and command, in God's own mission within the history of God's world for the redemption of God's creation…mission flows from and participates in the mission of God."[9] Missions is greater than just being "sent," for it embodies the very heartbeat, presence, and love of a triune God.

Missiologist Bishop Lesslie Newbigin said that the "key focus of the church's mission is not the church but the world."[10] The purpose of ecclesiology should be centered on missions; within this nucleus, there should contain rings that involve worship, fellowship of the saints, and the administration of sacraments, all of this held by the very presence of the Holy Spirit, commissioned by Jesus Christ, and in tune with restoring the kingdom of God, thus reflecting the triune God. The heart of the church's purpose must be to organize, unite, and implement ways of reaching out to the world; this must not be just an evangelistic outreach, although this in the central piece, but it must be

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[9] Wright, *The Mission of God,* 22-23.

[10] Leonard I. Sweet, *AquaChurch* (Loveland, CO: Group, 1999), 37.

balanced with a holistic approach to meeting the physical needs of an individual or

society before or closely in combination with sharing the gospel. In understanding much

of the history of Western Christianity and the recent post-Christian nature of Europe, we

see that what was once a strong Christian presence has become diminished into more of a

quiet whisper.[11] "Christian faith has become privatized and divorced and from the center

of culture."[12]

Consequently, the mission of the church has become increasingly paramount in

impacting all areas of life in order to become a "faithful presence" in the world in which

it lives.[13] This "faithful presence" must protect itself from becoming too comfortable with

culture; there must be some difference between the tares (world) and the wheat

(church).[14] The scriptures warn us "not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed

by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God,

what is good and acceptable and perfect."[15] This must stay in constant tension, as a guard,

for the church to be faithful to, but distinct from, the world it is on mission to reach. This

missional ecclesiology serves to direct the efforts of the church: "the nature of the witness

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[11] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 79-92. Hunter expands possible reasons into the recent decline of Christian influence in American culture.

[12] Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical & Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 157.

[13] Hunter, *To Change the World*, 249-86.

[14] Matthew 13:24-30.

[15] Romans 12:2.

of the church in such a context, rather than claiming to possess the truth, is bearing the truth and witnessing to the truth."[16]

This does not mean that the church cannot claim to possess the truth but that it must live out the truth, because "faith without works is dead,"[17] and the postmodern society will not seek the truth from an institution that will not live out the truth first. Leslie Newbigin stated there is "no church without mission, no mission without church."[18] Some may argue that the church's primary responsibility is for establishing *koinonia*, worship, discipleship, or administering the sacraments, but the fact of the matter is that the church needs to have those things in them, but its focus, its heartbeat, its driving force must me missions. The very fact that Jesus came to seek and save those that are lost, signifies to us that we must do the same. Leonard Sweet writes:

> If there were just one word the church needs to hear today, it is the one you will hear in a variety of ways… *mission*… God is a God of motion, of movement, of mission. Or, as it is popular nowadays to say, 'two thirds of the word God, is go.' Mission is not an activity of the church but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God, Jesus is a missionary Messiah, and the Spirit is a missionary Spirit. Mission's is the family business.[19]

This movement towards a Trinitarian *missio Dei* is a kingdom-oriented mission.

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[16] Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 159. Kärkkäinen cites Lesslie Newbigin, *Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1989), 12.

[17] James 2:14-16, What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it?

[18] Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 159.

[19] Leonard I. Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church: Missional, Relational, Incarnational* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 55.

The church is not about us, but about others. Christ models this throughout His

ministry on earth, He continually states that He must be about His Father's work. This

work is greater than any one thing; Christ even says in the Garden, if "this cup pass from

me; nevertheless not as I will, but as you will."[20] Christ exemplifies what the church's

response should be to the mission of God. The Lausanne Covenant states:

> We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our
> failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelism. We believe the
> Gospel is God's good news for the whole world and we are determined by his
> grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all humankind and to make
> disciples of every nation.[21]

As Christ commissions the church to go and make disciples, one begins to see the picture

of the church being sent just as Christ was sent. Soon after Christ's ascension, the Holy

Spirit appeared in Acts and the people of God were empowered by the presence of God,

in the form of the Holy Spirit, in order to accomplish the work of God.

Transformational Theology

> Transformational theology focuses on mission, it takes humans seriously, in the
> particularity of their persons, societies, cultures, and their ever-changing histories. It
> integrates cognition, affectivity, and evaluation in its responses to biblical truth,
> and it defines faith not simply as mental affirmations of truth or as positive
> experiences of God but as beliefs, feelings and morals that lead to response and
> obedience to the Word of God.
> —Samuel Escobar

Human contexts are not morally neutral; there are both good and evil customs and

traditions within each person. The gospel is transformative in that it can be placed over

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[20] Matthew 36:39.

[21] Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: the Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 27.

any context or social group to identify what is acceptable according to the scriptures and what is not. The gospel should challenge each cultural setting and the fundamental assumptions that each group maintains; the result should be an incredible alternative way of life that the gospel creates, infused with the culture at hand. At the heart of transformational theology is how we can be instruments used by God in order to help bring forth the Kingdom of God. Each culture cannot ultimately stay the same once they experience Christ's saving power: there must be a difference. In order to accomplish this we must understand the world in which we live.

Missional

By doing a search in Google on the word "missional" one will find almost two million hits. Over the past two decades, the word missional has acquired ample attention. In order to clarify this term, I will define it as "a means of participating with God in what God is doing in the world." Darrell Guder's summary of the term missional looks at the term missional in the light of the word missions, placing missional as an adjective embracing missions. "Missional would then be used as an adjective- a descriptive word- a word that describes a noun. As insignificant as this may seem, when mission or missions is a noun, it is a specific thing or field, but as an adjective it is liberated to capture the essence of the fullness of a Christian's life."[22]

Reggie McNeal explains this concept by stating, "Missional is a way of living, not an affiliation or activity…to think and live missionally means seeing all life as a way to

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[22] Three key thinkers and writers in what missional means, Francis Dubose, God Who Sends (1983), Charles Van Engen, God's Missionary People (1991), and Darrell Guder, ed. The Missional Church (1998).

be engaged with the mission of God…the missional development goes to the very heart of what the church is, not just what it does."[23] This uncovers an ecclesiological essence, a heartbeat, a mission to exist missionally: "One of the crucial missiological problems of the second half of the twentieth century has been how to accomplish a successful transition from an earlier church-centered theology of mission to a kingdom-oriented one without loss of missionary vision or betrayal of Biblical content."[24] Reggie McNeal states that any missional shift will require three tectonic shifts. These shifts are "from internal to external in terms of ministry focus; from program development to people development in terms of core activity; from church-based to kingdom-based in terms of leadership agenda."[25] If this can be accomplished, ecumenical ecclesiology could be focused on the central task of being a part of Jesus redeeming a lost world unto Himself.

Ecclesiological missiology must include missional awareness into its construction, for it is the hands and feet of the incarnational church. To live missionally, the believer and the church must understand the semiotics of its culture within the global framework of ecclesiology. This understanding of signs allows us to identify where God is currently moving in our society and helps us perceive where the Spirit is blowing in a global world. "Are we up to what God is up to in our world?"[26]

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[23] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xiv.

[24] Hesselgrave, Stetzer, and Terry, *Missionshift*, 519-33.

[25] Reggie McNeal, *Missional Renaissance*, xvi.

[26] John 3:1-8. This passage, if understood, allows us to understand that we cannot control the Spirit, who moves and draws as it wishes. Currently, the "third world" is a place to look towards in the future of Christianity. See, Leonard I. Sweet, *So Beautiful: Divine Design for Life and the Church: Missional, Relational, Incarnational* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 24.

The missional church and individual must begin to incorporate the mission of God into every aspect of their life. As an individual looks at ecclesiology over the last 120 years, they see the Christian faith begin to pull apart into polar opposites within the western world. The liberal-left and conservative-right have clashed since the rise of Darwin's evolution and the emergence of modernity. The Christian Right takes large stances to abstain from the world and the Christian Left incorporates too much of the world: the result of this dualism is competition and critical examination that focuses on the things we are against over and above the things that we are for. Understanding that agreement on certain theological beliefs is essential to the ecumenical process, many of the same fundamental beliefs exist between these two groups, but little ground is made in the cohabitation of these groups engaging the world missionally for Christ. The process necessary for the church to become missional across all lines of thought must include:

> *Contextual*: A missional church understands itself as part of a larger context of a lost and broken world so loved by God.

> *Intentional*: A missional church understands itself as existing for the purpose of following Christ in mission.

> *Proclaiming*: A missional church understands itself as intentionally sent by God in mission to announce in word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God in Christ.

> *Reconciling*: A missional church understands itself to be reconciling and healing presence in its context, locally and globally.

> *Sanctifying*: A missional church understands itself as a faith community gathered around the Word preached, thus personally living out its truth and serving as a purifying influence to society.

> *Unifying*: A missional church understands itself as an embracing, enfolding, gathering community of faith, anxious to receive persons into its fellowship.

> *Transforming*: A missional church is 'the salt of the earth" (Matt 5:13), a transforming presence as the body of Christ in mission, called to be, embody, and

live out in the world the following Biblical concepts of mission, among others: *koinonia, kerygma, diakonia, martyria,* prophet, priest, king, liberator, healer, sage.[27]

This process will not be easy for many traditional churches. Traditional church-centered theology must be replaced with kingdom-focus in order to become missional. Every activity of the local and global church must pass through a litmus test as to the way it engages with the mission of God to a lost world. As the church understands herself in context with other believers and engages others with intentionality while proclaiming the narrative that is the gospel, she will begin to live out Matthew 5:9. This peacemaker relationship has the underpinning of helping man reconcile with man and man reconcile with God, this reconciliation leads to a place of sanctifying. The church begins to become a faithful presence, a purifying agent to the culture it lives within. Finally, this process propels people to unity, sharing community with each other and ultimately ends with transformation. Living, breathing, incarnate representation of Jesus Christ to a fallen world.

Contextualization

"Be afraid, be very afraid," is the attitude that many individuals have when hearing the phrase contextualization mixed with the word gospel in the phrase, "contextualized gospel." The idea behind contextualization has nothing to do with compromising the gospel, or undermining the systematic theology of the gospel. It has everything to do with allowing the gospel to transcend culture, ethnicity, and region in order to infiltrate the world in a way that is understandable and relevant to everyone.

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[27] Hesselgrave, Stetzer, and Terry, *Missionshift*, 511.

It has been said numerous times that if someone really desires to see, understand, and know the truth, to be where God wants them to be, they must honestly step back from a given context and assess where they are and seek His Word to lead them to where they must go. Today, billions of people around the world have never heard the gospel. Europe has become post-Christian, while much of America is on its way; young people are falling away from church and following false religions, while thousands of churchgoers attend church on Sunday while going through the motions. Southern Baptists have reported a decrease in their denomination for the fifth straight year and the church is unable to counter many of the spiritual battles we face as a nation and in the world.[28] Acts 19:15 reveals what Satan's response might be to our churches and individual's lives today: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?"[29] Something must change; Christians and the church must take an honest look into what is going on, be willing to continue to hold fast to the imperatives of the Scriptures, and start to saturate everything that is done with the gospel.

This starts with the aforementioned missional ecclesiology but continues with the preceding anthropologic contextualization.

> A recent geographic and culture shift has resulted in a plethora of new forms and expressions of Christian faith…the 2001 World Christian Encyclopedia states there are thirty-four thousand denominations, an increase of twenty-three thousand from twenty years earlier…today we are confronted with differences in cultures, economic patterns, political structures, and Christian expressions, we

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[28] Russ Rankin, "LifeWay," LifeWay, June 12, 2012, section goes here, accessed December 20, 2012, http://www.lifeway.com/ArticleView?storeId=10054. The last five years is the first decrease reported since 1950.

[29] Charles E. Lawless et al., *The Great Commission Resurgence: Fulfilling God's Mandate in Our Time* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2010), 258.

struggle to know how the church in the West should relate to the church of the rest.[30]

This recent globalization has forced us to discuss these issues of contextualization with the framework of the gospel while consulting the field of anthropology for a perspective on the social, economic, moral, and religious rationale of other areas of the world. The findings are then inseminated into the discussion within missiology and ecclesiology. In order to set up the proper boundaries within these given contexts, Scripture must always critique cultural experience. As these critiques are applied, "mission requires more than orthodoxy, a concern for the integrity of the gospel, but also orthopraxis, a concern for the way in which the missionary practice is carried on."[31]

Contextualization is essential and inevitable as a process for communicating the gospel. What one fails to realize in much of western Christianity is the many forms and ways that their faith expressions are a contextualized version of the gospel through the traditions, practices, and beliefs of the generation and culture they exist in.

Let's look at an example to help us clarify the point. In the mid-1800s Southern Baptists advocated slavery; today in the United States, over a century after the civil war and decades after the civil rights movement, most Christians and Baptists are appalled at the idea of someone being a slave. So one must ask: why did Christians practice slavery even though it is wrong? The answer, in somewhat simple terms, is that the custom of slavery was socially accepted at that time.

Now, two questions result from this story. The first question is, how does this fit into contextualization? No matter how one looks at slavery, it is an immoral act

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[30]Harold A. Netland and Craig Ott, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 53.

[31]Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 25.

dehumanizing individuals and ethnic groups; even under the "umbrella" of contextualization, it is wrong. Remember, our litmus test is "scripture must critique cultural experience." However, the times and location in which this took place affected the theology accepted by many Christians.

Today, there are various sorts of things, large and small, that we add to Scripture using the presuppositions that lie within our contexts. The key to contextualization is understanding these areas in order to navigate through them both in the church and in our individual Christian lives, especially when it comes to engaging other cultures. Simply, individuals must comprehend their own cultural biases in order to separate their prejudices from the gospel; this will allow them to communicate the gospel in its purest form and then relate it into each and every context necessary for the spread of Christianity.

In order to fully grasp the magnitude of contextualization and identify to what extent it should be accepted John Travis created a scale to separate the various levels of contextualization:

C1—*Traditional Church Using Insider Language*. This is where the non-western churches use western forms of Christianity and language. There maintains a large gap between the missional church and the native culture.

C2—*Traditional Church Using Insider Language*. This is essentially the same as C1 but certain cultural language is used, even though it is communicated in English. Believers still call themselves Christians.

C3—*Contextualization Christ-Centered Communities Using Insider Language and Religious Neutral Insider Cultural Forms*. This includes music, ethnic dress, artwork, and other neutral expressions. Sometimes the church meets in neutral locations. These believers still call themselves Christians.

C4—*Contextualized Christ-Centered Communities Using Insider Language and Biblically Permissible Cultural and Islamic [other religious] Forms*. This is similar to C3 even though traditional religious customs are accepted. For example not

eating pork, keeping the fast, using Islamic terms, and customs. These individuals never use a traditional church building and call themselves 'followers of Isa Messiah' or something similar.

C5—*Christ-Centered Communities of Messianic Muslims who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior*. These individuals maintain their full identity within the Islamic community. They still participate in Islamic worship but meet regularly and share their faith. Unsaved Muslims may still ex-communicate them from the greater Muslim community.

C6—*Small Christ Centered Communities of Secret/Underground Believers*. These are believers who are Muslims that chose to worship Jesus in secret. They are silent about their faith and often worship alone; they identify themselves publically as Muslims.[32]

Alan Hirsch and Michael Frost write, "We need to work toward something between C4 and C5 levels of contextualization… thousands of Muslims are being converted in C5 contextualized churches."[33] I hold that C5 contextualization allows for too much integration of other religions. A Christian by definition is a "little Christ" and should be a follower of Christ; in the case of a C5 Christian, the continued practice of Islamic worship goes against that idea that these individuals are now followers of Christ and the missionary orthopraxy begins to become a bit blurry.

Contextualization clearly is one of the most heavily debated issues among churches and theologians at this current time. Whether an individual or organization should practice no contextualization, minimal contextualization, or critical contextualization is something that we must keep addressing as the gospel continues to reach unreached places and the world proceeds to change at faster and faster rates. All of

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[32]Frost and Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 89-93. All italics are direct quotes, Also see, Phil Parshall, "DANGER! New Directions in Contextualization." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (October 1998). Travis developed this scale for Islamic contextualization, but the concepts transfer to other cultures and the uses of various methods.

[33]Ibid, 93.

this is happening while Information Communications Technology is quickly becoming the medium in which much of our communication and instruction is taking place.

Global Concepts in Relation to Missions

Globalization is something that most everyone can agree is occurring. The world is evolving at unprecedented rates: technology replaces itself faster than consumers can buy it; travel has become more convenient; organizations have become global enterprises; branding has become global with companies like Coca Cola, ESPN, and Shell Oil; and media has allowed the world to connect to each other at amazing rates. Short-term mission trips have increased dramatically over the past twenty years, allowing individuals to experience other cultures and personalize the evangelistic need. I am pursuing a doctorate at a seminary in Oregon, while living in Louisville, Kentucky, and having a lead instructor in Great Britain. "With its unprecedented technological and economic dynamism, the globalization process in our time place before us, burning issues of race and culture, ethnicity and multiculturalism, justice and peace. A global church developing new partnerships for missions faces an impossible task, but God is the God of the impossible."[34]

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[34] Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 169.

Global Trends

In understanding the global issues that influence the nature and process of missions, we must identify trends that either hinder or aid evangelization. Some of these trends are as follows:

Refugees make it harder to identify core people groups but create a destabilization that people become more receptive to the gospel.

Urbanization allows easier access to individuals in a more confined space, but many individuals become numb to the gospel while in economic pursuits. Over 50 percent of the world's population now lives in urban settings.

Tribalism and ethnic cleansing have hindered the missionary efforts in many regions, numerous people are being killed not having heard the gospel.

Poverty is perhaps the largest focus in recent missionary efforts. In 92 percent of the world's poor, poverty allows access to bring the gospel while taking care of humanitarian needs.

Nationalism can influence people to give loyalty to something other than allegiance, the gospel demands, to Christ.[35]

These are not the only trends we can identify within the global community; increased missionary presence from the global south (third world) has become ever-present. This third world constitutes much of Africa, Latin America, and some Asian countries. These areas have been the focal point of much of the Western missionary effort and are now sending out missionaries in the thousands. In fact, it is estimated that some 30,000 Chinese are coming to Christ every day. This incorporation with missionary efforts like the "Back to Jerusalem Project" where over 100,000 missionaries are planned to be sent out, have placed increased focused study of what God is doing in these new

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[35] Terry, Smith, and Anderson, *Missiology*, 673-74.

areas.[36] By understanding these trends and movements of the Holy Spirit associated with them, missiologists can help determine the best way to introduce and advance the gospel within a given context or region. One helpful insight into learning to identify trends both in global issues and in ecclesiology transitional stages is to understand culture. Bebbington writes, "The basic trends in Evangelicalism were shaped by the shifts in cultural mood that eventually altered the orientation of the whole population."[37]

Ecumenical Perspectives in Missions

Over the course of the last 250 years, we see the ebb and flow of Evangelicalism within the contexts of Europe and America undergo some incredible changes. These changes have given rise to conflict within similar denominational paradigms and even greater contestation within various more diverse denominations. Whether or not one understands church history, it is important to understand the different factors that influence Evangelicalism and Christianity as a whole, in order to talk about ecumenical ecclesiology within the confines of missions.

> The future of Christian theology lies in global sensitivity: theologizing can no longer be the privilege of one culture, neither Western nor any other. Systematic theology is fast becoming a collection of various voices from all over the world, often a cacophony of distant sounds.[38]

This is especially true when discussing missiology and the unity of the *missio Dei* among Christians. Partnerships will be essential in reaching the almost 3 billion people

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[36] Michael Frost, *Exiles: Living Missionally in a Post-Christian Culture* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 267-72. Also see Hesselgrave, Stetzer, and Terry, *Missionshift*, loc. 4869-4882.

[37] David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain a History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Routledge, 1989), 273.

[38] Kärkkäinen, *Introduction to Ecclesiology*, 232.

that represent 2,161 various ethno-linguistic groups and the 7,109 unreached people groups. "Global partnerships for missions, as the first fruits of the new humanity God is creating, will be a tangible expression of the biblical vision of the church."[39] Although fundamental agreement must be made on certain primary issues of scripture concerning soteriology and Trinitarian theology, many secondary theological beliefs can be tabled to focus on what we agree upon, rather than our disagreements, in order to accomplish the Great Commission.

Techno-Missional Developments in Missions

The key factor to modern missiology in regard to missions and the ecumenical conversations will be the area of technology; specifically, Information Communication Technology (ICT). It has helped and will continue to help churches and missionaries to become more effective and efficient in their environments. ICT has changed the face of how information flows from the mission field to the sending or supporting organizations, while satellite television has allowed the gospel to be preached to billions of people. Just as Johannes Gutenberg's printing press revolutionized the spread of information in the 1400s and the gospel began to be distributed all over the world, technology has become the new printing press and its abilities the new tools we can integrate in missions. "Future missionaries will discover ways to use the Internet to evangelize people in restricted access countries, disciple them, and equip them for leadership."[40] Although many people

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[39]Escobar, *The New Global Mission*, 167-68.

[40] Hesselgrave, Stetzer, and Terry, *Missionshift*, loc. 4982.

fear technology is going to overtake or overshadow interpersonal relationships, it has the ability, if used correctly, to partner with missions in order to advance the Kingdom of God. If Facebook has over one billion users become "friends," is there a way for the church to connect using technology in order to increase unity and propagate the gospel.

When looking at the Old Testament, one sees everything pointing to the coming Messiah; this Messiah is promised to one day establish His kingdom to rule and reign forevermore. Reading further into the New Testament, one sees everything point to the Messiah having already come. Jesus died and rose again to redeem mankind and establish the Kingdom of God on earth in the future. In line with this brief overview of Scripture, people often say "eschatology will determine your ecclesiology." I agree with that statement. An individual's understanding of eschatology and systematic theology will either propel them into mission or allow them to recess back into complacency. The fact of the matter is that Jesus commanded us in Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:44-49, John 20:19-23, and Acts 1:4-8 to go, regardless of where we live or what denomination we are; our hearts should be consumed with knowing God and making God known. "More than seven thousand people groups are classified as 'unreached' and 'unengaged.' This means that these people groups do not contain an indigenous community of evangelical Christians with adequate numbers to spread the gospel or with a church or organization actively present working to reach that group."[41] Missiology, missional ecclesiology, contextualization, transformational theology, ecumenical process, and global awareness are all vital parts of missions. If the church is going to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, it must understand the world it is trying to reach.

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[41] David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2010), loc. 2199-2213.

The Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John – were written to four very different audiences for a reason to relate to the Jews, Romans, Gentiles, and church in order to point to the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. Each of the gospel authors understood the audience to whom they wrote. The church must also understand its target audience and work to contextualize the gospel as its people follow the commands of Christ to go into the world and tell about a marvelous Savior who gave His life for them. Will our heart beat as one with Christ? And is ICT a tool God has given this generation to reach more people for Christ and promote unity among the body of Christ than the church has ever seen?

CHAPTER FOUR:

MISSIONS RE-DEFINED: THE UNCHARTED WATERS OF A

TECHNO-MISSIONAL CHURCH

> We need to…do what Paul was doing, bringing the new reality of Christ's
> Lordship into an engagement with the context in which our hearers live, in order
> to point the ways to new life in Christ
> —Nancy Lammers Gross

In 2003, I was significantly injured in a sports accident, which made me realize there was more to life than participating in sports. Do not get me wrong; I love sports, but at that time, a change occurred within me that pushed me to re-evaluate the areas of my life. Looking back over the past nine years, I can see that the Holy Spirit was that push. Shortly after my injury, I decided to go back to college. Over the course of the next fifteen months, I took 72 college-credit hours, which is the equivalent of 22 classes. During this time, I was granted dual enrollment at a Bible college where I began a Masters in Ministry. I guess I was a glutton for punishment, because I took a full load of classes. In May of 2004, I walked down the aisle with cap and gown to receive my Bachelor of Business Degree, while also celebrating my first completed year of Master's work. A little more than five years later, I finished an additional two Master degrees and began the process of finding a doctorate program. Two hundred and fourteen hours of class work or seventy-two classes later, I sat wondering what had I learned throughout those years. The answer to this question is simple yet complex. I came to grips with the fact that I still had much more to learn. Someone might say, "Are you crazy…you need to learn more?" To which I would reply a simple "yes."

Without understanding what was going on in my mind, I began to re-evaluate my choices. I reverted back to when I was two years old and began to ask typical "why" questions. "Why do churches function the way they do? Why do missional efforts seem to underutilize so many technological advances and limit holistic programs? Why do Christians treat the gospel like a commodity? Why is the church so afraid of ecumenical methods to bring cohesion to the body of Christ? Why, when we study Ecclesiology, Sociology, and Missiology, do we see the church repeating the same mistakes, while expecting different results? Why do Christians live so much of their lives inwardly focused instead of outwardly serving?" These questions filled my mind and these are my "whys."

Seth Godin writes in his book *Linchpin*,

Your mind, the thing that drives you crazy and makes you special, has two distinct sections, the daemon and the resistance. The daemon is the source of great ideas, groundbreaking insights, generosity, love, connection, and kindness. The resistance spends all its time insulating the world from our daemon…the conflict between your ideas and the outside world. More importantly, the chasm between the part of you that wants to be safe and invisible and your daemon, which is demanding to speak to the world. Every time you find yourself following the manual instead of writing the manual, you are avoiding the anguish and giving in to the resistance.[1]

A linchpin is "someone who can invent, connect, create, and make things happen."[2] Although Seth Godin writes about linchpins being individuals, I believe that a linchpin, in a broader sense, can be an organization, group, people group, or place. In the world, I believe that the linchpin will be the next generation of Christians. They will begin to re-write the manual as never before written. The foreword of this manual will introduce conversations about missiology, ecclesiology, and technology that will

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[1] Seth Godin, *Linchpin: Are You Indispensable?* (New York: Portfolio, 2010), 106-107.

[2] Ibid., viii.

integrate numerous forms of interactions and create a *tetrim quid*, a third space, which

brings a new dimension to faith.

My hope, in the next few pages, is to begin a conversation that will allow my

daemon to appear and begin to write the manual instead of following it. What if the

church would stop, listen, and learn a different way of seeing, a different way of giving,

and a different way of working? What if that new way is already birthed?

Semiotics and Missions: The Beginning of Something New

Only God knows the future. Since humanity was not endowed with the gift of

foretelling the future, we must learn ways to glean from the past and make sense of the

present in order to best navigate future territories. History is one such gift that affords

mankind some insight into what might be when a course of action is taken. Sometime

around the eighteenth century, after the Protestant reformation, the rise of the church in

the West began to shift towards a secular and individualistic mentality, focused on the

supreme goal of an individual's private pursuit of happiness and political rights.[3] Today,

the west is quickly losing ground as the center of Christianity; much of what Christ is

doing in our world has shifted to the global south and the rest of the world. However, one

would be amiss if they failed to realize a second shift taking place, an undercurrent, for

the Body of Christ in the west. This current is the rise of the Internet and the reshaping of

the West to tear down individualistic barriers and actually be concerned for others around

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[3] Carl A. Raschke, *GloboChrist: The Great Commission Takes a Postmodern Turn* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 17.

the world. This cognitive paradigm shift has taken place and many churches in the west

are beginning to focus on kingdom-centered theology.

> The Great Commission transforms the Christian faith into something that is much
> more than a new torah, or instruction, from on high. It is not divine revelation as
> much as divine relation, a relationship that is "with us always." It is a relation that
> must be propagated unto the "end of time."[4]

As the Spirit is blowing, many Christians are feeling a "nudge."[5] The dictionary

defines a nudge as a "push slightly or gently to get someone's attention, or prod someone

into action."[6] As I write this paper, a nudge is taking place, an overwhelming sense in the

body of Christ to do something even though she cannot place her finger on it. This

stirring is so compelling that everywhere we look, the semiotics of our time confirm what

our spirit senses. The key to this transformation is through the integration of semiotics,

ecclesiology, missiology, and technology (ICT).

Semiotics is not something to fear or associate with some radical form of new

movement that forsakes doctrine, theology, or reason. Semiotics is simply the "art of

making connections, linking disparate dots, seeing the relationships between apparently

trifling matters and turning them into metonymic moments."[7]

> One of Jesus' favorite sayings went something like 'Red sky in morning, sailors
> take warning; red sky at night, sailors take delight.' He then went on: 'You know
> how to read the signs of the sky. You must also learn how to read signs of the
> times.'[8] The Greek word for signs is *semeia* (from which we get the word

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[4] Ibid., 48.

[5] Leonard Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 29.

[6] *Dictionary.com,* s.v. "nudge," http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/nudge?s=t (accessed April 19, 2011).

[7] Leonard I. Sweet, *Nudge: Awakening Each Other to the God Who's Already There* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2010), 41.

[8] Matthew 16:2-3 MSG, TNIV.

semiotics). We are directed by Jesus to learn how to read signs, to read "the handwriting on the wall." God's hand is still writing on walls today.[9]

Christians must be a people with red-sky-at-night radar, understanding that the nudge they feel is the Holy Spirit positioning them to see what they have overlooked. It is seeing the often unseen.

For example, an individual first walks into a restaurant and notices a young woman eating dinner. It seems as though this woman may be a co-worker. As he sits down, he confirms in his mind who she is, only to get up and proceed towards a table that he finds empty. At first, he thinks she may have gone to the restroom. After carefully surveying the area, he notices a crumpled up napkin thrown on top of her dinner plate, a sign (semiotic) that she is finished. He realizes he must have just missed her leaving and returns back to his seat. This illustration points to the fact that individuals already use semiotics each day. Now, it is time to incorporate this into the body of Christ.

Ecclesiology and semiotics must interlink. The natural byproduct will yield a new way of seeing, a better way of reaching, and a clearer mission of living. The Holy Spirit's activity in the world will direct us through nudges to where His mission in currently taking place. The waters of this "new world" are uncharted, but this next generation of Christians is primed to use this information in order to re-write the manual that many are afraid to open.

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[9] Sweet, *Nudge,* 41.

Anthropology

Understanding anthropology is essential to leading the interaction between not only people groups but also multiple generations. This comparative study of humanity societies, cultures, and generations and their development while grappling with theological anthropology the church faces as it relates to spiritual formation is fundamental to interpreting semiotics and leading future ecclesial life. Since all mediums, including technology, affect the formation of individuals mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, critical analysis must be given to how technology hinders and promotes spiritual development among the believer. Quentin Schultz states, "Our tendency to adopt every new information technology uncritically— without discerning the options, setting appropriate limits, and establishing humane practices— is simply irresponsible."[10] Although Quentin is correct in much of his appraisal of technology and its effect on humanity, no medium, tool, or technological innovation has ever had a neutral impact on society. With every new age comes with it new challenges. The rise of print media and digital technologies does impact our cognitive development or our potential for learning. With this shift come new challenges within moral contexts. Schultz states "But if we examine the degree of immorality and incivility online, we cannot help but see the folly of our cyber-hopes."[11] The issue with mankind's "morality and incivility" is the result of our depravity. Throughout every point in history, mankind has demonstrated how we can corrupt even the simplest of creations. This is the result of the fall. Although some

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[10] Quentin J. Schultze, *Habits Of The High Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 16.

[11] Ibid., 19. Schultze discusses various theological anthropology aspects of humanity and morality as it relates to technology. Informationism is one of his key points, as society thinks it leads to happiness but in reality find information lacking. Knowledge does not equate wisdom or happiness. With increase information technologies, Schultze argues that virtue is at stake in our new digital age.

innovations bring out that depravity more than others, the body of Christ best combats this tendency for corruption through discipleship and proper teaching among its members, within the body of Christ. The church's responsibility is to maintain awareness of this fact and critically examine how they interact with every aspect of society to faithfully use the resources and tools God affords mankind. "Moderation, one of the oldest virtues, is crucial yet rare in high-tech endeavors. Rather than assuming that the answer to any moral quandary is more technology, we need a virtuous sense of technological moderation that balances unbridled change with cultural continuity."[12] In order to live balanced healthy lives, moderation is needed in many areas. The church does not necessarily need to use more technology, but acquire a greater skill set for how to use it both more efficiently and more effectively. In order to attain this proper balance and analyze how various things impact our lives Daniel Forrester gives great insight into "reflective thinking."[13] The church must be reflective in the technologies and practices they adopt, but the paralysis of analysis cannot hinder the church from moving forward. A new generation of youth and Christians give us some continued insight into these areas and future possibilities.

Beta Christians

"Software developers release either a closed beta or an open beta version of their product. Closed beta versions are released to a select group of individuals for a user test,

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[12] Ibid., 55.

[13] Daniel Forrester, *Consider: Harnessing the Power of Reflective Thinking in Your Organization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1. If people "have the courage to force things to stop and take time to think about the broadest context if that they are observing, it's more likely that major problems can be avoided."

while open betas are released to a larger community group, sometimes to anyone

interested. The testers report any bugs that they find, and sometimes suggest additional

features they want made available in the final version."[14] As technology introduces beta

groups to begin new areas within its given field, in like manner, culture reveals new beta

groups as its shifts throughout time. Over the last several centuries, we have seen

tremendous shifts into ecclesial life. This shift begins with Martin Luther and his *95

Theses* and John Calvin and the reforms he proposed to early church life. As time

continued, the rise of the Protestant Reformation permeated much of Europe and made its

way into America. Many of the ideas generated, both theologically and methodologically,

still hold significant influence over ecclesiology today. Much of our culture has been

shaped by this reformation.[15] Today, almost 500 years after Luther and Calvin, the church

is ready to shift again. Mission is experiencing tectonic shifts while the church is seeing a

decline in much of America and Europe. Pockets of growth are occurring throughout

numerous third world countries, which are beginning to influence the Christian faith on a

global scale.[16] The current generation of Christians has become the new beta; they are

creating open beta groups of communities in which the church is beginning to take

notice. As the next generation of children is seeing this take place, they are developing

the ability to see the semiotics of our time without apprehension, fear, attachment, or

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[14] "Software Release Life Cycle." Dig Planet. May 2012.
http://www.digplanet.com/wiki/software_release_life_cycle (accessed January 16, 2013).

[15] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958). This book gives a great overview of the impact of culture and the reformation on each other and how that impact has integrated its way into capitalism. The new paradigm of work as a "vocation," a calling, instead of a "job" forever changed society.

[16] Hesselgrave, Stetzer, and Terry, *Missionshift.*

pride of tradition. They will become the ultimate testers, suggest additional features, and create the final manual.

The Next Generation

Generation Y will be largest generation in earth's history.[17] Children of the late Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers, they were born between 1984 and 2002. Today, about three billion people constitute this generation, out of the approximately seven billion people on the planet.[18] The sheer mass of this generation is staggering. Almost half of the world's population is under the age of twenty-five. The last half of this generation, born between 1991 and 2002 and commonly called iY, is the largest segment of that generation. "Generation iY is the most eclectic and diverse in our nation's history… They are also the first generation that does not need leaders to get information; they have electronic access to every piece of data you can imagine."[19] In order to properly understand the anthropological issues within this generation, Tim Elmore researched every aspect of their culture and makeup and identified numerous concerns as to the pressures that this generation feels, given the environments of media, technology, and war. Whenever someone states war as a factor, ears begin to perk up. Generation iY has never known a time that America has not been at war.

Chick-fil-A is one of the fastest growing and most successful fast food restaurants in the world. Upon a closer examination into the inner workers of their corporation,

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[17] Tim Elmore, *Generation IY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future* (Atlanta, GA: Poet Gardener Publishing, 2010), 19.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 18-19.

besides the fact they base their business plan on Christian values, Chic-fil-A employees are approximately 50,000 iYs strong. They spend time training, encouraging, believing in, and empowering their employees by providing them with work environments fostering creativity, flexibility, and success. The result is obtaining the highest-rated customer service reputation in the world.[20]

"Like every generation of youth, Generation iY wants a voice. They long to make a difference. One way or another, they will find a way to speak. The question is what will they say, and how will they say it?"[21] It is our responsibility to mentor them, teach them, come alongside them, and help them find that voice. If we fail to let go of our manual and help mentor them to rewrite a new one, there is no telling how the pressures of this generation, like no other, will affect what transpires.

The Next Generation of Christians

"Thousands of young Christians are staying under the big tent of Christianity but refusing to toe the party line. They are resisting the more militant, doctrinaire, and strident elements of the host faith culture, particularly when identifying with these elements that marginalize those who do not hold the same views they do."[22] Many Christians are afraid of this fact; they view this move as the first step to undoing the theological and doctrinal foundations that our church fathers have laid. They believe the

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[20] Ibid., 10.

[21] Ibid., 150.

[22] Jim Henderson, Todd D. Hunter, and Craig Spinks, *The Outsider Interviews: A New Generation Speaks out on Christianity* (Grand Rapids: BakerBooks, 2010), 19.

compromise of these beliefs leads to a relative form of Christianity, a faith void of

absolute truth.

When studying apologetics, one begins to understand the reason or importance of

defending or sharing one's faith. In the Scriptures, we see that God desires us to know

what we believe so that we are equipped and able to defend our belief. 1 Peter 3:15 states,

"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to

everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have, but do this with

gentleness and respect."[23]

The reason Christians need to be able to defend their faith is so that they are able

to share who Jesus Christ is and what Christ has done. This narrative is the essence of the

Christian faith. The difference with this generation of Christians is as they learn what

they believe, they are not afraid to share that belief. They choose, however, to focus on

the "gentleness and respect" with far greater fervor than any previous generation. This

tolerance cannot be equated with an omission of doctrine but with a development of a

heart like Christ's. The meta-narrative that they display is a fuller gospel, a richer gospel

of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration.[24] This full meaning of the gospel story will

illuminate Christian focus in the coming century.

> Unconcerned with outcomes, Christ's followers must get back to the heart of their
> faith – recovering, relearning, and rebuilding from the core first, and then out. I
> realize this may sound too simple for some, But it is likely that the greatest results
> will come from returning to the tried, true, and foundational truths of faith…to
> recover the Gospel, to relearn and fall in love again with that historic, beautiful,
> redemptive, faithful, demanding, reconciling, all-powerful, restorative, atoning,

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[23] ESV.

[24] R. W. Glenn, "The Gospel and the World Foundations for a Christian Worldview" (lecture, August 15, 2010), http://www.solidfoodmedia.com/resources/series/the_gospel_and_the_world_foundations_for_a_christian_worldview (accessed March/April 2011).

grace-abounding, soul-quenching and spiritually fulfilling good news of God's love… The fact is where Christians restore people are saved.[25]

Doctrine is not at risk with the next generation as much as one might fear. God is moving them to love as He loves. When they love as Christ loves, they will reach the world for Christ as never before. This holistic approach not only focuses on the social needs of individuals but also a balanced approach to the narrative, centered on the love of an Almighty Creator. We must remember, "We love Him because He first loved us."[26] His love in us will reach the world for Christ, and they will find Him because we love them as He loves them. These next-generation Christian restorers will not restrict their religious activity to a building, but ecclesiology will carry over into everyday life. There will be no distinction between faith and careers, relationships and social lives, or sacred versus secular. They will assimilate each other into a new way of life, a *tetrim quid,* of living out faith.

"The way many Christians relate to culture has hurt faith's image and, more importantly, impeded the Christian mission. However, as a new generation is rising up many of them are taking a different path. Determining not to become another punch line in Christian parody, these faithful followers are committed to writing a compelling restorative narrative."[27] A "manual" like never before, "this generation is the most cause-driven generation in history," and I believe they may have found their cause.[28]

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[25] Gabe Lyons, *The Next Christians: The Good News about the End of Christian America* (New York: Doubleday Religion, 2010), 192-193.

[26] 1 John 4:19, KJV.

[27] Lyons, *The Next Christians*, 48.

[28] Craig Groeschel, "Generations" (speech, Catalyst, Atlanta: October 2010).

Techno-Missional

> Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure.
>
> —Herman Melville, from *Moby Dick*

Over the course of the last few centuries, technology has introduced itself to civilization. The invention of the printing press revolutionized how communities functioned, individuals learned, and societies interacted. This single invention shifted every area of life. From the fifteenth century's Gutenberg Press, until the twenty-first century's Web 2.0, the vast increase of information and knowledge has grown at exponential rates. As these inventions and innovations have taken root, much of society has incorporated a watchword to explain these new ideas; this word is 'progress.'[29] "Progress- social, economic and above all scientific – was perceived as just that, the forward march of the human intellect from which we would reap only benefits. And progress came from science…but the twentieth century has surely taught us, among much else, that everything comes with a price; every schoolchild now knows that scientific and technological advances have colossal potential for both good and evil."[30] With the rise of the iY generation and the understanding of the church's missional mandate in regard to her proper place within missional ecclesiology, one must understand and analyze technology, especially ICT, so it may be redeemed and used for the Kingdom of God.

One of the greatest problems in trying to tackle the issue of technology is the vastness of its reach. Careful observation gives way to "subtlety, a subtlety that has

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[29] Susan Greenfield, *Tomorrow's People: How 21st-Century Technology Is Changing the Way We Think and Feel* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 1.

[30] Ibid., 1-2.

allowed technology to pervade all corners of our lives without struggle, on our part, to understand how this happened."[31] Technology advancing at exponential rates, under the title of progress, leaves in its wake little regard for social, political, religious, and environmental methods or individual beliefs. Functioning as a society within these new constructs has forced several hard questions to be asked. One of most common questions is, even though technology has yielded numerous benefits for civilization, is its command on our life worth many of its proposed perks?[32] Now that these questions are being asked, and we talk about "how technology might change everyday life; many think these transformations are already too far under way to change."[33] It is not my desire to extrapolate grandiose ideas of futuristic technological advances or the possibility of scaling back, but to have a conversation about many of the risks as well as the rewards for incorporating technology into ecclesial and missional life. The best place for this analysis to begin is within the human brain.

Insane in the Mem"brain"

Epistemology is relatively complex and obscure. The subject matter is concerned with the origins and nature of knowledge. In understanding the origins of knowledge, it is essential to examine the medium used to communicate this knowledge. If the medium communicates through writings, radio, television, orally, or via the Internet, each message is processed by different neurological means. The product of these varying

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[31] David H. Hopper, *Technology, Theology, and the Idea of Progress* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 9.

[32] Ibid., 13.

[33] Greenfield, *Tomorrow's People,* 2.

transitional forms of media has given way to a shift from a primary "left-brained," centralized society to a "right-brained," de-centralized next generation.

The printing press functioned as something like a steroid for the left hemisphere of our brains. Logic, reason, order, critical analysis, and abstract thinking are all functions of our left brain. When contemplating various forms of logical thought that require sequential process to take place in a variety of integrated manners, our left brain is the proverbial boss. This is why over the past 400 years, men such as Luther, Calvin, Edwards, Wesley, and Einstein, are praised for their mental capacities. These men re-wrote ecclesiology and science on a level that people still marvel at today. Principles of logic seeped into everyday thought. The law of causality, law of identity, law of non-contradiction, and law of the excluded middle were relatively easy to understand principles that individuals applied to science and theology to understand competing beliefs.[34] People sat for hours to listen to lectures or debates with little regard for time.

Suddenly, a change occurred. The photograph was developed and introduced to the right brain to the world. This single invention began the shift from our left-brain dependence on writing to our right-brain desire for images.[35] Images, creativity, art, music, and abstract thought are what the right brain craves. The digital age has added a buffet that continually stimulates our right brains.

> The emerging right-brain culture presents other challenges as well. Protestant Christianity is a byproduct of a single medium, the printed Bible. Without printing Luther would have never been able to challenge the authority of the pope...Our culture has a shrinking preference, and even aptitude, for reading books especially

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[34] Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007). This book is a great source into the introduction of Apologetics. The laws of logic are found within its writings.

[35] Shane Hipps, *Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 133-34.

complex ones…The right-brain is the hemisphere that allows us entry into spiritual practices like contemplation, centering prayer, and silence. The left-brain is allergic to such practices; it is the dogmatic theologian rather than the intuitive mystic. [36]

Images and icons are fast replacing words as the prominent system for communication for our culture.[37] The proof lies within the identification of companies like Nike's swoosh and McDonald's golden arches. These companies lose no brand recognition by using these symbols instead of words. The reason this phenomenon is taking place within Western culture and much of the world is largely in response to television. "The flickering mosaic of pixilated light washes over us, bypassing our conscious awareness. Instead, we sit hypnotized by the program, the content, which has gripped our attention unaware of the ways in which the television, regardless of its content, is re-patterning the neural pathways in our brain and reducing our capacity for abstract thought."[38] This process is so subtle that for the better part of three generations, little is done to understand, educate, or inform society of this shift. This shift has been oppressive without the mind even recognizing what has taken place. Society has begun to "amuse themselves to death… people have come to love their oppression and to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think."[39]

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[36] Ibid., 145-146.

[37] Ibid. Hipps describes how the eastern characters represent whole words. Reading is a series of characters that represent various meanings to tell a story. Western culture chose a phonetic alphabet that uses letters to construct words. As a result, religion in the West was logical and concrete while in the east mystic and sensational. We are seeing a rise in eastern perceptions in the West due to our new medium increasing right-brain activity.

[38] Ibid., 26.

[39] Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), xix.

Generation Y is a right-brain generation driven by imagination, story, and music. Fearing this leads us into setting up roadblocks for allowing the younger and older generation to mix. If a right- and left-brain symbiotic relationship takes place, it will allow the world to experience a truly holistic gospel, a gospel mentored by an older generation and presented with the love and creativity of a new generation. Albert Einstein once said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."[40] The reason is that knowledge is finite but imagination can take a person into the infinite. This is a matter of dreams versus information, and without dreams information is worthless. The key to these left-brain and right-brain neural processes is to create a balance of both. To integrate the knowledge of the left brain with the creativity of the right brain is to create a masterpiece that the world has never experienced at the same time.

The Medium is The Message

When understanding technology, there is another important issue that must be uncovered, the issue of medium. The medium is the transportation of a message. Two thousand years ago, communication was accomplished primarily orally; four hundred years ago, through books; two hundred years ago, the telegraph; one hundred and twenty years ago, through print and photos; fifty years ago, through television; and over the last twenty years, through the Internet. Depending on the forum, varying forms of mediums are used to communicate the correct message. Our attention must be given to the message, the medium, and the forum. For example, smoke signals can communicate messages to other communities, but it would be hard to discuss theological issues in this

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[40] Elmore, *Generation IY,* 176.

fashion. Today, many forms of media we use go directly against the content we are trying

to communicate.

> A message denotes a specific, concrete statement about the world. Nevertheless, the forms of our media, including the symbols through which they permit conversation, do not make such statements. They are rather like metaphors, working by unobtrusive but powerful implication to enforce their special definitions of reality. Whether we are experiencing the world through lens of speech or the printed word or the television camera, our media-metaphors classify the world for us, sequence it, frame it, enlarge it, reduce it, color it and argue a case for what the world is like.[41]

We must understand that the medium shapes the message. Often, the two contradict each

other. When this happens, whether we realize it or not, we fail to communicate and

connect the message we are so eagerly sharing.

In Jesus, we see the medium and message are perfectly integrated with profound

unity. John 1:1 tells us "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and

the Word was God."[42] After Jesus came and died, the church became the new medium to

carry the message of Christ. Although the message never changes, the medium is often

bent, cracked, or hindered in some capacity. If the medium is the message, then the

gospel is profoundly shaped by the way we live our lives. In all our hurt, pain,

brokenness, resentment, envy, faith, and love, we are the message of Christ. The church

is the medium. Through us, God chose a frail medium to carry His divine message to a

lost world. Christians must remember that God chose the church – not the individual – as

the medium for His mission. This is where the next generation has the upper hand. Their

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[41] Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* 10.

[42] KJV.

desire for a complete narrative, a holistic gospel, borderless faith, and a unified front sets the perfect stage for the message and the medium to unite and pour out as never before.[43]

Technology within Ecclesial and Missional Life

There are currently over 2.4 billion people who use the Internet regularly. It is now possible for someone who has access to the Internet to reach one-third of the world's population while sitting at their dining room table.[44] Nearly eighty percent of the United States' population is online, and currently India is developing a wireless Internet service that will reach their population of over one billion people for absolutely free. In 2009, 1.4 billion people used email. Today, over one billion people have "friended" someone through Facebook. Today in the U.S., nearly 100 percent of college graduates are online, along with more than 81 percent of teens. The rise of Web 2.0 and the increasing availability of the Internet is a force the church must acknowledge with great fervor. The semiotics of our time is nudging us to this end. As we have interacted with numerous pieces of information over the course of this paper and are aware of the concerns and influence that media has on our minds and on our message, one must not be timid in mastering this new form of interaction. One must become proactive in encapsulating its potential with understanding its impact in order to allow it to be a tool used for the glory of God and the furthering and restoration of His kingdom.[45]

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[43] Shane A. Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 91-93.

[44] "World Internet Users Statistics Usage and World Population Stats." Internet World Stats. June 30, 2012. http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed November 29, 2012).

[45] Craig Von Buseck, *Netcasters: Using the Internet to Make Fishers of Men* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2010), 1-22. All statistics given are found here.

> The Internet has become a twenty-first century Roman road. Digital devices and the Internet represent a convergence of media in one delivery mechanism, including video, print, telephone, video games, e-mail, social networks, blogs, television, audio and video phone. As a result, Internet Evangelists are putting these tools to use while harnessing the energy of exploding social networks to connect with searching souls all over the world.[46]

This revolution of technology over the past hundred years has not been man's genius but the hand of God opening the minds of men in order to create such amazing systems. "At a time when science and technology are having an adrenaline rush, few in the church get ICT. The notoriously technophobic mainline church has drifted beyond the sidelines."[47]

The current worldwide growth rate of the Internet over the last twelve years is 566 percent, which has yielded the more than 2.4 billion users.[48] Over the next twelve years, the last of the "Generation Y" finish college and begin their careers. It is reasonable to predict that the vast majority will use the Internet. Taking this number and calculating the possible next twelve years of Internet, over half of the world's population should have regular access to the Internet. It is with these systems and by developing community, using technologies as the catalyst, that the church may see a harvest that has never before been witnessed.

Understanding and using technology does not automatically create personal connections. Television, cell phones, radio, and Internet can provide connection, but connectivity, among people and within relationships, has to do with creating authentic community. Sometimes, technology can actually create barriers, but, if used correctly, it

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[46] Ibid., 6.

[47] Leonard Sweet, *Carpe Manana* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 23.

[48] "World Internet Users Statistics Usage and World Population Stats." Internet World Stats. June 30, 2012. http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed November 29, 2012).

can be an extension of our hands and feet.[49] "Every medium is an extension of our humanity…all forms of media extend or amplify some part of ourselves. They either extend a part of our body, one or more of our senses, some function of our mental process, or some social process."[50] Either we become an extension of technology or technology becomes an extension of us. When media fails to be seen this way, it is given the power to make us slaves to our own innovations.

In order for churches to become techno-missional, they must keep in tension four areas within technology. First, technology must never become messianic. It will not save the world, it is just a tool. Second, technology must always be supported by theology in order to keep the correct display (lens) to view culture and missions, a good foundation for this is set in chapter three. Third, the greatest advancement for the kingdom of God in using technology is still undiscovered. Fourth, these possibilities will come from Generation Y. This generation will rewrite the rules of forming networks that will propel ICT to advance into areas that spark creativity, connectivity, and co-operation like never before. The medium is the message, and 21st Century Christians must maintain a balance between the left and right brain; only then will the gospel be presented adequately to the world. This display will show how wide, how deep, how long, and how high God's love is for them.

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[49] John P. Jewell, *Wired for Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 18-20.

[50] Shane A. Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 34.

Walking it Out

When a master craftsman looks at an old piece of furniture, he does not see what is currently before him but what was there originally. In the same way, when he sees an untouched piece of wood, he does not see the past but envisions the future. What might be? In Christianity, these master craftsmen are the next generation of Christians that will become "linchpins" for the Christian faith. They will recognize the past but embrace the future without reservation. These individuals will understand "semiotics" and respond to the "nudgings" of the Holy Spirit in ways that bring about ecumenism within ecclesial life while creating authentic community and participating in that community through technology and personal interactions. The use of technology will continue to grow and develop and new ways of evangelism will take place through missions. In order to use this technology correctly, each individual must understand both the medium and the message to adequately reach, teach, and relate to both left- and right-brain thinkers. Through a new dual mental process, the gospel is shared in a holistic way focusing not just on the cross but also creation, fall, redemption, and reconciliation. This new narrative will paint a complete picture of the Christian faith to a lost world as new forms of social outreaches meet the physical needs of others. Ecclesial life will find new ways of utilizing technology to share resources, information, and bridge gaps between both secular and Christian organizations. These linchpins will become restorers of the Christian faith.

> They will rediscover the full story of the Gospel, which leads them to recalibrate their conscience to allow them to be in the world. Which forces them to rethink their commitment to one another and their neighbors, which inspires them to re-imagine renaissance of creativity, beauty, and art that the world has not seen in centuries, which culminates in redeploying the church where the world needs it

most. You can see how embracing restoration as part of God's story sets off a chain reaction that can revitalize our faith in the post-Christian century.[51]

The next generation of Christians will become missional and techno-missional as they relate, communicate, and connect with the majority of the world's population through the Internet. Whether using the Internet to combine resources, organize worldwide campaigns, evangelize through virtual churches, or break down barriers to ecumenism, tomorrow will vastly change from today. It is the church's responsibility to help create this new culture. The only way to create new culture is to create more culture. With over 3 billion strong, Generation Y will create more culture. By understanding technology and how it influences individuals, we can use technology to help the next generation re-write the manual that is missional ecclesiology in order to reach the world for Christ.

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[51] Lyons, *The Next Christians,* 66-67.

CHAPTER FIVE:

MOVING FORWARD: THE UNDERPINNINGS OF

TECHNO-MISSIONAL EFFORTS

> The church is the bearer to all the nations of a gospel that announces the kingdom, the reign, and the sovereignty of God. It calls men and women to repent of their false loyalty to other powers, to become believers in the one true sovereignty, and so to become corporately a sign, instrument, and foretaste of that sovereignty of the one true and living God over all nature, all nations, and all human lives. It is not meant to call men and women out of the world into a safe religious enclave but to call them out in order to send them back as agents of God's kingship.
> —Lesslie Newbigin

> When the writer of Ecclesiastes decided to determine his purpose in life, he started by accumulating a vast sum of money, only to discover that it didn't provide the meaning he had hoped for. Then, he sought power, attained it, and discovered that it failed to satisfy. Next came a scandalous pursuit of pleasure, Then, fame and celebrity, and finally, at the end of all his efforts, he uttered his famous words: 'Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.' Or as another translation says, "all of this is like chasing the wind.' We were not created to chase the wind. We are created to join God on a mission.
> —Bill Hybels

Today, missionaries, churches, and organizations must look past the traditional paradigms of the residential missionary into additional approaches into missions. The proposed alternatives have raised numerous debates as to the benefits and hindrances these alternatives yield. Regardless of one's perception as to the validity of current missional methods, one thing is for certain, "A growing number of missionaries take seriously the Great Commission mandate of our Lord to disciple all the nations – the *pante ta ethne* – and are discovering creative channels and innovative strategies to access and impact unreached people groups with the gospel."[1] The global missions movement,

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[1] Terry, Smith, and Anderson, *Missiology,* 30.

as we know it today, is barely two hundred years old, but the responsibility of evangelizing the nations is at the heart of God's directive to the body of Christ.[2]

Right now, as you are reading this paper, you are most likely immersed in technology and influenced by its effects in ways of which you are hardly cognizant. A world completely void of technology is almost inconceivable. Its presence is all around us every day. From the time we wake up and turn on the light to use the restroom, until the time we go to bed and adjust the thermostat, we are wrapped by artificial environments. "The word technology is itself quite new; Johann Beckman of Gottingen first used it in 1789. Its root, techne, is the ancient Greek word for 'art,' 'craft,' or 'skill,' which itself is derived from Indo-European root, teks which means 'to weave' or 'to fabricate.'"[3] At the core of the word technology is the idea of the "ensemble of techniques by which humans make artifacts that serve certain useful ends."[4] As time has continued and advancements have been made, technological developments have yielded radios, telephones, cars, computers, digital gadgets of all types, and recently the introduction of the Internet. "Technology is not just the collection of things but is a systematic and rational way of doing things; it is, in general, the organization of knowledge, people, and things to accomplish specific practical goals."[5] This is why the introduction of the 21st century's ICT is so important. It allows this organization to take place at levels that have been unimaginable throughout history, up until recent times.

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[2] Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:8 ESV, and Ephesians 2:10.

[3] Winston and Edelbach, *Society, Ethics, and Technology,* 2.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

Many individuals believe that since the mid-1970s, society has been shifting into

a technological transformation period, from the machine age to the "information age,"

also called the "third wave," or "knowledge revolution."[6] This transformation has yielded

computers that make it possible to gather and organize information on an unprecedented

scale. In parallel with this, computer programmers have become increasingly proficient

and have developed programs that no longer required human intellect. "The synergies

created by these advancements, and the exponential growth of the capabilities of the

computer generated user-friendly software applications, satellite mediated

communications, the Internet, containerization, and rapid and relatively inexpensive air

freight made possible the kind of geographically distributed production systems that are

characteristic of the contemporary era of globalization."[7]

Some authors believe that since the year 2000, we have entered a sub-phase of the

information-revolution in the form of what Thomas Friedman calls "Globalization 3.0."[8]

Web-based global platforms have decentralized traditional operations within

organizational structure while creating multiple forms of knowledge sharing and

collaboration, regardless of distance. ICT is changing the face of commerce and industry

while transforming the power of governments.[9] Whether people want to admit this

change or not, its reality is upon us with fervor and vigor like nothing that has come

[6] Ibid., 9.

[7] Ibid., 10.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 1-31. In June of 2009, thousands of young Iranians used their smartphones, despite overwhelming control of media by the government, in the city of Tehran to protest and call for the resignation of Ayatollah Khamenei. Regardless of the outcome, we have begun to see ICT's impact in governmental handlings.

before. This evolution of technology is impacting everything, including ecclesial life. The

church must recognize this fact if she is going to be able to continue to influence societal

life in the future. Even though technologies are usually created to meet some sort of

societal need, or to solve some existing problem, they often have secondary effects on our

lives. Marshall McLuhan was a pioneer in identifying these secondary effects and the

influence they exert on human lives; in much of his writing he identifies subtle ways that

these "mediums" define and set limits on human interaction.[10]

A Closer Look Into the Rise of The Digital Age

> Has technology come to embody our chief values, the things we most want out of
> life? Does it not, in fact, represent our basic commitment? This is a large
> question, a cultural question, a question about America as a nation and the people
> of the world. Technological innovation proceeds at an ever more rapid pace with
> little regard for the long-term social impact of any given innovation or political
> purpose and values a particular nation of people may embrace.
>
> —David Hopper

Are the ramifications of technology worth the proposed benefits? The church

today is at a crossroads with this very question at the heart of her future operations. Many

people today argue that the negative impact of the Internet and various types of ICT are

not worth the proposed benefit. Like horns blowing in the middle of the night from

passing ships navigating through a dense fog, these individuals are sounding the alarm. I

am in no way stating that there are not significant changes that ICT has brought with it.

What I am saying is that throughout history, we have seen other various forms of

technology introduced in human activity and those technologies have forever altered

humanity as well. Electricity is one of those technologies. Not even the greatest visionary

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[10] A greater look will be given to McLuhan in a later section.

of our time could have predicted the impact that the discovery of electricity has had on

our world.

> In 1912 it took 1,260 man hours to produce a Model T. Two years later, with the assembly line in operation, that number had been halved, to 617 man-hours. As the line's operation continued to be fine-tuned, the labor requirement dropped further, falling to just 228 man-hours by 1923… Here was the first, but by no means the last irony of electrification: even as factory jobs came to require less skill, they began to pay higher wages, that helped set in motion one of the most important social developments of the century: the creation of a vast prosperous American middle class.[11]

This middle class led to increased urbanization in American, middle class

suburbia, and greater focus on the need for higher levels of education for specialized jobs.

However, despite its great benefits it left in its wake the family.

As we look at history, we see the shift in family life as a result of the industrial

revolution. Fathers, who once worked side by side with their sons, now worked in

factories to produce goods in order to supply the demand of a growing economy. The

father who taught his son by example and worked daily with him was removed from the

home for the first time in history. Not long after the rise of the industrial revolution came

World War I and World War II. These wars also took fathers away from their homes.

Upon his return, he was, in general, emotionally absent from the home. As Western

consumerism continued to develop and the rise of the information age took place, more

and more women went to work to keep up with the demands of societal pressure.[12] In

recent years, ecclesial life has felt the increased pressures of these changes, and many

denominations have reported declines in attendance for the first time in decades. As the

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[11] Nicholas G. Carr, *The Big Switch: Rewiring the World, from Edison to Google* (New York: W.W. Norton &, 2009), 92-93.

[12] Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner, 1958).

general lifestyles of many Americans increase, the overall feeling of contentment and community seems to be lacking.

Over the years, the price of electricity has fallen so rapidly that soon after Ford introduced the electric assembly line, it became possible for nearly every business and household in the country to afford electric power.[13] Today, some 75 percent of the world uses electricity in their homes.[14] The majority of those left without electricity lie within African and Southern Asia, and efforts continue to increase to bring them clean electricity in the near future.

The church's response to much of this is an overall concern and apprehension with the implementation of new technologies, especially ICT, even as the effects on genuine community and discipleship within the body of Christ are debated. The issue often does not lie within the creation of new technology but in our ignorance of the power of the technology over human interaction. As life continues, we will be continually faced with new media and technologies. Unless we reject all advancements, this conversation will continue with every new age and stage of human interaction and technological development. Educating ourselves to the impact technology and specifically ICT is the first step to using its benefits in missional life in a balanced way.

As we educate ourselves, one might ask, can we really educate ourselves about the unknown? I believe we can. "No society has ever known enough about its actions to have developed immunity to its new extensions or technologies. Today we have begun to

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[13] Carr, *The Big Switch*, 11.

[14] Nathanial Gronewold, "One-Quarter of World's Population Lacks Electricity," Scientific American, http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=electricity-gap-developing-countries-energy-wood-charcoal (accessed December 7, 2011).

sense that art may be able to provide such immunity."[15] Barbara Maria Stafford, a

historian of images used in the sciences, has argued that, in a process beginning in the

eighteenth century, the construction of scientific knowledge about the world has become

more based on images rather than on written texts.[16] With increasing awareness into

iconography and visual methodologies, this area may be the key to a better understanding

of the impact of ICT on the future of humanity and within the church itself.

Technology…The Human Change Agent

> The medium, or process, of our time - electric technology - is reshaping and restructuring patterns of social interdependence and every aspect of our personal life. It is forcing us to reconsider and re-evaluate practically every thought, action, and institution formerly taken for granted. There are multitudes of changes – you, your family, your neighborhood, your education, your job, your government, your relation to 'the others'…Societies have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication.[17]
>
> —Marshall MacLuhan

The reason that the medium has greater influence than the content of that medium

is because "all media are extensions of some human faculty – psychic or physical."[18]

McLuhan argues, "This is to merely say that the personal and social consequences of any

medium – that is, of *any extension of ourselves* – result from the new scale that is

introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology."[19]

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[15] Marshall McLuhan and W. Terrence Gordon, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man* (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2003), 95.

[16] Gillian Rose, *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials* (London: Sage Publ., 2007), 3.

[17] Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium Is the Message* (Corte Madera: Gingko Pr., 2005), 8.

[18] Ibid, 26.

So, according to McLuhan, the medium in which technology is introduced directly affects

that individual and society. This is important as we proceed with future conversations

within the area of ICT and its impact within missional ecclesiology. In order to further

clarify McLuhan's point, let us clarify his premise. "For the message of any medium or

technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human

affairs…This fact merely underlines the point that 'medium is the message' because it is

the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association."[20] In order

for the church to navigate these waters carefully and successfully, it must understand the

medium that it uses and the message that it sends. The content conveyed in that medium

must be congruent with the medium in order for the message to be received correctly, at

all levels. The underlying change that is occurring as new media are formed is something

that we are becoming increasingly aware of as this newest generation of young adults

comes of age and interact in society in greater levels.

> We seem to have arrived, as McLuhan said we would, at an important juncture in our intellectual and cultural history, a moment of transition between two very different modes of thinking…For the last five centuries, ever since Gutenberg's printing press made book reading a popular pursuit, the linear, literary mind has been at the center of art, science, and society. As supple as it is subtle, it's been the imaginative mind of the Renaissance, the rational mind of the Enlightenment, the inventive mind of the Industrial Revolution, even the subversive mind of Modernism. It may soon be yesterday's mind.[21]

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed his *95 Theses* to the door of a Castle

Church in Wittenberg, Germany, which contained the 95 revolutionary opinions that

would begin the Protestant Reformation. The contents of this document were quickly

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[19] McLuhan and Gordon, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*, 19.

[20] Ibid, 20.

[21] Nicholas G. Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), 10.

translated into German and made their way to Rome where, in 1521, the Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther from the Catholic Church.[22] In any other point and time in history, these *95 Theses* might have gone largely unnoticed, but thanks to increased literary growth, due to the 1440 Gutenberg Printing Press, the Protestant Revolution was birthed. As the church faces unique challenges in the 21st century, what tradition is she holding onto that, like the Catholic Church during Luther's time is repressive among the body of Christ? In a moment we will begin to look into how technologies like ICT and the collaboration that it brings will unite the body of Christ like never before.

Current Methods in Missional Ecclesiology

Today, churches all over the world are beginning to understand that the old ways of doing things are not working. "The missional understanding of Christianity is undoing Christianity as a religion. The expression of the Christian movement in North America is fundamentally altering before our very eyes. The shifts are tectonic. They involve both form and content. These developments go way beyond denominational affiliations, party labels, corporate worship styles, program methodological approaches, or even cultural stances. The mission development goes to the very heart of what the church is, not just what it does. It redefines the church's role in the world in a way that breaks sharply with prevailing church notions."[23] Today, despite our efforts over the centuries, much of the world has never heard the Gospel, many of which live within the 10/40 Window.

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[22] "Martin Luther Posts 95 Theses,"History.com, http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/martin-luther-posts-95-theses (accessed December 7, 2011).

[23] McNeal, *Missional Renaissance,* xiv.

Table 1 — Missions statistics from the places of the 10/40 Window:[24]
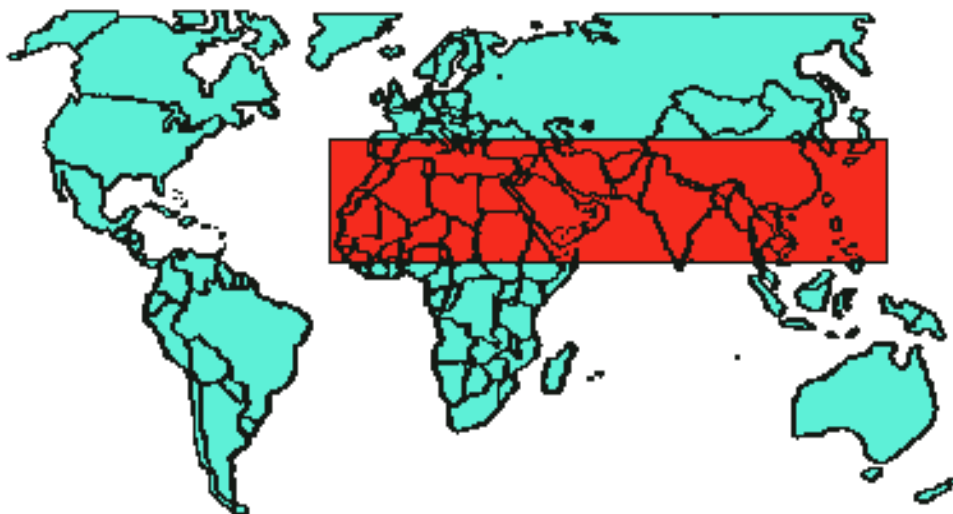
- Center of population: Two-thirds of the world's population -- more than 4.4 billion people -- lives in the 10/40 Window.

- Unreached and un-evangelized: 90% of the people living in the 10/40 Window are un-evangelized.

- Poverty: 85% of those living in the 10/40 window are the poorest of the world's poor.

- World religions: Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism are centered within the 10/40 Window.

- Least evangelized cities: Half of the world's least evangelized cities are in this window.

- Statistical data on unreached people groups:

  - 865 million unreached Muslims or Islamic followers in 3,330 cultural sub-groupings

  - 550 million unreached Hindus in 1,660 cultural sub-groups

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[24] "10/40 Window: Do You Need to be Stirred to Action?" Mission Statistics, http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/1040.htm (accessed December 8, 2011).

- 150 million unreached Chinese in 830 groups

- 275 million unreached Buddhists in 900 groups

- 2,550 unreached tribal groups (which are mainly animistic) with a total population of 140 million

- Forming a smaller – though important – unreached group are the 17 million Jews scattered across 134 countries

In order for the Church to reach people from literally all tribes, nations, and tongues, it requires a different missions paradigm. This paradigm is one void of competition and segmentation and fosters cooperation, empowerment, and the decentralizing of the missional task. "Whatever else the church may have to do, it must fulfill its calling to evangelize a lost world – to bring light and hope to people who walk in darkness without any glimmer of hope."[25] There are a number of solutions currently being discussed and implemented within the body of Christ to partner in the missional task. Over the next few pages, we will look into three areas.

Churches and Para Church Organizations Team Up

Churches all over the country are teaming up with non-profit organizations or creating their own non-profit organizations in order to meet the needs of their community and evangelize the world for Christ. Organizations like Children's Hope Chest partner up with various churches to adopt orphanages all over third world countries. These churches provide the fiscal support for the day-to-day operations of the orphanage and even at times visit the orphanage to develop relationships with its people. Children's Hope Chest

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[25] Terry, Smith, and Anderson, *Missiology,* 125.

help in identifying local individuals to lead these orphanages and in maintaining the

support network for the orphanages continual operations.[26]

Companies like the Alban Institute help churches understand the changing social

times. In doing this, they provide consulting services to all types of churches regardless

of denominational affiliation. One suggested method they advocate, in order to help the

church retain additional funding from outside sources and increase their volunteer pool, is

starting their own 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

> The nonprofit part of the structure brings a lot to the organization's effectiveness, too. You'll be able to attract resources from funders that would not support a church directly. New collaborative partners will become interested in what you are doing, and there will be opportunities to recruit volunteers from new sources. One of the most important advantages is the ability to attract the skills you need through new staff and board members from outside your church.[27]

VisionSynergy is another example of a web-based organization that creates

partnerships between churches, agencies, and organizations to advance global

evangelization. VisionSynergy "believes that an international Internet evangelism

network will significantly increase the growth and effectiveness of existing and new

online evangelism efforts. It works to connect experts around the world to help Christian

groups network together to fulfill the Great Commission."[28]

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[26] Children's HopeChest, http://www.hopechest.org/.

[27] Joy Skjegstad, "Starting a Nonprofit At Your Church: Drawing More Resources to Meet Increasing Community Needs," Alban, http://www.alban.org/conversation.aspx?id=7788 (accessed December 8, 2011).

[28] Von Buseck, *Netcasters,* 136.

Websites Created to Foster Unity Among The Body of Christ

The fear of cooperation is evident in the day-to-day operations of most organizations. Unfortunately, the church is included in these organizations. Significant efforts are given to the control information, protect resources, and gather ideas within that group. Organizations like "One Day's Wages" have begun to challenge the idea of competition by offering an online platform that multiple organizations can use to promote causes or mission objectives and allow individuals to come alongside those initiatives and partner up at incremental levels in order to meet those needs. The interesting concept about "One Day's Wages" is that it allows its users flexibility to create campaigns. These campaigns are then able to pool together their resources to further try and meet a proposed need. The in-house fiscal resources that provide for the operations of One Day's Wages is given by private donors and is separate from their organization's normal operations.[29]

One Day's Wages is not the only site to begin this new trend. EveryBlock is a website dedicated to bringing together local communities in order to share information and resources at the micro level to promote cooperation and strengthen local areas. This site allows your organization to join its ranks for a small monthly fee and interact with individual community users.[30]

"The Global Christian Internet Alliance (GCIA) is an international network of Christian ministries using the Internet to help fulfill the Great Commission."[31] This site

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[29] One Day's Wages. http://www.onedayswages.com

[30] http://www.everyblock.com

[31] http://www.globalmediaoutreach.com

shares resources among various ministries across the world. Today, some twenty-four

ministries in fourteen languages are a part of this Alliance.

Church Partnership Programs

Over the years, churches have partnered with various initiatives in order to

evangelize the world and meet the physical needs of others. In the Southern Baptist

Convention, co-operate giving has been one of the ways that the church would focus on

missions. These funds would be used for local and global missional outreaches. Over the

years, the SBC has seen a decline in giving towards these cooperative programs.

> Perhaps the most telling statistic for the near future of mission funding for
> Southern Baptists is the rapid decline in percentage giving through the
> Cooperative Program. From its inception in 1925, the Cooperative Program was
> predicated on local churches forwarding a percentage of their undesignated gifts
> through the Cooperative Program for all Southern Baptist Convention and state
> Baptist convention causes. In the first two years of the effort, the average gift
> from the churches settled in at about 11% of income. (The initial proposal by
> some that churches forward 50% for CP now seems to have been wildly
> unrealistic). A random check of the data from 1930-1980 shows the churches, -
> after surviving the effects of the Great Depression, maintaining percentage giving
> to the Cooperative Program in the 11% range. However, in the early 80s, the
> percentage began to drop steadily. From an average of 10.5% in the 80s, the
> percentage has plummeted to 7.39% in 2002. As a percentage of undesignated
> offerings, local churches have decreased their Cooperative Program giving by
> 30%.[32]

Churches not only have in-house partnerships to promote co-operation in

missional activities other organizational efforts have been undertaken to promote unity

within the body of Christ, especially as it concerns missional efforts. The Lausanne

Movement began in 1974 twenty-seven hundred participants from more than 150 nations

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[32] "The State of Giving in the Southern Baptist Convention," Baptist2Baptist, September 23, 2003. http://www.baptist2baptist.net/b2barticle.asp?ID=293 (accessed December 8, 2011).

gathered in Lausanne, Switzerland. This movement continues to promote unity within the body of Christ for the sake of evangelizing the lost. The Lausanne World Pulse (LWP) is an offspring collaboration between the Lausanne and the Institute of Strategic Evangelism and the Evangelism and Missions Information Service. This alliance offers information on missions, evangelism and leadership from all over the world.[33]

Global Media Outreach is another example of this type of cooperation. They focus on "Building the Church globally through on the ground partnerships with local congregations of all sizes."[34] In addition, they provide an online opportunity to become a missionary on the web and interact with sharing your faith through various online interactions. Last year, they reported 1.3 million people who received Christ through Campus Crusade's online Global Media Outreach.[35] Of course, many people might say "How do you know these people accepted Christ?" They would respond, real people talked to real people and followed up through emailed testimony from the individuals who received Christ.

The Convergence of Technology, Communications, and Faith

These are the numbers of the men armed for battle who came to David at Hebron…men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do.

—1 Chronicles 12:23, 32

Understanding Media was at heart a prophecy, and what it prophesied was the dissolution of the linear mind. McLuhan declared that the "electric media" of the twentieth century – telephone, radio, movies, television – were breaking the

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[33] Von Buseck, *Netcasters,* 139-140.

[34] Global Media Outreach, http://www.globalmediaoutreach.com/index.html (accessed December 8, 2011).

[35] Von Buseck, *Netcasters,* 163.

tyranny of text over our thoughts and senses. Our isolated, fragmented selves, locked for centuries in the private reading of printed pages, were becoming whole again, merging into the global equivalent of a tribal village. We were approaching the 'technological simulation of consciousness, when the creative process of knowing will be collectively and corporately extended to the whole of human society.[36]

Many skeptics condemn the crassness of this viewing it as a "dumbing down" of our culture. As cognitive processes are studied, iconography and ethnographic research continues, ICT continues to grow, and the availability of the Internet continues to permeate the globe. The rise of a whole "new" mind is emerging.[37] This mind will not be the purely oral and pictographic mind of the B.C. era or the linear logical mind of the Gutenberg era, but it will be a balance of the two, a usage of the mind as a whole. Both left- and right-brained processes will function together as the incorporation of word and image is integrated into everyday life. This is no "dumbing down" but a "re-structuring," and the church must position itself to communicate the gospel in a way that appeals to the "whole mind" and not just parts.

This restructuring is no small task. It requires a fundamental shift in how church is done at multiple levels. "The Medium is the message. More than that, once a building has been erected, the church has to keep the pews filled and the offerings up, and so the pattern of the attractional mode is reinforced and confirmed."[38] "Come and see" can no longer be the church's mantra; a flatting of the world is calling people out and the church

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[36] Carr, *The Shallows,* 1.

[37] Daniel H. Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006).

[38] Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 69. I am not suggesting that buildings are never necessary but that many churches make decisions that re-enforce traditional paradigms and force much of their resources and time to be devoted to trying to keep people coming instead of equipping and sending people out.

must start saying, "Go." "This will require three shifts, both in thinking and behavior. The church must change from internal to external in terms of ministry focus. Their initiatives must change from program development to people development in terms of core activity. Finally, the local body must shift from a church-based to kingdom based in terms of leadership agenda."[39] As this shift begins, ICT will be at the heart of the church's communications and interactions within its laity and in relation to other churches. The dawn of a new day is at hand.

Re-Branding the Church

"This postmodern generation has grown up watching endless fights about religion and politics, culture bashing and a host of other ideological battles, and most are, frankly, tired of the brawl…As a result, how unbelievers perceive the Christian community could use a little help."[40] Many people think that the idea of branding Christianity is offensive and even downright insulting. The reason that most people think this way is because they associate branding with a form of commercialization of the gospel. As a result of our consumer-oriented society trying to sell Jesus, many think negatively about the idea of re-branding faith. Actually, branding is just a person's "perception of a product, service, experience, or organization."[41] It would be like a person in your community making some sort of mistake and everyone living in that family with the same last name being labeled for the mistake made by another person. In order for the original person to restore their

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[39] McNeal, *Missional Renaissance,* xvi.

[40] Phil Cooke, *Branding Faith: Why Some Churches and Nonprofits Impact Culture and Others Don't* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2008), 9.

[41] Ibid, 10.

relationship with the community and clear their family name, it would require years of re-orienting the community's perception of them, by doing right. This would be re-branding.

"Who's influencing the Church today? Is the same as who's influencing the culture. It's the media."[42] This is the challenge of the Church today. How does one express faith in a way that connects people with the love of Christ in a media-dominated culture? How does the church tell her narrative, the redemptive story of Christ, in a way that uses media intelligently, effectively, and fully? The church must educate its body into how to use media correctly in order to better represent themselves to a digital age. The question remains, will the church take up residence in a world vastly different than anything it has ever engaged in before? "If the church's promotion of evangelization, formation, community, and the common good is to continue throughout future generations, she must harness these technologies and utilize them well."[43] As we look at the church's history, we can learn from her mistakes, as well as her successes. "The church cannot change her response to the Gutenberg's printing press, the radio, or the television; they are forever fixed in history. At the onset of this digital revolution, her response to New Media is wide open."[44]

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[42] Cooke, *Branding Faith*, 12.

[43] Brandon Vogt, *The Church and New Media: Blogging Converts, Online Activists, and Bishops Who Tweet*, 21.

[44] Ibid.

The Integration of ICT into Missional Ecclesiology – Becoming Techno-Missional

"Over 460 people will become new Internet users in the next ten minutes. In the same ten minutes, there will be 11,000 new pages of information added to the Internet."[45] The average American spends 66 hours per month on the computer outside of work, while social networking has overtaken pornography as the top slot on Internet activity. Facebook has over 1 billion users, spending over 700 billion minutes each month on their site. YouTube visitors watch over three billion videos a day and every minute, 24 hours of video are uploaded to their site. There are over 200 million blogs and last year alone, Americans sent some 1.8 trillion text messages.[46] "Social media are the fastest-growing form of communication in the United States, especially among youth and young adults. Our church cannot ignore this, but at the same manner, it must engage social media in a manner that is safe, responsible, and civil."[47] The church has a responsibility to engage a new culture, a new demographic of individuals, the body of Christ must not only be missional but techno-missional.

Technology Disclaimer

The Internet is not all good. The church must be aware of three things as it integrates technology into its daily operations.

- It must be aware of the pitfalls of the new technologies in the life of the Christian community.

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[45] Jewell, *Wired for Ministry,* 88.

[46] Vogt, *The Church and New Media*, 18-19.

[47] Ibid, 115.

- It needs to develop knowledge of the promise of new technologies that can facilitate and enrich ministry.

- It must develop a working strategy for the implementation of the best practices for the integration of technology in ministry.[48]

Technology is a tool that provides connectivity to the user. It cannot provide the connection, because connection deals directly with relationships. The use of computers and technology within the church provides us with additional opportunities for reaching others. When technology becomes a barrier to authentic community, it must be re-evaluated as to its usefulness within a given means.

Why Society is Ready

University of Chicago professor Cass R. Sunstein examined why so many Internet users collaborate so freely to produce so many products and services. This is what he writes:

> Wikis and open source software, for instance, have come to be called the 'blogosphere' and are somewhat miraculous in that they depend on the spontaneous formation of cooperative virtual communities of information workers. What is astonishing about these phenomena is that a great many people are willing to contribute their time and talent to such collaborative projects without promise of economic rewards for their labors? How can we harness this creative energy and talent in order to solve other social problems that we face?[49]

Society is already extremely active in participating within online environments. They are logging in tens of thousands of hours for numerous reasons and in cooperation with numerous causes. The creativity that lies within each individual is often undervalued and overlooked as the church looks across its congregants. The Internet allows those

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[48] Jewell, *Wired for Ministry,* 25.

[49] Winston, *Society, Ethics, and Technology,* 196.

individuals to take ownership and engage in ways that encourage them to be a part of something bigger than any one person. "A growing component of the media world is about allowing people to participate in the conceptualization, communication, and criticism process."[50] For so long the church has kept its members silent sitting in pews listening; today those same members are speaking, interacting, creating, imagining, giving, volunteering, and dreaming in a virtual environment with no monetary reward.

The numbers of wireless Internet users in the United States has increased from 12 million in 2003 to an astonishing 100 million in 2010.[51] That represents one-third of the adult population. Contributing to the desire for wireless service lies the creation of Web 2.0, encouraging people to participate in ways never before allowed. For years, so many restrictions have been place on individuals in jobs, churches, schools, and various other organizational life that the popularity of Web 2.0 lies largely in the freedom it gives the user to be a part of the content, conversation, and community it creates. Individuals are primed and ready, but the church must empower and unleash the potential that lies within its doors. However, in order to do that, it must give up control.

"Global partnerships of churches will be indispensable for mission into the twenty-first century…In the face of the urgency of the task, owing to the fact that 'more than two-thirds of mankind have yet to be evangelized,' churches and para-churches must launch new missional efforts."[52] An effort this large can only take place by empowering the body of Christ to go, and this empowering will start by using ICT.

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[50] George Barna, *Futurecast: What Today's Trends Mean for Tomorrow's World* ([Carol Stream, IL]: BarnaBooks, 2011), 82.

[51] Ibid., 95.

[52] Escobar, *The New Global Mission,* 164.

Perhaps most profoundly, as social media introduces changes to some of the fundamental ways in which people manage their lives, will social media change some of the fundamental ways in which we organize human society? When there is possibly more potential for ensuring humans surviving and thriving on a global scale in a system that enables loose confederations of people to solve problems and share solutions, is it likely that institutions such as governments, local communities, and even families will begin to change.

In order to begin this, Voght identified seven steps to help guide our interactions with the integration of ICT into missional ecclesiology. These steps are educate, encourage, expose excellence, evaluate, execute, extend, and evangelize. Educate the church as to the tools available to the body of Christ through ICT. Expose excellence by showing the body what others are doing and how they can join the process. Encourage church leaders to look at new media as an outpost for gospel proclamation and connectivity for the body of Christ and implement its usage into daily ecclesial life. Evaluate each tool being used as to its success, and understand its impact to the body and to the culture. Execute new technologies in a way that meets the purpose and objects of the church. Extend any help to other organizations that you can to promote a free-flowing exchange of ideas and resources. Evangelize the world with the love of Christ through every outlet possible, while making sure the media does not clutter the message.[53]

As the younger generation continues to age, they will eventually take over organizational life. In a generation where "privacy matters very little," the future of information, organizations, and individual's lives will continue to be placed on display for all the world to see. Instead of trying to hide things, deny things, and control things, why not become a vital part of what God is doing? Look and see the semiotics of our time.

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[53] Vogt, *The Church and New Media,* 116-119.

Conclusion

Fear often paralyses. Many would say that the church stands in fear about the possibilities of tomorrow; therefore, in fear they wait. They are waiting for revelation and understanding about what lies ahead. The truth of the matter is no one knows what tomorrow will bring. The scriptures reveal some things, but many things are left unknown.

> Against the present realities of our historical moment, it is impossible to say what can actually be accomplished. There are intractable uncertainties that cannot be avoided. Certainly Christians, at their best, will neither create a perfect world nor one that is altogether new; but by enacting shalom and seeking it on behalf of all others through the practice of faithful presence, it is possible, just possible, that they will help make the world a better place.[54]

What we do know is people are hurting and suffering throughout the world. Billions of individuals do not have a relationship with Christ, and it is in our hesitation that they are being left alone, afraid, and without help. If an individual was drowning in an ocean and as you began to dive into the waters to save them, you noticed the torrent was too great and with continual surveying of the situation brought to light that not one but three people were calling for help. With limited resources and extreme obstacles, one would begin to find any means available to throw out as a life raft to those calling for help. I am not arguing for the reckless integration of every new technology as it relates to ICT, but am advocating the possibility that God has given us tools to reach the world for such a

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[54] James Davison Hunter, *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity Today* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 286.

time. This is what the Internet and ICT provide, a life raft, an opportunity to save, help,

and encourage billions of people throughout the world.

CHAPTER SIX:

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE RISE OF SOCIAL

MEDIA: A NEW HIGHWAY FOR MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY AND THE

TECHNO-MISSIONAL CHURCH

"The future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed."
—William Gibson

The future as it relates to ICT and the rise of social media has arrived. When one peers through a glass, darkly tinted, it requires a moment for the eyes to adjust and focus on what lies beyond. Sometimes, as a result of what lies in front of us, the items that one is trying to focus upon can remain distorted until such a time the glass is removed. The key to seeing what lies just beyond the glass is found in the present. For it is the present poised in the past that allows us to see in its shadow the future – which is an extension of right now and reality of tomorrow.

When looking into the area of ICT and its relationship within culture, the church, and, more specifically, missions, one would be amiss if he or she did not recognize its permeation into everything. Some may argue that much of ICT only affects Western/emerging economies, and its potential in struggling third world economies is limited, especially as it relates to the future of missions. To which, one might reply, "the future is already here – it's just not evenly distributed."[1] The reality is not if third world countries acquire ICT, then one might argue the potential for ICT as it relates to missions, but *when* much of the third world gains access to ICT, then one finds that the future of

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[1] Gibson, Willaim. *The Economist* (London).

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ICT as it relates to Missional Ecclesiology was already here. Society just needed time for

the present to merge with the future. Barley over a century ago, no one had electricity or

a telephone. It took a few decades for more than one fourth of the world's population to

have these advancements in their wake. With the introduction of electricity and the

telephone, the present caught up with the future and the reality was newly connected

society whose boundaries were re-drawn: sunlight no longer controlled work hours and

speaking with families did not rely on the postal service. Cell phones took even less time

to reach the same infiltration that landline phones took. Today, there are over six billion

cell phones worldwide. This is equivalent to 87% of the world's population.[2] Let's paint

this picture to understand the reach of cell phones. Today, there are tribal nomads

walking around with more computer processing power in their garments than was aboard

the Apollo command modules. It appears that the distribution is almost finished and the

glass that once distorted our sight is being removed. ICT is here and very soon the vast

majority of the world will have access to Broadband connections through their mobile

devices.[3]

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[2] "Global Mobile Statistics 2012 Part A: Mobile Subscribers; Handset Market Share; Mobile Operators," MobiThinking, June 2012, http://mobithinking.com/mobile-marketing-tools/latest-mobile-stats/a#subscribers (accessed December 4, 2012). "At the end of 2011 there were 4.5 billion mobile subscriptions in the developing world (76 percent of global subscriptions). Mobile penetration in the developing world now is 79 percent, with Africa being the lowest region worldwide at 53 percent. Portio Research – in the excellent free Mobile Factbook 2012 predicts that mobile subscribers worldwide will reach 6.5 billion by the end of 2012, 6.9 billion by the end of 2013 and 8 billion by the end of 2016. Portio research estimates that Asia Pacific's share of the mobile subscribers will rise from 50.7 percent in 2011 to 54.9 percent in 2016. By 2016 Africa and Middle East will overtake Europe as the second largest region for mobile subscribers Africa."

[3] Ibid,. Ericsson forecasts that mobile subscriptions will reach 9.3 billion in 2018, of which 5 billion will be mobile broadband connections. Mobile subscriptions refers to the number of SIM cards being used in each country, not the number of people using a mobile device. Some people have two mobile accounts on the go at a one time, possibly in two devices, possibly in a single dual-SIM device (which are becoming increasingly common in the developing world and are forecast by Strategy Analytics to reach 20 percent of handsets by 2016).

Peter Drucker, a leading management consultant, in response to the future of economies wrote an article entitled "The Future That Has Already Happened."[4] In this article he stated:

> In human affairs political, social, economic, and business it is pointless to try to predict the future, let alone attempt to look ahead 75 years. But it is possible and fruitful to identify major events that have already happened, irrevocably, and that therefore will have predictable effects in the next decade or two. It is possible, in other words, to identify and prepare for the future that has already happened.[5]

Today's major event is the rise of the Internet 2.0 that has given way to the growth and distribution of Information Communication Technologies, and inseminated society with the new birth of social media. Drucker makes one more comment as it pertains to economies that I believe is relevant to the topic at hand:

> The trends that I have described above are not forecasts (for which I have little use and scant respect); they are, if you will, conclusions. Everything discussed here has already happened; it is only the full impacts that are still to come. I expect most readers to nod and to say, "Of course." But few, I suspect, have yet asked themselves: "What do these futures mean for my own work and my own organization?[6]

This quote, taken and laid as a transparency over ICT and her interaction in regards to *Ecclesial* life, is where the church comes to an impasse. However, the future of social media is upon us and its availability is being distributed to the world faster than is believable. This new highway will transport the message of Christ to more people, at faster rates, with greater content, and quicker interaction than one could imagine.

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[4] Peter Drucker, "The Future That Has Already Happened," *The Futurist*, (November 1998): 16-18.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Peter Drucker, "The Futures That Have Already Happened," *The Economist* (London), October 21, 1989, World Politics and Current Affairs sec. p. 19.

The Growth of Social Media

Pew Internet gives amazing insight into the current saturation that social media has achieved throughout society. Today, some 69% of all Internet users are engaged in social media.[7]

Who Uses Social Networking Sites
% of internet users within each group who use social networking sites

All internet users (n=1,873)	**69%**
Men (n=886)	63
Women (n=987)	75*
Age	
18-29 (n=351)	92***
30-49 (n=524)	73**
50-64 (n=567)	57*
65+ (n=404)	38
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,355)	68
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=217)	68
Hispanic (n=188)	72
Annual household income	
Less than $30,000/yr (n=469)	73*
$30,000-$49,999 (n=356)	66
$50,000-$74,999 (n=285)	66
$75,000+ (n=501)	74**
Education level	
No high school diploma (n=129)	65
High school grad (n=535)	65
Some College (n=513)	73*
College + (n=692)	72*

Source: Pew Internet Civic Engagement Tracking Survey, July 16 – August 07, 2012. N=2,253 adults ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.
* Statistically significant difference compared with others in the same grouping

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[7] "Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project," Pew Internet. August 2012, http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx (accessed December 5, 2012).

One might concede that social media has made its way into the daily lives of the majority of Internet users but still doubt the validity of the ease and convenience to which social media can be accessed. Pew Internet continues its research into this area:[8]

Social Networking on Mobile Phones
% of cell phone owners who use a social networking site on their phone

All cell phone owners (n=1,954)	40%
Men (n=895)	39
Women (n=1,059)	41
Age	
18-29 (n=340)	67***
30-49 (n=562)	50**
50-64 (n=587)	18*
65+ (n=429)	5
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic (n=1,404)	36
Black, Non-Hispanic (n=234)	48*
Hispanic (n=180)	49*
Annual household income	
Less than $30,000/yr (n=447)	38
$30,000-$49,999 (n=316)	40
$50,000-$74,999 (n=272)	48*
$75,000+ (n=538)	45*
Education level	
No high school diploma (n=156)	33
High school grad (n=542)	37
Some College (n=490)	42*
College + (n=752)	43**

Source: Pew Internet Spring Tracking Survey, March 15 – April 3, 2012.
N=2,254 adults ages 18+. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points for results based on cell phone owners.
* Statistically significant difference compared with others in the same grouping

Given the limited amount of time that mobile broadband Internet has been available, its growth remains staggering. "Mobile-broadband subscriptions have grown 45% annually over the last four years and today there are twice as many mobile-

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[8] Ibid.

broadband as fixed broadband subscriptions."[9] In 2011, "a total of 159 economies worldwide have launched 3G services commercially and the number of active mobile-broadband subscriptions has increased to almost 1.2 billion…in addition 90% of the world's population has 2G services available with 45% of the world already changing to 3G services."[10] Given the above statistics, social media usage on both mobile and traditional broadband services are poised for growth. The question is not "will social media grow," but "how fast?"

In 2008, out of the top ten Global Internet Sites, Yahoo was number one with YouTube, Windows Live, and Google following closely behind. Today, Google has taken the number one spot with Facebook and YouTube following closely behind. In just a few years, two of the top three global sites are social-media-driven sites, and Twitter, Taobao, BlogSpot, LinkedIn, and eBay joined the top twenty global sites.[11] This reveals that seven out of the top twenty global sites are social-media-driven sites; it would stand to reason that a shift is taking place throughout society and modern-day culture is telling us something about their needs and desires.

> Social media, it turns out, isn't about aggregating audiences so you can yell at them about the junk you want to sell. Social media, in fact, is a basic human need, revealed digitally online. We want to be connected, to make a difference, to matter, to be missed. We want to belong, and yes, we want to be led.[12]

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[9] "The World In 2011 ICT Facts and Figures," ITU Telecom World, http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/facts/2011/material/ICTFactsFigures2011.pdf (accessed December 5, 2012).

[10] Ibid.

[11] "Top Sites." Alexa Top 500 Global Sites. Accessed December 05, 2012. http://www.alexa.com/topsites (accessed December 5, 2012).

[12] Terrace Crawford, *Going Social: A Practical Guide on Social Media for Church Leaders* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2012), 123.

Content Creators

> Christianity – in a centralized, administrative, bureaucratic form – is certainly irrelevant…We must get rid of the hierarchy (in the church) if we want participation but we don't have to wish for it. It's happening.
>
> <div align="right">—Marshall McLuhan</div>

One such need and desire that people have maintained throughout history is the desire to be heard. Everyone has the need for their voice to be acknowledged, for them to be able to contribute something to the conversation, for someone to recognize them. People have a compelling desire to "do" rather than to "sit." This is why Martin Luther's idea of the priesthood of believers was so readily accepted. No longer was the body of Christ stagnant but empowered and engaged. Today, social media has created a similar shift for humanity. Instead of information, ideas, thoughts, and any other form of content being created and distributed by elites and societal leaders alone, everyone has the ability to impact each other by the creation and distribution of information.

> The enormous scale of change in our increasingly mobile society is evident very noticeably in the publishing industry. As rapidly evolving electronic technologies such as search engines, mobile phones, weblogs, and wikis have entered the awareness of the average people, we are witnessing a huge change in the climate for media production.[13]

Social media affords every user the opportunity to create, publish, and interact with content in a fashion that promotes creativity, expression, empowerment, and interaction. This new user-generated content does not rely wholly on secular media, church pastors, civic leaders, or community influences. It pulls information from everyone who interacts within its boundaries.

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[13] John Blossom, *Content Nation: Surviving and Thriving as Social Media Changes Our Work, Our Lives, and Our Future* (Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Technology Pub., 2009), xvii.

Social media has made communicating and connecting much more effective than it was in the past. This is because it has empowered users to select information from sources they trust (organizations, companies, leaders) and allows for interaction (a two-way communication or conversation) with those sources. Additionally, it taps into others in the community who have had interaction with the same source.[14]

For the most part, institutions, organizations, and governmental systems are not ready to accept the ramifications that social media will bring upon their structures. In a world where everyone is a publisher, control begins to take a new shape and influencers come from all over the world.

Publishing content is nothing new to society; since Adam and Eve, mankind has been etching pictures within cave walls, making stone carvings, writing on animal skins, and making notes on shards of broken pottery. The only difference between the last several thousand years and today is the advent of the Internet and ICT and the scale and magnitude that these tools allow for publication. The end goal for any content that is being created is for the consumption of that content. If others read and interact with what one creates, then one has achieved what every publisher tries to achieve. Computers, mobile phones, and other communication devices have enabled billions of individuals to share content with both their neighbor and among other nations. This new technology affords humanity a platform to communicate and share information to anyone anywhere with minimal cost and great speed. As a result, individuals are living their lives differently than any previous generation. "A 2006 Poll by the Pew Internet and American Life Project gathered an interesting picture as to what kinds of people are generating their

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[14] Ibid., 33.

own content online and why. The study found that the major reason most people, 52

percent, use weblogs is to have a creative outlet."[15]

People are creative by design. In the creation narrative, God gave mankind the

commission to "Be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have

dominion… over every living thing."[16] Within understanding God's mandate to mankind

is the awareness that humans are supposed to be culture creators. Our creator imprints

His image upon His creation; a part of that imprint manifests in our desire to create. From

creating life as one has children to creating culture as we interact within the world,

individuals innately desire to use their creative abilities as outlets to impact and connect

with others. "With 30% of the world's entire population now online, and social

networking the most popular and time consuming online activity—with users spending

more than one fifth (22%) of their time engaging on social media channels. This means

that more than 250 million tweets and 800 million Facebook status updates are now

published every single day."[17] Social media is today's tool for content creation, and by

definition social media is now "anything that helps individuals to publish influentially."[18]

The reason social media stands poised to continue this trend of being one of the

greatest avenues for creating and sharing content within ICT is found with three

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[15] John Blossom, *Content Nation: Surviving and Thriving as Social Media Changes Our Work, Our Lives, and Our Future* (Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Technology Pub., 2009), 8.

[16] Genesis 1:28-31.

[17] Tom Pick, "87 More Vital Social Media Marketing Facts and Stats for 2012," Business 2 Community, October 16, 2012, http://www.business2community.com/social-media/87-more-vital-social-media-marketing-facts-and-stats-for-2012-0307891 (accessed December 7, 2012).

[18] Blossom, *Content Nation,* 29.

observations. First "social media uses highly scalable and accessible technologies."[19]

This adaptability gives the user control to scale his or her focus down into whatever

audience that it is desired to reach. Second, "social media enables individual people to

communicate with groups of other individuals."[20] This communication tends to be from

one person to many people or from many people to many more individuals. "Social

media is more about a circle of equals that expresses leadership fluidly amongst peers

than a pyramid like hierarchy of pre-ordained people in superior roles who control the

distribution of information to others via technology."[21] Lastly, social media enables

influence. As a result of how it is delivered, its viral potential could reach an enormous

audience within a few hours.

<center>**Social Media Outlets**</center>

Today, if Jesus Christ walked on this earth or the apostle Paul was alive, I am

convinced that each one would have used social media in the form of Facebook, Twitter,

blogs, and other venues to spread the Gospel message. The focus of this usage would not

be for personal fulfillment or entertainment but would have one central focus: to connect

with people and share a message that could radically change their lives.

Social media has numerous outlets in which creating and sharing content can take

place. Among these outlets, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Delicious, and blog sites like

Tumblr, are among the leading sites. Facebook could be considered a generalized social

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[19] Ibid., 30.

[20] Ibid., 31.

[21] Ibid.

media site while Twitter focuses on detailed interaction and falls into the microblog category. Tumblr is a blog site that allows for music and other sharing; Delicious standing inside the social bookmark category, while YouTube is a multimedia social network. Pinterest is a "niche" social network that provides an outlet to share crafts, decorating, and cooking ideas. LinkedIn focuses on networking and sharing information about careers and trades and an individual's area of influence as profession, and Instagram and Flickr are social sites for sharing photos. Each one of these venues allows for unique sets of audiences and provides user-specific constraints that allow a message to best interact with its target audience. Understanding which platform the church must communicate from is just as important as understanding what message it is trying to communicate. The platform that one communicates within will affect the message that is being carried by that platform; understanding this nuance gives insight into the best practices for this integration. See flow chart below for further illustration:
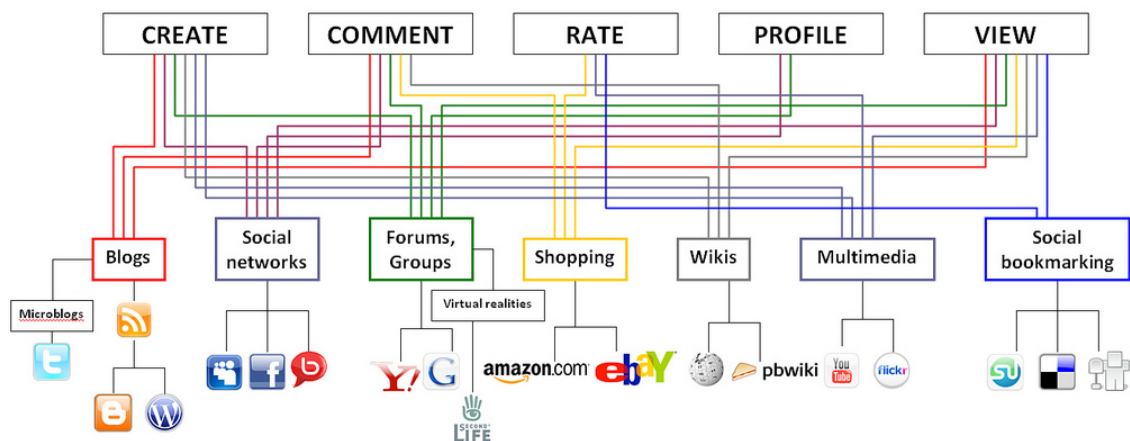
Each venue yields a platform engineered differently. Twitter requires precision in communicating a thought, idea, or action. Facebook allows for greater interaction with regular updates. YouTube's potential lies with the power of video to connect to its

audience while giving its viewers an opportunity to share and comment on things that interest them, and even create individual channels that focus on certain types of content. As one searches the Internet, Delicious promotes the sharing of sites that have been bookmarked and tagged with relevant associated descriptions. Each one of these sites hosts its content on a cloud and allows the user to access its information from any place in the world, regardless if one has their computer. This new social interaction allows greater flexibility and adaptability for an increasingly mobile society.

For the church, at the center of each of these social media sites should be the goal of connecting the body of Christ while sharing the Gospel message. Whether social network, blog, wiki, podcasts, forums, content communities, or microblogging, each site holds within its users large communities of individuals that are creating and sharing content at amazing rates. Just within the Tumblr site alone, over 37 billion posts have been made.[22] Three billion videos are viewed each day on YouTube, and over eight hundred million unique visitors view YouTube's content daily.[23] Considering one of the missional mandates of the New Testament is to go and make disciples, it is possible that there are eight million potential disciples waiting to be led daily on YouTube.[24] Understanding these sites and their potential within social media gives way to how God

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[22] "About Us," Tumblr, http://www.tumblr.com/about (accessed December 6, 2012).

[23] Terrace Crawford, *Going Social,* 106.

[24] "Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project," Pew Internet. August 2012, http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx (accessed December 5, 2012). "46% of adult Internet users post original photos or videos online that they themselves have created. We call them creators. 41% of adult Internet users take photos or videos that they have found online and repost them on sites designed for sharing images with many people. We call them curators. Overall, 56% of Internet users do at least one of the creating or curating activities we studied and 32% of internet users do both creating and curating activities."

might use its creation to help the church have conversations with others. That is reason enough to give it a try.

From Gutenberg to Google, the rise of social networks was unexpected. A Gutenberg world mastered the art of long sentences and lengthy sentiments, while the T.G.I.F. (Twitter, Google, Internet, and Facebook) world has mastered another form of communicating: the artful construction of short sentences with long thoughts and images that paint a thousand thoughts. Twitter is known for complete thoughts in 140 characters or less. Leonard Sweet tweets this great statement that proves the potential and power of short sentences that can yield long thought. "Every face is a story, every wrinkle and crack chronicles an episode, every sag of skin tells of adventures, some good, some bad."[25]

Jesus was a master wordsmith when it came to tweets, "The Lord's Prayer is only 70 words."[26] In that one prayer lay our relationship with our Heavenly Father, His supremacy and sovereignty over mankind, His kingdom and future reign, and His concern for our daily needs. How about in the Old Testament, God stating to Moses tell the "I AM sent you"? Sometimes the art of saying something succinctly requires greater understanding and depth than laying it out in detail.

Consider an illustration for clarity. Michelangelo was a famous painter in the early 16th century. Among his greatest works was the breathless creation of the Sistine Chapel. Pope Julius II, after the construction of the chapel, was looking for an artist to paint this now famous masterpiece. Upon his introduction, he asked Michelangelo to

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[25] Leonard I. Sweet, *Viral: How Social Networking Is Poised to Ignite Revival* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2012), 84.

[26] Ibid., 67.

prove his unspeakable talent. In response, Michelangelo drew a perfect circle with his freehand. The circle in essence was so simple it was practically impossible. Its simplicity and precision magnified its perfection.

In today's culture, social media and the Information Communication Technologies that house them do not necessarily dumb down an individual's intelligence; they just allow people to express themselves in new ways. Sometimes these ways seem so simple but in reality their simplicity and precision reflect a high degree of difficulty. Twitter, Facebook, Google, and the Internet, and the ICT that has allowed their construction, are not dumbing down society. These social networks are just allowing us to create perfect circles for the first time. These circles speak for themselves as to their masterful creation and limitless potential for future construction, just as Michelangelo's circle spoke volumes before he ever created the Sistine chapel.

Social Media: Secrets For Content Creation

John Blossom, in his book Content Nation, describes seven secrets to social media. The proceeding section is a takeoff from his writings, with adaptations for the church.[27]

Secret #1: Social media is all about the church's ability to scale their member's influences and combine their efforts with unified purposes. Social media outlets can be centralized around a common goal or mission. The church must cast a compelling vision and allow individuals the autonomy to create their own content and influence their peers.

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[27] Blossom, *Content Nation,* 32-56.

The key for the church's leadership starts with giving up their tendency to micromanage and allow organic growth and momentum to begin.

> All social media publishing tools have one common goal: to increase access, influence, and audience for the individuals using them. It may be through their own publications, through publications that integrate their content into others, or through publications developed collaboratively, but the end result of social media is that more people have more influence over more other people as easily as possible.[28]

The church's goal is to capture that influence for Kingdom advancement.

Secret #2: Technology matters in social media, but the most important information is found within knowing what people desire to see, that is knowing what people are looking for: to influence others and to be influenced. One of greatest aspects of social media is how it encourages collaboration at the peer level. Partnering does not mean that both sides agree on everything or that there are no significant differences between individuals. It just focuses on the task at hand. In the church, competition should not be a driver for the body of Christ. The body of Christ should be indifferent to who generates an idea, who has the best blog post, or who accomplishes the *missio Dei* and meet the needs of people everywhere. As the church encourages its members to be content creators, "peers are perhaps the most powerful control for managing conflict and encouraging collaboration and quality in social media."[29]

Two years ago, I took a trip to Nairobi, Kenya. During this time I visited one of the largest slums in the entire world, the Mathare slum. One non-profit organization that I was introduced to gave out microloans to residents of the slum, allowing them to start small business, making enough money to provide for their families. This organization did

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[28] Ibid., 37.

[29] Ibid., 39.

two things very well that contributed to their success. The first thing is that they trained the individuals acquiring loans with basic business principles to increase the likelihood of their success. The second, and possibly most important, thing that they included in their loan packages is community accountability. The organization only had so much money to loan, and there was a long list of people waiting to receive a loan. In order for the organization to approve new loans, existing loans must be re-paid. The community as a whole had a personal reason why it would want the existing business to succeed so that the loans could be repaid. Accountability was everywhere and the default rate on each loan was barely one percent. The church need not fear empowering the body of Christ; it just needs to encourage its members to keep one another mutually accountable for the good of the whole.

Secret #3: When using social media, the idea that "anything is better than nothing" is false. Quality of content matters, value matters, and having people who are willing to help make this happen is a must. Many people argue, "Just post something on social media, it does not matter what; just start with something." If I had one piece of advice to give, it would be to keep postings on social media sites to a minimum at first in order to avoid sacrifice of clarity, quality, and value. The church needs to be known for excellence, and this includes all areas of ICT.

Secret #4: The value of social media comes directly from the individuals who interact within its boundaries. People matter and the church must understand that there are over a billion people who interact with online social networks. Each network represents a different audience and each audience affords the church a specific people group to whom they can easily custom-tailor a message.

Secret #5: Social media's goal is not mass production from a handful of creators but mass contextualization from millions of content creators that replicate content again and again and disseminate that content to useful contexts. The greatest sign of a healthy church is the ability to birth other churches and for those churches to follow in similar fashion. If content is truly marketed with value, clarity, and quality, it will encourage people by its very nature to reproduce its value to others. Creating an environment within any organization and especially a church that promotes free-flowing sharing of ideas within each entity and among others will only help the organization in the long run.

Secret #6: Social media enables the church to create content in contexts that place them in direct contact with individuals who desire to see that content and allow that content to be continually adjusted in order to maintain its viability. Every year, churches send mass mailers to communicate with people all throughout their city. These mailers cost many thousands of dollars. Creating that same content online and distributing it among social media sites allows for focused initial offerings and continual updating as additional information comes to light, not to mention at a fraction of the cost. This information is fluid and with the ease and ability to share that information to target audiences yields greater potential impact for the church.

Secret #7: Social media efforts should be experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connected (EPIC).[30] Generation Y wants to see something, do something, be a part of something bigger than themselves. This is why they are so cause-driven. They do not just want to read or hear something. One-way communication is not enough. People desire to respond, add value, and express themselves; allow them room for participation.

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[30] Elmore, *Generation IY,* 172-176.

Companies today do not just create mission statements but image statements: Nike, Coca Cola, Gatorade, McDonald's, and many other corporate organizations paint a picture that is tied to the icons used to symbolize their companies. The power of an image is truly like a thousand words, but its imprint on the heart and mind is deeper than a thousand miles. Right- and left-brain engagement is needed. Finally, connection is what makes one's efforts viable. Generation Y does not like doing things alone. They tweet, update, post, and tag everything that is going on in their lives. Take advantage of this, and appeal to the "why not" aspect of their culture.

Social Impact of Social Media

In today's society, "community" and "authenticity" are buzz words among ecclesial circles. Many people argue the premise that ICT and, more specifically, social media offer a false reality when it comes to those topics. Some of those questions are "Do social networking sites isolate people and truncate their relationships? Are there real benefits to social sites, and do those benefits outweigh the possible hindrances?" Quentin Schultz states it this way:

> Real community is marked by lay participation over expert control, geographic proximity instead of disembodied messaging, open dialogue rather than one-way messaging, neighborliness above bureaucratic authority, and cross-generational continuity instead of intra-generational myopia. More than anything else, community is the chief means by which we undertake the public responsibilities that emanate from shared habits of the heart. Communities should be places where we seek the common good even while respecting our individual and tribal differences.[31]

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[31] Quentin Schultze, *Habits of the High-Tech Heart*, 24.

Although technology can provide or create environments conducive to isolation and informationalism, recent research begins to critique some of our initial observations as to the negative effects of media technologies.

In November 2010, Pew Internet examined Social Networking Services in a survey that explored people's overall social networks and how use of these technologies is related to trust, tolerance, social support, community, and political engagement, and these are their findings:

- Social networking sites are increasingly used to keep up with close social ties

- The average user of a social networking site has more close ties and is half as likely to be socially isolated than the average American

- Facebook users are more trusting than others

- Facebook users have more close relationships

- Internet users get more support from their social ties and Facebook users get the most support

- Facebook users are much more politically engaged than most people

- Facebook revives "dormant" relationships

- MySpace users are more likely to be open to opposing points of view[32]

Yes, there are numerous minefields that lay underneath the surface of digital technologies, but that is no different than any other area of life. "Technology in and of itself cannot bring about authentic community for a generation that has no idea what a

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[32] "Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project," Pew Internet. August 2012, http://pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx (accessed December 5, 2012).

world without Internet is like."[33] It does, however, provide a host of new opportunities.

"Caring persons who are spiritually connected with God, grounded in the community of

the redeemed, and skilled in the use of digital technologies have great potential for

ministry in a disconnected world."[34]

The potential for positive the social impact of the Internet was studied by Pew

Internet, and their findings are quite impressive. These findings were submitted in an

article entitled *The Strength of Internet Ties*. This is a summary of their findings:

> Our evidence calls into question fears that social relationships — and community
> — are fading away in America. Instead of disappearing, people's communities are
> transforming: The traditional human orientation to neighborhood- and village-
> based groups is moving towards communities that are oriented around
> geographically dispersed social networks. People communicate and maneuver in
> these networks rather than being bound up in one solitary community. Yet
> people's networks continue to have substantial numbers of relatives and neighbors
> — the traditional bases of community — as well as friends and workmates.[35]

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[33] Jewell, *Wired for Ministry,* 62.

[34] Ibid,. 63.

[35] Lee Rainie et al., "The Strength of Internet Ties," Pew Internet, January 25, 2006, http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2006/The-Strength-of-Internet-Ties/01-Summary-of-Findings.aspx (accessed December 7, 2012).

The Strength of Internet Ties: Summary of Findings at a Glance
The internet helps build social capital.
The internet plays socially beneficial roles in a world moving towards "networked individualism." Email allows people to get help from their social networks and the web lets them gather information and find support and information as they face important decisions.
The internet supports social networks.
Email is more capable than in-person or phone communication of facilitating regular contact with large networks.
Email is a tool of "glocalization." It connects distant friends and relatives, yet it also connects those who live nearby.
Email does not seduce people away from in-person and phone contact.
People use the internet to put their social networks into motion when they need help with important issues in their lives.
The internet's role is important in explaining the greater likelihood of online users getting help as compared to non-users.
Americans' use of a range of information technologies smooths their paths to getting help.
Those with many significant ties and access to people with a variety of different occupations are more likely to get help from their networks.
Internet users have somewhat larger social networks than non-users. The median size of an American's network of core and significant ties is 35. For internet users, the median network size is 37; for non-users it is 30.
About 60 million Americans say the internet has played an important or crucial role in helping them deal with at least one major life decision in the past two years.
The number of Americans relying on the internet for major life decisions has increased by one-third since 2002.
At major moments, some people say the internet helps them connect with other people and experts who help them make choices. Others say that the web helps them get information and compare options as they face decisions.
Source: Jeffrey Boase, John B. Horrigan, Barry Wellman, Barry, and Lee Rainie. *The Strength of Internet Ties.* Washington, DC: Pew Internet & American Life Project, January 2006.

At its core, the church is one giant social network. It exists as an intricate, interconnected community. Even more, God is a network himself—the Trinity—pulsating with communion… As social beings created by a communal God, we should take courage and not be afraid of modern social media. There are five primary reasons congregations should embrace these tools to aid church fellowship. First, fellowship is not an end in itself, but a means to many other goals: community, mission, evangelization, and spiritual growth. Social media amplify each of these elements exponentially and therefore are a potent aid to fellowship. Second, social networking transcends geography. These tools extend fellowship beyond the church walls and stretch it around the world. They help us fulfill Jesus' command to Peter, which still echoes for us: "Put out into deep water" (Luke 5:4). Church fellowship must never be exclusive and closed in on itself. It should always be outward-focused and mission-oriented. Members are ultimately connected in the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12), not isolated in local church bodies like disparate tribes. Third, social media transcend time. Fellowship in the past was typically constrained to the times when people gathered at churches or in homes. But now conversations about Sunday sermons can linger throughout the week. Fourth, online relationships spark offline community. Social media do not replace personal relationships. They supplement them and cultivate new ones. Ideally, online social networking leads to offline social networking, meeting face to face so that our joy may be complete (2 John 1:12). Fifth, and

most importantly, social media open the doors of Christian fellowship and invite millions of outsiders to join the community. Young secularists who would never darken the doors of a church find themselves dialoguing with Christian bloggers. An atheist YouTube viewer stumbles across a religious debate and becomes intrigued by the idea of God. A Facebook exchange dissolves the distorted images a young mom long held about Christianity.[36]

This is not to diminish the potential dangers that come with any social network or Internet usage. The downside is that it can also reinforce some negative images. But that is part of what makes social networking so compelling. It flattens the conversations, creating equal footing and a chance for everyone to have a voice. People may say and do unexpected things, or come to unexpected conclusions. This is ok; it is real and live.

The body of Christ can redeem its social media to create an online highway to bolster the potential for community, missional living, evangelism, and cooperation as she resides within a glocal world. When used intelligently, ICT and social media can be a six-lane Interstate that cuts through the heart of culture. This interconnection of people from every walk of life and on every continent on the face of this planet brings with its opportunities a new light, a greater hope that all people from all nations could potentially be impacted with the love of Christ by simply engaging within social networks. This is not the only interaction the world needs but it is an opportunity that is waiting to be taken by the church. The heart of missional ecclesiology is found in a God sending his son, Christ, into this world, Christ sending the Spirit, and the Spirit sending us to continue the work that Christ began. Social media and the networks they provide are not the world's Savior, we already have that; but they are an instrument that God allowed mankind to create and the church can receive it, reject it, or redeem it for the glory of God.

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[36] Matthew Lee Anderson, Brandon Vogt, and Doug Groothuis, "How to Think about Social Networking in Churches," Christianity Today, December 20, 2011, http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2011/december/social-network-churches.html?start=1 (accessed December 7, 2012).

CHAPTER SEVEN:

THE TECHNO-MISSIONAL CHURCH: CRAFTING THE BEGINNINGS OF A

BEAUTIFUL RELATIONSHIP

> The call here is for a church that will imitate Christ to pitch tent, to embody itself, to take form in the indigenous practices of our time, not for the purposes of accommodation to the world but rather to be God's people.
> —Tex Sample

When I first began the research for this dissertation, I had every intention of

creating an artifact. You see, George Fox allows the option of a different kind of

dissertation, a dissertation that combines a smaller writing piece with a real-world

creation of some type of ministry tool. As I began to read, study, and have conversations

about technology and its impact on society, especially in relation to the church, I realized

that this topic needed more attention than I was going to be able to give it if I created an

artifact. This greater awareness led me to switch my focus into a more substantive writing

piece. In this last section, it is my goal to challenge current mission efforts by giving a

macro view of how the body of Christ is using their resources for missions, after which I

will illustrate a groundbreaking idea as it relates to teaching and connecting people via

ICT. Upon this new development, I will construct and introduce a brief description of

what my artifact would have been and propose its creation and implementation into the

body of Christ, and finally summarize the contents discussed in this dissertation, pulling

everything together. In order to begin this conversation, let me start with an illustration.

Today, many children learn various songs regarding Christ and the church in

order to begin constructing the foundations of their faith. One such song resonates in my

ears when it comes to understanding the church. As it is sung, hand gestures create an

image on which the words may hang. The song unfolds as follows: "here is the church, here is the steeple, open the door and there's all the people." The second verse responds with: "here is the church, here is the steeple, open the door and where are all the people?" Perhaps what best describes modern-day understanding of the church lies within these simple words. The church and the steeple, generally called the building, are so closely tied together that the body of Christ no longer understands what the church truly is and how she is to interact and react in the world in which she resides.

Upon gaining a proper understanding of the church and her purpose within this world, a beautiful masterpiece begins to emerge. The bride of Christ (when in right position) reflects the glory and majesty that is God the Father. The future of the church does not rest in programs, initiatives, or gimmicks, but in the understanding of her true purpose and the embracing of the purpose in which she was created – a people of God called out of darkness into the marvelous light. When this little light shines, all of heaven stands amazed at what God desires to accomplish in and through His children. A sending God creates mankind in His image, gathers Himself a people, calls them the church, and sends them to reveal the King's glory to all the nations.

In order to accomplish this great missional task over last two thousand years, God has endowed mankind with certain gifts. Man's ability to craft, create, innovate, and grow has vastly changed throughout the centuries. The Ancient Period brought with it the rise of the Iron Age and, as time continued, the Middle Age gave birth to the Dark Age and concluded with the birth of the Renaissance Period. Shortly after the Renaissance, the Early Modern Period came into focus, and Christianity found a new voice as the Protestant Reformation was birthed. With literacy on the rise and printed media

permeating its way throughout the world, the Age of Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason found its way into the 18th century. This new age of cognitive thought transitioned the world into the Modern Era and the construction of the Industrial Revolution. The factory was ever-present in the 18th and 19th centuries and with unprecedented cultural change and the influence of the machine age, World War I and World War II found a Postmodern Era replacing modernity with the creation of the Information Age. One might argue why each one of these transitions took place and what cultural and societal pressures ushered in each one of these eras. The fact remains that the church evolved, grew, changed, and was even re-born through these amazing points in history.

Today, the church stands at yet another transition in history; she is pregnant with ideas, thoughts, opportunities, and new challenges while being faced with a decision about how to transition herself into a world that looks more differently than at any other point in history. To better understand how vast of a reach the Information Age has changed, Librarian of Congress Dr. James Billington stated:

> It took two centuries for the Library of Congress to acquire today's analog collection – 32 million printed volumes, 12.5 million photographs, 59.5 million manuscripts and other materials – a total of more than 134 million physical items. By contrast, with the explosion of digital information, it now takes only 15 minutes for the world to produce an equivalent amount of information.[1]

This thought should not bring fear but hope: hope that God is moving mankind into position for His greatest work since the death of His Son. The world is not the same as it was in the Middle Ages, Early Modern Period, or Modern Era, and neither should the church remain the same. The Information Age affords the body of Christ new

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[1](March 20, 2007) (testimony of Dr James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress, before the House Subcommottee on Legislatvie Branch, U.S. House of Representatives).

opportunities; her purpose is eternal and the scripture never changes, but how she accomplishes the *missio Dei* must change with time.

The Christian World: Falling Short but Potential For Greatness

It is estimated that about 2 billion people are Christians, Christian being broadly defined. Out of that 2 billion in respect to the rest of the world, Christians make 52.6 percent of the global income, have 73.8 percent of all computers, own 47 percent of all televisions, and spend 99.9 percent of their income on themselves. Out of the remaining monies, Christians spend .09 percent on the Evangelized non-Christian (reached) world and .01 percent on the unevangelized (unreached) world.[2] In order to fully understand this further, statistical information is needed.

- Christians spend more on the annual audits of their churches and agencies ($810 million) than on all their workers in the non-Christian world.
- The total cost of Christian outreach averages $330,000 for each and every newly baptized person.
- Despite Christ's command to evangelize, 67% of all humans from AD 30 to the present day have never even heard of his name.
- A huge new Christian non-confessional mega-bloc, the Independents/Post-denominationalists is growing rapidly and numbers 19% of all Christians.
- These 386 million Independents in 220 countries have no interest in and no use for historic denominationalist Christianity.
- From only 3 million in AD 1500, evangelicals have grown to 648 million worldwide, 54% being Non-Whites.
- The country with the fastest Christian expansion ever is China, now at 10,000 new converts every day.
- 40% of the church's entire global foreign mission resources are being deployed to just 10 over-saturated countries already possessing strong citizen-run home ministries

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[2] "World Mission Statistics," Frontier Harvest Missionaries, http://frontierharvestministries.net/WorldMissionStatistics.dsp (accessed December 13, 2012).

- Some 250 of the 300 largest international Christian organizations regularly mislead the Christian public by publishing demonstrably incorrect or falsified progress statistics.

A. THE UNEVANGELIZED WORLD
- Present cost of Christian foreign missions to unreached peoples: $250 million a year
- 26 restricted-access (closed) countries
- 10,200 foreign missionaries (2.4%)
- No citywide evangelistic campaigns
- 20,500 full-time Christian workers
- 50,000 lay Christians residing abroad in closed countries
- 0.1% of all Christian literature
- 0.1% of all Christian radio/TV

B. THE EVANGELIZED NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD
- Per capita income of non-Christians: $3,380 per annum
- Present cost of Christian foreign missions: $1,750 million a year
- 103,000 foreign missionaries (24.5%), 5,000 being in 31 restricted-access countries
- 300 cities per year have citywide evangelistic campaigns
- 1.31 million full-time Christian workers, 330,000 being in 31 restricted-access countries
- 8.9% of all Christian literature
- 3.9% of all Christian radio/TV

C. THE CHRISTIAN WORLD
- Present cost of home Christianity: $163 billion a year
- Foreign missions to other Christian lands: $13 billion a year
- 306,000 foreign missionaries to other Christian lands (73.1%), 4,000 being in 29 restricted-access countries
- 1,300 cities per year have citywide evangelistic campaigns
- 4.19 million full-time Christian workers (95%) work in the Christian world, including 480,000 in 29 restricted-access countries
- 500 million lay Christians live in 29 restricted-access heavily-Christian countries
- 91% of all Christian literature is consumed by World C
- 96% of all Christian radio/TV output is directed at World C[3]

The question is not "do we have enough resources in order to evangelize the world," but "will we partner together in unity and humility and focus our efforts on the

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[3] Ibid.

main central task of Gospel proclamation and meeting humanities basic needs?"[4] The

church must re-look at the way it currently spends its resources within missions and at the

same time empower, teach, and encourage its members to use their resources to meet the

needs of others as they lives their daily lives. If the church pulls itself together, ICT is a

medium which may facilitate this interaction on both the local and global stage. For the

first time in history, people in one country feel connected to people of another country;

therefore, the world does not feel as big as it once did. This new connection is largely a

byproduct of new communication, travel, and media technologies.

Our Story

In 2010, I entered one of the most unique doctoral programs in the country. Our

doctoral track is entitled Doctor of Ministry in Leadership and Global Perspectives

(DMINLGP) and was the beta/inaugural cohort for George Fox Evangelical Seminary.

The unique aspects of this program allowed for the integration of social media as a

platform for engaging in doctoral work while promoting travel all across three continents,

studying economics, colonialism, social development, and Christianity all with the

understanding of leading and influencing various groups of people from all over the

world. The idea this program fosters is found within the realization that great leaders

understand those they lead. This understanding is only gained by walking with the

people. By posting our academic work on social platforms and interaction with each

other's work, through various social media contexts we created an environment that

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[4] Micah 6:8. "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" When broken down, the believer has responsibility to act when they see areas of injustice.

fostered conversations about the content each one of us created. These conversations were not held within closed groups but open to anyone who had access to the Internet and social media. Within our cohort alone, pastors, non-profit leaders, and denominational leaders from the United States, Canada, Burundi, England, China, and Australia brought a mosaic of information, thoughts, and ideas to each one of our writings and critiques. This interaction, mixed with those from both Christian and non-Christian traditions, brought a depth of interaction that is unparalleled in most places. Not only did each of us create our content in relation to our studies, but were forced to defend and interact in regard to what was written.

Perhaps one of the most creative an inventive ways that each member of the cohort interacted was through a single site ([http://www.dminlgp.com)](http://www.dminlgp.com) that used content aggregators, more specifically tag aggregators, to pull all the information we posted on six different social media platforms into one single location.[5] Each time one of us posted anything on one of these social media sites, it was tagged with the hashtag #dminlgp. The tag aggregator program would search these various networks and pull the information that was tagged into our single site. This allowed us to interact with individuals on the platforms they most conveniently used and for each cohort member and anyone else who desired to see all tagged items in one singular place. For example, if I posted a comment on Facebook and tagged that comment with #dminlgp, the tag aggregator would pull that comment into our school site. This information would then be categorized by time posted, content location, and content creator. This allowed for the autonomy of each cohort member to engage in all social media platforms or just the ones they normally use; helped each person focus on creating various content and promoting that content on

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[5] The tag aggregator was created by Pure Blue Design, http://www.purebluedesign.com

specific social networks; and promoted creativity in using various methods and means of content creation.

This new innovation in learning, interacting, teaching, and connecting students to each other as well as those they will interact with one day no longer limits the classroom to a singular location that is one dimensional. This three-dimensional learning, sharing, and living experience allows for greater diversity of student body; increased cooperation in the creation of content and academic literature; greater mobility to live, work, and play; and affords students the chance to be influenced by people all over the world. For some, this influence may be intimidating or concern may arise about who is influencing them, but the fact of the matter is today's youth are already being influenced in this way as they interact within digital environments. The Xbox 360 is a perfect example in which children from one country engage and play games with children from another country. As the game is being played, they communicate with each other regarding areas from sports to religion. In today's culture, part of teaching must include learning how to think critically and navigate through numerous conversations and interactions in an increasingly global world. This doctoral program is the beginning of something new in the educational world and gives insight into future possibilities for the church.

A New Tool: Information Communication Technology Used to Accomplish Missions, Providing a Space for Unity and Collaboration

With the growth of the Internet continuing to sweep across the globe and the increased mobility of ICT, the church must begin to think how it can harness the power of technology in order to continue missional efforts well into the 21st century. In the context of the Southern Baptist Church, one such proposal that I have is for the creation

and integration of content and tag aggregators into the systems and networks of the

individual and denominational church.[6]

Given the fact that most churches have websites and, with time, churches will

continue to develop those sites and increase their learning and navigational ability of

information within their site, a platform is being created from which the body of Christ

can begin to work. The rise of social networks and user-generated content, mobile

devices, third world Internet access, and increased flexibility and adaptability that

software developers have been able to give their users has created an opportunity for a

new tool to be developed for the church. This tool will combine all of these areas into one

piece of software. A "Uniware" if you would, a new way to connect, equip, partner,

mobilize, and communicate to the body of Christ to lead them, influence them, and give

them a vision they can work towards achieving.

Software

Each church that participates will download a new piece of software that allows

that church to tag information they input into their databases. How they tag that piece of

information will determine how that information is pulled into a central network; for

now, let's call that network/website "MoBi (Missions outreach Being intentional)." These

users will be made of up individuals, other churches of like belief and denomination, and

if allowed, even across denominational lines to the church at large, universal. The content

is not limited to churches only but has the capacity to allow non-profits, individuals, and

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[6] A proposal of the initial design, testing, and beta group for the creation of this online platform is documented in the Appendix of this dissertation and has been submitted in coorporation with Pure Blue Design.

businesses to contribute to the content creation. Each organization, non-profit, church, or individual that places information into this system will allow content and tag aggregator software to pull that information and assimilate it in organized pieces and display that information in multiple ways.

In addition to website software, each social network that the church engages within will also afford the opportunity to share that content into the MoBi network. Each social network that the church uses will give MoBi the permission to pull any postings that are tagged with the hashtag #MoBi into the network and organize that information to post within the website's contents. This new central location will house all of this information and allow for it to be accessed and viewed by topic, fields, location, region, demographics, interests, commonality, denomination, and social groups, and searched with any number of common terms to focus the findings on the exact information someone requires.

Illustrations

For example, if a small group in Louisville, Kentucky decides they want to help intercity youth in downtown Louisville, they could type their parameters into the MoBi site and find any churchess or groups that are currently working in that area, access what is currently being done in that area, and contact those who are working in that area in order to decide if they would like to partner up with those groups to meet a particular need or if there is a location that is not being reached. As a result, they could focus their efforts more intentionally on that particular location. The MoBi site would allow pictures, videos, stories, and any other form of content to be shared about each opportunity that is

found within its site. On a greater scale, if that same group wanted to find out needs in South Africa, they could focus their search within MoBi on "single mothers" in South Africa, find any churches or groups working within those contexts, and view information describing what is being done in those areas in order to focus on what they might do as a group.

For greater understanding into the ability that this software and website yields, Forest Side Community Church would be a great case study. If FSCC encouraged the 50 plus Southern Baptist Churches with its twenty-mile radius to implement this new software and begin tagging their information to pull into this central site, the joined efforts of thousands of believers would have a focused place and tool for their missional efforts. After this new content was organized, FSCC and the other churches could see on a map all of the areas within their city that these churches are doing ministry. At this time, all of these churches could identify any areas that are being neglected, other areas that are saturated with activity, what exactly is being done, and begin a dialogue into how they might partner together to complete each other's activities to reach the lost and meet individual needs instead of competing with each other in these given areas. FSCC would no longer have the resources of just her 5,000 members, but she would see the impact and resources of 302 total churches. Sometimes, until one sees a picture of the possibilities, they cannot understand what potential lay at their fingers. This new outlook would give a forty-thousand-foot view of a given region and allow for the focusing in of the region into small, bite-size areas.

Individual Activity

As Martin Luther promoted the priesthood of the believer and the individual's autonomy from the Catholic church and her control, today's believer desires to be seen, heard, and part of the conversation as well as the solution into the task of reaching others for the Kingdom of God. MoBi would allow not only the church as an organization to input information into its networks but would afford individuals the chance to contribute information to its site. Each person would be able to give MoBi the permission to access and pull any information they have tagged with #MoBi on their social networking sites and pull that information into its networks and display it on its website. As people interact with the content on MoBi, they are able to create personal profiles that allow them to receive updates on the information that interests them as it becomes available.

As each individual finds information on the MoBi site, they can post that information on their social networks and interact with that information in order to promote and create awareness about a given area. Whether by an individual or a church, a "cause" can be created to focus efforts on a specific area and each individual or group can custom-create a way in which they might raise awareness and funds for that given cause in a method that gives them some creative control and allows for the continual development of outreach opportunities. The information found within MoBi is no longer stagnant but alive and growing with every interaction.

Potential

Any time someone pioneers a new area, there are challenges that come into play. Challenges are not reasons to quit but opportunities to find out how much you believe in

what you are doing. The potential of ICT and the tools it brings is vast and amazing on so many levels, but so are the challenges. The Internet is evolving at amazing rates and how one interacts with technology is continuing to change. Within the development of this new tool, there will be changes, new opportunities, and new roadblocks, but the potential of creating a network and site that has the ability to connect so many believers to the central task of gospel proclamation and missional needs has never been afforded mankind, until now.

The first phase of this tool would be its Beta group. This group would be a select group of churches that would integrate the various methods, install the necessary software, and begin working together to test this network. Within this first phase, certain individuals would be asked to begin uploading content on MoBi and tagging information on their personal social network sites. Any adjustments that need to be made to Mobi would happen to prepare for phase two.

The second phase would allow for a larger audience to begin implementing these efforts. The Kentucky Baptist Long Run Association would be the targeted first group. The Long Run Association is made up of more than 160 churches, and these churches would be asked to begin using these new tools. Additional individuals would be recruited to add content and interact on their social networks. At this time, any individual who wanted to start interaction with MoBi would be welcome. Any adjustments needed would be addressed and systems would be updated to prepare for phase three.

The third phase would focus on the integration of the Kentucky Baptist Convention into this new network. The KBC is composed of almost 2,400 churches, and these churches would be asked to begin usage of these tools. In addition to the KBC,

several of her non-profit partners would be asked to test this site and begin sharing content within its networks. At this point, any necessary updates or site adjustment would continue to prepare the site for its launch in the entire SBC network.

The fourth phase would encompass the integration of the SBC and her 45,000 churches into MoBi's networks. Individual usage would be happening throughout all areas and non-profit contribution would continue. This site would continue to be updated in order to maintain viability as technology and ICT grows. Mobile apps and other tools would be added to MoBi's arsenal in order to maintain ease of use and viability. At this point, information could be shared and accumulated across denominational lines in order to better partner for global outreach. Churches, organizations, non-profits, and individuals could interact with micro and macro views to see, understand, and collaborate on missional efforts.

Overview

The creation of the MoBi site and the usage of the tag and content aggregator allow information to be assimilated in a way it never has been before. This information can be viewed, accessed, focused, itemized, and shared in a way that meets individuals and churches in the environments they are already found. The social networks each person uses can now be captured and used for the advancement of the kingdom of God in a new way. Below are some highlighted points about this new ICT tool, MoBi:

- Interacts with social media and organizational websites
- Allows for user-generated content
- Allows personal interaction within the site to focus on areas one may personally identify
- Allows information to be tagged and pulled into the main site

- Allows content to be created in the main site and shared with other networks or visa-versa
- Allows indicators to flag common areas to promote cooperation and more efficient resource usage
- Allows micro and macro views of missions within zip codes, cities, states, regions, and countries, as well as specific efforts within those areas
- Promotes church partnerships in same location or region of work
- Information helps create more informed decision-making processes
- Helps identify current needs, areas that need attention, and current areas of engagement
- Creates a big picture of what the body of Christ is currently doing, helps create vision
- Central location for resource sharing to better appropriate monies
- Can be used to focus individual efforts, small group efforts, church efforts, and denominational efforts while overlaying all areas of outreach and ministry on a given map.
- Allow each user to place personal information into site, work, church, community involvement, and any other info to allow churches to see where there people currently are interacting and focus efforts in those areas instead of creating new contexts that pull people out of already established relational areas were they currently interact on a regular basis.
- If resources are available at the last minute, allows for immediate insight into local areas that resources could be used.
- Give the body of Christ a sense of ownership since they help in content development
- Affords the community the ability to keep accountable the interaction within the site and the needs posted

My doctoral program afforded me the opportunity to interact with people I normally have little interaction with. Some individuals believe similarly to me, and others have slightly different theological constructs. Each one of us believe in the same foundational truth that Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, deity in flesh, fully God and fully man, lived a perfect life, died a horrible death, and afforded mankind the opportunity to find salvation in and through Himself, and with His death marked the hope that believers rest within the restoration of all things. I have grown to love each member of my cohort as a result of interacting with them, seeing them, watching videos of them, reading their work, seeing pictures of them, and talking to them when opportunity allowed. They are

no longer numbers, statistics, or just "some guys" that live all over the world. Technology has allowed me be a part of their lives; in some fashion, that helped me to fully grasp the humanity of each one of these individuals. Their needs, families, dreams, struggles, and hopes are something that I have shared, prayed over, and even at times shed tears for. This generation has been given an opportunity to be a part of billions of people's lives through interacting in digital environments. These environments cannot replace human contact, community, and fellowship, but they can offer an extension to those areas. The videos, pictures, stories, and conversations that individuals maintain on the Internet and through ICT bring to life people that once were viewed as numbers on a page. These people are living breathing beings that desire love, affection, and attention just like you and me. Their needs are real and their spiritual needs are great. This new tool allows the church to interact in a way that increases awareness, promotes unity, allows creativity, empowers the body, encourages collaboration, yields better use of resources, and brings to life people and their spiritual and physical needs from all over the world.

Putting Together the Pieces

The environments in which humanity interacts are constantly changing. The Diffusion of Innovations has begun in regard to ICT. The church can no longer ignore the vast expansion of the Internet and the tools it allows. Over the last two thousand years, the church has incorporated various technological advances into its ecclesial life as it has navigated through time. Using technology is what humanity does. From the first shovel made with wood and rock, to the vast aqueducts that allowed water to be transported in ancient times, to the modern invention of the computer, technological advances have

followed their way through history and the church has integrated them into her practices to remain engaged with the culture and times.

ICT is not to be viewed as messianic and the idea that technology will save the day is ludicrous. However, a holy tension must remain to cause one caution into making sure theology influences methodology. The church must be proactive in this area and refuse to remain reactive to cultural changes. The church is called to be culture creators and within the digital world it has the opportunity to be proactive in how it engages this new environment. Technology is continually changing and additional research is needed into its usage, ability, proposed benefits, and potential hindrances. The church is never to blindly follow and use something just because society says it must. It must make thoughtful, well-informed, and well-researched decisions. This requires additional individuals to continue the research that others are currently doing. Polarization is not needed when it comes to innovation, but healthy conversation and proper balance must be maintained. New questions must be asked and oversimplification of any new innovation must be avoided. "It is imperative we move beyond this paradigm and realize that our forms of media and technology are primary forces that cause changes in our philosophy, theology, culture and ultimately the way we do church."[7] Some of the great contributors in conversations about the rise of technology are Marshall McLuhan, Neil Postman, and even Quentin Schultze. Each point to numerous negative aspects of technology, and give way to some benefits. The fact is that writing does make it easier not to try and memorize information; however, it allows opportunity for new knowledge. Wisdom is not synonymous with that knowledge. The benefits of writing are equally as vast. The ability

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[7] Shane Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture: How Media Shapes Faith, the Gospel, and Church* (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties, 2006), 27.

to read and write has allowed for some of the greatest growth the church has ever

witnessed. The Bible being the number one selling book of all time and a large part of the

world able to read its pages is just one of those benefits.

As the church redeems ICT for its missional outreach opportunities continued

study must be given to the areas of anthropology, epistemology, sociology, and the

ontological effects that media and specifically ICT have on humanity. The findings will

not result in the complete avoidance of technology and its future applications to the

church, as cultures like the Amish maintain, but a healthy and balanced understanding

and interaction.

> We believe that the greatest gains for God's kingdom using digital technologies
> have not yet been made. They will not be made by the headliners and legends of
> the contemporary Christian world. They will be made in the trenches of the small,
> medium, and larger churches where people are seeking not so much the
> spectacular as the substantive.[8]

The *ekklesia* is the church, the called-out ones. The body of Christ, the family of

God, and the bride of Christ–this constitutes the church. The church is not made up of

denominations but of people, people who by grace, through faith, have accepted the

marvelous work of Christ for the redemption of their sins. People from every nation,

tongue, tribe, color, race, age, and background make up the people of God. As the people

of God, they are called out of this world and called to the *missio Dei*, the mission of God.

The church, made up of individuals, is the organism that incarnationally represents Jesus

Christ to the world. The church is made for missions; she is God's creation, His design,

His ambassador, to creation.

Understanding this fundamental ecclesiological concept of the *ekklesia* allows for

the construction of a proper missional ecclesiology. The purpose of the church should be

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[8] Jewell, *Wired for Ministry,* 178-79.

centered around missions. As Newbigin stated, the "key focus of the church's mission is not the church but the world."[9] If missions is the church's focus, then discipleship should be constructed around the idea of maturing believers to the point in which they live their lives in such a way that the idea of sharing Christ in word and deed saturates everything.

As disciples are created and the church engages the communities that surround her influence, a proper transformational theology is needed. This theology will help the church navigate the contextual environments she encounters while teaching her members how to live missionally in an increasingly global context.

Since the church must live, work, and play in the time in which she resides, technology and ICT are pivotal aspects of her culture. These technological advancements have created new digital environments that provide new avenues for communication, content creation, partnerships, and collaboration among the body of Christ. These advancements have fostered the arrival of the Information Age and the next generation of believers, Generation Y, has never known a time in which technology and ICT has not existed. The product of technology as it relates to visual media has shifted a once left-brained-driven society to that of a right-brained society. This shift has brought with it the rise of the visual, iconic driven culture that ICT naturally appeals to. One might fight in an argument with the proposed benefits or possible hindrances of ICT, but in understanding semiotics, looking into the world, and seeing where God is currently working, one would be amiss if he or she did not at least recognize the opportunities that lay ahead with digital technologies and how God is already using them to advance His kingdom.

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[9] Sweet, *AquaChurch*, 37.

By comprehending this new right-brained generation and studying ways that the church can use the correct media to connect its message, perhaps the message and medium may maintain congruency with each other. Very soon, Generation Y will take their place in leadership and, as the largest generation on earth, they will influence everything. With 2.4 billion individuals worldwide already on the Internet, the church is faced with how it can use ICT to connect the body of Christ and the church to the central task of missions.

This new culture of content creators desires to connect with people all over the world and be an instrumental part of the *missio Dei*. This desire is not affiliated with denominational motives or organizational norms but focuses on causes more than any previous generation. As the church desires to engage these new believers and challenge Generation Y for kingdom work, it must understand that the next generation of believers needs to be empowered and influenced, not controlled and commanded. This new techno-missional church will pave her way into influencing over 2.4 billion Internet users and utilize ICT in ways that connect the body of Christ to accomplish the task of missions. This process will begin through the convergence of social networks and various ICT tools. These new venues will allow for multiplication of content and continual influence among the individuals that interact with its constructs.

The current problem remains, "how can FSCC connect its 5,000 members and focus their energies while at the same time remaining a part of the 16 million members of the Sothern Baptist Convention, and simultaneously the hundreds of millions of believers across the globe? How can the church utilize their resources, energies, and ideas where their members are currently working and living and how can this translate itself on a

global scale?" The answer, and the future of missional outreach and networking, lies within the understanding and utilization of ICT. It is no longer about building bigger systems and organizations but creating better networks and empowering and connecting the entire body of Christ.

Information Communications Technology will be the greatest tool the 21st century has to offer in decentralizing the missional task by breaking down barriers that separate individuals, religious institutions, and various organizations. ICT can promote missional ecclesiology. The Southern Baptist Convention must utilize ICT missionally in both their micro (individual churches) and macro (denomination at large) contexts and promote a free-flowing exchange of resources between her and the global (inter-denominational) church. The body of Christ should use ICT to accomplish its holistic and evangelistic missional outreach by empowering its people through the creation of an online environment of shared resources to systematically meet the spiritual and physical needs of others around the world, without overlapping redundancies and unnecessary competition. The birth of the church in the 21st century is twelve years in the making. A techno-missional church is not the only thing that defines the church, but it is at the center of her operations within the world. A new day awaits the church and with each new day brings new opportunities… *Carpe diem*.

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Prepared by Pure Blue | 1/9/2013

Overview

Pure Blue has been asked to develop a content aggregation app called MoBi (Missions Outreach Being Intentional) as managed by Michael Hearn. This document is designed to provide an introduction to the process and deliverable that will be achieved through this work effort.

Process

The development process we use is based on the process developed at the Harvard Business School, Stanford University and in partnership with successful businesses across the country.

The general theory is captured in a book called Lean Startup and further refined in the book Running Lean. We have found that using this process in conjunction with Agile development processes creates a much higher probability of developing a solution that users will actually want to use.

The outline below is an overview of the steps that will be used to develop our solution.

1. **Create an app canvas**
   Create a model of the app and business model needed to support it
   http://leancanvas.com/
2. **Conduct problem interviews**
   Make sure we are trying to solve the right problems
3. **Identify and prioritize risks**
   Identify what might hinder this project
4. **Create experiments to mitigate risks**
   Find a way to mitigate the risks that have been identified
5. **Document solution**
   Write up the proposed solution based on the documented information we've received so far
6. **Conduct solution interviews**
   Make sure the proposed solutions work for users
7. **Iterate prototype**
   Create the initial clickable prototype

Solution

Our current hypothesis is that a web application will solve the following list of problems for it's users. These problems have been identified by the D.Min research that Michael Hearn has completed in the George Fox Theological Seminary Global Missional Leadership program.

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Hypothetical Problems

Users need to be able to aggregate content from multiple sources
Users need to be able to organize information in a clear way
Users need to be able to make focused decisions about mission opportunities
Users need to be able to understand how hastags work and how to integrate with MoBi
Users need to be able to access content in closed SBC systems
Users need to be able to integrate a content widget that makes access the content easy
Users need to understand that this will benefit them and how

The solution that we'll develop will solve each of these problems in one experience that will be evaluated and revised by our test users and the process structure.

Prototype

The final deliverable for this phase will be a clickable prototype of the app that represents the solution as defined by our process. By creating a prototype first, we can evaluate how and what to build. Having this knowledge we can more accurately build the system that will support the prototype.

Beyond the prototype - Building the application

Once the prototype has been approved, our development phase can begin. The development phase will develop the final application. Additional efforts will be required for content strategy and customer support for the application. These efforts can be significant and will require an additional proposal process to accurately predict budget.

Timeline

Our proposal can essentially be broken down into three steps. The first is to define the problem. The second is to define the solution. The final is to build the prototype. The following timeline assumes a start date of February 1, 2013.

Problem Definition: Complete 2/28/2013
Solution Definition: Complete 3/31/2013
Prototype: Complete 5/31/2013

Budget

The following estimate is design to capture the budget required to get the solutions to a clickable prototype.

Problem Definition: $8,000
Solution Definition: $12,000
Prototype: $40,000