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Evangelicals

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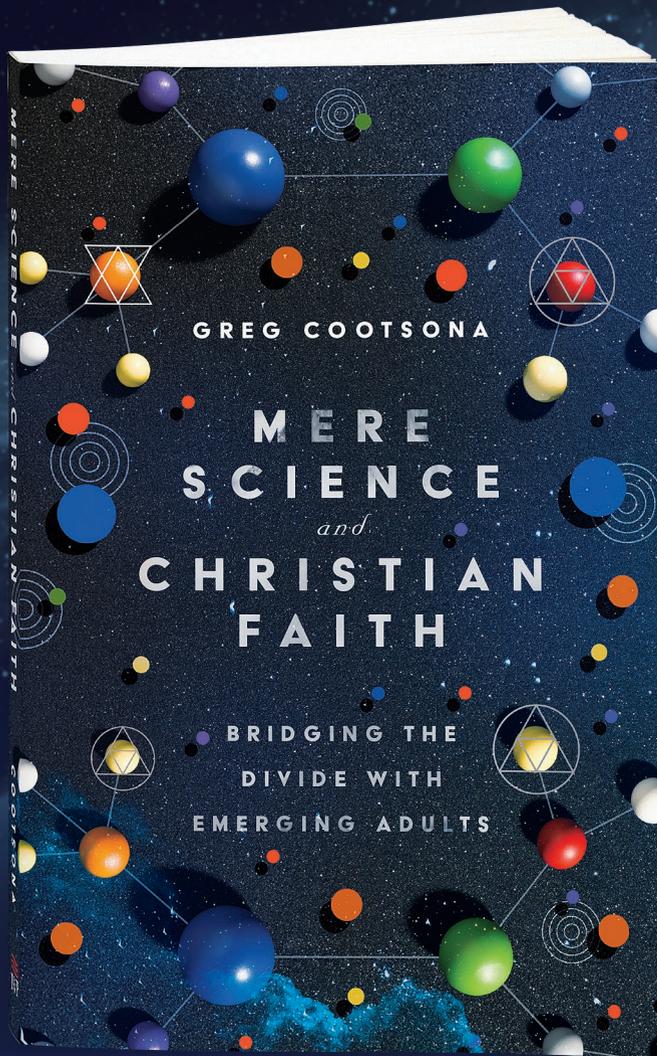
ADAM MCLANE



SCIENCE AND FAITH AREN'T ANTAGONISTIC

"Greg reflects on science, technology, faith, and emerging adults with learning, urgency, clarity, and grace."

JOHN ORTBERG, senior pastor of Menlo Church



Emerging adults want to believe that science and faith can coexist peacefully, and Greg Cootsona argues that they can.

In this book he holds out a vision for the integration of science and faith and how it can lead us more deeply into the conversations that confront the church today.



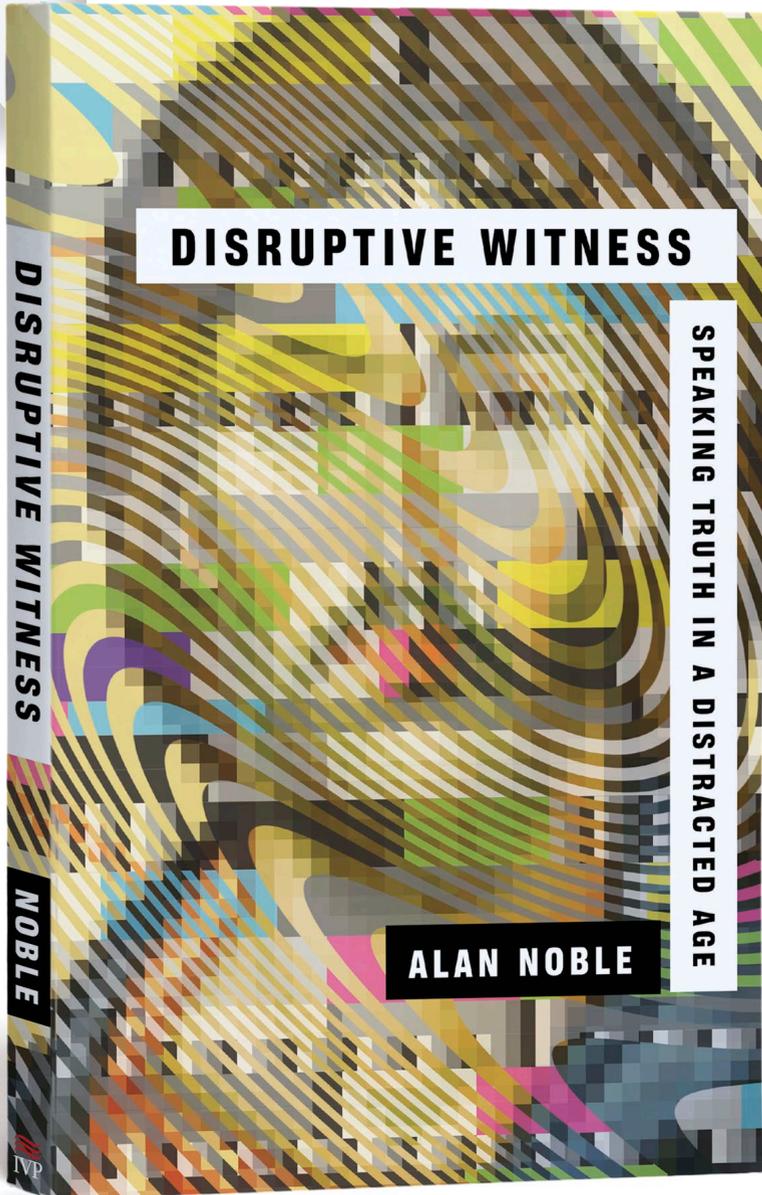
GREG COOTSONA is a writer, researcher, and speaker. He directs Science and Theology for Emerging Adult Ministries (or STEAM) at Fuller Theological Seminary, and teaches religious studies and humanities at California State University at Chico. He recently finished eighteen years as associate pastor for adult discipleship at Bidwell Presbyterian Church in Chico and Fifth Avenue Presbyterian in New York City.

• **How Do We Engage Faithfully in a Distracted Culture?**

Disruptive Witness

Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age

Alan Noble



Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age

"If you want to know what the next generation of evangelicalism could and should look like, look to Alan Noble. Grounded, faithful, and circumspect, he is asking all the right questions and leading us to better answers."

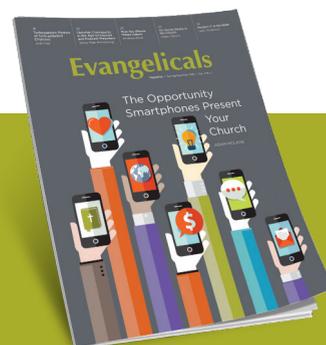
Karen Swallow Prior,
author of *Booked: Literature in the Soul of Me*



ALAN NOBLE is assistant professor of English at Oklahoma Baptist University and cofounder and editor in chief of Christ and Pop Culture. He has written for *The Atlantic*, *Vox*, *BuzzFeed*, *The Gospel Coalition*, *Christianity Today*, and *First Things*.

Evangelicals

The Magazine of the National Association of Evangelicals



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Today's Conversation provides opportunities for you to hear from leading thinkers, theologians, activists, culture-makers and more.

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The development of technology is not new. Still there is a sense that today’s technology, which has the power to keep us connected all the time and everywhere, is unique. Over the past two decades, communications technology has significantly impacted how we live, work and interact with others — the implications of which we may not yet fully understand or appreciate.

Technology now connects us in ways we couldn’t have imagined. And ironically, technology has also made it easier to disconnect from others. Like many things, technology cuts both ways depending on how it is used. Technology is not an isolated, abstract concept. Rather today’s technology mirrors human nature — revealing both wholeness and brokenness.

So, how then shall we live? This Evangelicals edition considers the unique challenges and opportunities that communications technology presents Christ-followers who seek to love God and love people. It focuses on how technology impacts the church and gives advice to pastors and church leaders who desire to shepherd their people in an age of technology. We also include guidance from a ministry leader (Doug Nuenke, U.S. president of The Navigators) to other evangelical leaders on when and how to speak on local, state and national issues in a social media environment.

We need not consider technology the enemy or avoid it out of fear. Instead we should approach technology with wisdom, confidence and hope. Technology presents many opportunities for introspection, discipleship and outreach. May our approach and use of technology — like many other parts of life — be an area in which Christians display Christ to a desperate world.





Remembering Billy Graham

“ Billy Graham has been the best known face and voice of evangelicalism for more than half a century. With Christian graciousness, he transcended political and religious differences to faithfully proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Billy Graham loved God, and we loved Billy Graham. We will miss him.”

Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals

“ For years, over his head as he preached was the banner that quoted the words of Jesus: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. Jesus completed that sentence by saying that no one comes to the Father but by me. Based on what Jesus said, Daddy is safely with the Father. In heaven. Daddy not only claimed Jesus as the only Way to God, he lived by the Truth publicly on platforms and privately behind closed doors, and is now enjoying real Life.”

Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of Billy Graham

“ The thing that I adored most about him is that he remained the most humble and giant of a man you would ever, ever, ever want to meet. He had this incredible, loving presence of a person for the masses, but then when you were one-on-one with him, you were the only person in the room. Rarely do people have both of those gifts.”

Kathie Lee Gifford, host of Today

“ Billy’s teachings taught me how to disciple and counsel people. I learned how to get them connected with the local church. He was a true partner in Christ and was someone who enriched the Church’s demonstration of the gospel, particularly through its embodiment of reconciliation.”

John Perkins, founder of the Christian Community Development Association

“ Dr. Graham attempted to connect with political leaders from all parts of the political spectrum, so that they would have available to them the resources of the gospel. I admire his willingness to risk criticism to take the gospel into the places of power, as well as all other arenas of society.”

Shirley Mullen, president of Houghton College

“ The GREAT Billy Graham is dead. There was nobody like him! He will be missed by Christians and all religions. A very special man.”

President Donald Trump

“ Broad-minded, forgiving and humble in his treatment of others, he exemplified the life of Jesus Christ by constantly reaching out for opportunities to serve.”

President Jimmy Carter

Defining Evangelical

“Some words, like strategic castles, are worth defending, and evangelical is among them. While the term is notoriously difficult to define, it certainly encompasses a ‘born-again’ religious experience, a commitment to the authority of the Bible, and an emphasis on the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.”

Michael Gerson, former speechwriter for President George W. Bush, in *The Atlantic*

Cultural Identity

“Just for the sake of understanding what the gospel is and to make sure we’re not being co-opted by cultural context and cultural influences, it’s important to know our cultural identity. In another way, knowing ourselves actually helps us to see our neighbors as well. I think that’s important.”

Daniel Lee, director of the Asian American Center at Fuller Theological Seminary, on *Today’s Conversation* podcast at [NAE.net/leepodcast](https://nae.net/leepodcast)

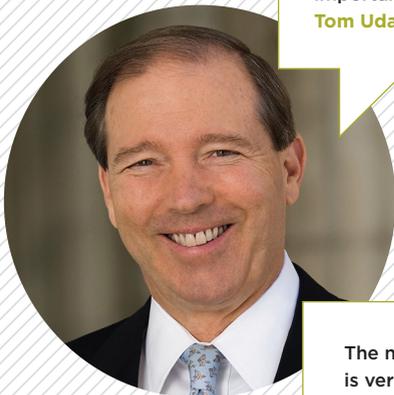


“When former prisoners serve in ministry, we are reminded of the redemption and restoration that all Christians enjoy in Christ” @leithanderson @NAEvangelicals #SecondChances #justicethatrestores Jeremiah Mosteller @jgmosteller1

Great to meet Sergio today, a student from Pojoaque & students from across the country who are in DC for the @NAEvangelicals Christian Student Leadership Conference. We had an important discussion about protecting America’s #publiclands & staying civically engaged. Tom Udall @SenatorTomUdall

“Evangelicals should not be solely identified with any politician or party. We should meet and work in a bipartisan fashion where our gospel values are represented through policy.” @salgueros agrees with majority @NAEvangelicals to move beyond partisanship National Latino Evangelical Coalition @NalecNews

The new issue of “Evangelicals,” the magazine from @NAEvangelicals, is very well done. Noll on the history and challenges of the e-word, Jeannine Brown on euangelion, lots more. Ted Olsen @tedolsen





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EVANGELICAL CALENDAR

Please join the evangelical community at these events hosted by the NAE and its members. **Your prayers are welcome too.**

Many of these events include downloadable resources for promotion and participation.



JUNE 12-15, 2018

Walk in Wisdom

Milwaukee, WI

Association of Gospel Rescue Missions
AGRM.org

This annual convention will train gospel rescue mission leaders from across North America to walk in wisdom as they examine biblical truth and apply it to the challenges of being the hands and feet of Jesus every day.



SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2018

Partnership: Mission Leaders Conference

Orlando, FL

Missio Nexus
MissioNexus.org/partnership

Church and missions leaders will be encouraged and equipped to make disciples of all nations. This is the place for learning and networking within the missions community.



JUNE 26-28, 2018

Amplify Conference

Chicago, IL

Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College
AmplifyConference.tv

At Amplify, church and lay leaders will focus on evangelism for today — stripping out the complexities of gospel witness and revealing the simplicity of the gospel that overcomes all barriers.

JULY 24-27, 2018

Chaplains Training Workshop

Alexandria, VA

Evangelical Chaplains Commission
NAE.net/chaplainsworkshop

Each year the Evangelical Chaplains Commission hosts a training workshop for the benefit of its chaplains and candidates, as well as chaplains from NAE denominations. This is a time for them to be equipped and empowered in their ministry.



SEPTEMBER 26, 2018

See You At The Pole

National Network of Youth Ministries
SYATP.com

Since 1990, students have gathered around their school's flagpole to pray for their school, friends, families, churches and communities.

JULY 8, 2018

Pray Together Sunday

National Association of Evangelicals
NAE.net/praytogether

Join with churches across the country and ask God for spiritual renewal. Together we will lift our voices on behalf of our communities and nation.

SEPTEMBER 6-7, 2018

National Preaching Conference

South Hamilton, MA

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
GordonConwell.edu

"Preaching to Prove" is the theme of the National Preaching Conference, where preachers and plenary speakers will encourage attendees to know and prove their faith in Christ to a culture in need of the certainty found in Christ.



Find additional Evangelical Calendar opportunities online at NAE.net/calendar.

WORTH NOTING

✓ Pray Together Sunday

Asking God for Spiritual Renewal on July 8

The National Association of Evangelicals encourages churches around the country and across denominational lines to commit to a time of prayer for our nation during worship services on July 8. Pray Together Sunday focuses on seeking God for spiritual renewal in our communities and nation.

Evangelicals believe that Jesus changes everything. With one voice, Christians across the nation will worship God and ask him to transform congregations, communities and the country for his glory. They will ask him for renewal in their hearts and in the hearts of those around them.



More on Pray Together Sunday

Register your church to pray for our nation on Sunday, July 8, at [NAE.net/praytogether](https://www.nae.net/praytogether).

Listen to Today's Conversation podcast with Daniel Henderson on Prayer in America at [NAE.net/hendersonpodcast](https://www.nae.net/hendersonpodcast).

✓ EPC Pastor Remains in Turkish Prison

Andrew Brunson, an Evangelical Presbyterian Church pastor, was imprisoned in Turkey in October 2016 on terrorism and espionage charges. Along with his wife, Brunson served as a church planter and pastor in Turkey for 23 years.

"I don't accept any of the allegations or accusations. I did not engage in any illegal activity. I had no relations with anyone engaged in such activity. I am a Christian pastor. I did not join an Islamic movement. Their aims and mine are different," Brunson said during his trial on April 16. The next hearing is scheduled for July.

Jeff Jeremiah, EPC stated clerk, said, "We will continue to cry to God in prayer for our brother in Christ. As Andrew's trial has drawn the attention of the U.S. and global media, we need to do all we can to keep the world's attention on Andrew and his unjust imprisonment."

Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina and Sam Brownback, ambassador-at-large for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, attended the April trial in Turkey.



Stay updated at [EPCConnection.org](https://www.epcconnection.org).

✓ NAE Brings Christian College Students to the Hill

Since 1956, the National Association of Evangelicals has brought Christian collegians to Washington, D.C., to learn how to engage in public policy. This year during the week-long Christian Student Leadership Conference in January, students considered what the country will look like in the next 10, 20 and 30 years, and how they can make a difference.

Students heard from top public policy influencers; discussed issues, such as gun violence, North Korea, the national debt, immigration and criminal justice; and addressed their concerns with elected leaders on Capitol Hill. One student remarked, "This conference was absolutely amazing, challenging and enlightening. We so appreciate the opportunity!"

Government leaders who spoke at the CSLC included Senators Cory Gardner, Chuck Grassley, Mike Lee, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, Thom Tillis, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse; Senate Chaplain Barry Black; Former Representative Frank Wolf; and White House Director of Legislative Affairs Marc Short, among many others.

✓ Praying for Just Peace on the Korean Peninsula

A broad group of evangelical leaders came together to call for united prayer for peace on the Korean peninsula. "... we unite in prayer for permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. We do this mindful of the millions of lives, including more than 230,000 Americans, that would be threatened by an escalation of conflict there," the call states.

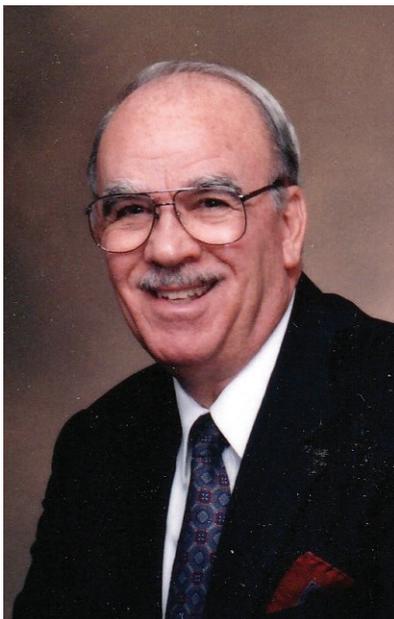
Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, said, "Evangelicals have long been concerned about religious persecution and other human rights violations in North Korea, as well as the destabilizing impact of North Korea's nuclear program. Now we face the possibility of a war in which many thousands, and perhaps millions of civilians, including many Americans, would be killed. We pray God will guide all leaders involved toward a just and peaceful resolution of the conflicts between our nations."

The NAE invites Christians to sign the call to prayer and join in praying for just peace on the Korean Peninsula on Fridays at noon.



To sign the Evangelical Call to Prayer for Just Peace on the Korean Peninsula, visit EvangelicalsForPeace.org/northkorea.

Learn about Avoiding Nuclear Catastrophe from Max Tegmark, professor of physics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, at NAE.net/tegmarkpodcast.



✓ Billy Melvin, Past NAE Leader, Dies at 88

The National Association of Evangelicals celebrates the life and ministry of Billy Melvin, who died February 1, 2018, at age 88. Melvin served as the NAE executive director for 28 years, retiring in 1995.

While Melvin was NAE executive director, the organization expanded on several fronts, including the 1979 construction of the Evangelical Center, which sought to support the local church's mission of preaching and teaching the gospel, in Wheaton, Illinois. During Melvin's tenure, Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush spoke to NAE audiences, and the NAE celebrated several legislative victories. Melvin also sought to elevate the status and role of denominations in the NAE. Between 1981 and 1990, 15 denominations joined the NAE.

Harold Smith, president and CEO of Christianity Today, served as the NAE director of information and editor of United Evangelical Action magazine while Melvin was executive director. Smith said, "Billy helped this then fresh-out-of-school young man see and more fully engage the 'big tent' of evangelicalism. He modeled for me the movement's language of gospel conviction lived out in Christ-centered love. And with all that, God used him to set me on an unlikely course that would eventually lead me to Christianity Today. Thank you, Billy. And to God be the glory!"



To Speak or Not to Speak

Guidelines in a Social Media World

One of the challenges we face regularly as ministry leaders is deciding when to speak and when not to speak on issues or events in our culture. It can be a heart-stretching decision. I've been asked on numerous occasions, "Why don't you say something about topics like 'X'?" It's a good question.



Over the years, the leadership team at The Navigators has been asked to speak out on many topics. For example: abortion; political candidates; LGBT issues and same-sex marriage; refugees and immigration; race relations; class injustice; tax reform; women's rights; creation stewardship (environmentalism); assisted suicide; and dignity and care for the elderly.

There are others, but you get the idea. It should be of little surprise that on a number of these topics, individuals within the Christian communities we serve have diverse experiences and opinions. In the world we seek to reach with the message of Christ Jesus, there is even broader disagreement.

The conundrum: How can we, as Christ-following leaders, present a pure and unencumbered gospel if we become increasingly defined by our stances on certain issues, rather than being known as men and women who seek to incarnate and proclaim the central message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus? Keeping the message of Jesus and his reign focused and pure proves impossible if it gets attached to any number of causes or issues.

Striking a balance is essential and most difficult. I don't have the answers, but am walking in humility as a learner in this slippery dynamic. Here are four principles that may be helpful amid the tension of knowing when to speak and when not to speak:

Keeping focus. First and foremost, what is the mission of your organization or church? While many topics can be argued to be "gospel issues," staying focused and speaking on the issues related to your organization or church's unique contribution can help ensure, when you do speak, you are in the right conversation.

Being apolitical. For organizations and churches without a stated political purpose, you have a choice on whether or not to choose sides on political issues. During President Obama's tenure and now with President Trump, there were and are members of our constituencies who want(ed) us to speak out against the policies of one or the other. In every administration, there are heightened emotions and accusations that a political official's actions are evil, or that they have nefarious motives. It may even be true.

How can we keep the gospel free from political language? The ugliness of humanity that is often magnified in political debate seldom wins people to Jesus, and when that ugliness is attached to Jesus, it can even drive people away. Throughout history, there have been exceptions to this principle, when governments went "off the rails," but at least based on what we read

in the gospels, even Jesus had little to say on many of the issues of his day.

Addressing strategic priorities vital to accomplishing our mission. There may be certain strategic priorities that are so vital to our organization's mission that they are worth speaking about, even though they are not our primary purpose. To retain focus when addressing secondary issues, we must be sure to connect the dots to why the area is essential to accomplishing our purpose. For example, it is a strategic priority for The U.S. Navigators to increase ethnic minority contribution in our organization. We have therefore chosen to speak on some significant cultural events related to the dignity and value of ethnic minorities to further reinforce this priority.

Standing with others in pain or opposing evil. In some situations (like natural disasters and mass shootings), we as leaders may speak up to call those around us to prayer or to stand together with others in the Body of Christ (Romans 12:15), in opposition to evil or in solidarity due to a natural or unnatural disaster (Matthew 5:13-16). We could fill unlimited pages speaking of the pain, distress and evil that exists in our desperately broken world, but when we do speak we must remain biblically rooted with hope and wisdom, and lean towards a message of compassion versus condemnation.

How can we, as Christ-following leaders, present a pure and unencumbered gospel if we become increasingly defined by our stances on certain issues?

When Jesus spoke harsh words, they were almost exclusively directed at legalistic religious leaders (see Matthew 23:13-29) and the religious lies that kept people from experiencing the freedom found in the gospel. Jesus lived during a time of political tension. He lived among an oppressed people, under the power of an occupying government, and among people divided deeply by race, class and religion.

Yet he taught, modeled and led people to lives of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. While Jesus spent much time with the disenfranchised and vulnerable, he also showed that love was the answer for everyone, whether rich or poor, regardless of race, gender or social status. Jesus offered hope to all those he touched.

This contentious and broken world in which we live does not lend itself to easy answers on these issues, but let me offer a simple acrostic that may be helpful when the decision is made to speak:

Timely. Response may not happen in minutes or even hours, but for some events, response within days can be important.

Empathetic. Connect with the hearts and souls of those affected.

Acknowledge. Call the situation what it is. Affirm the brokenness and desperation of our world in light of the event, and in rare instances, call out sin.

Calling. Connect the message to your organization or church's calling or mission.

Help. Let those affected know you stand ready to help, whether someone to talk with or tangible assistance.

As leaders seeking to follow Jesus and care for the flocks entrusted to us, we bear the weight of decisions on when to speak and when not to speak. But we also stand together, grounded in our common faith with a commitment to love Jesus and bring the hopeful, unencumbered message of the gospel to our broken world. 🙏





Adam McLane is partner at The Youth Cartel and author of "Tuning In: Six Ways to Reclaim Your Life From Technology."

The Opportunity Smartphones Present Your Church

"Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?" This was the question posed by San Diego State University's Jean Twenge in the September 2017 issue of The Atlantic. It's a really good title for a magazine article as it speaks directly to the fears I've heard echoed from adults and parents as I've traveled the country offering parenting workshops at schools and churches.



For Christians and church leaders my response to Twenge is simple: It doesn't really matter. Seemingly for all of modern history, people worry about the latest trends. But these are just distractions from our mission. The same things parents say about children playing too many video games today were said in 1987. This is what old people do to young people: fret that they are ruining everything.

What we personally think about changes in society is secondary to the Great Commission work of reaching our contemporary culture. Jesus' universal command remains the same: Love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds and souls, and love our neighbors as ourselves.

Let's not waste our time wringing our hands to the point of inaction. Instead, let's look for opportunities to engage with culture the way Paul did, "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship — and this is what I am going to proclaim to you" (Acts 17:22-23).

Instead of focusing energy on what we don't like about smartphone culture, let's redouble our efforts to deeply understand today's society. Let us minister from optimism in all that the Holy Spirit does through us, not lament at comparisons to the good old days. Let's face it: The good old days weren't nearly as great as we remember them anyway.

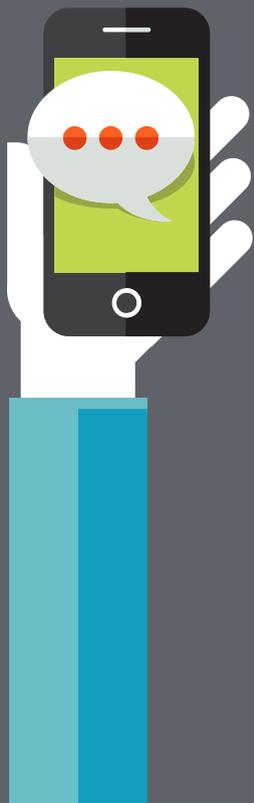
The Least Powerful Person in the Room

The pulpit has changed as a result of smartphone technology. For generations, when someone stepped into the pulpit, they became the most powerful, authoritative voice. Usually, they stepped onto a platform or stood behind a lectern while others were seated in a room with all eyes on them. Their amplified voice overcame all other noise.

For millennia the pastor in his pulpit enjoyed this power. However, smartphones have reversed that power dynamic. The pulpit voice is now disconnected and tied to a linear, pre-determined script. The Sunday morning message is now subject to instant fact-checking, to texting conversations among hearers, to social media dialogue and (I will confess) a little shopping during the dull parts. Since everyone has a smartphone on them, the pulpit's authority is no longer necessarily the loudest voice in the room. Attention is now politely requested. Sometimes it's given. Sometimes it isn't.

Don't be threatened by this new reality. Change creates opportunity! Don't guilt your congregation to turn off their phones. Instead, shift the focus of your message by offering something they can't get on Facebook or from their favorite podcasting pastor.

The great opportunity smartphones bring churches is connection. We no longer need to gather each week for more information. We have information at our fingertips whenever we want it. Instead of information sharing, the pulpit can be a place to connect our hearts and minds to what God is doing in our congregation, neighborhoods and cities. I can't remember a time when a congregation pulled out their phones to snap a photo during an information-based sermon. But the congregation celebrating the testimony of a life changed by Jesus, the baptism of a new believer, or child dedication? Even old grannies pull out their phones for that.



Healing a Divided Society

I'm only 41 years old, but I have a hard time remembering a time period quite as weird as this one. The current political situation is a dangerous mix of very interesting and very toxic. It seems like everyone wants to talk about politics — usually leading off by quipping that they don't want to talk about politics. Yet people seem divided on not just the actual politics but also whether they even want to have the conversation.

I believe there is an opportunity for churches to lead people beyond what to think about the politics of the day, but instead to teach how to think about today's important issues as dual citizens of our country and the kingdom of God.

Over the past month I've interviewed about a dozen pastors about how they are leading their congregations during this time of political division. While these pastors seem divided on how to cope with the political climate individually — particularly in their strategies on how their own staff engages or does not engage with political discussions on social media — they are universally recognizing the hurt.

My encouragement is for your congregation to lead the way in your community in creating spaces for dialogue. Every day our Facebook and Twitter newsfeeds are full of stories about big, important issues of the day like racism, violence, sexual harassment and equality, and yet there are very few places in our lives to turn to where we can process these things. I meet people in my community who know I'm a Christian and ask me, "Where are the Christian leaders? Our community is hurting and all they are posting on Twitter is an invitation to their next church event."

We all know that social media can become an echo chamber. It's my hope that churches — especially within the evangelical tradition which has historically cherished intellectual honesty — can become trusted voices in our communities where we can gather to learn both about the issues of the day as well as how to talk about them in a way that honors our relationship with Jesus. Likewise, there is a huge opportunity for Christian leaders to act as the social media moderators in helping people discuss, even disagree, in ways that are respectful and honoring of all people.

The Sabbath is Healthy and Necessary

I'll close with one last opportunity technology and social media present for the church. Every person I meet, whether

a child, teenager or adult, is grappling with some form of Internet addiction. The devices we love are double-edged swords. They are so fun, so useful and so entertaining that we want to use them all the time. This is particularly acute among adults — many of whom have learned that technology allows them the chance to work whenever, wherever and for however long they'd like.

As Christians this is an opportunity to get a refresher about the purpose of the Sabbath. Sabbath isn't just about resting or doing nothing; it is also about trust. At its core, for humans, the Sabbath commandment asks us to trust God to provide seven days of resources with only six days of work.

In the United States most of us don't really need to work seven days per week. But you can imagine that in other places, in other times, the Sabbath commandment meant that you had to haul double the water or figure out how to make extra food or how to take care of your animals before the Sabbath began.

We now live in a time that allows us, in one form or another, to work 24 hours per day, seven days per week. We don't have to trust that everything is OK at work or even at home. One of the greatest opportunities the church has today is to model the power that the principle of Sabbath can have in our walk with Jesus.

In our house we aren't legalistic about it, but we are fairly practical. We have two Sabbath practices. On Sunday, our Sabbath day, we go to church in the morning, and when we come home we don't use Internet-connected devices until after dinner. Sometimes we go to the beach or work in the garden or play board games or just take a nap. But the one thing we don't do is work (or homework!).

And then throughout the week we set aside the dinner table as a device-free zone. For me — probably the most device dependent of the five of us — that means that before dinner I put my phone on silent and leave it somewhere else in the house, so I'm not distracted by the knowledge that it exists. For the next 10-20 minutes, our family sits around the table enjoying a meal while not looking at our phones. These things are glorious and simple, almost as if they were one of the 10 commandments.



Every person I meet, whether a child, teenager or adult is grappling with some form of Internet addiction. The devices we love are double-edged swords. They are so fun, so useful and so entertaining that we want to use them all the time.





Technophobic Pastors of Tech-Addicted Churches

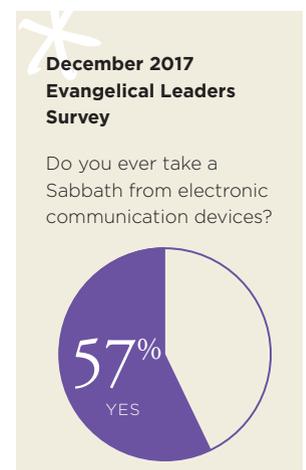
People have struggled with a little known, but widely felt phobia for at least 150 years now. The fear is of the latest technology. Consider this terrifying description of the introduction of “electric elevators” in the late 1800s on the Engineering and Technology History Wiki website:

The electrical elevator led to the birth of the skyscraper, but acceptance of the electrified elevator option did not occur overnight. Electricity was a new technology and a source of both fear and wonderment. Electricity was an unseen force that moved along slender wires. It could magically light a room or a street — but it could also kill. Fear of electrical energy was bad enough, but anxieties were ratcheted up considerably more when coupled with the thought of being suspended in an elevator 20 or more stories above the ground.

The fear of new technology and how it may affect us has been around at least as long as humans have invented, mass produced and marketed new products to the public. Always paired with promises to make our lives easier, more efficient and save us time. This fear has a name that was first used in 1947: *technophobia*. It means a fear or dislike of advanced technology or complex devices, especially computers, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

I’ve lived most of my life in the San Francisco Bay Area and Silicon Valley. This is where most tech is developed. Recently a woman controlling a small robot with her phone carrying her groceries down the street startled me. I have watched driverless cars pass each other going opposite directions in left hand turn lanes. Saudi Arabia has granted citizenship to an Artificial Intelligence robot named Sophia. Private Trips to Mars are not far off!

When will it stop? The answer: It won’t. Technology doesn’t move backwards. Love it or hate it, it is here to stay, and it is moving forward at increasing speed toward infinity. For those who





hate it, the technological push forward and its perceived effects on us represent a digital Tower of Babel whereby man strives to ever increasing heights. Only this tower is built on the mysterious interwebs somewhere, and its bricks are actually older model iPhones.

It seems the choice for us today is either becoming raging technophobes railing against the nefarious uses of technology, or enthusiastic tech-evangelists who extol the virtues and possibilities of all things shiny and electronic!

Those who fall into the camp of tech-evangelists (i.e., “tech-addicts”) cannot resist the allure of the latest technology. These folks are “those people” who spend the night outside malls waiting to get their hands on the latest device. They eagerly sacrifice their time and hard earned money for the newest “thing” swearing they could quit any time! (If the mere thought of being away from your phone for more than two hours causes your eye to twitch, *Yes, I am speaking to you.*)

How are pastors to respond? Should we preach and model a tech-free lifestyle and rail against technology in an effort to save our people from themselves? Or should we praise the latest and greatest tech and implore people toward all the good that it can do in the world? Surely these are not the only options we have.

What if there is a third way: a way between technophobia and tech-addiction? Is there a healthy way to engage with technology that is not crushing to the soul? I believe there is.

The reality is that technology is generally amoral. Most devices do

not have a moral will bent upon evil and our destruction. Most things can be used for good or evil. Usually it all comes down to how you use it — including when, where, how frequently, and the duration as well.

Here are three things that have greatly shaped how I use, think about, interact and even preach about technology. I hope you will find them helpful:

1. *Set Technology Limits.* We are tempted to think if a little is awesome, then a lot must be uber-awesome! But as mom always said, “Too much of a good thing is a bad thing.” Our family practices screen-free time at dinner and all screens off between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. every night. This prevents many wasted hours of trolling the Internet and social media or responding to email constantly.
2. *Focus on doing only one thing at a time.* In our hurried scattered lives, the ability to remain present to people and in the present moment is a great gift. Technology always tempts us to focus on more than one thing at once, which only serves to distract us or irritate the people around us. This is easier said than done, but it looks like this: Drive (don’t text and drive); Talk attentively to a coworker or loved one (don’t talk and check emails or troll social media while mindlessly repeating “uh-huh”); etc.
3. *Fast from technology.* Plan regular times in your calendar during your day, week, month and even year when you intentionally are

unreachable, unconnected, without screens, off social media, and off the grid (preferably some place quiet and outdoors). Grow in your ability to spend longer periods of time without tech. Realize the distracting effects technology has on your relationships with other people, your own soul, and even with God.

Should we preach and model a tech-free lifestyle and rail against technology in an effort to save our people from themselves? Or should we praise the latest and greatest tech and implore people toward all the good that it can do in the world?



As pastors we never want ourselves, or those we love and lead, to live in fear and detachment, but we don’t want to be mastered by anything either. There is a way with technology, like everything else, for us to learn how to live freely with God’s help in the tension as Jesus prayed for us: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one” (John 17:15). **E**





Christian Community in the Age of Internet and Podcast Preachers

I had just turned into the Sunday School wing when I felt the telltale squish of carpeting under my feet, water seeping up the edges of my ballet flats. I groaned. I slipped off my shoes, cuffed up my jeans, and waded through an inch of water to the bathrooms, praying that the holding tanks weren't backing up again. Happily, the water gushing from beneath the sink in the women's restroom was clean. But my Tuesday had just gone down the drain — literally. I shut off the water, texted the head trustee, and grabbed a mop.

There's a lot more to pastoring than developing and preaching sermons, and that is especially true for pastors who serve at small- to medium-sized churches run mainly by volunteers. Despite the dire warnings from church growth experts and leadership seminars, we are Jacks and Jills of all trades, intimately involved in our church and community.

Any given day might find us serving communion in a nursing home, swinging a hammer beside a congregant, sitting in a courtroom during a custody hearing, or buying gas cards for the person who came in off the street. We plan the services, sit on the committees, pick up the half-empty Dunkin' Donuts cups the youth forgot under the seats on Wednesday, and make sure someone is looking in on Bob while Dolores is in the hospital. We are pastors, looking after the flock God has entrusted to our care. And while we admire Tim Keller's preaching as much as the next person, when was the last time he showed up to your kid's middle school band concert?

Forgive me if I sound defensive, but when it comes to preaching, I can't even compete with my own best efforts most weeks, much less the pressed and polished eloquence of Christian celebrities whose main trade is words. Some weeks I have days of inspired study to weave into a carefully crafted sermon. Other weeks I'm ankle deep in my community's literal and metaphorical poop.

Church attendance has been declining for years, even among those who identify as churchgoers. There are valid reasons to skip church, but "I learn more listening to sermons on Stitcher" isn't one of them. And lest we blame it all on the Millennials,

I've heard more than one older person cite their favorite TV preachers as an excuse for their spotty church attendance.

Since when was church all about preaching and teaching? Even the Reformers, those early champions of the central role of the sermon in Christian worship, knew better than that. The church is a family, and being part of a family involves regular interaction with other human beings — even human beings who annoy, embarrass and disappoint us at times. The church is a body that works together to perform many vital functions, not just a disembodied mouth yammering into ears plugged with Bluetooth buds.

Evangelicals may be particularly guilty in this area. Our tradition was born out of the revivals, where music and preaching (usually by a celebrated circuit rider) took center stage, with nary a wafer or wine glass to be found. It's not surprising that our services still bear resemblance to their revivalist roots, but when the average evangelical thinks church is mostly about the message and the music, we have lost something vital. Why should someone inconvenience themselves by attending church when better, shinier and infinitely more convenient options are available for easy consumption online?

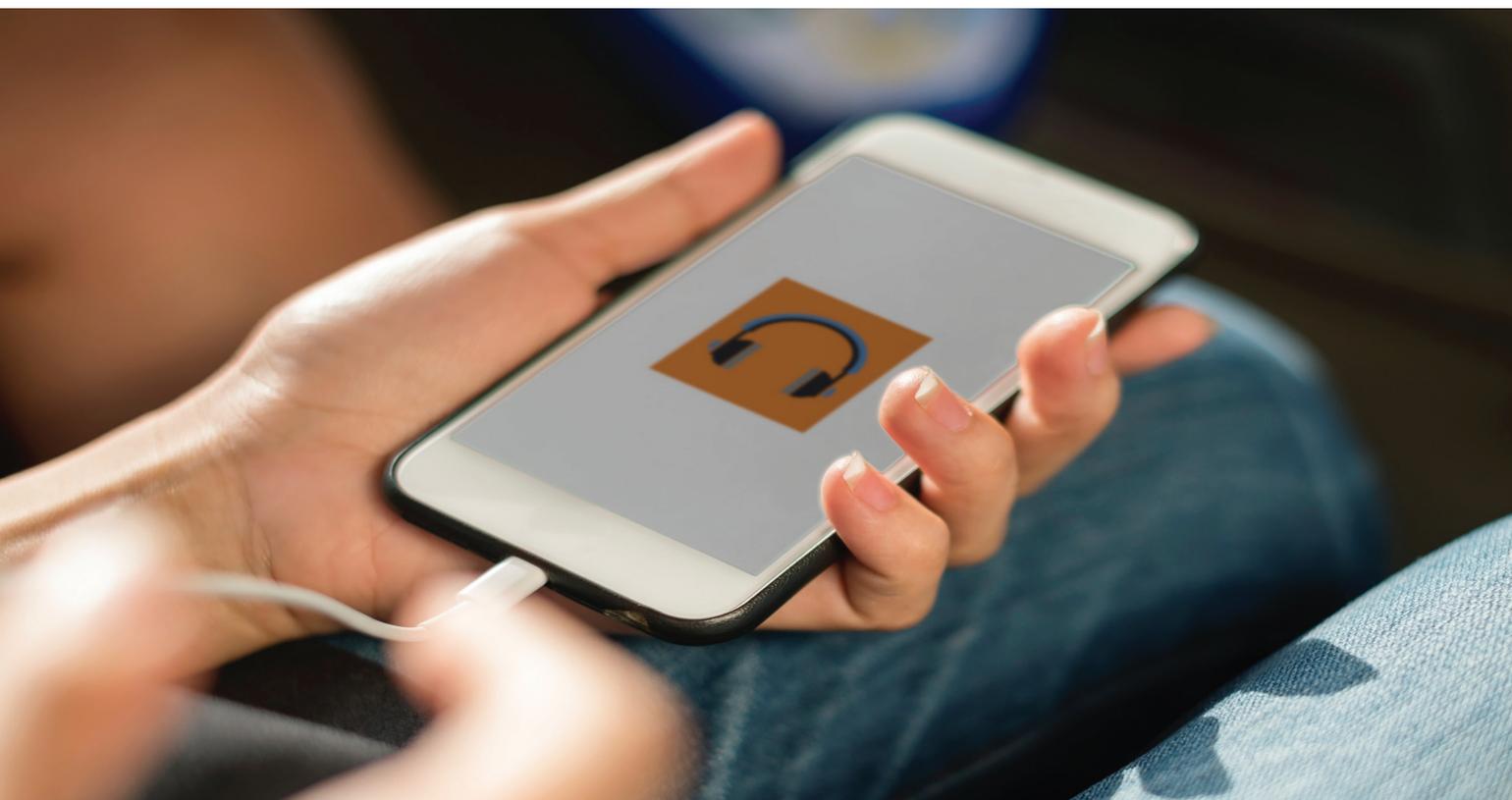
Honestly, though, I usually assume there are other issues at play when a believer trades their local church for a podcast preacher and virtual community. Maybe the person has hit a spiritual growth spurt and is starving for solid food the rest of the congregation isn't ready to digest. Maybe they have

Forgive me if I sound defensive, but when it comes to preaching, I can't even compete with my own best efforts most weeks, much less the pressed and polished eloquence of Christian celebrities whose main trade is words.

questions, and don't feel like their church is a safe place to ask them. Maybe they have been hurt by someone in their church and feel retreat is their only viable option.

Ironically, these issues all stem from a failure of community — a failure to nurture, a failure to listen, a failure to create a safe space for believers to flourish in every stage of their spiritual life.

The resources radio, television and the Internet have made available to us are an incredible gift, and we should take full advantage of them. But we were not created to live, learn and worship in isolation. Let's double-down on local Christian community, and recommit to growing and getting better, together. **E**





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Andrew Root is the Carrie Olson Baalson Professor of Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary and author of “Faith Formation in a Secular Age.”



How the iPhone Makes Haters

We have a 13-year-old in our house. My son’s pushes and pulls as he births his identity is torture — for us as much as him. At the center of the confusing seventh grade conflicts, the flailing for independence and the arguments over homework and rules, one constant thought keeps coming to my mind, “I wish we would have never gotten him a cell phone.”

My impossible dream of putting the iPhone genie back in the bottle is probably not for the reasons you think. I’m as concerned as anyone about pornography, and wish I could cut screen time to protect all the synapses I fear he’s frying as his eyes are transfixed on the glowing screen.

But my real concern is bigger, and one that reflects the time we all are in, whether we are 13 or 43. Philosopher Charles Taylor has argued that we are living in the age of authenticity. And this age has an ethic that we all follow or crash up against. It says that every human being has a right to define for himself or herself what it means to be human.

In this age of authenticity and its ethic of self-definition, we work out these identities through a politics of recognition. Social media platforms like SnapChat, Twitter and Instagram (and cooler ones I don’t know about) become the stages on which we express our authenticity. While this authenticity is supposed to be mine alone, it can’t really be lived out that way. I need others to recognize my unique way of being human. I know that I’m doing well, because I’m recognized and receive the likes, retweets and overall affirmation I need.

This is what I’m worried about with my son — the constant 24-hour, non-stop, in-his-pocket push to seek recognition and to form his identity primarily by getting this recognition.

Furthermore, the huge dark side of the politics of recognition is what James Davison Hunter has described as *ressentiment*. A kind of resentment that leads to haters, and moves all of us to rush into ideological enclaves, liking and consuming only what supports our definition of what it means to be human, and in turn despising all those who seek recognition in ways we don’t agree with or *like*. 

On Social Media in the Church: Haley Veturis

Haley Veturis has been the social media manager of Saddleback Church, an NAE member church, since 2011. In her role, she writes and implements social strategy and policy across Saddleback's regional and global campuses, runs the main Saddleback brand accounts, and leads Saddleback's social media team. Haley also trains and equips pastors and leaders across the country on social media strategy. She is co-author of "Trending Up: Social Media Strategies for Today's Church" and co-founder of Social Ecclesia.

HOW DID YOUR INTEREST IN LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR KINGDOM IMPACT DEVELOP?

I've always been interested in every aspect of the media. I did five internships in college: journalism, public relations, advertising, television production, and my final internship was with FOX 6 News in San Diego. I thought I would pursue broadcast news as a producer, but God had other plans for me. He quickly closed those doors and introduced me to church ministry. It was through pursuing a calling to ministry that I realized the value of social media platforms as an avenue to spread God's word. Jesus' ministry was all about people, and it still is. In an era of connection, it's our job as the church to connect people to Christ.

HOW DOES YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY CONNECT TO THE MISSION OF SADDLEBACK CHURCH?

Our social media strategy was birthed out of Jesus' ministry. God put it on my heart during my New Testament class in seminary. We were asked to read through the gospels twice, and I saw how simple, practical and profound Jesus' ministry was. He connected with people on a personal level, taught them life-transforming lessons, and gave them ministry opportunities, creating the best advocates to carry on the message of Jesus. That's also exactly the mission of Saddleback Church: We believe that Great Commitment to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment will grow a great church.

WHY SHOULD CHURCHES CONSIDER BEING ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

God called his disciples to be fishers of men. If you want to reach people for the kingdom of God, you have to fish where the fish are. Right now, the fish are on social media. Seventy-nine percent of American Internet users are on Facebook. On any given day, Snapchat reaches 41 percent of 18-34 year olds. Sixty-nine percent of adults use at least one social media site. On average, 1 billion hours of video is watched per day on YouTube. People in your church's community have never been easier to reach. If you have a church right now — at such a time as this — why would you pass on the opportunity to reach at least one more for his kingdom? Use the tools at your disposal for the global glory of God's kingdom.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A CHURCH — PARTICULARLY A SMALL CHURCH WITH LIMITED RESOURCES — THAT WANTS TO GET STARTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA BUT DOESN'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN?

You don't have to be a large church to use free social media platforms. If you own a smartphone, you're qualified to run a social strategy on any social media platform. Start by finding a volunteer who is a member of your church, who loves your church and who is responsible, reliable and responsive. Make sure you have a staff member monitoring their posts to ensure they are aligned with the values, mission and voice of your church. Give the volunteer insight as to who your church is specifically trying to reach and then select the social media platform where that target primarily resides. Don't feel like you have to be on every social media platform.

WHAT STEPS CAN CHURCHES TAKE TO ENSURE THAT SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT BENEFITS THEIR CHURCH AND DOESN'T HARM IT?

Clear communication is key. Communicate what you value, make your expectations clear and set up a social strategy and social media guidelines for your staff/volunteers to follow. I recommend conducting quarterly metrics just to make sure that

you're on the right track. Most social platforms have their own metrics available, but if not, some of my favorite tools are Sprout Social, Union Metrics and Iconosquare.

HOW CAN CHURCHES USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO FOSTER TRUE COMMUNITY?

Jesus was the absolute best at fostering community, because he put God first and people at a close second. Since social media is an online platform and you're a screen removed from face-to-face contact, churches need to help people forget that they are a screen away. Respond to comments, posts, tags, etc. Show people who you follow that you're actually following them and that their church cares about what they care about. Encourage someone when they post something that shows they are having a rough day. Wish your members a happy birthday when they post that they are out at a birthday dinner. The idea behind true community is surrounded by love.

DOES SADDLEBACK CHURCH ALSO TRY TO REACH BEYOND THOSE THAT GO TO THE CHURCH WITH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM?

Our social media platforms are built for the community, crowd and congregation. This complements the vision that Pastor Rick Warren has set for our church, as described in "Purpose Driven Church." The community is anyone in the community we live in, beyond our church walls. The crowd is made up of our weekend attenders, and the congregation are those who have taken the first step of commitment into church membership. Knowing this helps inform how we craft our posts. Social media has been one of our best platforms to leverage when promoting events made for the community. Facebook and Instagram ads allow you to target exactly who you are trying to reach. A \$5-\$10 budget can go a long way. Be strategic with your posts and know whom you are trying to reach when posting them. It all pretty much comes down to that! 



In "Trending Up: Social Media Strategies for Today's Church," leading church communications specialists provide accessible, practical answers to questions churches face as they seek to use social media for kingdom impact. Edited by Mark Forrester, director of communications and public relations for the Assemblies of God denomination, the book features 14 contributors including Haley Veturis.



Modern IT in the Bible

The best guess is that 1.96 billion of our world's 7.6 billion people were on social media in 2017, and the number will grow to 2.5 billion in 2018. It is amazing how fast a message can travel when transmitted from one person to the next.

Evangelicals like to find answers to our questions and seeds for modern trends in the Bible. But, we're probably not seeking a link between Facebook, Twitter or even email to anything in the Old or New Testaments. Don't give up so easily.

St. Paul posted the ninth book of the New Testament to a network of Christians and churches in the Roman province of Galatia. Unlike his other letters written to specific people and churches, Galatians is a letter to "the churches in Galatia" (1:2). It is called a "circular letter" that passed from town to town and church to church.

What's the point? Paul used his first century equivalent of "retweet" to get out his message. Scholars claim that this message transformed the gospel from a limited denomination of Jews to include everyone in the empire and eventually the whole world. Good job, Paul.

Scholars claim that this message transformed the gospel . . . to include everyone in the empire and eventually the whole world.

Johannes Gutenberg used the IT of 1454 to print the Bible with movable metal type. He launched new technology that (according to Guinness World Records) has printed more than 5 billion copies and has made the Bible the all-time best seller. Good job, Johannes.

Radio was the new technology sweeping America in the early 20th century. Some evangelical Christians thought it was a bad idea to broadcast because Satan is "the ruler of the kingdom of the air" (Ephesians 2:2), and this new

technology was sending signals through the air. James Martin Gray, president of Moody Bible Institute, came around in 1926 to found Chicago's WMBI as the first non-commercial radio station in America. The Moody Broadcasting Network now owns and operates 36 commercial-free stations plus 700+ satellite outlets. Today WMBI broadcasts in Spanish. Good job, James.

Were these once new technologies all platforms for good? Obviously not — first century epistles circulated with heresies, printed books promoted sin, and there is plenty of bad radio. The good news is that courageous and creative Christians have repeatedly claimed new technologies for Jesus Christ and now it's our turn. **E**



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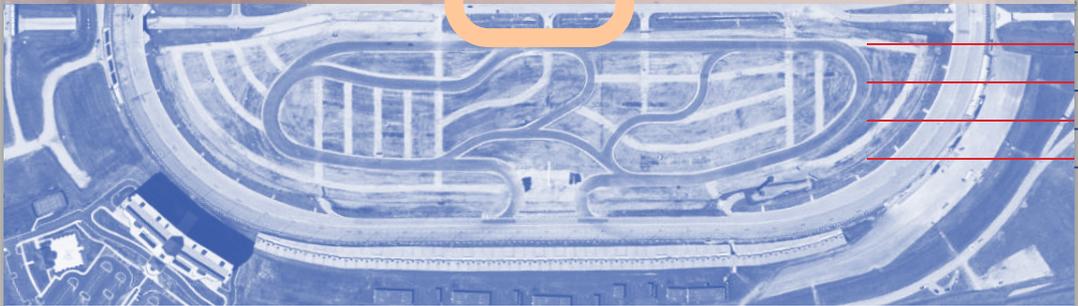
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