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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Culmination Phase for Selected
Micro-project Assignment**

A Paper Submitted to

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Micro-Project III: Personal Engagement

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by

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Introduction

This paper represents the Culmination phase of the third micro-project that purposed to develop a YouTube channel where the researcher communicates concepts that will aid believers in Jesus to consider their purpose as a disciple as described by Jesus. The researcher describes the justification for the project, comments, and responses to peer critique on the project, the implementation process utilized, and provides an analysis of the project after implementation.

Justification

The researcher has chosen the discipleship cognate as the focus of study. As a member of Southern Baptist churches for many years, the researcher has heard discipleship described and preached about many times. However, it has been observed that there is no agreement on what it takes to be a mature believer. There are no commonly agreed-upon metrics that have been developed to measure whether a person is a “mature believer.” Scripture describes what Christian maturity involves, yet modern churches do not have many individuals that live a life that exemplifies what Scripture encourages.

The researcher will create a YouTube channel that will communicate the problem that churches are not exhibiting explosive growth of disciples and provide suggestions of how paradigms can be changed to return to the early church models. This project will utilize the work done in the first two micro-projects for content and will provide the platform to bring people to the website/ministry plan created in the last micro-project.

The ministry problem that these works seek to address is that the multi-site mega-church where the researcher serves does not exhibit the exponential growth that the early church experienced. This lack of effectiveness in the modern American church is rooted in a lack of spiritual maturity among the believers and their lack of awareness of how to progress to achieve

the spiritual maturity of a mature disciple. The researcher has served as part of church leadership that has sought to create several strategies to build disciples but has not yet found one that has proven effective at developing mature disciples.

This micro-project aligns well with the discipleship cognate as it allows for the engagement with other believers to challenge the current thought and practices of church leaders as they attempt to develop disciples as well as considering how the discipleship models are transforming from previous models. This project provides an exciting platform for the researcher. It allows for connecting to a broader audience and enables transmission of the concepts that have been considered and how modern believers can bring a workable solution to the issue.

This micro-project focuses on Personal Engagement. The researcher will present videos that describe the current state of the church disciple-making effectiveness and explain how God gives direction to disciples in the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-5),¹ the Great Commandment and the New Commandment given in Matt 22:36-40, and the Great Commission given in Matt 28: 28-30. These verses provide the direction of foundational imperatives that set an individual's path toward becoming a disciple. The videos created will speak of a need to establish devotion, unity with other believers, love for others, and empowerment from the Holy Spirit to pursue the objectives given in the Great Commission to become effective disciple-making disciples. Love for others and unity is vital as described in John 15:5, where Jesus indicated that no spiritual work could occur separately from Him and Jesus' repeated calls for unity within the body of Christ.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

It has been a lifetime passion of the researcher to develop practical solutions to problems that are presented. The researcher has taught virtually every age group within the context of the traditional model “Sunday School” and in attractional model “home groups.” In recent years, the researcher has been a student who utilized online courses to pursue higher education degrees and serves as the president of a Bible college. These experiences have required the researcher to create video content weekly and deliver coursework digitally to professors and students. The researcher loves the process of learning and engaging with others to share the truth that God provides to us in His Word. A YouTube channel will be an exciting project to create and to utilize in the future as another ministry tool.

The micro-project was defined to progress through four phases. Those phases included an organization phase, elaboration phase, implementation phase, and a culmination phase, which are described in the following:

Organization Phase – Investigate at least five YouTube channels that seem to address the proposed problem statement and write a one-page analysis of each, including the pros and cons of each, as well as their URLs.

Elaboration Phase – write an analysis of why the proposed YouTube channel will address the ministry problem in a way that other channels have not addressed. Report on various options available for starting and building a YouTube channel.

Implementation Phase – prepare at least one video and post it to the YouTube channel that has been created. The video should be engaging, unique in content and presentation, and have related to the ministry cognate. The channel should have a title, credits, introductory music, and other enhancements.

Culmination Phase – a report will compare the new YouTube channel to others, citing the pros and cons of each and describing peer review comments. The paper will also document information regarding the creation of the YouTube channel and its efficacy for ministry. It will address how the channel addresses the ministry problem, explaining the content on the channel and its mission. This paper will be presented according to the guidelines established regarding the formatting guidelines provided in the course materials.

The researcher identified a concern regarding the number of videos required to cover the scope of the project and the expectation that the work required will exceed what time is available for this micro-project. The researcher planned to craft overview videos over the key topics to address the ministry problem and intend to create more content after completing the micro-project to hit the full vision of what to achieve with this YouTube channel. The other area of concern is regarding the creative aspects of the video. The researcher has excellent tools available to do this work, but it will be stretched to use the right tools in the right way to make these videos engaging.

Peer Review

As part of the micro-project process, the researcher presented the micro-project plan to doctoral candidates before enacting the implementation phase. The researcher described the vision for the micro-project and the methods that were to be utilized to record the channel videos.

Randall Zeigler, a fellow doctoral candidate, affirmed the need to address the ministry problem when he shared, “I believe your ideas for a YouTube channel on church growth is an important one. Many churches are not growing today, and they are either stagnant or receding in

many cases. The research you are doing should be able to help many who have this problem. As I said, it seems as you are headed in the right direction.”²

Zeigler encouraged a dedicated effort toward making the channel videos “professional quality.”³ His encouragement was based upon his experiences of viewing YouTube videos. He reflected that “As a millennial, there is nothing that will keep me from watching anything more than it being low quality.”⁴ This encouragement is extremely important. A great message that has been created and labored on for long hours will not be engaged for very long by viewers if it does not meet their quality expectations. Zeigler further developed this encouragement as he shared, “. . . as I search through Bible Study materials for my students, I skip over anything that looks low budget or out of date; therefore great quality will lead to more viewer(s). If no one is watching the videos, no one will hear the information.”⁵

Zeigler provided another suggestion which was to be creative. He described that creativity as an important element in the production of video content. He declared, “Creativity makes the videos interesting and keeps the listeners around till the end.”⁶ Zeigler points out an important issue. Many videos do not have more than a few seconds of use because the viewers make a quick evaluation of the quality and decide if it is worth their time to view. Since it is easy to load videos to YouTube, there is a vast quantity of content available. The perceived quality of the video content will determine the viewership that a channel will attract.

² Randall Zeigler, Discussion Board Response, (Liberty University, 2021), Accessed from https://canvas.liberty.edu/courses/68327/discussion_topics/515467, May 1, 2021.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Zeigler inquired about the technical details of how the videos would be created. He specifically wished to know about the quality of the camera and the type of microphone to be utilized. These questions are crucial when creating video content. The camera can limit the options that a video producer can consider and can produce inferior recordings if the quality level is not sufficient for the task. Likewise, audio recording is vital when producing video content. Ambient noise, low decibel recording, and problems with synchronization with the video tracks are all variables that a video producer should consider. Zeigler also questioned whether other individuals would be called upon to assist in shooting the videos or as guests in the video shots. The researcher has chosen to create the videos without other's involvement in the micro-project.

Zeigler also questioned how the setting of the video would be created. He advised that the setting should be chosen to enhance the video and raise the viewer's perception of the creativity involved to produce the content.

These comments were constructive in the development of the video content. They helped raise awareness of the value of quality and creativity when connecting and communicating with an audience via video.

Implementation

This micro-project purposed to create a YouTube channel where a series of videos would be hosted that would discuss how the early church operated and had such a world-changing impact upon the civilization of their day. The YouTube Channel can be accessed by going to <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRWErups9AWKO-7lxuUVEOw> or by searching YouTube for the "Early Church Vibe" channel.

This micro-project seeks to address the ministry problem to determine why the modern church does not have the same impact in the current culture and present concepts that would enable a modern-day believer to become a change agent in ministries where God has placed them. Five videos were created that addressed a series of topics.

The first video was an introduction of the problem and proposed that there was a solution that could be implemented. The video host presented his life experience as a senior leader in multiple mega-church sized ministries and reflected upon his observation that those churches did not exhibit the sustained exponential growth that the early church experienced. The host expressed that these churches have amazing resources available to them, yet exponential growth did not occur. He described how the early church did not have a codified Bible, few paid clergy, no dedicated buildings, and limited financial resources. Yet, that group of believers spread quickly and overwhelmed the Roman empire with their beliefs in just a few generations. The host describes how we can analyze their behaviors and beliefs. After processing that information, believers can implement the early church members' concepts into their ministry contexts. This first video had a playtime of five minutes and thirty seconds.

The second video recaps the problem of the lack of growth in the modern church and presents the idea that a disciple's mission is provided by Scripture in three areas. The first is provided in Deut 6 (the *Shema*), the second is Matt 22: 36-40 (the Great Commandment and the New Commandment), and the third in Matt 28: 38-40 (the Great Commission). This second video focused upon devotion to God as was clearly described by Jesus as He spoke with the Pharisees in Matt 22: 36-40. Jesus was quoting Deut 6 when asked what the most important commandment was from Scripture. The host explains to the viewers that all growth in spiritual

maturity is predicated upon living a life of devotion to God. The second video had a playtime of ten minutes and one second.

The third video discusses the need to love others as God loves. Jesus gave a New Commandment in Matt 22: 38-40 and described how we need to love others as we love ourselves. The host describes that as a person learns to love God well, they begin to understand what it means to love others. This selfless love that develops is a reflection of God's love for each person and mankind in general. The host explains that man's selfish nature keeps them from demonstrating *agape* love to others without the empowering of God in their lives. When a person embraces this concept, others will see them significantly impact the world around them. This third video had a playtime of six minutes and thirty-one seconds.

The fourth video raised the idea that we should be adept at communing with God, live a life empowered by the Holy Spirit, and pursue the Great Commission as directed by Jesus. The host points out that this pursuit of the Great Commission is supposed to be active in a disciple's life. The host explains that many have been taught the imperative to "go" and make disciples. He redirects them to understand the imperative is upon making disciples, and the Greek should be interpreted to say, "as you go." This small change allows the disciple to understand that they are not exempt from disciple-making as they can do it in their current context. The host asserts that many dismiss themselves from disciple-making because they are unable to pack up and "go" somewhere else as a missionary. The host recommends a book that Dave Early and Rod Dempsey wrote and called *Discipleship is . . .* for viewers to learn more about these concepts.⁷ He also encourages them to "grab ahold" of the Great Commission and make it their own. The fourth video had a playtime of six minutes and thirteen seconds.

⁷ Dave Early and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is . . .* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2013).

The fifth video recapped the last four videos and explained how the prior concepts all worked together to give a believer clarity about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. The host challenges disciples to journal what they hear from God as they listen to Him and take action upon what He reveals. The host explains that each disciple is a minister for God and that the clergy have the challenge to prepare and assist them in ministry. The host also challenges the viewer to purpose to love those close to them so that they can become more adept at loving all men. These actions have the secondary impact of improving unity among believers as Jesus directed. The host proceeds by encouraging the disciple to develop their interaction with the Holy Spirit and allow His empowerment to enable them to become effective in ministry to others. This active ministry mindset is needed to engage the Great Commission properly. The host recommends that the viewers read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's book *Discipleship* to learn about the concept of "cheap grace" and work to avoid such a mindset.⁸ The fifth video had a playtime of thirteen minutes and fifty-three seconds.

The videos were created with cameras that recorded in 4K resolution. The researcher used the video editing program Adobe Premiere Pro. The videos were edited to include consistent opening graphics, graphic overlays to provide names, Scripture references, and end graphics that provided links to other videos and the playlist on the channel and a subscription link. Third parties created these graphics and are available for licensing and use from a company called Envato. Each video must have a license to use the moving graphics. This license is provided after paying an annual fee, which allows the licensee to utilize one of the tens of thousands of graphics and audio files that are provided. The files were downloaded from Envato's website, and then the researcher had to engage with training videos to learn how to

⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* DBW Vol 4 (Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works), (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), Kindle Edition, Location 1102.

install and utilize these files in the Adobe Premiere Pro software platform. Finally, the researcher sourced and added an audio soundtrack that underlaid the video.

Analysis of the Micro-Project

The first challenge in developing a YouTube channel for the micro-project involved analyzing what was currently available to viewers on YouTube.com. The researcher chose to create a set of search phrases to determine if other videos were available that addressed the ministry problem that was advanced in this project. The search phrases developed were “What is a fully devoted follower of Christ?”, “How to be a disciple of Jesus,” and “What did the early church look like.” The researcher limited the analysis to the top five videos ranked by relevance and view count. The researcher watched thirty videos and determined that the search phrase “What is a fully devoted follower of Christ?” ranked by relevance gave the best comparable results to the topics to be addressed in the video content to be created in this project. Based upon this analysis, the researcher concluded that there was no video content on YouTube that addressed the same content that this project sought to present.

High Relevance YouTube Videos

The project parameters required that the researcher analyze at least five other videos that sought to address the issues that the researcher proposed to respond to with the videos that would be produced. The researcher used the search tool that is built into the YouTube platform. The first search used the search string parameter of “How to be devoted to God” and selected the top five results by the relevance setting.

The highest-ranking video was called “What Is A Fully Devoted Follower of Christ?”, located at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeiNNdGdWbg>. This video was hosted on the YouTube channel called “Real Truth, Real Quick” and showed to have had seven thousand, nine

hundred and eighty-three since November 30, 2015. The channel displayed that it had eighty-two thousand eight hundred subscribers. The video was hosted by Rick Smith and Todd Wagner, who represented Watermark Church, located in Dallas, TX. This video had an overall time of five minutes.

The video sought to provide Scripture and explain what a fully devoted follower of Christ should look like to others. Wagner explains that a disciple denies their own agenda in favor of God's, committed to developing themselves to better service to others, focused on learning more from God's Word to be able to apply the principles to their life competently.

This video has an extremely professional presentation and engaging hosts. The pace is fast, and a great deal of information is transmitted in a short amount of time. This video is a terrific source of Scripture references that enable a viewer to find and process on their own time.

The primary host is a skilled communicator and speaks clearly and convincingly to the camera as he makes his points. The set is visually appealing and conveys the message that this is a quality presentation put together by credible experts on the topic. The supporting elements all "make sense" in how they are utilized and engages the viewer in multiple ways throughout the video. The set was professionally constructed and utilized several technologies to enhance the quality of the video. This video set an extremely high bar for quality presentation of information.

The information that is delivered comes at a pace that a viewer would have to watch it several times to process all that is shared. Due to the nature of the time restriction, the hosts are not able to unpack the ideas shared in Scripture in a way that people could process the information to apply to their lives. This speed of transmission of concepts falls within the

expectation that is set by their channel definition. This video leaves room for another channel to provide additional information to a viewer in a different presentation format.

The second video that was analyzed was titled “How to develop faith and love for God” and was located at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ3M929BpKQ>. This video was hosted on a channel named “JKYog.” The channel had one million nine hundred and ten thousand subscribers. The specific video analyzed had forty-four thousand, five hundred, and thirty-seven views since June 9, 2018. The host is Swami Mukundananda, who represented JKYog.org, located in Dallas, TX. This video had an overall playtime of ten minutes and two seconds.

The Swami proposes that one must develop the humility to be able to have a love for God. We must develop a value for God, which develops our faith in God, and then we fall in God. He suggests that our problem is that we do not have faith in God.

The host’s storytelling style is comfortable and seems to draw his audience as he shares “wisdom” in his fables. Storytelling is a powerful method of knowledge transmission, and the Swami is skilled in his presentation. The host communicates with a smile and does not raise his voice at any point to assert his points. He conveys an attitude of a patient grandfather talking to those around him.

The video quality is good, but the lack of movement by the host makes the video a bit stale as the video continues. The graphics are not appealing, and the teaching style would not be attractive to a western audience. The host wears orange robes, and the curtains behind his couch are purple and yellow. Again, this setting is not appealing to a western audience but does convey the “otherness” of his message. The video is low energy and does not clarify what god the Swami is referring to in his lesson. As he is Hindu, there is quite a variety from which to choose.

The third video analyzed based upon relevance rankings was “Are You Devoted to God?” which was accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1ooFos1fwE>. This video was hosted on the channel called “Living Church of God,” which showed to have eight thousand and two subscribers. The video displayed that it had eleven thousand, five hundred, and twenty-four views since December 9, 2016. The video was hosted by Wallace Smith, who represented the Living Church of God, Charlotte, NC. The overall playtime of the video was seventy-five minutes and seven seconds.

The host describes how the maturity of faith is required to have God invest more into a person’s life. A person must be devoted entirely to God to have the ability to grow to maturity in faith. A believer needs to be utterly devoted to God’s will for Him to be devoted to them.

The audio is clear and easily understandable. The host’s demeanor is one of a reasonable conveyor of information. Still, he loses focus on his key points and creates a message that is extremely broad and hard for a viewer to perceive what message he is trying to deliver.

The length of the video is very long for the YouTube format. Most viewers would likely stop viewing far before the end of the sermon, possibly not even engaging for more than a few seconds. The video format is lackluster and not interesting. The lack of other camera angles and other elements is fatiguing to a viewer. The video does not supply any reference information for Scripture references in banners or slides, which would assist the viewer in reading along with the Bible quotations that the speaker consistently used in his presentation. The presentation is brought forward as a long monologue. The presenter does not provide key points, in summary, to help the viewer manage the volume of information that is shared. His introduction summary is too broad for a person to manage their expectations of what they are about to hear.

According to relevance, the fourth video analyzed was “What does it mean to be devoted to God?”, located at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hsj4AJCaYj0>. The channel that hosted this video was called “Dan Marler.” The channel did not display any subscribers, and the video showed that there were one hundred and nine views since December 6, 2017. The host’s name is Dan Marler, and the hosting organization was the First Church of God, Oak Lawn, IL. This video’s overall playtime was three minutes and six seconds.

The host explains that a person who is devoted to God has strong feelings for God and a strong commitment to God, such as a vow. The host shares that devotion has a connotation of actions that are consistent with wanting to grow our relationship with God. He asserts a person would love God, remain committed to doing what God asks, and engage in practices that continue to develop their relationship with God.

The video presents a fun guy who wants to share what he thinks about the subject. If a person has a relationship with this person and values his friendship, they will likely enjoy this quick video and overlook the poor quality of the recording.

The quality of the video is very distracting, and most viewers would likely click away since it does not appear much effort went into making this video. The host makes assertions but does not support any point he makes beyond alluding to believers’ common beliefs. If a person did not have a reference point to what the speaker was discussing, they would not be able to follow his argument.

He appears to have utilized a cellphone as his camera, but his camera does not appear to have the ability to provide a full-screen recording format. The video shows up narrowly on a computer monitor, with large black frames on each side. His framing of the shots presents an

unflattering view of his office, which does not raise the viewer's opinion as to his credibility. This lack of planning undermines his messaging.

The final video analyzed based upon relevance was called "Devoted to God // 1 Timothy 6:1-2" and was hosted at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUz4EmT59M8>. The video was presented on the channel called "Legacy" and displayed that the channel had seven thousand, three hundred and sixty subscribers. The video showed to have been viewed two hundred and thirty-nine times since July 5, 2020. The hosts' names are Josh Thompson and Ricky Gonzales, and they represent Legacy City Church, Studio City, CA. The video had an overall playtime of thirty-eight minutes and twenty-five seconds.

The host begins by emphasizing the importance and reliability of Scripture to their lives. He explains how 1 Tim 6:1-2 speaks of devotion to God but relates this devotion to how to resist racism and slavery mindsets. The host explains that resisting a worldly mindset helps a believer be more effective in ministry to those around them.

The quality of the recording invites a viewer to engage with the video. The lack of formality and setting is appealing to a large audience. The introduction is well done and likely helps add to their subscription numbers. The camera quality is excellent and displays an excellent level of creativity and professionalism.

The primary host spends a great deal of time looking down to read his notes on the iPad, which reduces engagement for the viewer. The title of the video appears to be tangent to the real message presented by the host, which is to speak against slavery and racist mindsets. This kind of misdirection will likely lead to many that were searching on the devotion topic to click off the video since it does not address what they might have been seeking. The end of the video does

not have a closing transition to talk about the channel or invite subscription, making the video seem to end abruptly.

Creation of a YouTube Channel

YouTube has become a trusted platform where over one billion hours of video is watched each day.⁹ According to Nielson Research, YouTube reaches more adults in the United States, age eighteen to thirty-four, than any cable network.¹⁰ As such, this video platform has the potential to connect with a vast audience. Bell and Leonard comment that “Sites such as YouTube provide a platform for multimodal storytelling, using film, graphics, photographs, and audio recording in combination. Each of these communicative modes can be used to realize a different communicative purpose, but together, they constitute an integrated whole.”¹¹ The functionality of YouTube provides users the ability to search on topics that they are interested in studying. The same functionality provides access to those with a ministry purpose to inspire and educate those that are seeking answers from Scripture.

The researcher had already established a Google account several years ago. Google had purchased YouTube from the researchers and added it to their stable of technology companies. The Google account allowed the researcher to create a new YouTube channel, which was named “Early Church Vibe,” in an effort to communicate the intent of sharing the practices of the Early Church to a modern audience and allowing them to operate according to the same vibe as members of the early church.

⁹ Rob Ciampa, Theresa Go, Matt Ciampa, and Rich Murphey, *YouTube Channels for Dummies*,. (Newark: NJ, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2020), Accessed May 1, 2021. ProQuest Ebook Central, 27.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Emma Bell and Pauline Leonard, “Digital Organizational Storytelling on YouTube: Constructing Plausibility Through Network Protocols of Amateurism, Affinity, and Authenticity”, (Journal of Management Inquiry 27, no. 3, July 2018), 339–51.

The setup process was very intuitive and allowed for the easy uploading of videos into the channel. The tools provided allow a user to identify if the video should be protected from underage viewers. Initially, the researcher did not select this protection. Interestingly, the automated review tools that YouTube uses issued a notice to the researcher and advised that putting restrictions on the channel would be required. The researcher placed the restrictions in place but has set up a task to research this and see if this is an automated form of religious censorship. The channel provided other tools which allowed the researcher to create a playlist, then linked that playlist to the end screens of each video. The playlist allows the viewers the opportunity to select the next video in the playlist or to subscribe to the channel and return when they are ready to watch other videos. The subscriptions also allow a viewer to be notified when any new content is added to the channel.

The channel creator is provided with a dashboard that allows them to monitor how much viewer traffic is coming to their channel. The tool provides a count of total views and total subscribers, along with the ability to filter those totals by specific date ranges. In addition, the dashboard shows click-through rates, time spent viewing the videos, and how many viewers completed the videos. This information is vital for the channel manager to understand how the channel performs and reaches the YouTube audience.

The platform provides several opportunities to the researcher to grow their audience. There is an ability to target specific videos and allow the researcher to host “premiers” to publicize a specific date and time when a new video will be “released.” The platform allows a chat channel to be created where people can post their impressions, and the researcher is able to interact with the viewers in the chat channel. The researcher is provided a unique name “tag”

that identifies them as the video researcher. This kind of promotional activity can create excitement among the viewers and encourage them to invite others to view the channel.

The channel also provides search engine optimization. The software will analyze the content uploaded and suggest keywords included in the search engine optimization fields. The researcher can also include keywords that they feel would be helpful. These keywords allow the videos to be suggested to viewers who are searching for specific types of videos. These tools greatly aid new content researchers as they place their video content on YouTube and begin to build an audience.

Challenges Presented in the Micro-Project

As the researcher edited the video projects, the audio tracks proved to be extremely difficult to manipulate. The target expectation was to begin each video with an upbeat soundtrack that would slowly fade to an audible background level but did not detract from the host's dialogue. The tools provided in Adobe Premiere Pro would allow for the editor to set a volume at each break in an audio track but did not allow for a smooth fade down in volume or up in volume. The audio editing proved to be one of the areas where a great deal of time was spent to get the audio close to what the researcher had envisioned.

A similar challenge arose as the researcher searched for audio tracks to utilize for the projects. The offerings that professed to be free of cost proved to use bait and switch tactics consistently. The files would be free for development, but all required a subscription and license to be added for each use of the file in the creation of a video for YouTube. Moving graphics also required licensing. One source provided an extensive library of moving graphics and audio tracks for an annual subscription. The researcher concluded it was best to pick one vendor to provide these files and provide the licensing. Licensing must be maintained to keep the videos

playing legally on YouTube, so an ongoing communication strategy must include a budget to subscribe to a provider of graphic files and audio files.

The researcher struggled to find settings that would allow the underlying soundtrack to play on an endless loop. The workaround that was utilized was to stack the audio tracks, one after another, to create the impression of continuous performance of the soundtrack song.

The researcher chose to record the videos on an outdoor lanai that overlooked a river that flowed next to the utilized home. This setting proved to have occasional audio intrusions from boating traffic that would move by on the river. These intrusions created multiple re-takes to allow the engine noise from the boat traffic to move away.

The outdoor setting provided another unforeseen challenge as small gnats would occasionally make their way through the screening on the lanai and would swarm the host as he was recording. In most cases, the host was able to ignore the wildlife. In some cases, the aggressive insects would bite or invade an ear, which required the host to spot and deal with the nuisance.

The researcher planned to have multiple cameras running to provide different angles of view that would be edited in a manner that the soundtrack would play. In contrast, the camera shots would move from one perspective to another. Multiple video recordings create an editing challenge where the editor must synchronize the videos to the audio voice track. Lack of synchronization keeps the viewer from being distracted by the host's lips moving, but the audio appears to be delayed or out of sync with the lip's motions. This work is not extremely difficult if thought is given to identify starting times on each camera. The researcher had purchased two identical video cameras that could be started using a remote control. The remote control allowed

the cameras to begin recording simultaneously, which significantly aided the synchronization of video and sound.

The plan to have multiple camera shots proved not to bring the value that had been hoped for in the videos. The researcher learned that having an offset angle that was less than ninety degrees would have been preferable. Also, the side-shots showed items in the background that had been overlooked and proved to be distracting items that would be distracting to the viewer. The researcher ultimately decided to remove the camera shots taken from other angles.

The cameras that were purchased proved not to have the crispness of video recording that the researcher had hoped to see. The cameras had the ability to record in 4K quality, but the researcher observed that a Samsung 20 cellphone recorded with greater clarity than the cameras. The researcher chose to utilize the recordings made by the video cameras but intends to re-record the video in the future to enhance the perceived quality of the recordings.

The recordings also required the editor to change the color settings in the editing software to attempt to present a consistent balance of colors in the videos. As the daylight changed throughout the day, the host's image became darker in the videos. The editor learned that it was necessary to write down the settings for one video that had good color balance, then used those settings to edit the other videos to present the videos in a similar manner.

Efficacy of a YouTube Channel for Ministry

Audience

This micro-project was designed to enable the researcher to communicate to a wider audience on the YouTube platform. The content is specifically targeted to those who are already regenerated believers in Jesus. There is no attempt to limit the content to a specific denomination. Still, it is meant to be helpful to anyone who seeks direction to become a mature

disciple of Jesus. Christian denominations in the United States are in a season of decline in numbers, so it can be expected that there will be individuals who are seeking to find out how to be effective in their ministries and reverse the current negative growth trends. The micro-project also allows the researcher to engage in ministry to others and experience personal engagement with others beyond his immediate proximity. YouTube videos have become a valuable training tool to many believers. The channel created is the beginning of an ongoing attempt to equip and mobilize believers across the United States to become mature disciples who endeavor to make disciples wherever the Lord has placed them to conduct ministry to others.

The videos are not targeted solely at clergy, but clergy is certainly one of the primary target audiences. Effectiveness in ministry is highly valued by those that serve local congregations. The desired outcome is that clergy members will gain insights from this channel that will aid them in communicating a need for change in believer's approach to their personal missions to serve Christ.

Intent of Videos

These videos share three key concepts that are taking directly from God's Word. Those concepts can be summarized as devotion, love for others, and engagement in disciple-making. Culture's move toward self-centeredness has influenced modern believers. Most believers have lost the understanding that they are meant to be the ones who share the gospel with others and bear the responsibility to disciple others. The centuries-long effort to empower clergy and disfranchise the laity has led to the conditions that exist in the modern church. The modern church needs to help the congregants to understand that they are the solution to spreading the gospel throughout the Earth. Breen suggests God's people should be described as "Disciples

who are radically committed to the mission of God.”¹² The videos are the beginning of an effort to communicate an empowering paradigm to a modern congregation of a mega-church, hoping that this message will be persuasive to many other churches across the United States and ultimately around the world.

Structure of the Videos

The videos were designed to open with a statement of the purpose of the video and a summary of information presented in prior videos in the series if the video followed another in the series. Researchers Beutemps and Bresges conducted a survey of YouTube users to determine what was most important to them in the presentation of a video. Beutemps and Bresges shared, “The structure of the video is most important for the respondents. More than 85% of the respondents say that the topic should be mentioned at the beginning of the video, while almost 80% of the respondents say that a conclusion at the end of the video is important or very important to them.”¹³

Tone of Videos

Since the message is meant to be encouraging rather than cajoling or condemning, the research has chosen to relate ideas conversationally. The host of the videos seeks to speak directly to the viewer without referring to notes. The dialogue is meant to be flowing and casual rather than formal. The vocabulary utilized is meant to be common language with few theological terms utilized. The idea behind the messages is to provide encouraging statements that move a believer to refer to God’s Words and apply them to their own lives. These changes

¹² Mike Breen, *Multiplying Missional Leaders*, (Crowdscribed, LLC, 2014), Location 355.

¹³ Jacob Beutemps and André Bresges, “What Comprises a Successful Educational Science YouTube Video? A Five-Thousand User Survey on Viewing Behaviors and Self-Perceived Importance of Various Variables Controlled by Content Creators”, (Frontiers in Communication, vol. 5, April 1, 2021).

will be significant for many, so the host attempts to phrase the encouragements to communicate that any believer can appropriate the concepts.

Quality of the Audio

The researcher focused on having an excellent recording of the host's voice for the videos. Audio is vitally important to the viewers, as indicated by the research of Beauteemps and Bresges, who said, "The visual quality was seen as much less important to the respondents than the auditory quality."¹⁴

Tone of Background Music

The researcher intentionally chose upbeat acoustically guitar music to create a feeling of happiness and openness. The guitar refrains are relatively simple rather than complex and are meant to make the viewer feel relaxed as they listen to the dialogue. The upbeat nature of the music will communicate positivity, as opposed to using solemn or heavy music. Those kinds of music can communicate reverence or awe to a viewer but were avoided in these videos. This background music in this series of videos was meant to support the feeling that encouraged a person to consider that a loving God wishes to have a closer relationship with them.

Style of Dress

The host of the videos was presented in casual clothing. This style of clothing was chosen to communicate that the viewer is being invited into a relational conversation where one person is sharing from their heart what they wish to give to another. The lack of formality is

¹⁴ Jacob Beauteemps and André Bresges, "What Comprises a Successful Educational Science YouTube Video?", (Frontiers in Communication, vol. 5, April 1, 2021).

meant to lower any perceived barriers a person might feel toward clergy and to reflect upon the biblical concepts that are being shared. The researcher intentionally chose dark colors so that the background colors would be enhanced, and his face would stand out on the video screens that were being viewed.

Location Chosen for Filming

The location chosen for the backdrop was meant to be interesting visually while also communicating that the host was inviting them into their lives. Many people have very few experiences of being invited into another person's home. This setting was meant to feel like a person had joined the host on their porch and were engaging in a discussion about how to serve God and develop a closer relationship with God with a fellow believer.

Visibility to the Internet

This YouTube channel is easily assessed using the YouTube search tools on that website; however, the same is not true when a conventional search is performed using Google, Bing, or DuckDuckGo. Those search engines need more information to pull up the videos. The researcher will have to invest time to enhance the search engine optimization fields that are associated with video addresses. This work to enhance search engine optimization will be facilitated when the videos and YouTube channel are linked to a website where that type of optimization work has been completed.

Overall Effectiveness

The YouTube channel and the associated videos are an excellent beginning to creating a teaching and encouragement platform that communicates the need for God's people to clearly understand what it means to live a life of devotion to the Lord. As with any new project, data will need to be gathered from a sample of viewers to see if all the assumptions that underlie the

creation of these videos are accurate. For this channel to have a meaningful impact to a large audience, considerable effort will need to be expended to expand the awareness of the channel. The researcher can visualize having a far-reaching impact with such a platform; however, the primary goal is to affect the thought processes of the local congregation. The opportunity to influence the local congregation is easily within reach of the researcher. It should enable the opportunity to gather accurate information about the effectiveness of these videos in transmitting the concepts described in the videos.

The skills that have been gained in developing this channel will allow the researcher to expand into other opportunities of communicating with others effectively. The initial responses from individuals who have been invited to view the channel have been very positive. Their critiques will aid in enhancing the current videos and providing meaningful standards to target in the development of future videos.

Conclusion

The researcher believes that the creation of the YouTube channel and the accompanying will provide a terrific tool to reinforce concepts that will be taught in one-on-one interactions, from the platform in sermons and small group discussions. The researcher plans to rely upon God to empower the teaching and encouragement and will be delighted to aid any of the believers at the church he serves in growing in their devotion to God, to each other, and to feel empowered to share the gospel with their friends as they go through life. The micro-project provides a platform for continuous development and will be useful in ministry for years to come.

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