



Philosophical Considerations for Video Ministry

A media ministry should not exist simply because it is what other churches are doing. It should be born out of a desire to effectively communicate truth and to aid (not distract) the church-goer in their worship experience. A capable team of either paid staff or highly motivated volunteers should make up the core of this functional ministry, but should work in sync with the worship team and preaching minister.

Media and video technology are simply extensions of human functions that replace and/or make obsolete in some cases other mediums. For instance, a video illustration could achieve practically the same purpose as a live drama on the stage, but alters it in such a way as to allow for greater creativity and eliminate the possibility of error. In this example it is understood that some dynamics will change when the live element is taken away. The goal of the dramatic message has been met, but in a slightly different and more refined way. Other examples of video replacing/altering human function are in video announcements, scripture animations, picture slide shows, countdowns, testimonies, baptism videos, and much more. The way that it extends human capability is in the endless possibilities of distribution. Today, not only a whole church can see a video presentation but also through the Internet the audience can be worldwide. We live in exciting times where the central message of the Bible can be transmitted in a modern form so freely and touch so many in the process.

Though the time has never been better to reach out to the world with the positive, uplifting, and

convicting Word of God through video, it must be done as everything with fear and reverence. Every medium has a blessing and a curse. It can be a wonderful addition in your ministry, well worth the investment dollars if properly applied. It can greatly enhance your church services, Christian education, camps/ retreats, or conferences. The moving images combined with thoughtful planning of organized thought can evoke and stir up a wide range of emotions in the audience. A well-crafted video should solicit a desired response from its audience, persuading the audience to reflect or consider a choice, an action or a way of thinking.

Moving pictures are a common language in this video saturated age. The written or spoken word could say, "this woman was anxious". Video, through good and realistic acting can actually show an anxious woman. Also, the ever popular comedic elements can be used in such a way as to drop the guard of the listener and leave him/her ready to encounter a message of truth. A creative comedy short can grab the listener's attention, and then it is the job of the speaker to build on that foundation. Video can be in is an extremely effective form of commu-

nication.

However, if taken to an extreme it can be irritating, distracting, and have an opposite detrimental effect. The goal should never be to use video for the sake of using video. In a ministry setting it should not be merely to entertain, but more importantly to educate. It is to be inserted into ministry when and only it is appropriate and fitting.

We, in ministry, can take this simple (but complicated) medium of video, an ordinary thing today, and use it to proclaim God's truth in a powerful way. This art form should not be applied solely in the secular world. We as Christians, knowing the times that we live in (1 Chron. 12: 32; Eph. 5:16) should use it for the glory of God, and so redeem this technology, perfecting its powerful effect. Everything done in the name of God should be done with the best quality possible. Secular producers strive for excellence, and sadly in the church we tend to settle for what is mediocre at best. Hollywood, with all of its resources has abused this power, and consequently has tainted the medium. The church should come in and turn the tide. The way that the Kendrick brothers and Sherwood Baptist have made Facing the Giants and most recently Fireproof has shocked Hollywood by its success. We must not be affected by our culture, but rather be an agent of positive change in our culture.

Video through the Internet and cable, reality TV, etc. has become very mundane and unoriginal. We have an opportunity to make it extraordinary again for the Lord. That is a tall order, though. Technology standards are very high, but not out of reach. Lack of expertise and budget shortfalls in a ministry setting may be too commonplace. However, these days with a wide array of computer products a Hollywood set is not required to make a quality production. The cost to operate can be significant, but there are fairly inexpensive ways to achieve these goals. Video Illustrations can be made with consumer cameras and cheap lighting tricks. Vlogs can be made for Internet evangelism, teaching or sharing with any webcam, household light, and a free subscription to Youtube, Vimeo, Tangle, or any other of these types of sites. The really exciting happening is that God is raising up talented people to match the production standards of Hollywood, and doing so for God's glory. All of us who read these types of articles are important foot soldiers in this enormous task of matching the uncompromising message of the church to the century it strives to impact. A whole MTV and even a Youtube generation await true meaning and significance in their lives. The church does have the message of truth. Is it being heard? Is it being understood through our methods? It is our task to be clear in our presentation of the gospel.



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