ABSTRACT

TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY AS A PASTORAL SKILL FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SEMINARY STUDENTS

by

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Adviser: Steve Case

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY AS A PASTORAL SKILL FOR SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SEMINARY STUDENTS

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Problem

The statement of the Seventh-day Adventist church on Christian living cautions members against the damaging effects of popular media, yet the denomination offers few strategies for negotiating a pervasive media culture. Rapid developments in media technologies, converging with dramatic increases in media consumption among young people, have met with falling support for popular culture standards in Adventist homes. This widening gap between denominational standards and the changing media practices of youth and young adults has created challenges for parents and professionals seeking to address the growing influence of popular media.

Method

A two-credit academic course was designed and delivered at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in spring of 2013 that sought to develop media literacy as a pastoral skill. Throughout the semester, 14 enrolled students were asked to reflect on the spiritual and professional value of the course activities through learning reflections and a focus group. Data was evaluated using a qualitative case study research methodology and enriched with a brief quantitative portrait of students' media practices.

Results

The study revealed a group of seminary students who were involved with and dependent upon media in different ways, negotiating media culture with both caution and enthusiasm. Variously, throughout the course, students reported a greater awareness of the role of media in their lives. They also described an increased sense of personal agency and divine activity in their media practice, resulting in deeper discernment. Additionally, students felt that becoming conversant with young people about media could lead to fruitful ministry relationships, while engaging in media production gave them an appreciation for the potential that media tools could have in their ministries.

Conclusions

Based on the seminary students' learning reflections, the course experience and its structured engagement with media did appear to have perceived spiritual and professional value, with transformational outcomes accruing for some participants. Consequently, further exploration of faith-based media literacy as a part of 21st century pastoral education is merited and recommended.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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A Project Document

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Media literacy education is an international movement that addresses the role and influence of media, with the goal of developing the critical and creative capacities of individuals as consumers and producers of media. A recent literature review highlights a number of Christian scholars and practitioners working in the area of faith-based media literacy, which often builds on established media literacy theory and practice with an added layer of theological inquiry (Iaquinto & Keeler, 2012). Within the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, media literacy has received limited attention by a handful of scholars (Hopkins, Babikian, McBride, & Oliver, 2001; Moncrieff, 2007; Reynaud, 1999; Steyn, 2004, 2005). Nevertheless, the faith-based media literacy movement may well hold value for Adventist parents and professionals concerned with the perils and potential of contemporary media culture.

This introductory chapter will describe a ministry context in which the challenges of media culture are addressed in a specific and limited way. It will provide an overview of the development of the project, including the steps of reflecting theologically, reviewing recent and relevant literature, as well as developing and evaluating an intervention. Finally, it will offer definitions for technical terms that are unique and central to this study, along with a brief summary of the chapter.

Description of the Ministry Context

The setting for this project was the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, located on the campus of Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Established in 1936, the Seminary is a fully accredited institution, including membership in the Association of Theological Schools. It has a main campus enrollment of over 500 students who are part of one of the most ethnically diverse campuses in North America (*U.S. News & World Report*, 2014). The Seminary has seven departments, offering six master's programs and five doctoral programs. The Discipleship and Religious Education department is the immediate context for this project, and more specifically the curriculum of its Masters in Youth and Young Adult Ministry (MAYYAM) program.

The project entailed redesigning a required course within the MAYYAM curriculum titled "Youth and Young Adults in Contemporary Culture" (DSRE 608), which I have taught each spring semester since 1998. This course is listed alongside other core courses such as "Contextualized Preaching: Youth and Young Adults" and "Counseling Youth and Young Adults." It represents a key area of knowledge and skill development for youth professionals related to understanding popular youth culture and formulating a pastoral response to those immersed in it.

An analysis of course statistics for DSRE 608 (2000 to 2011) revealed an average class size of 16 students. Of the total population, 38% of the students were women, 37% held international status (coming from 40 countries), 60% fell into the 21-29 age range, 54% were enrolled in the MAYYAM program, and 37% came from the M.Div. program. The redesigned course at the center of this project was launched in the spring semester of 2013 with an enrollment of 14 students, ranging in age from 24 to 47 years old (nine were

in the 21-29 age range), including eight women, two international students, 11 from the MAYYAM program and three from the M.Div. program. The group was ethnically diverse, including six Blacks, four Hispanics, two Asian/Pacific Islanders, and two Caucasians.

As the primary researcher and implementer of the project, it is important that I locate myself personally and professionally. I am a married, heterosexual, Caucasian male, born and raised in the United States, and at the time of the intervention was 49 years old. I am the son of an Adventist pastor and have attended Adventist schools through the completion of my M.Div. degree from the SDA Theological Seminary. Ordained in 1994, I served as a pastor and youth pastor for nine years before coming to Andrews University, where I initially worked in enrollment. Since 2004, I have served in the Division of Student Life, first as associate dean and now as assistant vice president. I have also been an adjunct professor of Youth Evangelism at the Seminary since 1998.

Statement of the Problem

Beginning with the steam press, the Seventh-day Adventist church has always sought to harness the power of mass media. Yet, its official statement on Christian living (General Conference, 2010) also seeks to protect members from the negative influences of popular media and entertainment. Even so, the denomination offers few strategies to equip youth and young adults to navigate a media culture whose pervasiveness is fueled by the proliferation of new mobile and online technologies. By multitasking media, youth pack nearly 11 hours of media content into 7 ½ hours of use per day, an increase of over two hours of daily exposure in five years (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). While Adventist schools continue to set boundaries on entertainment choices, support for

popular culture standards is slipping at home (Gillespie, Donahue, Gane, & Boyatt, 2004). This widening gap between denominational positions and the rapidly changing media practices of Adventist young people places a high demand on teachers, pastors, youth leaders, and parents who must find new ways to address the increasing influence of media.

Statement of the Task

The task of this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a faith-based media literacy intervention for Seventh-day Adventist seminary students by redesigning an existing academic course for the purpose of developing media literacy skills and integrating them into students' pastoral identities. As media literacy is an emerging discipline within the Adventist church, this project solicited the insights of participating seminary students in order to draw conclusions about the perceived spiritual and professional value of media literacy education.

Delimitations of the Project

The scope of this project was limited in several ways. First, while still considering the wider body of media literacy theory and practice, the project itself was framed within a faith-based viewpoint and conducted in a Seventh-day Adventist context. Second, as the project was situated in an Adventist seminary, the students involved were all at the graduate level, and all were baptized members of the Adventist church. Third, participation in this project was limited to enrolled members of the 2013 "Youth and Young Adults in Contemporary Culture" course. Fourth, while the course has always included international students, it was decidedly taught from a North American context, which likely imposed some cultural limitations. Finally, the media literacy curriculum

for this project was focused on, and therefore limited by, the applicability of media literacy as a pastoral skill, particularly within a youth and young adult ministry setting.

Description of the Project Process

The project process included building a theological foundation, reviewing recent literature, developing and implementing an intervention, and then evaluating and reporting the results within a selected research methodology and protocol.

Theological Reflection

In order to provide a theological foundation for engaging media culture, I chose to reflect on the concept of "seeing" in the Gospel of John. Perhaps a more obvious choice would have been the book of Revelation, with its striking apocalyptic images, frequent visual references, and the revealing of Jesus Christ. Yet, several reasons emerged as to why John's Gospel was an ideal candidate for this project. First, the Gospel also contains numerous references to sight (and light) and offers memorable images, signs, and symbols that reveal the identity of Jesus. Second, John problematizes sight by disrupting the world of the seen, drawing the reader's eye further into the unseen realms of truth and meaning. This is essentially the task of media literacy. Third, the visual and symbolic context of the late first century Christianity to which John responds has important similarities to the context of the early 21st century church in the West, offering important clues for how it can negotiate contemporary media culture. Fourth, seeing is connected to several theological themes in the Gospel that have relevance for current media practice. Finally, seeing in John is explicitly connected with and dependent upon the work of the Spirit, which provides a cornerstone for faith-based media literacy.

Review of Literature

A review of literature relevant to teaching media literacy in the context of pastoral education was undertaken by focusing on selected works in three key areas. Priority was given to current literature written within the last five to ten years. However, the late 1980s to early 2000s were of such importance to the development of the field that some key earlier works were included. First, I explored literature related to media literacy education, including historical overviews of the field, theoretical works, research on media literacy interventions, examples of media literacy resources, and other recent literature reviews. Whenever available, I included literature that approached media literacy from a faith-based perspective. Second, I surveyed literature related to religion and media, which included some more general works in the area of faith and popular culture. Finally, I chose to give some limited attention to the literature of theology and film, since this is the area most frequently represented in seminary curriculums. I found myself in particular debt to the qualitative work of Hoover (2002, 2006) in the area of religion and media, and to the religious education perspectives of Hess (1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2002, 2011, 2014), who is one of the few scholars to write about media literacy in the context of theological education.

Development of the Intervention

As noted earlier, the project intervention grew out of a youth culture course I have taught at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary for more than a decade. It became apparent during that time, as Jolls (2008) stated so well, that "media no longer just influence our culture. They are our culture" (p. 42). I found this to be particularly true for youth and young adult culture. After conducting a situational analysis of the

course, I decided to redesign it, giving priority to the development of media literacy skills as a way of equipping pastors to read and respond to popular culture and the young people immersed in it. From my theological reflection and review of literature, I drew the conclusion that there was a need to identify a holistic media literacy framework that could integrate a number of theoretical and theological viewpoints. The Media Practice Model (Steele, 1999; Steele & Brown, 1995) emerged as the most promising candidate. It not only balanced several important theoretical considerations, but focused squarely on the lived experiences and identity formation of young people that are so significant to the efforts of pastors and youth workers. Furthermore, I discovered that the key elements of the Model aligned well with the theological insights gained from John's Gospel. Once adapted to this theological perspective, the Model became a rich framework from which to teach and practice media literacy as a pastoral skill.

Structure of the Intervention

The intervention was built on the basis of an active learning cycle. This yielded a course structure that was broken into four phases—media practices, media exegesis, media conversations, and media production—that moved students from awareness to analysis to reflection to action. A set of nine theoretical and skill-based outcomes was developed for the course. The 30 hours of class time were divided among lectures, media screenings, discussions, guest appearances, and student presentations. Out-of-class assignments were developed for each of the phases, including participating in a media survey and a media-free exercise, writing a media exegesis paper, facilitating a faith-and-media conversation with a group of young people, and producing a short digital story with a team of fellow students. All of this was packaged in what Wenger (1998, 2011)

calls a community of practice, a group in which members learn and practice a set of skills together. It was also supplemented by a wiki, which hosted a number of class resources and links and allowed students to post items and discuss readings online.

Research Methodology and Protocol

Evaluating the intervention required establishing a research purpose. I decided to explore students' perceptions of the spiritual and professional value of developing media literacy as a pastoral skill. A qualitative case study research methodology (Creswell, 1993, pp. 179-197) was selected (with some quantitative data entered for descriptive purposes), largely for its usefulness in exploring my research questions through an interpretation of the insights and experiences of a small, limited group of participants.

All 14 of the students in the class chose to participate in the research by signing an informed consent form. Measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of data and participants, as well as the credibility and reliability of the study. Data included four rounds of student learning reflections, researcher's field notes and observations, and the transcription of a video-recorded focus group. This was then analyzed using the methods of content analysis. An interpretive narrative of the intervention data is offered in Chapter Five. Conclusions from the interpretation of data, along with overarching conclusions from the project as a whole, are detailed in Chapter Six.

Definition of Terms

While every effort has been made in this paper to define specialized terms as they appear in the text, some frequently used terms with specialized meanings may best be defined and situated at the outset.

Agency is a sociological term that "denotes individual capacity for free thought and action" (Bruce & Yearley, 2006, p. 7), over and against *structure* which refers to various ways in which individuals' actions may be constrained or determined by established social patterns, ideologies, or institutions, such as those represented in media. Thus, agency is "the human ability to act upon and change the world" (Postill, 2010, p. 7). In this paper, agency is attributed to both human and divine beings.

Ideology may simply refer to the beliefs and ideas of a particular group of people. In the negative sense, however, it understands those beliefs and ideas to be "in the service of power" or "rationalizations justifying oppressive systems or the interests of a dominant group" (Vanhoozer, Anderson, & Sleasman, 2007, p. 250). In the context of media literacy literature, ideology is usually used with this pejorative connotation.

Literacy entails "gaining competencies involved in effectively learning and using socially constructed forms of communication and representation" (Kellner & Share, 2005, p. 369). Within media culture there are multiple literacies or ways of "giving and getting meaning" (Gee, 2010, p. 31), requiring one to be competent in the use of different media technologies, as shaped by the practices and conventions of various groups. For instance, being a literate Twitter user is distinct from being a literate gamer.

Media is often used as the plural of *medium*, referring to various means of mass communication, such as print, radio, television or the Internet. This is how the term is used in this paper, with the understanding that—especially in ancient times—*media* are inclusive of other visual forms used to convey messages, such as paintings, sculpture, or coinage. *Media* is also used as a collective noun when referring to the agencies of mass communication (i.e. "the media"). Yet, in this paper, the term *media industries* will be

used when referring to "different industries that have the creation of mediated content as a common activity" (Küng, 2008, p. 17). *Media culture* will refer to a common way of life shaped by media images, messages, and technologies. According to Kellner (n.d.), media "provide the symbols, myths, and resources through which we constitute a common culture and through the appropriation of which we insert ourselves into this culture" (p. 1). A cultural understanding of media is foundational to this project.

Participant will be the preferred term in this paper when describing people who are engaged with media (i.e. "media participants"). The term *viewer* has often been used but has passive connotations, while the concept of *audience* "only poorly describes people's engagement with today's media and communication environment," and *user* "lacks any direct relations to communication in particular" (Livingstone, 2008, p. 2). Inspired by the more recent notion of "participatory cultures" (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2006, p. 3) in new media environments, I have chosen *participant* to denote the reality that many media today require some level of interaction.

Practices are forms of activity through which people, as agents, "set out to maintain or change themselves, others and the world about them" (Hobart, 2010, p. 63). This term is central to *practice theory*, which describes the dialectical relationship between individual agency and social structures, attempting to demonstrate how each acts upon each other. Ortner (2006) describes practice theory as dealing with "the production of social subjects through practice in the world, and of the production of the world itself through practice" (p. 16). In other words, *media practices*—the things people do with or related to media in their everyday lives—both influence and shape participants as well as allow participants to shape and give meaning to their world.

Text, when used in the sense of *media text*, refers not only to written material but to any produced media work (a film, television program, web page, digital recording, etc.). Such texts contain signifiers (words, images, sounds) that are meant to be read and interpreted by those who engage them.

Summary

This concise introduction has offered a glimpse of the unmet challenges of popular media within the church and detailed how this media literacy project—in a very limited and focused way—has taken up the task of addressing those from a pastoral viewpoint. The interpretive analysis of this case study is intended to offer insights as to the spiritual and professional value of media literacy to the life and work of the emerging pastor or youth worker. It is my hope that it will be an encouragement to others who are pursuing or considering the pursuit of similar work within the context of pastoral education.

CHAPTER 2

A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR ENGAGING MEDIA CULTURE

The Gospel of John, noted for its visual and symbolic character (Frey, Zimmerman, Van der Watt, & Kern, 2006; Koester, 1995; D. Lee, 1994, 2002), was selected as a theological foundation for engaging media culture. It contains over 100 references to seeing, a prominent motif of light and darkness, and a rich array of images, symbols and signs. Yet it is not the *prominence* John's Gospel gives to seeing that makes it significant for a theology of viewing, but the way it *problematizes* sight. Throughout the Gospel, the Word made flesh disrupts and challenges what is seen in order to reveal deeper levels of truth and meaning. This makes it a rich text for thinking theologically about media literacy, which also questions images in order to see them more clearly.

The first half of this chapter will examine, with the aid of social scientific concepts, how the Gospel is fashioned to respond to the *contextual challenges* of loss and threat present in the visual and symbolic setting of late first century Christianity. It will then draw a brief comparison with early twenty-first century Christianity and consider how the Gospel may address similar challenges related to contemporary media culture. The second half of the chapter will trace the dynamics of seeing in the Gospel through several *textual themes* and use these to reflect theologically on contemporary media

practice. The chapter will conclude with a summary of John's theology of seeing along with recommendations for further research.

The Visual and Symbolic Context of the Gospel of John

Understanding how John's Gospel was shaped in response to its context is essential to grasping the project of seeing and symbolism it undertakes. A majority of scholars agree that the Gospel was authored at the end of the first century A.D., not long after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (70 A.D.) and the subsequent dedication of the Colosseum in Rome (80 A.D.), a project most likely funded by spoils from the Jewish Temple (Feldman, 2001). The Arch of Titus, dedicated five years later (85 A.D.), overlooked the Colosseum and featured marble reliefs of Titus' return from the Jewish War with sacred Temple objects in procession (see Appendix E). This visual juxtaposition of Jewish tragedy and Roman triumph characterizes the dual context that informs the Gospel: (a) the *loss* of the Temple with its festival imagery and ancient symbolism, and (b) the *threat* of the Empire with its grand spectacles and ubiquitous representations. The Gospel may be read as a symbolic and theological response to this context, as well as to the crisis of *identity* that emerged for readers suspended between a razed Temple of worship and a rising Empire of spectacle.

The Loss of the Temple

The destruction of the Second Temple left a gaping hole in the visual and symbolic landscape of Judaism. Rome broadcasted its triumph throughout the Empire in vivid terms by minting *Judea Capta* coinage, which pictured a victorious Vespasian on one side and a mourning Jewish captive and her bound male counterpart on the other (see

Appendix E). While Jews in Palestine certainly bore the brunt of the trauma and loss, those living elsewhere were affected, as well. Kostenberger (2006) likened the destruction of the Temple to "an earthquake that reverberated powerfully" (p. 81) throughout the Jewish diaspora. He argued that the Temple's demise was "the core element occasioning the composition of the Fourth Gospel," written as an apologetic response to "the religious vacuum left by the Temple's destruction" (p. 77). Indeed, the burning theological question for Jews after 70 A.D. was one of *presence*. Since the symbolic place of God's dwelling had been destroyed along with its rituals, where was God to be located? Jews had begun to address this question during the Exile and now faced it again. The post-Second Temple period gave rise to "a variety of coping strategies among Jews" (p. 82). From these, two main alternatives emerged: (a) rabbinic Judaism, which replaced the temple with personal piety and the study of Torah, and (b) Christianity, which identified Jesus and his community as the locus of God's presence.

John's Gospel articulates a Christian response to the loss of 70 A.D. through the use of a well-developed temple motif (Coloe, 2001, 2007, 2009; Kerr, 2002). By placing the temple cleansing scene at the beginning of the Gospel's narrative rather than at the end, as the Synoptics do, John situates Jesus as one who will establish himself as the new Temple throughout: "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days. . . . The temple he had spoken of was his body" (2:19-21). In fact, much of the remaining narrative takes place within—or with reference to—Jerusalem, the Temple, or one of its festivals. Jesus is presented as one whose very being encapsulates and expands upon the significance of the Jewish symbolic system.

This response is consistent with Homans' (2008) concept of *symbolic loss*, which he defines as "the loss of cherished and socially shared historical ideals and symbols, followed by a struggle to replace them with a new form of thinking" (p. 13). For Homans, such collective loss calls for "a gradual relinquishment of the past, of a once unifying and vivifying symbol and the social identity it conferred" (p. 18). Certainly, this became the task of the Jewish people after 70 A.D. Rather than slip into despair or disillusionment, Homans said creative persons may arise who squarely face a loss and "in turn generate the discovery of something as yet unseen in the new and emerging situation" (p. 18). This creative work of mourning involves "the revising of memory and the re-creation of meaning" (p. 18), or what Neimeyer (2001) described as a process of "meaning reconstruction" (p. 4). John, with his recovery and reinterpretation of Jewish symbolism in the light of Jesus, was surely such a meaning-maker.

The role of memory in mourning, then, is critical. *Social memory theory* provides insight into how past images and symbols may be rehabilitated as part of an adaptive response to loss. It posits that memory of the past, while generally resistant to change, can be shaped over time for the purpose of maintaining meaning and identity in the present. As Culpepper (1983) observed, the Gospel's "adaptation of symbols drawn from Judaism suggests that established symbols are being given new meaning in order that they might retain their viability and continuity in a context of profound crisis and change" (p. 184). Spaulding (1999) spoke of this as the "layering of new Christological meanings onto older Jewish material" (p. 162), so that Jesus is viewed not as eradicating the Temple system and its symbols but rather fulfilling them and giving them their truest significance.

This process of renewal suggests that mourning is not merely a theme of the Gospel but a key *function* related to how readers come to see the world through its lens. Homans (2000) indicated that a number of cultural forms can serve as "functional equivalents of mourning" (p. 24), including literature and film. Building on this insight, Daschke (2010) showed how apocalyptic writings associated with the destructions of the First and Second Temple "project a transformative healing arc" (p. 21), effecting what is known as the "apocalyptic cure" (Collins, 1998, p. 52). This occurs when a seer, mourning the loss of Zion, is taken heavenward in vision and shown an alternate symbolic reality that corresponds to the troubling events on earth. This revelation, with the aid of a heavenly interpreter, leads to "an unmasking of reality—showing believers that the reality they experience is not 'true' reality" (Daschke, 2010, p. 35). The apocalyptic journey, then, rehearses the loss but symbolically transforms it so that a new way of seeing emerges.

Though the Gospel of John is clearly not an apocalypse, Ashton (1991, 2014) has noted that it bears "intimations of apocalyptic" (1991, p. 182), a suggestion since taken up by other scholars (Williams & Rowland, 2013). Ashton (1991) argued that the Gospel is "an apocalypse—in reverse, upside down, inside out" (p. 405), since its revelation does not involve a heavenly vision concerning earthly events but rather an apprehension of earthly events that disclose heavenly truths. In the Gospel, "the transformation undergone by seers who journeyed to heaven was democratized; it was available to John's earthbound listeners" (Griffith-Jones, 2013, p. 275). That is, John's hearers become everyday seers, able to discern God's presence and activity in the world.

These affinities with apocalyptic allowed John's Gospel to cast a similar, yet distinct, "transformative healing arc" across the late first century landscape of loss. The Johannine "cure" hints at the Temple's destruction (2:19-20; 11:48-49) but reframes its loss by speaking of *another* story—one of the manifestation of God's presence in the person of Jesus, of his destruction at the hands of Rome, of his disciples' mourning, and of the subsequent birth of sight and meaning after his resurrection through the interpretive work of the Spirit. Not unlike Martyn's (1968) influential proposal, this creates a "two-level drama" (p. 89), one in which the losses of 70 A.D. can be mourned and transfigured in light of the previous narrative about Jesus' body-temple, which was also destroyed but raised again to become a spiritual dwelling for his followers.

The loss of the Temple was not the Gospel's only concern, however, as this loss was suffered at the hands of an Empire that continued to threaten the existence and identity of marginal groups like Jews and Christians. The Gospel offers evidence that it has this Imperial threat in mind, as well.

The Threat of the Empire

Rome exercised its power in a carrot-and-stick fashion, maintaining control of its vast Empire through persuasion and coercion. On the one hand, it espoused "a theology of imperial power" (Salier, 2006, p. 287) that hailed the Augustan dynasty as ushering in a golden age of life and peace by way of the emperor's divine calling and status. This message was embodied in an impressive visual and symbolic system known as Roman spectacle. "Freedom, justice, peace and salvation were the imperial themes you could expect to meet in the mass media of the ancient world, that is, on statues, on coins, in poetry and song and speeches" (Wright, 2005, p. 63). Religious festivals and public

entertainment, sponsored by local politicians and wealthy patrons, curried public favor and infused imperial ideology and worship into the rhythms of everyday life. There was "a broad evolution in Roman society toward what may be termed the 'theatricalization' of culture. . . . An increased emphasis on image over essence, style over substance, [and] fantasy over reality" (Beacham, 1999, p. 44) permeated Roman culture.

On the other hand, the control and wealth of the Empire rested with only a handful of elites. "The remaining 97 percent or so experienced varying but significant degrees of powerless and poverty" (Carter, 2008, p. 53). Life was precarious and punctuated by the harsh realities of violence and death, whether in the arena or on the battlefield. The spectacle of the cross, in particular, was the "Roman form of a public service announcement: do not engage in sedition as this person has, or your fate will be similar" (Taylor, 2000, p. 22). Thus, inscribed in Roman spectacle was not only a beguiling narrative of divinely-ordained peace and prosperity, but also a system of elite privilege and, when necessary, brutal punishment. The pressing theological question in the face of the Empire, then, was one of *power*. How were God-fearing groups like Jews and Christians to negotiate the threats associated with Imperial power and influence?

The nature of these threats can be explored through the lens of *intergroup threat theory* (Stephan, Ybarra, & Morrison, 2009), which distinguishes between *realistic* threats to a group's physical wellbeing and resources and *symbolic* threats to a group's system of meaning and values. From this perspective, alternative ways of seeing the world that challenge or invalidate a group's worldview are just as significant as physical threats. Furthermore, it is the *perception* of threat, not the actual level of threat itself, which matters. Perceived threats "have real consequences, regardless of whether or not

the actual perceptions of threat are accurate" (p. 47). For example, in the Gospel, Jewish leaders fear (ironically) that if Jesus' popularity grows, he may be seen as a threat and "the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation" (11:48). Jewish threats against Jesus (11:49-53) and his followers (9:22; 16:2) occur within the shadow of this perceived Imperial threat, even though Jesus is later judged by Pilate as innocent (18:38, 19:4, 6). Jesus is nevertheless crucified by Roman authorities, and his followers are warned that "the world" will become a source of hatred and persecution (15:18-20). The Gospel mitigates this threat, however, by recounting the solidarity of Jesus in suffering, revealing his proleptic defeat of "the world" (16:33) and announcing heaven's sovereignty over earthly powers (19:10-11). What threat theory offers, then, is the insight that how one sees and symbolizes the world is a real form of power, one which John uses to counter and reframe the threats laid against the early Christian community.

How did this Imperial threat play out in the everyday lives of John's audience? Broadly speaking, two possible scenarios have emerged. The *sectarian* scenario pictures a marginal and mostly Jewish Christian community facing expulsion from the synagogue and persecution from the Empire for their belief in Jesus (Cassidy, 1992; Reed, 2006; Richey, 2007). This highly distinctive group of believers faced a set of realistic threats and, in turn, was emboldened in their stance by the Gospel's strong ingroup-outgroup language. However, not all of John's readers may have encountered such threats, as data from this period does not indicate a widespread policy of rabbinic or Roman hostility (Hakola, 2005; Harland, 2000). Alternatively, the *participationist* scenario envisions a group of Jewish-Gentile Christians in Asia Minor who, in keeping with the practice of local synagogues, were immersed in urban life and at risk of accommodation to the

Empire (Carter, 2008, 2011; cf. Tilborg, 1996). Indeed, it appears from epigraphic evidence that Jewish and perhaps Christian groups did not totally withdraw from social and civic life. Some attended the theater, participated in the gymnasium, and held membership in guilds and associations (Harland, 2000). In such circumstances, symbolic threats could emerge, as participation in imperial life might erode Christian beliefs and loyalties. Thus, for Carter (2008), the Gospel's "rhetoric of distance," with its sharp conflicts and dualisms, "creates societal boundaries, establishes clarity of identity, and urges distance" (p. 75) from those who have become too comfortable with the Empire. Of course, if Bauckham's (1998) case for a widespread Gospel audience is correct, both scenarios could have existed. John's text may have intersected with Christian groups who were shunned and persecuted for their distinctiveness as well as with those who participated in Imperial life and were under threat of compromising their identity.

What emerged from this context of loss and threat, then, were not only questions of presence and power but also a crisis of *identity*. On the one hand, 70 A.D. delivered a crushing blow to the religious identity of Jewish believers, which John sought to address through a process of symbolic memory and creative mourning (as indicated earlier). On the other hand, the demands and allurements of Imperial identity pressed on Jewish and Gentile believers alike. Christians had to negotiate between the competing claims of Jesus and the emperor. For this reason, scholars within New Testament imperial studies have used the tools of *post-colonial analysis* to explore how early Christians maintained a distinct identity amidst the dominant influence of the Empire.

Whether pressure to conform to Imperial identity came through accommodation or persecution, the need for Christians to resist remained. Post-colonial analysis makes a

distinction between the "public transcripts" of official power and the "hidden transcripts" of quiet resistance created by subordinate groups (Horsley, 2004; Scott, 1990). *Cultural mimicry* refers to the way in which subordinates copy the language and behaviors of those in power but "use that mimicry to mock—and therefore subtly challenge and subvert—the control and authority of the coloniser" (Punt, 2010, p. 5). John's use of mimicry is seen throughout the Gospel, as Jesus assumes titles claimed by emperors, such as "Savior of the World" and "Son of God." It becomes especially apparent in the closing scenes in which Jesus is mockingly dressed and treated as a Roman ruler (19:2-5). The very things "which are meant to humiliate him actually acclaim his true status in an ironic fashion" (Salier 2004, 164). This symbolic subversion continues at the cross. Crucifixion was meant to dehumanize its victims, but as Thatcher (2009) described it, Jesus "is 'dehumanized' by the cross only in the sense that his divine identity is completely exposed by everything that the Romans do to him" (p. 116). Jesus, then, "displaces Rome, while still leaving the crucifixion spectacle in place" (Taylor, 2000, p. 22). The cross stands as an enduring example of how an image employed by one power can be adopted, subverted, and transformed by another.

A further illustration of mimicry can be found in the Gospel's focus on the miraculous signs of Jesus. If in the wake of Jewish loss Jesus is presented as the new Temple, then in the face of Imperial power John portrays him as the "true life-giver" (Salier, 2006, p. 293). As previously noted, Roman spectacle visualized the emperor as the source of life and peace, the great benefactor of all people. Emperor Vespasian (69-79 A.D.) was even credited with healing two men, one lame and one blind (Eve, 2008) (cf. 5:1-14; 9:1-6). Yet, in the arena Imperial life took a deadly turn. Staged spectacles

mutilated flesh as a form of entertainment, using technology to alter and package that reality for a consuming public (Hammer, 2010). The signs of Jesus, which "relate mostly to the healing or restoring of the flesh" (D. Lee, 2002, p. 36) or otherwise offer generous benefaction (2:1-11; 6:5-12), both mimic the Empire and critique its false promises of life. They also serve as an act of memory. Salier (2006) recalled that "the language of signs is particularly associated with the release of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses" (p. 298). Just as God used the signs of Moses to "bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt" (Exod 12:12), he likewise uses the signs of Jesus—especially the crucifixion and resurrection of his flesh—to pass judgment on the gods of Rome and establish Jesus as the only true and abundant life-giver (10:10).

Therefore, in a post-Temple world John's Gospel does not take up the policy of accommodation with Rome adopted by the Yavnean rabbis, nor does it indulge the Jewish nationalistic hopes of those seeking to rebuild another temple, which ended in the failed insurrection of Bar-Kokhba (Schiffman, 1991). Instead, John opts for a course of symbolic subversion. Unlike the Temple and the Empire which imprinted their meanings and social order onto physical spaces, the Gospel creates a "Johannine thirdspace" (van den Heever, 2010, p. 228) which contests and re-conceptualizes these spaces within a textual plane. Without laying a single stone, the Gospel's narrative reconstructs the torn-down Temple and reorders the top-down Empire. It is a memory that recalls yet reshapes the past and a mimicry that reflects yet subverts the present. Rather than creating yet another physical site of worship, it opens a new way of seeing made possible by the one who gives blind men sight.

From the First to the 21st Century

The 21st century began for Americans in much the same way as the first century ended for Jews – with a national loss of epic proportions. The traumatic spectacle of the Twin Towers collapsing on September 11, 2001, was replayed over and over again in the media, and has been followed by years of collective mourning through literature, movies, art, and architecture. America has sought to adjust not only to the loss of life and national security but to the loss of what the buildings themselves symbolized in terms of unquestioned American privilege, power, and prosperity.

A much less dramatic source of symbolic loss lies in the processes of modernization and secularization, at work more than two centuries before the events of 2001. Homans (2008) spoke of loss as the inevitable "dark side" (p. 16) of modern progress. While symbols bring cultures together and create shared understandings, rapid social change "strips away the symbolic structures that earlier generations created and that are no longer workable. When the creation of new forms of thought and adaptation lag behind the changes that demand them, loss occurs" (p. 40). Secularization, he argued, is the religious side of this process. Under changing modern conditions, religious institutions and symbols begin to lose their cohesive influence. Yet, instead of destroying religion, Ostwalt (2003) asserted that secularization proceeds in two ways: (a) in attempts to make churches relevant by adopting popular cultural forms and (b) in "the dispersion of religious sensibility through a variety of cultural forms" (p. 7), especially those of popular culture. Both ways shift the locus of religious authority in the direction of popular media and entertainment and both "originate with the perceived loss of authority

or relevance by religious institutions" (p. 7). So, while secularization may not be the end of religion, it does entail significant losses on the side of traditional religion.

When this sense of religious loss is paired with the threat of popular culture perceived by many pastors and parents, a parallel with the late first century begins to emerge. When this is further joined with the frustration many churches experience while trying to shape young people's faith identities in the face of a multi-billion dollar media industry, the similarities only increase. Without overdrawing the comparison, it seems safe to say that most Western Christians now live in a context in which temple-like religion appears to be waning while the religion-like temples and arenas of popular culture are flourishing. This raises the question: How should Christians cope with their losses and respond to the spectacle of media culture? Should they separate or participate? Perhaps the creative functions of memory, mourning and mimicry that John applies in his context can be useful in our own. Christian memory can recover and reinterpret past symbols in light of the ongoing revelation of Jesus. Christian mourning can reframe our losses and open up new avenues of insight and meaning. Christian mimicry can embolden us to reflect the images of our culture in ways that both resist and transform them. In short, perhaps the work of contemporary Christians in an age of loss and threat is not to become more visible (bigger churches, bigger screens) but to simply learn how to see well and to share what we have seen with others.

Textual Themes Related to a Johannine Theology of Viewing

Having explored the ways in which the Gospel of John responds to the contextual challenges of symbolic loss and threat, the remainder of the chapter will detail seven

textual themes related to seeing—identity, desire, presence, mourning, birth, power, and agency. Each section is anchored by a question from the text followed by a brief theological reflection on how that theme might be applied to everyday media practice. As Culpepper (1983) stated so well, "the implicit purpose of the gospel narrative is to alter irrevocably the reader's perception of the real world" (p. 4). It is to this testing and transformation of sight that the chapter now turns.

Identity—Seeing and Being

"Who are you?" (8:25)—this is perhaps the central question of the Gospel, reflective of John's focus on the identity of Jesus. With echoes of Genesis, Jesus is introduced as the divine Word of creation and the "light of all mankind" (1:4). His identity then unfolds visually through a series of metaphoric "I am" (εγω ειμι) statements (cf. Exod 3:14), which together create a "Christ mosaic" (Zimmermann, 2006, p. 37) composed of images drawn from everyday life and religious tradition. John builds on these images to confront readers with their own identity. Koester (2006) showed that "each of the main images of Jesus has a corresponding image for human beings" (p. 403). For instance, hunger, thirst, and darkness describe a *condition* "in which people are both estranged from and attracted to God" (p. 416). These are met with satiating images of Jesus as bread, water, and light. The "underlying theological perspective" is that people are relational creatures who are "created for life with God" (p. 403-405). Koester (1995) further showed that for each Christological image there is also a corresponding *call*. For example, the bread of life invites people to come and be satisfied (6:35). The good shepherd's flock follows him and listens to his voice (10:3-4). Zimmerman (2006) called this a "figurative commissioning" (p. 40). Overall, this visual scheme demonstrates that

people are not only designed to be in relationship with God but within that relationship alone find their true identity as "children of God" (1:12).

The narrative of the man born blind (9:1-41) is a story about discovering identity. The man's blindness is a symbol of the congenital condition of all humanity, born in need of the world's "true light" (1:9). He is "theologically 'everyperson,'" (Schneiders, 2002, p. 192). Through a miracle of Jesus, the man's blindness turns to sight. This sign not only restores his physical sight but gradually enables him to see the identity of Jesus, as well. Again echoing Genesis (Gen 3:5, 7), John repeats seven times that the man's "eyes were opened" (9:10, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, 32). Painter (2002) considered this to be one of Jesus' "new acts of creation" (p. 77), signaling his work to restore human beings in God's image. Not surprisingly, the Gospel gives a nod to the man's renewed status. When neighbors strike up a debate about the man's true identity, he insists "I am (εγω ειμι) the man" (9:9). Coming to see Jesus, then, is also about coming into our own true being.

Identity is central to media practice. Media provide spaces where we can explore other worlds, try on new ways of being, and project images of ourselves to others. The Gospel certainly resonates with this visual and symbolic construction of our identities using everyday materials. Like many narratives in the media, the Gospel provides material for thinking about the human condition, testing our perceptions of reality, and asking questions like "Who am I?" and "Why am I here?" But its central reference point is always the person of Jesus who came to image true humanity for us.

Desire—Coming and Seeing

"What do you want?" (1:38)—these first words of Jesus tap immediately into his followers' desire, with the added invitation, "come, and you will see" (1:39). Throughout

the Gospel, Jesus actively engages in conversations about desire: for water and a husband (4:15-18), help and healing (5:5-8), bread and a king (6:14-15, 226), life and a lost loved one (11:32). Henrikson (2011) seems to understand with Jesus, that to be invited to articulate your desire "is to be taken seriously as a person" (p. 3). In asking the lame man, "do you want to get well?" (5:6), Jesus seeks to break his cycle of despair and actuate his deepest longings. Henrikson (2009) said that Jesus creates "an eschatological desire for the impossible. . . . Those healed, saved, recognized, find their desire more than fulfilled, since he destroys the circle of sameness, [and] liberates from the bonds of the present conditions" (p. 30). Indeed, God-given desire moves us in the direction of seeing and doing "greater things" (1:50; 14:12). Dyrness (2011) believed that people's everyday desires and passions are poetic attempts to make (ποιησις) a better and more beautiful life, "a movement of the soul that, if nurtured more deeply and oriented rightly, would lead them to God" (p. 5). In fact, Jesus' attention to human desire is an expression of a greater divine desire to come into the world, to be recognized, and to be received by his own (1:9-11). Visually, Jesus longs to be seen as the Creator. Relationally, he desires to be accepted as "the gift of God" (4:10). As Moore (1993) described it, "God's desire is a black hole that slowly draws the Johannine cosmos into it" (p. 226). The deeper John's characters and readers are drawn in, the more they come to see their own true desires.

The story of the Samaritan woman (4:1-32) is built around images of desire and fulfillment. It also operates within a metaphor of relational longing, as it echoes the pattern of several Old Testament betrothal stories (Thompson, 2012). Jesus' initial request of the woman for a drink of water represents an even greater "thirst" on his part. Moore (1993) observes that "his desire is to arouse her desire, to himself be desired" (p.

208). Jesus gently reveals the woman's cycle of broken and misdirected desires, culminating with her invitation: "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" (4:29). In fact, when Jesus' disciples return with food, he indicates that he has already been satisfied. His hunger is "to do the will" (θελημα also denotes "desire") and work of his Father (4:34). This vocational desire (Mercer, 2011), which the woman replicates with her own act of witness, results in the Samaritans' proclaiming Jesus as "Savior of the World." To follow Jesus in the path of desire, then, is to be led by a divine desire that the whole world would come to see.

Unfortunately, many Christians try to avoid or suppress desire, especially as it relates to media. However, when desire is divorced from faith and theology, it only relegates desire to the marketplace where it plays a distorted role (Farley, 2011). By and large, this abandons people to lead lives of unexamined desire. Acknowledging desire as a good and fundamental part of human nature (Dean, 2011), and learning to re-educate it in line with the desire and gift of God is central faithfulness in media practice.

Presence—Staying and Seeing

"Where are you staying?" (1:37)—Jesus' first followers, desiring to stay with him just a while longer, could not have known the full import of their question. Jesus' reply, "come, and you will see" (1:38), invites them on a symbolic pilgrimage in which the everyday world "below" will reveal an unseen world "above" (8:23). Whereas, the Synoptics speak of discipleship as "following," John's Gospel expresses it in terms of "staying" and "seeing" (Latz, 2010; D. Lee, 1997). This is initiated by Jesus himself who "dwelled" or "pitched his tent [εσκηνωσεν] among us" (1:14), no doubt a reference the Israelite "tent [σκηνη] of meeting" in which God's glory first appeared. John's

suggestion is that God is dwelling again among his people in the person of Jesus, resulting in another epiphany. Thus, the report, "we have seen his glory" (1:14).

John quickly transposes this into a theme of "abiding" (μενω) that creates a movement from physical dwelling to spiritual indwelling, from the seen to the unseen. When the Baptist testifies, "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain [μενω] on him" (1:32), he has not seen an actual dove resting on Jesus' head, but has perceived in him a divine abiding. The indwelling of Jesus and his Father (14:10), the intimate "home" the Father and Son will build in our hearts (14:23), and the "many rooms [μοναι]" (14:2) Jesus prepares are all part of an unseen realm. Thus, the answer to the disciples' question about Jesus' dwelling stretches from heaven to earth (1:51).

As with abiding, "glory" (δοχα) also emerges as a significant theme of presence in the Gospel. Robertson (1988) defines glory as "the manifestation of God's presence and power" (p. 124). In the Synoptics, Jesus' glory is revealed in the transfiguration account, an event not included in John's Gospel. Yet, according to Kooy (1978), "the entire Gospel is a transfiguration story" (p. 68), brought to life in the language of glory. Lee (2003) observes that in the Synoptics, Peter proposes to erect three "shelters" (σκηνας) in order to prolong a mountaintop moment of Jesus' glory (Matt 17:4; Mark 9:5; Luke 9:33). By contrast, the Johannine Jesus descends from heaven and "pitches his tent" (εσκηνωσεν) among humanity, where John lingers on the immanent display of glory "present in every contour of the life and being of Jesus" (p. 161). The flesh of Jesus becomes the "Symbol of God" (D. Lee, 2002, p. 29). And because as the Word he has created all things, the world also becomes a "storehouse of symbols" (Painter, 1986, p. 40), capable of representing him and thus revealing His Father's presence and power.

Near the end of Jesus' ministry, upon hearing that he was going away, Philip says, "Lord, show us the father" (14:8). After three years of staying with Jesus, the disciple who invited others to "come and see" (1:46), still does not fully apprehend what he has seen. The disappointment of Jesus is evident: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9). Philip's struggle reveals that seeing is a process, and that discerning God's presence in what we see on a daily basis does not, in fact, come naturally.

It is important, then, to consider how God might be present in media culture. Does he "pitch his tent" in the symbolic worlds created by movies, video games, and social media? Media participants engage in what Aden (1999) calls "symbolic pilgrimages" (p. 79), seeking out meaning, identity and belonging in these spaces between the virtual and the real. Can God enter these symbolic journeys to speak of things "above," as he did in John's Gospel? If so, how can we not just live in media culture but inhabit it in a way that is attentive to God's unseen activity?

Mourning—Losing and Seeing Again

"Why are you crying?" (20:13)—this question reveals the care of Jesus for his disciples, especially in the days before and after his death. A major portion of the Gospel is devoted to this time of losing and seeing again. Jesus indicates repeatedly that the world will soon lose its light (9:4; 11:9; 12:35). As Judas departs and Jesus begins his farewell address, John says "it was night" (13:30). The farewell address (chapters 13-17) is an extended work of anticipatory mourning, in which Jesus prepares the disciples for his death and departure. At the heart of it, Jesus shares a riddle that becomes the pivotal point in John's theology of seeing: "In a little while you will see [θεωρειτε] me no more,

and then after a little while you will see [οψεσθε] me" (16:16). Jesus, of course, will disappear into the tomb and then reappear after his resurrection (20:25-27). But there is more here than an interruption of sight. The shift in language seems to indicate that one kind of seeing, physical observation, will be replaced by another kind of seeing, inward apprehension (Derrett, 1998). The explanation of Jesus to his bewildered disciples is that they will weep and mourn, but their grief will turn to joy (16:20, 22). This joy is linked with the promised gift of the Spirit (Etienne, 1982), who will guide them into all truth (16:13-15). The teaching and reminding ministry of the Spirit (14:26; cf. 2:17, 22; 15:20; 16:4) will enable them to truly apprehend Jesus once he is gone in ways they could not when he was present (Hurtado, 2007). Attig (1996) described grief as "a process of relearning the world" (p. ix), including relearning our relationship with the person now absent. It is this process of relearning that the Spirit will facilitate as the disciples look back on Jesus' life. They will no longer see Jesus in the flesh, but they will gain insight into his life that will provide an unshakeable joy in his absence (20:22).

When Jesus asks, "Woman, why are you crying" (20:13), Mary through her grief and tears takes him for the gardener. What appears to be a case of mistaken identity is really not, for Jesus is, indeed, the gardener (Coloe, 2011; Wyatt, 1990; Zimmermann, 2008). As the second Adam, he is creation's caregiver and has re-opened access to the tree of life (Suggit, 1999). The Creator's voice that Eve once ignored in a bid to have her "eyes opened" (Gen. 3:5-7) now speaks Mary's name, and immediately she recognizes Jesus (cf. 10:3-4). Her exclamation "I have seen the Lord!" (vs. 18) is the joyous testimony of a new Eve whose eyes have truly been opened.

While it might seem strange to speak of loss as part of everyday media practice, if loss is a function of change (as suggested earlier), an ever-changing stream of images cannot help but result in lost ways of seeing ourselves, the world, and God. Why else would we be afraid of "losing" our children to the influence of media? In light of this perpetual visual and symbolic loss, we must learn to trust the ongoing hermeneutical role of the Spirit in recalling the things of Jesus with an ever deepening insight and recasting those truths in freshly imagined ways for new times, circumstances, and generations.

Birth—Seeing and Believing

"How can this be?" (3:9)—this is the question of Nicodemus, whose confusion is shared some chapters later by a roomful of disciples trying to grasp the Farewell riddle of Jesus. To explain his saying, Jesus uses not only the image of mourning but also that of birth. He compares the crisis of not seeing triggered by his death to "a woman giving birth" who "has pain because her time has come" (16:21). Indeed, Jesus' "hour" (12:23, 13:1, 17:1) will plunge his disciples into their own time of darkness (16:32). Yet, after his resurrection, like a woman emerging from labor, they will forget their anguish for the "joy that a child [ανθρωπος] is born into the world" (16:21). This is the birth of seeing again, the joy of a new humanity. From the beginning of his Gospel, John has made it clear that he is not concerned with natural birth but with being "born of God" (1:13), later described as being "born of the Spirit" (3:8). In fact, Jesus tells Nicodemus, "no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again [or 'from above']" (3:3). This birth of sight and Spirit occurs only after the resurrection when Jesus "breathes" the Spirit on his disciples (20:22), just as he breathed "the breath of life" (Gen 2:7) into Adam. Du Rand (2005) calls this the "theological pinnacle" (p. 46) of Jesus' mission. His coming in the

flesh finds its fulfillment in the re-creation and commissioning of a new humanity. It is also the apex of John's theology of seeing. For not only will the disciples see anew, but they themselves will bear the image and glory of God to the world (17:22-23).

What then of Nicodemus? He is impressed by what he sees. He tells Jesus, "no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him" (3:2). It is what Nicodemus cannot see that perplexes him. "How can this be?" (3:9) he asks—not once but twice. Nicodemus is not alone. Other characters in John's Gospel also struggle to have faith in the unseen, and chief among them is Thomas, who was absent when Jesus appeared and breathed the Spirit on his disciples. While the others tell him, "We have seen the Lord," Thomas declares that unless he has evidence he can see and touch, he "will not believe" (20:25). Jesus appears again and elicits Thomas' faith, but then goes on to bless those "who have not seen and yet have believed" (20:29). Waetjen (2005) spoke of this as a "circle of faith" (p. 137) present within several of the Gospel's narratives, linking those who "see and therefore believe" with those who able to "believe in order to see" (p. 136). He says that both types of faith have their place, with sight-inspired faith preparing the way for faith-inspired sight and vice versa. As such, it calls us to encourage one another on our respective spiritual journeys of seeing and believing.

It seems appropriate, then, to speak of viewing as a spiritual discipline, involving the generative role of the Spirit in our media practice. If there is a way of seeing that can only be produced by the Spirit, then it seems essential that Christians be open to his role and activity in the viewing process. It also seems important to consider the role of imagination—including the imaginative works of popular culture—in the life of faith. Is it possible that the structuring of other possible worlds in media is an act of believing in

order to see (on the part of producers) so that upon seeing these others may believe? If so, how could the Spirit be active in this "circle of faith" inscribed into media culture?

Power—Seeing and Saying

"What is truth?" (18:38)—Pilate's question rings out in the governor's palace and echoes down through the corridors of power in every age. It serves as a dismissal of truth by power, even as it issues the Gospel's final call to consider truth's substance. John's answer to this question has already been given. Truth resides fully in "the one and only Son, who came from his Father" (1:14). Jesus himself testifies, "I am…the truth" (14:6). While Pilate's proceedings are dominated by the question of Jesus' kingship (18:33, 37, 39; 19:3, 19, 21), a notion harbored by some of his followers (1:49; 6:14; 12:13, 15), Jesus makes it clear that he has no interest in military power or an earthly kingdom. Rather, he says, "My kingdom is from another place" (18:36). Declining to call himself a king, Jesus declares, "The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (18:37). It is here that Pilate interjects his famous question, in effect "cutting off Jesus' testimony" (Köstenberger, 2005, p. 60) and declaring himself on the side of power. In fact, Volf (1996) notes that the exchanges between Pilate and the Jewish leaders amount to "a discourse of power" (p. 265), filled with demands, shrewdness and intimidation. Ironically, while trials are meant to discover the truth, in this instance "neither the accusers nor the judge cared for the truth. . . . The only truth they will recognize is the 'truth of power'" (p. 266). On the contrary, Jesus makes a case for "the power of truth" (p. 266). According to Volf, "the instrument of this power is not 'violence,' but 'witness'" (p. 267)—to say what one has seen and heard. Yet, "to be a witness to truth does not mean to renounce all power. For truth itself is so

much a power that witnessing can be described as kingship" (p. 267). This means that those born of the Spirit not only see the truth of God's kingdom but have a powerful opportunity to say something about it, as well (3:11).

But did Pilate really have no concern for the question of truth? Glancy (2005) quipped, "Pilate may not know the truth, but he thinks he knows how to get it" (p. 121). Her assessment was that Pilate applies *judicial torture* in Jesus' trial, a common practice in Roman law that was "conceived as a mechanism to extract truth from flesh" (p. 108). When Pilate finds Jesus without fault (18:38) and *then* has him flogged (19:1), it is for the purpose of proving that there is no admission of wrongdoing to be extracted from his flesh. After this fails and Jesus grows silent, Pilate flaunts his power to determine Jesus' fate. But Jesus asserts his Father's sovereignty, "You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above" (19:11). Pilate's men will leave visible marks on Jesus' body, and such marks were widely seen as a testimony to the truth of Rome's power. Yet in John's Gospel, Jesus' pierced flesh "does not signal the ownership or agency of the imperial authority that inflicted his wounds" (p. 134). Rather, it becomes the means by which Jesus is later recognized as both Lord and God (20:28).

At times, the power of the media establishment can seem overwhelming. Yet, the false claims of earthly power can and must be resisted. In witnessing to truth, we are no less powerful in the face of popular media than Jesus was before Pilate. While not diminishing physical torture, it must be said that contemporary media may also seek to inscribe bodies with their own narratives of power, in an attempt to extract not truth but money from flesh. Truth-telling in the midst of media culture, then, whether it be by

unmasking the false ideologies of power or by carefully excavating layers of truth and meaning, is an act of agency that is central to faith-based media literacy.

Agency—Sending and Seeing

"How then were your eyes opened?" (9:10)—this question undergirds all of the other themes related to seeing, and the answer is found in God's agency. Twenty-four times in the Gospel, Jesus refers to God as "the Father (or the one) who sent me." This is significant because "God is defined not in terms of ontic aspects of being but by active aspects of doing" (Anderson, 1999, p. 35). By sending his Son, the Father is the initiator of all that Jesus reveals in the Gospel. Consistent with the Jewish principle of agency (H. Baker, 2013), Jesus is the agent of his Father's will (4:34; 6:38), representing his Father in all that he does (5:19, 30) and says (12:49), to the point that Jesus exclaims, "the one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me" (12:45). Upon announcing his departure, Jesus promises that he and his Father will send the Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:7) who will similarly function as a divine agent (16:13-15). Jesus says, "The Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you" (16:15). This will enable the disciples' post-resurrection sight and prepare the way for their own being sent into the world (17:18; 20:21) as agents (14:12) and witnesses to what they have seen.

At the center of this agency motif is the story of the man born blind, with which this half of the chapter began. In a symbolic gesture, Jesus told him to go and wash his eyes in a pool called "Sent," after which he "came home seeing" (9:7). This is the very heart of John's theology of sight and, indeed, of faith-based media literacy: it is only the agency of God that enables us to see. Much is said in media literacy circles of the role for human agency in the act of viewing (see Chapter Three), which has its place.

However, theologically speaking, it is only through the divine agency of the Spirit and a Spirit-breathed, Spirit-sent witness to truth that we and the world will come to truly see.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this chapter, I have set out to reconstruct the meaning of John's Gospel for those living in 21st century media culture by exploring the visual and symbolic context of the late first century to which the Gospel responded. I have argued that the post-70 A.D. conditions of religious loss and cultural threat, along with a corresponding crisis of religious identity, also exist within contemporary Western Christianity, particularly as it relates to secularization and the inroads of popular media into everyday life. The tools of symbolic transformation used by the Gospel offer a way forward to what I see as Christianity's primary task: not competing with or accommodating to media culture, but learning how to see clearly and act wisely in the midst of it. Furthermore, a brief theology of seeing has been traced through seven themes in the Gospel, with consideration given to contemporary media practice. I suggested that the visual construction and recognition of identity is central to both the Gospel and media practice. I further proposed that the process of coming to see engages people's desires and losses. It entails a birthing of the Spirit that allows them to discern the gift of God's presence in everyday life and to recognize their true humanity in connection with Jesus. Those who see in this way can bear a powerful heaven-sent witness to the truth in the face of a media establishment that continually asks with Pilate, "What is truth?"

Because of the limited parameters of this chapter, and for the lack of any comprehensive, dissertation-length or book-length treatment on John's theology of seeing as it relates to media culture, I recommend that such research and reporting be done.

Alternatively, a fruitful exercise might be to explore this through the diversity of the Johannine corpus, including the Letters and the rich imagery of the Apocalypse.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE RELATED TO FAITH-BASED MEDIA LITERACY

Why should a Seventh-day Adventist theological seminary teach media literacy as a pastoral skill? Hess (2000) stated that media culture and practices are so intertwined with the contemporary situation that a failure "to engage in serious theological study of popular culture is not to be wholly honest in our situated theological reflection" (p. 12). She urged those in theological education to consider that "every student who comes into your classroom to prepare for ministry . . . will likely have received more formation of their attention from the media culture industries than from religious sources" (p. 12). This is a challenge and an opportunity for institutions with a mission to develop students morally, spiritually, and theologically for pastoral leadership.

As part of laying a foundation for teaching media literacy in a seminary setting, a review of selected literature related to media literacy, religion and media, and theology and film has been undertaken. Priority has been given to literature within the last five to ten years. However, because the late 1980s to early 2000s were such a formative time for these fields, some key earlier works are included. This chapter proceeds, first, by giving an overview of the media literacy movement as a whole, organizing its literature into four "lenses"; second, by examining how faith-based groups have framed their participation

with the movement in line with these four perspectives; and third, by further considering the approach to media literacy selected for this project within its Adventist context.

Approaches to Media Literacy

The media literacy movement is a complex phenomenon, influenced by a number of disciplines, with contributions from the behavioral sciences, literary criticism, cultural studies, teaching and learning, and communication studies. Hobbs (2005) noted that this creates "a cacophony of voices that, to a nonspecialist, can make the growth in knowledge and theory about media literacy seem inconsistent and incoherent" (p. 865). In a review of twenty-first century media literacy education, Tobias (2008) detailed four interrelated approaches: protectionist/interventionist, critical thinking, critical pedagogy, and arts/aesthetic. This review will similarly organize media literacy perspectives as a set of heuristic lenses through which media and media literacy may be viewed: media effects, media industries, media practices, and media production. This first section will detail each of these lenses, with some concluding remarks about areas of consensus in the field of media literacy.

The Media Effects Lens—Content and Consumption

The media effects lens focuses largely on the negative impact of media content and consumption on individuals and society. It draws on a tradition of media effects research as well as on media use studies, and seeks to intervene in order to prevent harm from occurring.

Two long-term research projects that track levels and patterns of consumption are Kaiser Family Foundation's quinquennial reports on media use among eight- to 18-year

olds (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2005; Rideout et al., 2010; Rideout, Foehr, Roberts, & Brodie, 1999) and the Pew Research Center's Internet Project (Pew, 2014). Both of these widely-cited projects reveal dramatic shifts in participation levels and use patterns, driven largely by rapid advances in digital broadband and mobile technologies.

The field of media effects research encompasses a wide range of theoretical perspectives, including those of persuasion (the ability of media to motivate behavior), cultivation (the influence of media messages over time), uses and gratifications (what people do with media), social cognition (how people learn from others in media), and media priming (how media affect later behavior and judgment). Effects research is trained on a number of specific media issues such as the influence of news and advertising; the effects of sex, violence, and stereotyping; fright reactions; effects on personal and public health; and the social and psychological effects of computer-mediated communication (Bryant & Zillmann, 2002; Nabi & Oliver, 2009).

Since its inception in the late 1920s, effects research has gone from understanding the effects of media as direct, powerful, and more or less uniform (known as the hypodermic needle theory) to the current acknowledgement of their variety, complexity and variability (Sparks, 2010). This more nuanced perspective has been carried forward into the latest wave of research exploring the impact of online and social media technologies (see the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*). Furthermore, the shift from analog to digital technologies has given the media ecology perspectives of McLuhan (1964), Ong (1967) and Postman (1985, 1992) continued attention, with their emphasis on the way in which new mediums themselves shape culture and content.

In spite of its growing sophistication, media effects research remains controversial, especially among British media scholars (Gauntlett, 2004). Effects researchers Nabi and Oliver (2009) have admitted that changes in media have outpaced theoretical developments and that experts now agree "the field is in need of reorientation" (p. 2). They also concede that the strongest motivation for effects research—a concern for harmful effects—has often been its undoing, as results are sometimes misconstrued by advocates, leading to research being disputed or discredited.

Nevertheless, the protectionist agenda behind much effects research is likely to be supported by parents, public health advocates, and government officials looking for ways to prevent social problems (Kubey, 2003). The idea that media literacy might shield students against the harmful effects of media has come to be known as inoculation. In this view, media exposure is treated as a risk factor and media literacy as a protective strategy (Hobbs, 1998). In fact, "media literacy has been recommended as an effective health promotion strategy by a number of respected organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Centers for Disease Control" (Bergsma & Carney, 2008). Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health operate the Center on Media and Child Health (www.cmch.tv) that includes a wealth and resources for researchers, teachers, and parents who want to understand and respond to the effects of media.

A key question, of course, is whether or not media literacy interventions are effective. In a review of media literacy effects, Potter and Byrne (2009) distinguished between two types of interventions. *Formal interventions* are typically experimental in nature and built on a theoretical basis. Some of them, such as those using the message

interpretation process, have proven to be quite effective in mitigating targeted effects (Austin et al., 2002; Austin, Pinkleton, & Funabiki, 2007). Others have actually "boomeranged," creating undesired effects (Byrne, 2009; Byrne, Linz, & Potter, 2009). *Natural interventions* are those which occur in the course of everyday life. These include restrictive measures (setting media rules and limits), social co-viewing (adults and children watching media together), and instructional intervention (adults discussing and evaluating media content with children). The last approach, though the least utilized, has been found to be the most helpful (Nathanson, 2004; Paavonen, Roine, Pennonen, & Lahikainen, 2009). Overall, Bergsma and Carney's (2008) meta-analysis concluded that more and better research is needed concerning the effectiveness of media interventions.

Very much in line with the effects tradition, Potter (2004) developed a cognitive theory of media literacy, asserting that "any theory of media literacy must be at its core a theory about how people are affected by the media" (p. 66). His theory proposes to develop the cognitive capacities of the individual in response to the "conditioning" (p. 12) of the media. Potter dismissed the notion, implied by critical and cultural studies (see the following lens), that there is a standard by which media ideologies can be judged or rejected as false. "The most fundamental principle underlying my perspective is that individuals should be empowered to make their own choices and interpretations" (p. 57). The heart of his approach, then, is learning how to cultivate a more mindful state when consuming media by building up "knowledge structures" about media and engaging one's "personal locus" (p. 69) where media can be filtered and then processed with the right skills and competencies. Hobbs (2005) commends Potter for advancing the concept of mindfulness, noting that "awareness has long been recognized as a key starting point

for media literacy education" (p. 871). Indeed, media may have the greatest effect on those who do not pay attention.

The Media Industries Lens—Ownership and Ideologies

The media industries lens is focused on the consolidation of media ownership and the dominant or distorted ideologies that are embedded within media messages. Its basis is more sociopolitical than scientific, but it is no less concerned with media's impact.

Over the last few decades, control of the media has become concentrated in the hands of just five or six corporations, which led Bagdikian (2004) to write of *The New Media Monopoly*. Media regulation and reform advocates like Bagdikian (see also C. E. Baker, 2007) are concerned with fighting media consolidation, maintaining American democracy and freedoms, and resisting corporate commercialism. Those who favor deregulation, like Thierer (2005), have insisted that such fears are unfounded and declare that we now live in an age of unprecedented "media multiplicity" (p. 18). After a detailed analysis, Noam (2009) concluded that both sides miss a much more complex picture, but one in which media consolidation is still a concern. The underlying issue for all sides in the debate is who has the power to decide what will be seen and heard and whether or not that power is sufficiently democratized.

Concern about the exercise of power within media goes back to scholars in the 1940s working within a framework of critical theory known as the Frankfurt School. They believed that viewers of mass media were either captivated or held captive by the false ideologies of the "culture industry" (Adorno & Bernstein, 2001). A second group working much later within British cultural studies in the 1990s added to this cultural suspicion by applying the concept of hegemony. Hegemony is "the process by which

dominant ideas accumulate the symbolic power to map the world for others" (Gorringe, 2004, p. 130) in a way that naturalizes those ideas. Those coming from the media industries frame, then, seek to liberate viewers from the oppressive ideologies of the media. However, Vanhoozer (2007) has correctly argued that to cast media exclusively in terms of power relations is reductionist and "goes too far insofar as it rules out the possibility that culture is meaningful" (p. 39) in any larger, even spiritual, sense.

Masterman's (1989) influential approach to British media education was an outgrowth of this ideological view. He sought to develop the "critical autonomy" of the viewer over and against the "consciousness industries" of the media. However, like Potter, Masterman shied away from imposing certain aesthetic or moral values. He focused instead on helping students investigate the media's powers of representation and consciousness-shaping for themselves, using analytical tools such as semiotics (the study of sign systems). His goals were to empower learners and to create a "critically informed intelligence" about the media and its constructions.

More recently, the Media Education Foundation (www.mediaed.org) has become a well-established example of an organization working from this media literacy lens. Its mission is "to inspire critical thinking about the social, political, and cultural impact of American mass media" (Media Education Foundation, 2014, p. para. 1). They have produced numerous documentaries for use in classrooms, attempting to unmask media representations around issues such as gender, sexuality, politics, race, commercialism, health, violence, and war.

The Media Practices Lens—Audiences and Rituals

The media practice lens focuses on the interpretive, meaning-making capacities of media audiences and considers the ways in which people incorporate media practices as a meaningful part of their everyday lives.

In the 1990s, attention turned from the influence of the media industries to the power of the audience, as the concept of active viewership emerged. According to this perspective, "viewers exercise selective perception, thereby shaping and interpreting meaning rather than having meaning merely thrust upon them" (Brown, 1998, p. 48). This accorded with Carey's (1989) ritual view of communication, which also paid respect to the audience. Instead of seeing media as a delivery mechanism used by producers to transmit messages to passive consumers (the transmission view), Carey envisioned media as encompassing a collaborative meaning-making process on the part of consumers who actively interpret and use the messages they receive (see also Hess, 1999a). In Swidler's (1986) view, the stories and symbolic resources of media are part of a cultural "tool kit" (p. 273) that people use to construct their own ways of approaching life and its problems. The focus for these scholars, then, is on what audiences do with media and how they integrate it into their everyday lives.

Within this view, students' experiences with popular media can receive more serious consideration. Buckingham (2003) noted that young people are no longer part of a mass audience, but active participants in any number of media niches. They are skilled "digital natives" (see Tapscott, 1998, 2009) whose media have become part of their culture and an expression of their identity. Buckingham encouraged educators to "begin with what students already know, and with their existing tastes and pleasures in the

media, rather than assuming that these are merely invalid or 'ideological'" (p. 14). This positive reading of the audience is a significant departure from the more wary focus on media content and industries, and has been criticized by some for being an "uncritical celebration" of popular culture (Sjovaag & Moe, 2009, p. 137). However, it seems that such naiveté can be avoided while still giving consideration to participants' experiences.

One helpful way of mapping the dynamics of media audiences and rituals is found in Steele and Brown's (1995) Media Practice Model, based on their work in adolescent room culture. It arranges four key elements in cyclical fashion: (a) the identity of the media participant, (b) the participant's selection of media, (c) the participant's interaction with media as a meaning-making process and (d) the application of that media as it is enacted in the participant's life. All four elements are grounded in the lived experience of the media participant. The model centers on the identity of participants, positing that their "sense of who they are shapes their encounters with media, and those encounters in turn shape their sense of themselves" (Steele, 1999, p. 334). The model is bounded by participants' lived reality, acknowledging that while media play an important role, their "influence on audiences is both *amplified* and *restrained* by active individuals who interact with media from 'where they live' (Schwichtenberg, 1989, p. 293), developmentally, socially, and culturally" (1995, p. 553). Thus, the model gives primary consideration to media audiences and practices without diminishing the role of media content or effects.

The Media Production Lens—Tools and Stories

The media production lens focuses on the use of media tools that allow media participants to construct and share messages across multiple media platforms or to accomplish tasks with others.

As media platforms have become more participatory and production tools more accessible, media consumers have also become producers by creating blogs, posting user-generated photos and videos, crowdfunding, and so forth. This has shifted the focus of media literacy education increasingly in the direction of helping students think critically and creatively about the process of production. Kellner and Share (2005) envisioned media literacy as a "project of radical democracy" (p. 372) that would teach students "how to use media as instruments of social communication and change" (p. 373). Social media platforms and mobile technologies have since provided tools that allow people to collaborate in unprecedented ways by pooling their surplus time, knowledge, skills, and resources (Shirky, 2009, 2010). Coupled with critical perspectives, teaching students to use media tools can become the means for creating alternative media that give voice to under-represented groups and ideas (Goodman, 2003; Legrande & Vargas, 2001). The purpose of media literacy, in this view, is to equip students to participate as productive and responsible citizens in a global media culture.

The digital storytelling movement has provided a framework for thinking about how to use digital tools and content (photos, video, sound, and animation) to create short first-person stories. The techniques of digital storytelling have been applied in a wide variety of settings, including education, social services, research, and international development. The Center for Digital Storytelling (http://storycenter.org) has been a

pioneer for the movement and trained thousands of people in its techniques. The University of Houston has created a very complete site for educators interested in using the digital storytelling process (http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu). Wang (1999) developed a participatory action research method called photovoice, which combines the power of photographs with the voices of issue-affected populations (see also www.photovoice.org). A similar participatory video research method (Lunch & Lunch, 2006) has been developed and also used in advocacy (www.insightshare.org). *TV by Girls* (http://tvbygirls.tv) is a well-established media arts organization that uses the film-making process to help young women ages 12 to 22 develop skills in leadership, collaboration, and critical thinking as they create stories about social issues that affect them. While digital storytelling typically occurs in classroom or workshop settings, Lundby (2009) points out that there are many online settings in which informal digital storytelling takes place, including blogging, YouTube, and social media profiles. These informal sites can provide a starting point for helping students think critically about the meaning and value of creating and sharing stories in media culture.

In her portrait of the online generation, Nussbaum (2007) says, "every young person in America has become, in the literal sense, a public figure" (p. 4). Viewers have become networked content creators who play to "invisible audiences" (boyd, 2007, p. 8). While many students possess high levels of functional literacy in online environments, they are often weak in the area of critical literacy (Buckingham, 2004). Consequently, Lee (2007) proposes a model of reflexive participation that develops students' critical awareness of what they do online and how it impacts others. Media education must shift, she suggests, from simply teaching creative media skills to training students to think like

global media producers. At the most basic level, this includes training in digital citizenship (an excellent curriculum is available at www.commonsensemedia.org). Beaudoin (2010) has found that many students have made a distinction between "the" media and "our" media, and are hesitant to apply the same critical skills to their own user-generated content as they would to broadcast media. This has led her to ask, "How can we productively frame media education for our students' critical understanding of their new participatory media?" (p. 107). Answering this question may be one of the primary challenges for twenty-first century media literacy education.

Areas of Consensus

Even though media literacy is a very diverse field, as these four lenses have shown, some broad lines of consensus have emerged. In 1992, the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy drew together an influential definition and conceptual approach to media literacy education (Aufderheide, 1993). It envisioned media literacy as a process of inquiry based on several key concepts, many of which had already been developed in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom (Pungente, 2010). The Center for Media Literacy expresses five of these concepts in their *MediaLit Kit* (Jolls, 2008) as follows:

1. All media messages are constructed.
2. Media messages are constructed using a creative language with its own rules.
3. Different people experience the same media message differently.
4. Media have embedded values and points of view.
5. Most media messages are organized to gain profit and/or power. (p. 37)

These concepts are matched with key questions to assist students in the deconstructive task of interpreting media as consumers, as well as in the constructive task of creating media as producers. Building on the Conference's work, the National Association of

Media Literacy Education defines media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate information in a variety of forms. . . . Media literacy empowers people to be both critical thinkers and creative producers" (National Association for Media Literacy Education, 2011, p. para. 1). This simple definition and conceptual framework is now the starting point for most media literacy efforts in the United States.

Several pedagogical considerations seem to have emerged as accepted best practices, as well. First, Hobbs (1998) notes that "at the center of media literacy education must be the pedagogy of inquiry, which is the act of asking questions about media texts" (p. 27). Teachers act as guides in this questioning process, respectfully exploring students' interpretations and points of view, as well as prompting them to look for more information. Second, whereas traditional teaching styles rely on an instructor-centered and content-driven process, media literacy education draws significantly upon student-centered pedagogies. These "build on a learner's existing knowledge and preferences and involve the learner to a great deal in the process of knowledge construction and collaboration, with the teacher in the role of facilitator" (Tyner, 2003, p. 380) Third, while some might feel popular culture does not have a place in the classroom, Hobbs (1998) suggests it is important to connect media literacy "to the popular cultural texts that are at the center of the students' first curriculum" (p. 22). This everyday curriculum is often taken for granted by students and for that reason in need of critical reflection. Showing a genuine interest in and appreciation for students' media experiences while encouraging them explore their nature, role, and influence is at the heart of a balanced pedagogical approach.

Faith-Based Approaches to Media Literacy

The four lenses described in the preceding section are useful in categorizing faith-based approaches to media literacy, as well. A recent literature review highlights a number of Christian scholars and practitioners working in the area of faith-based media literacy (Iaquinto & Keeler, 2012). Many of them have taken a "media-literacy-plus-faith" (p. 17) approach, building on established theory and practice with an added layer of theological or spiritual inquiry. What follows, then, is a discussion of four faith-based approaches to media literacy corresponding to the lenses just described, with applied examples listed for each approach. This section will conclude by offering a reflection on these approaches as they relate to the Adventist posture toward media, along with a description and rationale for the approach undergirding the project intervention.

The Cautionary Approach—Selective Censorship

The cautionary approach is informed by the media effects lens. It focuses on media content and consumption, with the belief that exposure to questionable content or excessive use can produce harmful spiritual, physical, and psychological consequences. Its method is to inform media participants about objectionable material or harmful practices as a way of empowering them to make healthy media choices. Content that is frequently cited for concern contains violence, sex and nudity, crude or profane language, occult activity, or the use of drugs and alcohol. At-risk behaviors like sexting also receive mention. This approach not only seeks to educate participants about the effects of media but offers them biblical principles for decision-making, as well. Participants are encouraged, by way of self-censorship or the forbidding of religious authorities, to shun material that will negatively impact their faith, religious identity, or family's values. In

this view, media culture is viewed as a battleground for hearts and minds, and media participants are equipped to engage the ensuing moral and spiritual conflict.

The cautionary approach has practical advantages for those seeking to make informed decisions about media content in today's rapidly-changing media environment, and may be especially appealing to families with young children. However, there are potential drawbacks, as well. Some may use this approach to shelter young people from media. As Rogow (2004) observes, "you cannot make people media literate by keeping them away from media" (p. 31). It is important for adults using this approach to develop an age-appropriate plan to increasingly share—and eventually hand off—decision-making to young people. Furthermore, Stout (2002) lists three common obstacles to media literacy that may occur in religious settings where protection is a concern. *Secondary analysis* assesses media based on the opinions of others without firsthand knowledge. *Text simplification* reduces analysis of a media text to only one dimension (i.e. moral content) at the expense of other important dimensions. *Rule extension* is the tendency to use one simple guideline for all situations (such as not going to movie theaters or banning all R-rated movies). All three of these tendencies can flourish within a cautionary approach and prevent young people from becoming fully literate decision-makers.

Two examples of the cautionary approach are found in well-established Christian media review websites: *Preview Online* (www.previewonline.org) and *Focus on the Family's Plugged-In Online* (www.pluggedin.com). Both sites provide extensive analysis and quantification of media content by category (sex, violence, etc.), as well as providing their own ratings and conclusions for all the latest media. A third website,

Media Talk 101 (www.mediatalk101.org), is maintained by a Christian media ministry that offers biblical resources for making media choices, including educational videos. It provides a classic representation of cautionary discourse.

The Worldview Approach—Thoughtful Critique

The worldview approach offers a thoughtful, biblical critique of media messages. Rather than focusing on objectionable content, it probes media for the worldview embedded in texts. According to Romanowski (2007), a worldview describes "the way the world *is*, while also providing a model for the way the world *ought* to be" (p. 59). This aligns it closely with the ideological concerns discussed earlier in the media industries lens. Its method is to analyze media texts by asking questions about their underlying messages. It then compares those messages against the biblical worldview for the purpose of discarding distorted ideas. Lynch (2005) calls this an "applicationist" approach, whereby "popular culture is subjected to a critique on the basis of certain fixed theological beliefs and values" (p. 101). While this approach calls for careful listening, he notes the objective is not to create a dialogue with culture but to make a determination of truth and error. Some Christians, however, do find apologetic value in this approach, as it provides insight into the values and beliefs of others.

The worldview model is valuable to the extent that it takes the issues of representation seriously. Christian concerns about the effects of media are often driven by content—by *what* is shown. This overlooks the fact that the *way* things are represented in media may have an even greater effect on thinking and behavior (Barker & Petley, 2001; Lynch, 2005). Culture in this approach, then, is seen as a classroom with media as its hidden curriculum. Helping young people discover what is being taught in

media is certainly part of enabling them to "not conform to the pattern of this world" (Rom 12:2, NIV).

A few limitations of the worldview approach are worth noting. First, this model focuses on authorial intent and largely ignores the meaning that audiences create. Deciphering the worldview of a text may provide the basis for personal decision-making, but it falls short of understanding how others use and interpret that text. Second, as noted earlier, ideological approaches run the risk of becoming reductionist, and may become nothing more than exposés seeking to unmask the powers or false ideas at work behind the media. This hermeneutic of suspicion (Ricoeur, 1970), while not completely misplaced, may limit the horizon of analysis to one of competing worldviews and rule out any deeper meaning of the text beyond that struggle (Turnau, 2005; Vanhoozer et al., 2007). Finally, arriving at a biblical worldview may not be as self-evident as this model presumes, as there are considerable differences within the Christian faith tradition.

The worldview approach is represented in at least three faith-based resources. Godawa's (2002) book, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom & Discernment* is a Christian introduction to common worldviews found in movies. Mueller's (2008) *How to Use Your Head to Guard Your Heart: A 3(D) Guide to Making Responsible Media Choices* is a curriculum that outlines a three-step process that young people can use to explore and respond to media worldviews from a Christian viewpoint. Romanowski's (2007) book, *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*, and his video curriculum by the same name (2002) provide a very complete Christian framework for analyzing popular artworks.

The Dialogical Approach—Interpretive Conversation

The dialogical approach moves beyond a mere critique of texts to focus on people's reception of media, aligning it with the media practices lens. It seeks to open up an interpretive conversation about the personal and theological meanings of media texts and practices. Undergirding this model are two understandings. The first is that media is a site of collaborative meaning-making, as previously noted, and therefore a natural place for conversations to occur. The second is that media function much like religions (Hoover, 2006). Silverblatt (2004) observed that media have assumed the role that social institutions like schools and churches used to play. People now turn to the media for meaning and guidance, a purpose for which media are not particularly well-suited. Hoover (2002, 2006) argued that religious symbols, once found in churches, now float freely alongside others in media culture and provide a "symbolic inventory" from which people attempt to construct personal meaning. Consequently, the boundary between the sacred and secular has blurred. Advertising, for instance, has become a pseudo-spiritual endeavor that seeks to capitalize on the void once filled by religious institutions (Dretzin & Goodman, 2004). The dialogical approach, then, views media culture as a sanctuary in which people seek meaning and transcendence.

The task of the church in this environment, says Hess (1999b), is "to engage popular media as initiators of conversations" (p. 8). Conversations about media texts may be framed using Tillich's correlational approach, which calls, first, for listening to popular culture in order to discern human needs and concerns, and then for making a relevant theological response (Lynch, 2005). However, this method can result in merely stating what one already assumes to be true (C. Marsh, 2008). A more mutual, yet

radical, form of conversation is found in the revised correlational approach, which creates a two-way conversation, allowing religion and popular culture to offer insights to one another (Lynch, 2005). An even more fruitful method may be to place the personal meanings arising from people's media experiences into dialogue with stories from the biblical text. The tools of autobiographical analysis (Silverblatt, Ferry, & Finan, 2009) can be especially helpful in teasing out connections between the world of the media text and the life of the participant, and then exploring those further on a pastoral level.

The dialogical approach's strongest suit is its missiological potential within contemporary culture. If Christian apologetics requires a balance between the rational with the relational (McDowell, 2009), then mutual dialogue may provide a promising way forward. A danger in the dialogical approach is that the normative horizon of the Scriptures may be lost and conversations may lapse into a relativistic discourse. If this approach is to be meaningful, it is important to have a theological anchor cast into the deep, even as there is openness to new insights.

There are a few examples that illustrate this approach well. One is Moncrieff's (2007) book *Screen Deep*, perhaps the only Adventist attempt to open up a conversation between Scripture and popular culture texts. Turnau's *Movie Night Kit* (www.turnau.cz), was developed with years of practice and is a valuable resource for creating spiritual conversations around film. Also, the burgeoning literature of theology and film offers a window into how dialogue is taking place within the scholarly realm. Johnston's (2006) *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue* is a solid entry point into this genre.

The Creative Approach—Spiritual Storytelling

The creative approach draws on the media tools and storytelling focus of the production lens in ways that contribute to the life and mission of the church.

Hoover (2002) noted that religion has always been connected in some way to the use of media. Protestants, particularly evangelicals, have used modern mass media as tools for spreading the gospel. As such, their efforts have been guided by the transmission view referenced earlier. Media have also been used to enhance the worship experience. Screens now have a place in church interiors that frescoes, mosaics, and carved altarpieces once held prior to print-era Protestantism. Even the sermonic form has been supplemented by the use of presentation software. These liturgical applications of contemporary media stand in a long tradition of including visuals as part of storytelling in worship (Bausch, 2008). Furthermore, social media and interactive websites are now used to supplement the activities of brick-and-mortar churches, as well as to create virtual campuses where online participants can access worship services and network with others under the care of designated internet pastors. Increasingly, then, churches are beginning to adopt the participatory aspects of new media, moving away from transmission modalities and weaving media rituals into the faith practices of their congregations.

Along these lines, scholars and practitioners have recently begun to explore the potential of digital storytelling for faith formation (Clark & Dierberg, 2012; Hess, 2011, 2014; Kaare & Lundby, 2009; McQuistion, 2007). Clark and Dierberg (2012) found that the digital storytelling process gave young people a chance to articulate their faith in a fixed form. This "anchoring narrative" (p. 7) then allowed young people to listen to their story and reflect on it over time. "Such listening to the narratives of the self is a key

aspect of identity" (p. 7). When these digital narratives are constructed and shared within the context of the faith community, it becomes a way of authoring identity that has a "communal character" (Hess, 2011, p. 10). Some of the most promising aspects of media for faith development, then, may lie not in their communicative properties but in their constructive, meaning-making capacities.

If there is a caution in the creative approach, it may be found with those who have asked, from the perspective of media ecology, how new media technologies are shaping Christian faith and faith communities (Hipps, 2006, 2009). It is probably best to resist either dystopian or utopian views about the influence of these technologies (Katz & Rice, 2002). Media are always a mixed blessing, as evidenced in the discussion about online and satellite churches (Hall, 2010; Smietana & Barnes, 2005). Each church must carefully assess the role of media and media production in their worship and mission.

The creative approach, then, views media culture as a studio in which sound, images, and narrative combine to communicate a message or create a meaningful story, as well as a social space that can extend the life and reach of the faith community.

Several examples of this approach deserve mention. The annual SONscreen Film Festival (www.sonscreen.com) has created a community of Adventist visual storytellers and producers, including film students from several Adventist universities. Lifechurch.tv (www.lifechurch.tv) and Darkwood Brew (http://darkwoodbrew.org) represent leading efforts by evangelical and mainstream Christians to create participative, online church experiences. The Work of the People (www.theworkofthepeople.com) and Illuminate (http://illuminate.us) create and curate resources for those involved in visual liturgy.

Finally, The Haystack.tv (www.thehaystack.tv) is a hub for Adventist media productions, launched by a group of students from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

The Need for a Balanced Approach

The question that naturally arises after detailing several media literacy perspectives is whether one of them is to be preferred over the others. As the lens metaphor implies, these are different ways of looking at the same subject. Therefore, they need to be kept in tension with one another. As Vanhoozer correctly noted, the drawback of using only one critical approach to culture is that "it ultimately limits what one sees" (p. 37). Thus, an approach that draws on multiple perspectives is the best way to gain a more complete picture of a complex subject like media literacy.

Overall, two basic postures have been adopted by media literacy proponents – protection and preparation (Buckingham, 2003). As media have become more pervasive, the protective posture has been increasingly challenged. Jolls (2008) noted, "media are so ingrained in our cultural milieu that even if you turn off the technology, you still cannot escape today's media culture" (p. 42). Consequently, media educators have moved toward preparing and empowering young people to participate critically and creatively in media culture. Yet, as Hobbs (2010) argued, "rather than viewing empowerment and protection as an either-or proposition, they must be seen as two sides of the same coin" (p. ix). This both-and approach is reflected in Iaquinto and Keeler's (2012) summary of faith-based media literacy. On the one hand, Christian scholars and practitioners agree that "the values promoted by the media are often false, destructive, and thus in contradiction to those promoted by Christianity" (p. 21), requiring the skills of critical analysis. On the other hand, there is consensus that "faith-based media literacy

education develops Christians who are equipped to serve the society in which they live" (p. 22), and that "Christians can enhance their own spirituality by becoming media literate" (p. 23). Thus, a balanced approach to media literacy education that appreciates both protection and empowerment is emerging.

Toward an Adventist Approach to Media Literacy

The mold for Adventist thought about popular media was cast in the writings of Ellen G. White. Early Adventists, along with other Protestants, actually gave birth to mass media in nineteenth century America (Nord, 2004). Capitalizing on the invention of the steam press, they printed and distributed millions of tracts and Bibles. It was during this period that White (1948) instructed that Adventist publications were "to be scattered abroad like the leaves of autumn" (p. 79). Rather than being at odds with mass media, then, the first Adventists actually helped to create it.

There was a deep ambivalence, however, about the power of mass media. By 1849 the American Tract Society warned that the press had become "the most important of human agencies for good or evil" (cited in Nord, 2004, p. 114). Religious publishers warned of dire consequences for those who read "vicious books" (cited in Nord, 2004, p. 115) published by a burgeoning popular press. In fact, White's (1981) counsels on popular fiction were nearly identical to those of other religious publishers of her day, who expressed a strong belief in the intoxicating and debilitating effects of cheap, cursory reading—views that anticipated the early media effects tradition.

The same conflicted relationship with mass media that Adventists (and their Protestant contemporaries) exhibited in the era of steam printing has persisted with the emergence of each new mass medium thereafter, including the advent of the Internet and

social media. On the one hand, the Adventist church holds a strong utopian belief in media as tools for communicating the Gospel. On the other hand, it clings to an equally strong dystopian narrative that is deeply cautious about the corrupting power of popular media in the hands of a secular entertainment industry. Yet, within the denomination, media literacy has received limited attention from only a handful of scholars (Hopkins et al., 2001; Moncrieff, 2007; Reynaud, 1999; Steyn, 2004, 2005). This has led to a deficit in our efforts guide young people and their families on the subject of media.

Furthermore, Adventists appear to manifest what Hoover (2006) identifies as a gap between official accounts of media and everyday practice. According to Hoover, there is a considerable difference between what people of faith say *about* media and their actual lived experiences *with* media. Hoover's qualitative work indicates that "what seems to drive media practice is not in most cases a process of deliberation over appropriate and normative values—including religious values—but the salience of the media experiences themselves" (p. 287). In other words, people—whether or not they are religious—participate in media experiences simply because they are appealing or relevant to them in some way. Indeed, long-term research on Adventist youth has revealed a widening gap between young people's attitudes toward popular culture and the official stances of the church (Gillespie et al., 2004). This calls for a more honest and reflective engagement with the actual media practices of Adventist young people, practices which became increasingly privatized with the arrival of home video and later with the introduction of the Internet and mobile devices.

Therefore, this project will approach media literacy, first, from the perspective of the Media Practices Model (Steele & Brown, 1995), referenced earlier. This model

allows Adventist pastors to consider the effects of media but always within the context of how a young person selects, shapes, and incorporates media within the context of their lived experience and search for identity. It encourages pastors to

> go to people where they are, and 'look back with them'—as it were—at the symbolic environment they inhabit, attempting to understand how they integrate those symbolic resources into senses of who they are, what they believe, and what they should do. (Hoover, 2006, p. 56)

Adopted as a faith-based approach, this model opens up a dialogical and pastoral engagement with the lives of media participants and with what God may already be doing there. Second, this project will adopt a creative approach to media literacy, with a particular focus on the constructive, meaning-making practices of the digital storytelling process. Again, this approach appears to be rich in pastoral opportunities, as it seeks to connect with the life stories of young people and foster their authoring of spiritual identity. Focusing on media practices, including those of production, gives priority not to media but to media participants, and maximizes pastoral opportunities for making an impact in their spiritual lives.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This review of literature has highlighted the complex and changing nature of the media literacy discussion, as it embraces a wide variety of perspectives and ongoing technological developments. By organizing this varied field of thought and practice into several lenses and faith-based approaches, it has been possible to appreciate the contributions and limitations of each perspective, demonstrating the need for a balanced approach that draws on collective and corrective vision of the whole. It has also illustrated a number of healthy tensions that exist between producers and consumers,

media texts and media audiences, as well as protection and preparation. Learning to be media literate, then, is like learning to ride a bike. It is a single skill with multiple parts which must be mastered and placed in coordination with each other.

While this review has included a number of worthy examples of each faith-based approach, including some from the Adventist church, it found no comprehensive faith-based curriculum for grades K-12 or Adventist resources for parents and their children. Furthermore, it highlighted a paucity of Adventist scholarship in the area of media literacy. Very little has been done to build upon the thought of our print-era founders. These gaps need to be addressed if we are to fully disciple the next generation.

Finally, this review has highlighted the potential of exploring both media practices and media production as a potential site for pastoral work and imagination. While not negating concerns about media content, considering the media practices of young people and engaging them in storytelling through media production allows the youth worker to enter into the processes of meaning-making and identity formation that are central to developing and deepening faith.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF THE MEDIA LITERACY INTERVENTION

As noted in the review of literature, media literacy has received limited attention in the Seventh-day Adventist church. Media literacy efforts in Adventist congregations and schools appear to be few and far apart. Yet popular media is a dominant force in youth culture and a key influence in the lives of young people. Adventist seminary students, called to shape the spiritual lives of the next generation, have not received faith-based media literacy training as part of their pastoral preparation. As such, they may be limited in their ability to think critically or theologically in the midst of media culture or to fully realize the potential of media in their ministries. The intervention described in this chapter was an attempt to step into that gap. It sought to explore with seminary students the impact and significance of popular media in the lives of young people and to develop media literacy as a pastoral skill for the twenty-first century church.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section describes the development of the faith-based media literacy intervention. It details the curricular context from which the intervention grew, and highlights the ways in which it was built on the theology of viewing (Chapter 2) and the theoretical insights gained from the review of literature (Chapter 3). The second section provides a description of the

intervention, including the course methodology, structure, and content. The third section outlines the research methodology and protocol.

Development of the Intervention

The faith-based media literacy intervention at the heart of this research project was over a decade in the making. It grew out of a youth culture course I began teaching at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in 1998 as an adjunct professor of youth evangelism. Since that time, over 250 students have enrolled in the course, each contributing their insights into popular culture as they have grappled with its significance for youth ministry. While youth culture trends come and go, one constant has been the role that media play in conveying and convening that culture. Another constant has been the rapid changes in technology that have made media all the more pervasive and intertwined with daily routines and relationships. After a decade of teaching the course, it became apparent that to effectively teach about the dynamics of youth and popular culture, I needed to understand media culture better. Not long after that, I chose to enter the Doctor of Ministry program and pursue the subject of media literacy further. Rather than creating an intervention from the ground up, I chose to redesign the course I had been teaching, using media literacy as a platform for exploring popular culture and effective ministry to youth and young adults. Tracing the development of the intervention begins, then, by considering the existing curricular context and how it contributed to the intervention.

The Curricular Context for the Intervention

The two-credit course "Youth and Young Adults in Contemporary Culture" (DSRE 608) has been a core course in the Masters in Youth and Young Adult Ministry program since 1995. Its primary goal is to help seminary students understand the dynamics of youth culture and to formulate a strategic pastoral response to current developments within it. In the past, it has required two major assignments. The first was a five-page cultural exegesis paper in which students interpreted the meaning of a youth culture text (movie, song, celebrity, etc.) and suggested opportunities for engaging it at a pastoral level. The second was a cultural immersion project in which students observed a youth culture setting and shared their findings in a five-page report. An educational wiki, youth-culture.wikispaces.com, was developed specifically for the class. It contained links to numerous websites, books, videos, articles, and research reports, as well as housing the course syllabus, class presentations, and youth-related RSS feeds.

Before redesigning the course, I completed a situational analysis using course statistics and course evaluation data from 2000 to 2010. This was done in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing course, as well as to pinpoint opportunities and threats related to its redesign as a media literacy curriculum.

The first strength to emerge was the role of the instructor. When students were asked in the anonymous course evaluation what they appreciated or valued most in the course, they most consistently mentioned the instructor or his expertise (one-third of all responses). "The teacher's desire to have youth ministry change the lives of youth for Christ is evident." "The teacher was excited teaching the materials, very knowledgeable and helped me learn a great deal." Comments like these highlighted the importance of the

instructor and his ongoing development to the success of the course. A second strength was the diversity of the course population. Over a third (37%) of the course population were international students, representing forty different countries. This made it possible to explore the global phenomenon of popular culture firsthand, as students from around the world shared their experiences with it from different vantage points. A third strength came from the popular culture content itself, which is at the heart of many seminary students' everyday lives. It includes experiences for which they have enthusiasm, yet are seldom able to reflect on in the seminary classroom. It has not been uncommon to hear comments like this one: "This class provided me with the tools to critically analyze popular culture all around me. I now see the world through new lenses…. I don't think I may ever watch a music video or television program the same way anymore." While theological education typically teaches students to exegete biblical texts and then apply them to contemporary life, this course has allowed students to explore the meaning of contemporary texts using a biblical lens. In sum, I concluded that all three of these strengths could be carried forward into a redesigned course.

Course evaluations also revealed a couple of weaknesses in the existing classroom experience. Even as students expressed appreciation for the level of discussion offered in class, they noted that the class format could be more engaging, using a wider variety of teaching methods. "More innovative teaching techniques. Reading from the PowerPoint is not engaging," one student suggested. Popular culture provides a wealth of interactive experiences, and this has no doubt raised the expectation that studying it should be just as engaging. Students have also consistently asked for the course to be more practical. While providing a theoretical foundation is important, students want to apply, practice

and reflect on what they are learning as part of the class experience. Again, I concluded that a redesigned course could address these weaknesses by including a greater variety of learning approaches and including more emphasis on skill development.

Shifting a course in youth culture to focus more specifically on media literacy seemed to present a few opportunities. First, given the limited amount of time in a two-credit course and the breadth of popular culture, focusing on media appeared to be a way of concentrating on the "busy intersection" of youth culture, through which most cultural influences pass. Second, faith-based media literacy offers a critical and creative skillset designed to help people negotiate media culture on a day-to-day basis. Thus, teaching media literacy promised to give the course a more practical orientation. Third, faith-based media literacy embraces the hermeneutical tools necessary to explore the pastoral possibilities present in popular culture. Considering popular texts as theologically meaningful (Turnau, 2002), for instance, seemed to provide a basis for initiating spiritual conversations with young people about their media experiences. I concluded that opportunities like these were worth pursuing.

Beyond the threat that trying something new might not succeed, the greatest risk appeared to come from the direction of not doing anything. What would happen if it was assumed that seminary students had already established a thoughtful set of media boundaries? Or that they had not already been significantly shaped by media influences? Or that they came to the Seminary media literate and able to critically and theologically evaluate media experiences? These might be costly assumptions in a culture where popular media and religion increasingly share the same meaning-making space, yet are not often brought into critical dialogue with each other. A redesigned course could equip

students to spiritually and professionally negotiate the complexities of media culture, and prepare them to more fully take up their roles as youth leaders and disciple-makers.

The Need for a Holistic Approach

The review of literature yielded several faith-based approaches to teaching media literacy based on various theoretical and theological perspectives. The differences among these approaches can seem sharp and—at times—contradictory. Yet, as noted in Chapter Three, there is a need to hold concerns related to the power of media (content, effects, and industries) in tension with an appreciation for the agency of media participants and their capacity to make meaning and create content of their own. Avoidance and caution toward media based on objectionable content or false worldviews must be balanced with an openness to mutual dialogue with media participants about their experiences in media. Therefore, the challenge in designing a media literacy intervention is to articulate a holistic framework (Duran, Yousman, Walsh, & Longshore, 2008) that can bring all of these considerations into a single approach.

The Media Practice Model

Steele and Brown's (1995) model, referenced earlier, proposed to cut through some of these theoretical differences by examining media practices. A practice-based approach takes into account media content and effects but within the context of young people's lived experience and search for identity. This context varies widely and has an influence on which media they select, how they interpret media, and what use they make of media in their lives. In other words, only in the everyday context of each individual participant can we come to understand the significance of media or evaluate its effects.

The Media Practice Model, then, briefly described in Chapter Three, merits further description here as it has been adapted for use in this faith-based intervention.

By way of review, Steele and Brown's (1995) model (see Figure 1) arranges four key elements in cyclical fashion. The cycle begins and ends with the *identity* work of media participants. As previously noted, participants' "sense of who they are shapes their encounters with media, and those encounters in turn shape their sense of themselves"

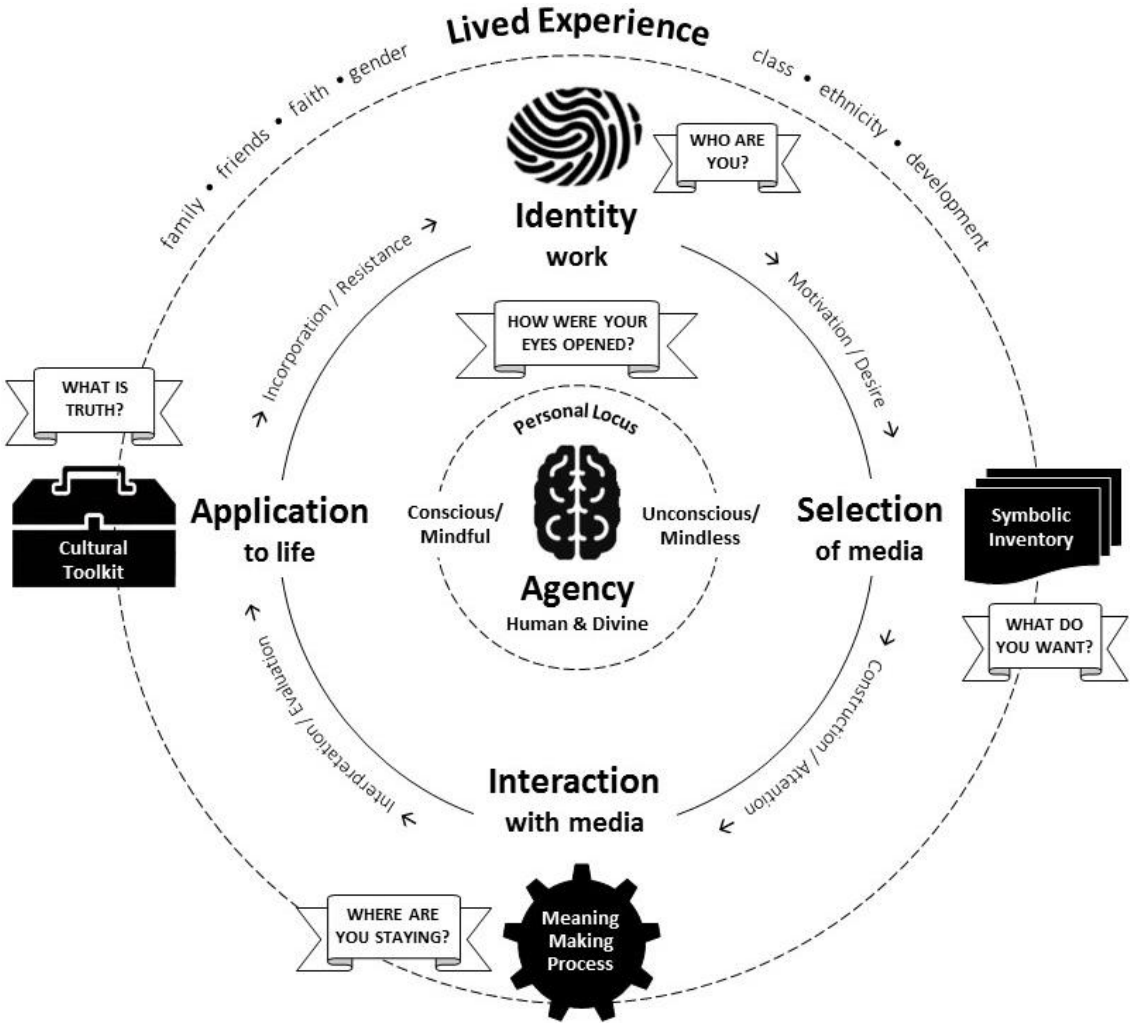


Figure 1: Media Practice Model—adapted from Steele and Brown (1995).

(Steele, 1999, p. 334). Second, media comprise a "symbolic inventory" (Hoover, 2006, p. 56) of images and stories constructed for the purpose of drawing attention and conveying messages. Participants *select* which media to engage based on their motivations and desires. Third, media participants *interact* with media worlds, entering into a process of meaning-making or "symbolic creativity" (Willis, 1990) by interpreting and evaluating media in ways that make sense to them, which may or may not reflect the intentions of producers. Fourth, media participants decide how to *apply* these cultural resources in their daily lives, perhaps as a means of expressing their identity, exploring possible selves, or resisting dominant expectations. Swidler (1986) speaks of such cultural resources as a "tool kit" from which young people develop "strategies of action" to address life's challenges (p. 273). All of this is grounded in the *lived experience* of the participant, which includes a participant's gender, social class, ethnicity, family upbringing, peer influences, spiritual resources, and developmental stage. I further propose that media practice is influenced by the *agency* of participants and the status of their "personal locus" (Potter, 2004), that is, the degree to which they have developed an intentional and informed framework for mindfully approaching media.

As my theological research unfolded, I realized that the themes and questions from John's Gospel I had been working with further elaborated the elements of the Media Practice Model, making it even more useful in a faith-based context.

Media Practice and Identity

The Gospel's question, "Who are you?" (8:25), lies not only at the heart of John's theological project but at the center of young people's everyday media practices, as well. While Steele and Brown (1995) studied identity and media in the context of adolescent

room culture (cf. Salinger, 1995), more recent research has focused on youth identity in the setting of digital media culture (Buckingham, 2008). What has emerged is a concept of identity as an ongoing project of construction. Young people actively assemble and reassemble their identities, "using whatever cultural and life material is at hand" (Weber & Mitchell, 2008, p. 43). There is much in John's Gospel that echoes this kind of identity work, as it also pieces together identity using everyday images. Unlike contemporary theories of identity, however, the Gospel offers a point of orientation, grounded in creation. The "you are…I am" formula (8:23) of Jesus distinguishes between human and divine identity, while at the same time bringing them together in the incarnation. Through the flesh of Jesus, human identity is reimaged, rebreathed, and reconnected to its divine source. In the mirrored halls and self-constructed corridors of contemporary media culture, the Gospel establishes God's design for human beings as that of divine image bearers.

Media Selection and Desire

Jesus' opening line, "What do you want?" (1:38), invites his followers to become self-aware and to reflect on the desires that motivate their practice. This question acquires even more significance when considered in light of everyday media practices. Could the key to unlocking the theological significance of media practices begin with an awareness of the desires that motivate participants' media choices? As noted in Chapter Two, Christians have often shied away from desire, yet Jesus engages it from the very start of his disciple-making process. Dean (2011) claimed that "desire represents the primary theological lens of adolescence" (p. 156), revealing an innate longing that all human beings have for connecting with the "other." She warned, "without a way to

probe desire from the perspective of Christian theology, the tools available to teenagers for exploring their God-given longings inevitably come from the media, and they inevitably reflect popular culture's limited theological imagination" (p. 163). A faith-based approach to media practice, then, attends to a participant's desires not by suppressing or denying them but by directing, deepening, and developing them through a progressive understanding of what that person truly longs for. This is what Moore (1989) called the "liberation of desire" (p. 17). It is the process of coming to more fully and authentically answer the question of Jesus, "What do you want?"

Media Interaction and Presence

The question "Where are you staying?" (1:38) expresses the disciples' desire to interact with Jesus. The nature of that interaction is of particular interest to media practice because it soon reveals a world that Jesus describes—with reference to Jacob's dream—as suspended between heaven and earth (1:51). For Jacob, the experience of God's presence turns an ordinary resting place into "the gate of heaven" (Gen 28:17). It transports him without so much as lifting his head, and enables him—in Johannine terms—to "see greater things" (1:50). The presence of media evokes similar experiences. Aden's (1999) concept of symbolic pilgrimages, referenced in Chapter Two, describes the process by which media participants, without embarking on a physical journey, (a) transcend the mundane world, (b) enter a liminal or in-between world, (c) reach a "promised land" of belonging or shared identity and (d) return to everyday life transformed. This journey of imagination allows the media participant to become "epistemologically mobile" (p. 98), temporarily experiencing life from another point of view. Media create liminal spaces that mediate between the participant's present

situation and other worlds of meaning brought to life on a screen. When participants watch a movie or spend time on the internet, they are neither "here" nor "there." Suspended in these spaces, they can explore identities, think through scenarios, and come to see new possibilities. This can become a rich space for conversing with others about the meaning and direction of their lives, and for considering how God may be present with them in that process.

Media Application and Power

Pilate's question "What is truth?" (18:38), even if dismissive, is particularly relevant for media practice. As noted in Chapter Three, media industries may exercise power in ways that offer distorted views of the world, yet present those views as truth—as the way things are. Critical media literacy seeks to disrupt this normalizing process by using what Masterman (2010) called "the principle of non-transparency" (p. 5). It states that media do not present reality as if one were looking through a window. Rather, media offer representations of reality, constructed with embedded values and viewpoints that are often guided by motives such as power or profit. In this view, the purpose of media literacy is to empower participants to deconstruct messages and expose their biases. In a similar way, the Gospel comes underneath the symbolic discourse of the Empire, subverting its dominant ideology with an alternative way of seeing the world. This is not a political exercise but an act of faith, in which the "Spirit of truth" (16:13) teaches believers to see the world by its "true light" (1:9). Yet, as essential as this corrective to power may be, it is also important to remain open to the presence of truth in media and to the agency of media participants in developing their own meanings and uses for media. Application in media practice is primarily about what media participants *do* with what

they have seen. In Johannine terms, the most powerful thing a person can do to incorporate media into their life is to become a *witness* to truth. Jesus' followers are born and sent into the world, as he was, "to testify to the truth" (18:37). In other words, Christians are to be truth-tellers, and when we use our God-given agency to incorporate media experiences into that calling, we act as "children of light" (12:36) who become a powerful presence in media culture.

Media Practice and Transformation

Finally, the dynamics of mourning, birth, and agency are also relevant to media practice, especially in its focus on identity work. As described in Chapter Two, the Gospel uses mourning and birth to symbolize a time of crisis, during which the disciples transition from one way of seeing to another under the agency of the Spirit. These images find a parallel in contemporary accounts of identity. Erikson (1968) described identity as a psychosocial crisis that characterizes adolescence. Such a crisis of identity may not be limited to adolescence, but can be sparked by significant changes throughout the life course. From a psychoanalytic perspective, adolescence is also described as a time of mourning childhood (Blos, 1962; Kaplan, 1984; Mishne, 1986), as adolescents either relinquish or restructure childhood attachments. Again, this type of mourning may be necessary throughout the life span, as individuals encounter life transitions in which old ways of seeing are no longer sufficient. Identity work, including the use people make of media, is a task of creative mourning that lays to rest old ways of seeing the self, others and God, in order to give birth to a new ways of understanding identity, relationships and faith. It is especially in these periods of transition that the Spirit may be active as an agent of transformation and in the "re-membering" of identity.

Description of the Intervention

Having narrated the development of the intervention, what follows is a detailed description of the intervention, including a chronological explanation of its four phases.

Methodology, Structure, and Learning Outcomes

The design of the media literacy intervention (see Figure 2) integrated two methodological approaches, one created by media literacy educators and the other by a

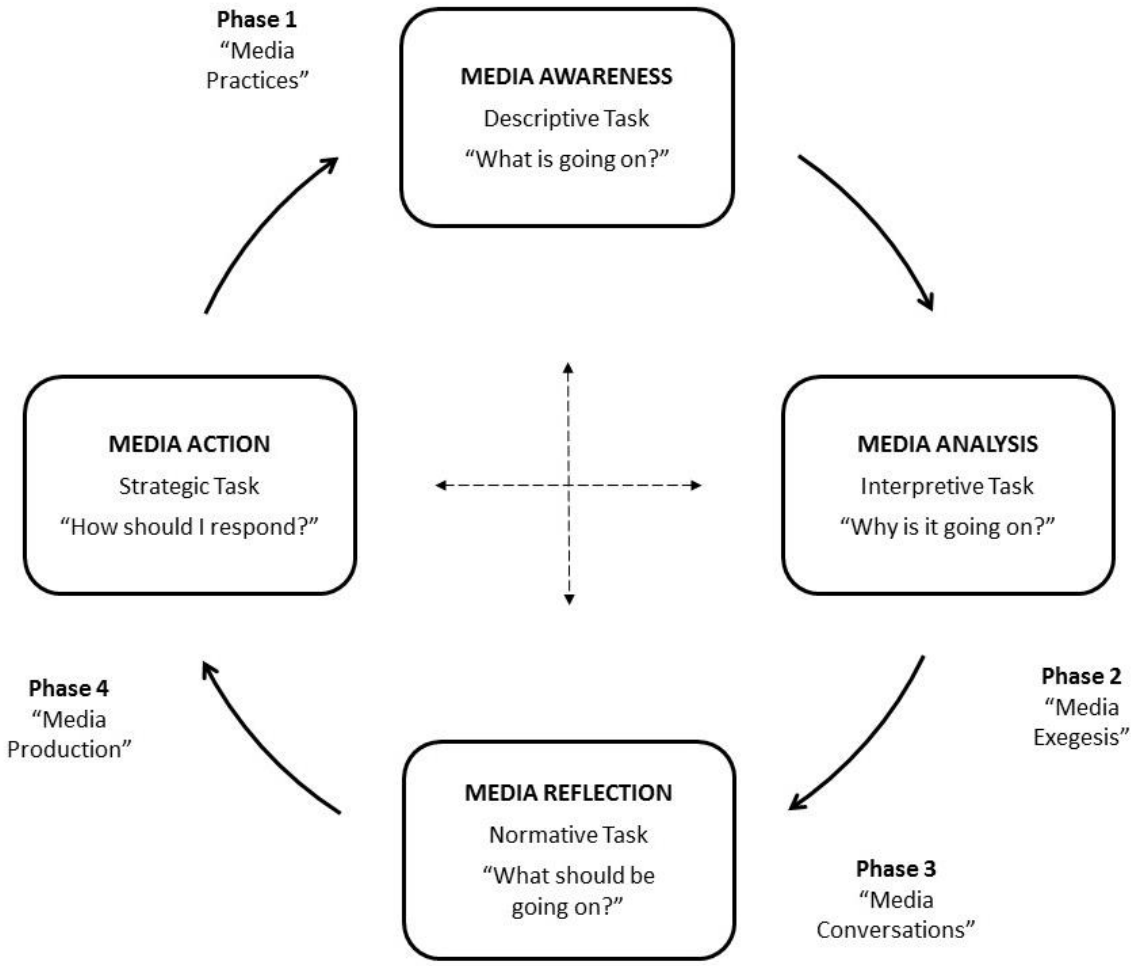


Figure 2: Active Learning Media Spiral—adapted from Jolls (2008) and Osmer (2008).

practical theologian. The Center for Media Literacy described a four-step "empowerment spiral" (Jolls, 2008, p. 65) to be used in creating media literacy curriculums. This spiral correlates well with Osmer's (2008) "four tasks of practical theological interpretation" (p. 11), which are guided by four questions that help pastors interpret and respond to life situations. When combined, these two active learning approaches form a helpful basis for designing a faith-based media literacy curriculum.

The first step in the empowerment spiral, awareness, finds its counterpart in Osmer's descriptive task which asks, "What is going on?" In this phase, attention is focused on a particular issue or situation and relevant data and concepts are gathered. The second step, analysis, aligns with the interpretive task which asks, "Why is it going on?" This phase is dedicated to understanding how something works or what causes it to happen. The third step, reflection, parallels the normative task which asks, "What should be going on?" This evaluative phase examines something deeply in light of biblical thinking, spiritual values, or ethical principles. The fourth step, action, corresponds to the strategic task which asks, "How might we respond?" This last phase puts into place strategies of action that can have a positive or redemptive influence.

These four steps were used to structure the redesigned course. The course began with an hour-long introduction and review of the syllabus. It was then broken into four phases: media practices, media exegesis, media conversations, and media production. Each phase involved six to eight hours of class time. The course ended with a two-hour focus group, which asked students to reflect on their class experience as a whole. There were a total of 30 classroom hours over a 15-week semester. The class met for two hours each Thursday afternoon. Out-of-class assignments involved an estimated total of 65

hours of work, including three major projects and weekly reading or viewing assignments to which students posted 200-word responses on the course wiki. In addition, students were asked to write a reflective journal entry at the end of each phase.

There were several student learning outcomes listed for the course. Theoretical outcomes included being able to (a) explain the relationship between contemporary faith and popular culture, (b) define faith-based media literacy and describe its importance to biblical discipleship, (c) describe several approaches to faith-based media literacy, including the value of a media practices approach, (d) reflect on personal media practices, boundaries, and principles from a spiritual and professional viewpoint, and (e) view popular culture and media as theologically and missiologically significant. Skill-based outcomes included being able to (a) analyze, interpret, and evaluate various popular media experiences from a critical and theological point of view, (b) facilitate faith and media conversations with young people, (c) tell a spiritual story using multimedia tools, and (d) envision the effective use of media in youth and young adult ministry.

Phase One—Media Practices

The first phase of the course was designed to help students become aware of their own media practices and those of the young people they serve. Class presentations began with an introduction to faith and popular culture, including some basic definitions and foundational concepts. Class lectures then proceeded to examine the first three media lenses and faith-based approaches outlined in Chapter Three, culminating with a presentation of the Media Practice Model. The last class period of this phase featured a screening and discussion of *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (Greenhut & Allen, 1985), which presents the fictional story of Cecilia, a struggling housewife in a 1930s depression-era

town, who regularly escapes to the movies to avoid her abusive husband and vicariously live out her desires for a loving relationship. Chaos and whirlwind romance ensue when the dashing Tom Baxter, a lead character in one of the movies, magically steps out of the screen and into Cecilia's life. This film was selected for its exploration of the intersection between media texts and lived experience in media practice.

During this first phase, students were assigned to complete an anonymous survey detailing their media practices. Time was taken in class to discuss the resulting profile of the students' practices, and a Media Practices Survey report (see Appendix A) was made available to class members on the course wiki. Students were also asked to participate in a 24-hour media fast intended to sensitize them to the role and impact of media in their personal and spiritual lives. This assignment replicated the design of a much larger study, "A Day without Media" (http://withoutmedia.wordpress.com), which originated at the University of Maryland and was then expanded into a global media study called "The World Unplugged" (http://theworldunplugged.wordpress.com). After completing the fast and an assigned written reflection, students discussed their reactions in class and were able to compare them to those of other students around the world.

Phase Two—Media Exegesis

The second phase was designed to teach students how to critically analyze media experiences and to reflect on their significance in theological and pastoral terms. Class presentations consisted of an introduction to media exegesis, including key questions for critical and theological inquiry, and an overview of a theology of viewing from John's Gospel. Class time was also devoted to developing worked examples of media exegesis using a music video, Mumford & Sons' "Lover of the Light" (Gout, Schneider, Books,

Elba & Cadan, 2012), an advertisement, Chipotle Mexican Grill's "Back to the Start" (Chan & Kelly, 2012), and a social media example. Coincidentally, just as the class was scheduled to analyze a piece of social media, the "Harlem Shake" dance meme went viral on YouTube, yielding 40,000 uploads (including several from Adventist schools) and one billion views. This provided a timely and rich text for in-class exegesis.

During the second phase, students were assigned to write a five- to six-page media exegesis paper on a popular media text, using the "Key Questions for Media Exegesis" provided in the syllabus. Referencing at least four sources, the paper was to (a) describe the media text, (b) interpret the text's appeal and meaning from multiple points of view, (c) evaluate its message in the context of Scripture, and (d) formulate a practical response in line with a student's personal and spiritual commitments. Papers were to be assessed using the Media Exegesis rubric in the syllabus. Students chose a variety of texts, including popular songs, television series, video games, and movies. This gave them an opportunity to think critically and reflect theologically about their own media practice before leading others in a faith and media conversation.

Phase Three—Media Conversations

The third phase focused on applying the skills of media analysis and theological reflection with a group of young people in a pastoral setting. This entailed learning how to facilitate faith and media conversations. Class time in this phase was devoted to engaging with selected media texts and unpacking them in faith-based dialogue with each other. As the instructor, this gave me an opportunity to model the facilitation of such discussions. Two films were selected for viewing. The first was an independent film, *The Whale Rider* (Barnett & Caro, 2002), the story of Paikea, a native Maori girl in

modern-day New Zealand who experiences a spiritual call to lead her people. However, she is resisted by her grandfather, the tribe's chief, who clings to centuries of patriarchal tradition. The second was a box office movie, *Hugo* (King, Depp & Scorsese, 2011), the tale of an orphan, Hugo Cabret, who lives and works as a clock winder in the walls of a train station in 1930s Paris. His mission to fix a mechanical man left by his father leads him to an unexpected and redemptive relationship with cinema legend, George Méliès. The normal two-hour class period was expanded to three hours for each of these viewings, allowing the class at least one hour for discussion. The final week of this phase was devoted to a hands-on experience with a first-person shooter video game, *Halo 4* (Lee & Holmes, 2012) The class discussion afterward about the ethics of violence in video gaming raised so many questions that I altered the reading for the following week to include McCormick's (2002) article, "Is it wrong to play violent video games?"

During this phase, students were placed in teams of two and assigned to host a movie night with at least four young adults (ages 18-22), facilitating a one-hour faith and media conversation afterwards. In advance of the event, student teams were asked to select a movie (G to PG13) with input from the young adults, screen it beforehand, and outline the questions to be used in leading the conversation. Costs for the movie rental or theater admission and any food or snacks were to be assumed equally by the student team or, if agreed, by the movie discussion group. The assignment could be carried out in a home environment or in a theater and restaurant setting. After the event, each student was asked to write a four- to five-page paper detailing: (a) the criteria and process used for selecting the movie, (b) what was done to prepare for the movie conversation and how it was then conducted, (c) what was learned from the experience about facilitating faith

and media conversations and (d) recommendations for future practice. Projects were to be assessed using the Media Conversation Rubric provided in the syllabus.

Phase Four—Media Production

The fourth phase asked students to move beyond "reading" media to engage the task of "writing" or producing it. This involved taking action and exercising creativity. Class presentations included an overview of the media production lens and the faith-based creative approach described in Chapter Three, as well as an introduction to digital storytelling, including examples of short videos that featured spiritual storytelling. Two of the class periods were devoted to guest presenters involved in media production—an Adventist documentary film-maker and an Adventist pastor who incorporates blogging into his ministry. This was intended to stimulate students' thinking about ways in which media might be used in their ministries.

During this phase, students were organized into production teams of three or four and assigned the task of creating a two- to three-minute digital piece that would tell a spiritual story. The output had to include some combination of digital images, text, audio narration, video clips, and music. Students were briefed on the criteria by which their work would be judged and introduced to some free resources online. They were not given any specific training in how to use media production tools. Rather, they were asked to utilize the media tools and skills already available within their production team, understanding that those may vary from group to group. In this way, the assignment replicated the variable conditions they might face in a church youth group.

The last class of this phase became a mini film festival, featuring the work of each of the student production teams. One team created a music video titled, "Come Home,"

dramatizing the stories of individuals who tried to fill the spiritual void in their lives with poor choices before responding to Jesus' appeal to return home. Another team produced a two-part video series titled "Coming to Seminary," focused on the calling of God in the lives of the team members and their decision to prepare for ministry. A third group's video, titled "Second Chances," recounted God's miraculous intervention in the lives of the team members with the promise that "all things work together for good" (Rom 8:28). The class spent time after the screenings critiquing one another's work, noting areas of effectiveness as well as those that needed improvement.

The last two-hour class period of the semester was used to conduct a focus group with the class members (described later in the final section of this chapter).

Community of Practice Approach

The course was designed to use a "community of practice" approach, a term coined by Wenger (1998) to denote "a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do, and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger, 2011, p. 1). He listed three key elements of these groups: (a) "members are brought together by a learning need they share," (b) "their collective learning becomes a bond among them over time," and (c) "their interactions produce resources that affect their practice" (p. 1). These elements have the potential to fit well with the task of teaching media literacy in a face-to-face classroom environment. Gee (n.d.) proposed an alternative approach which he calls "affinity spaces." These are virtual, interactive spaces that (a) form around a common endeavor, (b) welcome all skill levels, (c) offer portals where content can be updated, created and shared, and (d) encourage participants to link to knowledge dispersed in other environments, as well as distribute knowledge

they gain with others. The course sought to tap into both of these learning environments. A collaborative, practice-based approach to learning in the classroom was supplemented by an online educational wiki that offered students a space to pool knowledge, document discoveries, and access a set of resources.

A wiki is an interactive webpage that allows its members to create pages, upload files, add links, make comments, and edit content. Wikis are ideal for groups who want to collaborate on tasks or create a shared learning environment. An educational account was obtained through Wikispaces (www.wikispaces.com) and a private wiki for class members was constructed. It housed the course syllabus, weekly assignment and discussion pages, course presentations, resource pages for each of the media lenses and faith-based approaches, a suggested reading list, and links to helpful websites and videos. The goal was to create a resource that could continue to be an asset for students even after the course was completed.

Research Methodology and Protocol

The intervention was evaluated and the results reported using a research methodology and protocol that was built into the project as a whole.

Research Purpose, Design and Sample

The purpose of this research project was to explore the perceived value of teaching media literacy as a pastoral skill for seminary students. It proposed two questions: 1) would the process of acquiring faith-based media literacy skills have perceived spiritual value in the lives of seminary students, and 2) would the process of

acquiring faith-based media literacy skills have perceived professional value for seminary students preparing to minister to youth and young adults?

The research project primarily used a qualitative case study design. According to Merriam (1998), case study design "is chosen precisely because researchers are interested in insight, discovery and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing" (pp. 28-29). It is particularly well suited to studying a bounded system (such as a class with a limited number of students) and for providing a detailed, multi-faceted description of a phenomenon from which others can illuminate their own practice.

A convenience sample was used. All 14 students enrolled in DSRE 608 during the 2013 spring semester were given an opportunity to participate in the research by signing an informed consent form (see Appendix B). All of the students chose to do so. Research participants were followed from the beginning to the end of the course.

Disclosure of the Researcher's Position and Bias

For this study, I served not only as the researcher but also as an adjunct professor and facilitator of the intervention. As such, I participated fully in the intervention but in a dual role, which I acknowledged to the students. In addition, at the time of the research I was the Associate Dean for Student Life at Andrews University, which meant that I had to be conscious of my administrative voice in the classroom. I am also an American-born, Caucasian male, raised as a Seventh-day Adventist and educated exclusively within the Adventist educational system. I recognize that these characteristics set me apart in significant ways from students coming from other spiritual and cultural backgrounds. For instance, I discovered that I did not share the experience of a student who had come through a recent conversion that included the rejection of most popular media. My own

religious upbringing predisposed me to rejecting the cautionary approaches of my youth, and I had to consciously account for this in my teaching. Likewise, the presence of two students from a non-Western country was a constant reminder of the suspicion with which American media is sometimes viewed by those outside of my own cultural bias.

Detailed Study Procedures

Subject participation and data collection took place from January 10 to May 2, 2013. Analysis was limited to three items. First, students' course experience was tracked by asking them to reflect on two questions at the end of each phase: (a) what has been of value to you spiritually in this section, and (b) what has been of value to you professionally in this section? Second, a researcher's journal was used to record field notes and observations. Third, a video-recorded focus group was conducted at the end of the course, using a semi-structured interview protocol and questions related to the course experience a whole. All data collection was embedded into the course structure and assignments. Students could choose to participate simply by having their data entered into the research project. Choosing to not participate did not affect a student's grade.

Confidentiality

Survey results were stored in a private electronic survey account procured and password-protected by the researcher. Material posted online by the students was hosted on a private educational wiki created by the researcher and available only to class members. Field notes, video recordings, and transcriptions resided on the personal hard-drive and cloud computing space of the researcher and were password protected. The focus group was video-recorded so that participants could be visually identified and their

remarks properly coded in the transcription. Subjects were coded anonymously in project materials. When data analysis was complete, all video recordings and digital data were deleted and paper materials were shredded.

Internal and External Validity

In order to avoid hidden bias and strengthen the internal validity (or credibility) of this case study, (a) multiple methods of data collection were used and triangulated (written reflections, video-recorded focus group, researcher's notes and observations), (b) recorded and transcribed material was member-checked, (c) I spent at least 30 contact hours with the research participants, (d) my own biases were disclosed in reporting the research and (d) discrepant information, where present and relevant, was included (Creswell, 2003, p. 196).

The external validity (or reliability) of this case study was strengthened by providing disclosure of my position and participation level in the research and by providing an account of how data was collected, categorized, and interpreted. This allows readers to determine the degree of similarity with their own situation and to what extent findings may transfer to their context (Merriam, 1998, p. 211).

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using the methods of content analysis. Specifically, this involved a process of (a) continual reflection on and organization of emerging data throughout the study, (b) gaining a general sense of the final data and then conducting a close analysis using a coding process, (c) generating a description of the

research setting along with a select number of emergent themes and (d) organizing these into a narrative and developing an interpretation (Creswell, 2003, pp. 191-195).

Conclusion and Recommendations

For over a decade, the course DSRE 608 has explored the task of ministering to youth and young adults in contemporary culture. Popular culture—and youth culture, in particular—is increasingly dominated by media and media practices. Those who live and minister in a media culture must understand how it functions and how it intersects with contemporary religious and spiritual life, if it is to inform their pastoral practice.

DSRE 608 was well-situated within the Seminary curriculum to develop faith-based media literacy knowledge and skills. In redesigning the course, a theoretical emphasis on media practices was aligned with theological insights on seeing from the Gospel of John. This framed media literacy as a pastoral skill, focused not just on media texts or media industries but—more appropriately—on the lived experience and practices of young people as they interact with media in their search for identity and meaning.

By integrating active learning cycles from media literacy education and practical theology, a methodology for the course was developed that allowed students to move in four course phases from awareness to analysis to reflection to action. Embedding this in a community of practice approach gave students an opportunity to learn with and from each other, in the classroom and online.

In order to provide a close description of student's learning experiences, selected course data was analyzed, interpreted, and presented as a qualitative case study (see Chapter Five). The study explored the spiritual and professional development of a single

group of seminary students engaged in media literacy education. It is offered not as a method to be replicated but as a potential source of insight.

I recommend that other theological educators add to this project by conducting their own research on developing faith-based media literacy as a pastoral skill. Ideally, such research could serve to confirm, expand, or problematize the insights gained from this limited case study.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE OF THE INTERVENTION

IMPLEMENTATION

Over the course of a semester, a seminary professor presents lectures, facilitates discussions, and grades assignments. But what would students say they were learning throughout the process? How would they describe the value of the course to their spiritual and professional lives? Constructed from learning reflections written by students after each of the four course phases, as well as from feedback offered during a focus group at the end of the class, this qualitative description (with a brief quantitative profile) aims to present an account of learning and change through the eyes of students over the length of the project implementation. Each section of this chapter – media practices, media exegesis, media conversations, and media production – presents students' perspectives following their experience in that segment of the course.

Phase One: Media Practices—January 10-31, 2013

What are the practices of seminary students in media culture? How engaged are they with media and to what extent does that involvement shape their daily routines? This section of the course was designed to initiate students' media awareness, provide a profile of the group's media practices, and introduce three major approaches to thinking about media. What emerged was a picture of a group of students who were, overall, fully

engaged with and dependent upon media, and who struggled to reconcile the negative and positive aspects of media in their lives.

Media Practices Survey

The results of the Media Practices Survey (see Appendix A) revealed that students were engaged with media on a daily basis. Class members owned a wide variety of media devices, with laptop computers being the most common (100%). They also reported significant amounts of media consumption. On a typical weekday, students on average reported nearly seven hours (6:51) of media usage. The most common media activity was accessing the Internet for schoolwork, followed by going online for entertainment or socializing. Only a few reported playing video games. Mobile devices, however, received widespread use for text messaging, taking pictures, accessing the Internet, emailing, and recording videos. Furthermore, students indicated they had been engaged in a wide variety of activities online within the last week. All reported watching videos, using a social network site, and emailing. Nearly all had sent or received instant messages, banked online, or searched for information. Three out of four had listened to music, bought a product, or posted videos or pictures. This snapshot of the class members' media ownership and participation is fairly typical of the Millennial and Gen X cohorts. It reveals that students were not only consumers of media but also used it to produce content and communicate with others.

The Survey also looked at the practice of movie-going and the selection of media content. Interestingly, in a denomination that has historically condemned movie theater attendance, three fourths of the Adventist seminarians in the class reported going to see movies in a theater, with a fourth of them attending once a month or more. All of them

watched movies at home at least once a month, with a third doing so at least once a week. In the last twelve months, 92% of them had seen PG and PG13-rated movies and 83% had chosen to watch R-rated films.

When selecting movies, students were more likely to use secular rather than Christian movie reviews. In fact, half of them had never accessed a Christian movie review. The most common sources of information used when selecting movies were word-of-mouth, recommendations from friends and colleagues, and movie trailers. When asked how they determine whether or not to watch (or continue watching) a television show or movie, some students said they used entertainment value as a guide. Others reported using their conscience, convictions, or feelings. The remainder relied on ratings and content.

Students were asked how important it was that a movie or television show *not* contain certain content. On a five-point scale (1 = unimportant, 5 = very important), they considered the absence of nudity (3.91) and sexual dialogue or gestures (3.83) to be more important than the absence of violence (3.67), crude or profane language (3.41), or drugs (3.25), alcohol and tobacco (3.08). A minority of students (17-33%) saw these content areas as unimportant to their viewing choices. However, three fourths of them indicated that they had stopped watching a show or movie for moral, religious or spiritual reasons. These reasons included "the amount of nudity and lesbian scenes were a bit too scandalous for me," "it contained some pretty graphic violence," and "it was turning a bit too diabolic for me."

These results seem indicate that, in spite of the denomination's official call to abstain from harmful media content through selective viewing, many students in the class

still chose to view movies that no doubt exposed them to content which might otherwise be seen as "neither wholesome nor uplifting" (GCSDA, 2010, p. 142). Without any guidance from the denomination on how to think through their media choices in a more nuanced way, criteria for media selection appeared to vary widely based on entertainment preferences, moral intuition, or level of comfort.

The Survey also revealed that religious media produced by the Adventist church was accessed at fairly low rates by the students. The majority (58%) "never" or "seldom" watched an Adventist television channel, glanced at a Union paper, or read the *Ministry* magazine . The only Adventist media accessed by at least half of the group on a "sometimes" to "very frequently" basis was the paper version of the *Adventist Review*. At the same frequency, the two most successful forms of religious media were church-related social media groups (67%) and Christian radio stations (75%). For this group of mostly young adult students, then, Adventist attempts at providing wholesome media alternatives were largely ignored and the media world to which they paid the most attention was produced elsewhere. Thus, teaching these seminary students to negotiate the world of "secular" media in which many were immersed was of real importance.

A day Without Media

Students' awareness of media's role in their lives was deepened in the "A Day Without Media" assignment. After attempting to go media free for 24 hours, class members reported seven of the eight emotional responses documented by researchers in an identical world-wide study (http://theworldunplugged.wordpress.com). It is not surprising, given the connectivity of media, that feelings of isolation overtook some students. "The entire day I felt completely cut off from the world" (Megan). (Please note

that all names in this chapter are pseudonyms.) “I felt completely disconnected from my friends and family” (Kelly). Without the stimulation of media, another confessed, “I did feel a little bored at times” (Kayla). Feelings of distress also cropped up. “Initially I said to myself... ‘How can I cope and make it?’” (John). Others commented on the sheer difficulty of escaping media. “’Unplugging’ these days involves a series of shut-downs, disconnects and de-integrations akin to shutting down a complex machine” (Justin). However, it was the habitual power of media that stood out for many. “I noticed how the media is addictive. . . . I did not realize I was so dependent” (Megan). “I definitely noticed psychological withdrawal effects that intensified during the day” (Justin). For a majority of the class, this spelled failure. Some inadvertently fell into old patterns, while others simply gave in to desire. “When I got home I fell apart…. I was tired and all I wanted to do was play a game on my Nexus 7 . . . so I did” (Megan). One student flatly refused to do the exercise and felt that it was an unreasonable assignment. Nevertheless, nearly all class members listed positive benefits they received while going media free. These included fewer distractions and increased productivity, time to connect in person with family and friends, and more time with God and the Bible.

Overall, students registered greater levels of awareness as a result of this exercise. Lauren realized that her media practices had been encroaching on her time with God.

> Instead of looking for God in the morning, I am more concerned about a post on Facebook the night before or the latest trend on Instagram or the latest . . . well, anything! But God has shown me that putting media first takes away from my time with him.

Brian awakened to what it means to be fully present to others in the real world without the distractions of media.

> I'll never forget it, I think it was within that twenty-four hour period that for a moment I actually came to a friend of mine where the internet wasn't even on my thoughts. It was just, like, I'm right here, right now. I'm all here.

Megan recognized that media had more of an impact on her life than she first realized.

> A lot of times for me I think, "Oh, I'm not really affected by the media. I don't really watch TV that much. You know, I just listen to music in the car. It doesn't really count for me. I really don't get affected by it." But when you really think about all the things, it's like "Ah, it really is in there pretty deep."

All three of these students, in one way or another, gained a greater perspective on the role of media practices in their lives by stepping away from them for a day.

Wrestling With the Good and the Bad

In the process of learning about the various lenses through which media can be viewed, students were asked to consider the potentially negative aspects of media, from the harmful effects of certain media content to the false representations of various media industries. They were also presented with the possibility that media could serve in a positive role, such as being a carrier of meaning or a source of cultural tools with which people, through media practices, may envision and try to construct a better life. From a sociological perspective, this required students to strike a balance between *structure*, the extent to which media may shape people's lives, and *agency*, the degree to which people may use media to construct their own lives. Consequently, students wrestled with the tension between potentially negative and positive aspects of media.

Lisa's experience, in particular, represented a progression from an awareness of media's negative effects at the beginning of the course to a more nuanced perspective by the end. As a recent convert, her previous media practices were deeply woven into an existence that was alienated from God. "My spiritual life consisted of whatever would

make the pain of living a life without [God] go away. Music, television, and many other substances and practices that were harmful to me and others and not pleasing to [God]." Not long after her conversion, she came under the influence of a former hip-hop artist turned Adventist evangelist who spoke negatively about popular culture. "I was convicted that all of this was bad now. So I went home and got rid of everything—everything." Over the course of the semester, however, she gradually began to loosen these negative associations and opened up to the possibility of other, more constructive narratives about media.

> When I got in this class . . . it was hard at first, because I just wanted to stand up and say 'It's of the devil. This is sick.' I just did not want to be here. And I feel like the projects we did, the readings we did and everything, have started to bring me to a balance where God wants me.

Being open to other viewpoints on media was challenging for Lisa. However, as her perspective matured, she began to find some ground between the uncritical embrace of her unconverted past and the wholesale rejection of her post-conversion experience.

In a similar way, Kelly had once used popular media to fill a void in her life. After watching *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (Greenhut & Allen, 1985) in class, in which the main character seeks to escape into the world of movies, she wrote:

> I was reminded of when I was reading the Twilight Saga. Those books helped me escape from my reality, and took me into a fictional tale. I loved diving into the story, and forgetting about everything around me. However, after I read all the books, I felt depressed and sad because I had no more to read, and I had to face reality. . . . Point is that those books affected me emotionally and spiritually because after reading those books the Bible didn't seem as interesting, and the real life didn't either.

Whatever Kelly's circumstances, her use of popular media appears to have become a substitute for responsible action. Thus, the fantasy world of Twilight ended up shaping her experience. A later reflection in the semester, however, reveals Kelly's increased

sense of agency. She now realized that "if we choose wisely what we interact with and do it with discernment, we are able to use the text positively and the way we want. We are the ones who get to do the molding." In other words, Kelly became aware of her power to select and use media texts in order to shape her life in constructive ways.

Phase Two: Media Exegesis—February 7-21, 2013

What can happen when seminary students are given the tools to think critically and theologically about media? What may result when they begin to apply these tools to media texts? Worked examples of media exegesis in class as well as the media exegesis assignment were meant to explore these questions. What emerged from the students' experience with media analysis and reflection was a greater awareness of the spiritual and theological significance of media, an enhanced discernment and selection process and, in some instances, a growing sensitivity to divine agency in media culture.

Moving Beyond Entertainment

Several students noted that previous to the class they had only thought of popular media as a form of entertainment, not as having any spiritual or theological value. Kayla wrote in her first reflection:

> Honestly, most secular popular media . . . does not help me spiritually. A lot of it is for entertainment purposes and a way of just relaxing. . . . I think I need to really observe and evaluate a movie or television show now from a different perspective to see if there is value in it in helping me grow spiritually.

After completing her media exegesis assignment, she began to reflect more seriously on the possibilities that God could use popular media as a means of revelation.

> Some media shouldn't be thrown out because it is secular but instead should be analyzed and reflected on. I believe God can reveal good moral values in anything

> secular or non-secular. Beauty is everywhere. . . . If we take our time to see beauty, God can reveal it to us.

Kayla's conviction about God's activity within secular media came to even greater maturity in her third reflection following the media conversation.

> After leading out a faith-based conversation with a group, I feel my movie time is more enriched. . . . Many times I overlook certain parts to a movie, but when I actually watch it with an intention I see how God does work through it and speaks to me in a certain way. What I mean by that is some parts of the movie feels like a message directed to me. I have also learned to not make judgments on a media because sometimes I may miss out on valuable lessons that I could have learned if I took the time and patience to really analyze it. Most importantly, I need to learn to depend on the Holy Spirit to lead me in watching certain things and revealing certain things to me.

Several things are going on in this passage. First, Kayla has learned to exhibit "ethical patience" (Dyson, 2001, p. 182) with the text, to reserve judgment while she seeks to understand it through the process of analysis. Second, she has learned to exercise her own agency by setting an intention for her time with media. Third, she has become aware of God's agency in the viewing process. Her observation that God speaks to her through film comes close to Johnston's (2006) category of "divine encounter" (p. 74) in film. For her, media analysis not only opens up a new level of understanding but, when accompanied by a dependence on the Holy Spirit's activity, leads to an experience in which she senses God speaking to her. Being open to this added layer of divine agency in the media experience, it seems, is not only at the heart of John's theology of viewing, but central to a faith-based media literacy perspective, as well.

Overcoming the Sacred and Secular Divide

What may lead viewers to consider popular media as mere entertainment is the notion of a divide between the sacred and the secular. Lauren observed, "I find it very

difficult, coming from an Adventist conservative background, to find anything spiritual outside of the confines of the church." Like other Adventist young adults, she was likely taught to draw a bright line between the sacred and secular. This has not necessarily lessened her participation in popular media, though, only dulled her perception of its potential spiritual significance.

> In spite of my habits of listening to non-Christian music, reading non-Christian books and watching non-Christian programming, it never dawned on me that the artists I most commonly hear, although considered secular, are actually singing on a spiritual level that I may not be understanding.

Once Lauren was given a new set of critical and theological tools, she found herself delving deeper into the construction and meaning of the media she was consuming. She reported that practicing media exegesis has led her "away from some TV shows, and made others more interesting to watch develop. This has led me to walk closer, more in tune with God, seeking his counsel even on the things that I allow to occupy my time." Like Kayla, the process of exegesis seems to have activated her spiritual faculties, involving God in the evaluative process.

Yet, the results of Lauren's exegesis did not always proceed along predictable lines. While it led her to avoid some programming, it resulted in other media texts becoming a source of unexpected spiritual and theological insight.

> I have seen God through lenses that I never thought possible. I hear music and think of how wonderful God is, and the song may not even mention his name. I watch a movie or a television show and find theological implications, even through the questionable language or actions.

It appears that Lauren does not make her judgments about media based on content alone, but has begun to explore a set of larger questions. Lynch (2007) contends that a contextual theology of film will "move beyond superficial moral critiques of characters to

explore how an empathetic and imaginative engagement with film texts and characters contributes to our theological understanding of an authentic, whole, and creative life" (p. 123). This empathetic approach is necessary for understanding the theological value of "secular" texts. To her credit, Lauren seemed to be learning to how to look for the movement of God through the imperfect texts and broken stories of popular culture.

Open-Minded yet Discerning

The process of media exegesis asked students to look at a text in all of its complexity rather than viewing it through only one lens or from a single standpoint. Eric discovered that as a seminary student he already had some of the skills required for such a task.

> The research that is required for this analysis is similar to that of biblical exegesis of a scriptural passage. I never fully considered how to analyze media in a systematic manner. However, I was surprised by the volume of information I discovered about a subject and I was even more impressed by the layers that a media may have.

Looking at media in this way seems to have had the effect of making students more open-minded about media. For Justin, the course as a whole

> solidified the idea of viewing the same media from multiple points of view before you make a call on it. Definitely, growing up in the church I've been really used to just "How many swear words are in the movie?" or "What's the rating?"'

This sort of facile approach was shared by Kelly at the beginning of the semester.

> When I came into the class I thought, like, media was either good or bad. If it was Christian, it was good. If it was secular, it was bad. That was my mindset. . . . Now I'm a little more open-minded. It's not all black and white.

This open-mindedness became particularly important in the following section on media conversations. But for now, it is important to note that a more open approach to analyzing media did not produce less discerning viewers. In fact, it seems to have had

the opposite effect. It created a mindfulness that led to more selective viewing and, in some cases, a deepened spirituality. Justin's experience was a case in point.

> There are shows that my wife and I like . . . really like. But after understanding the messages and themes or researching the origins and people who produce them, we gain a perspective showing a discrepancy between what we say we believe and what we consume. In the process much, if not all, of our media seems cheapened and feels like a loss but there has been much spiritual gain to be had. . . . I don't know that I can say my world has been turned upside down just yet, but my media tastes and preferences are changing as I analyze and reconcile my media with my spirituality.

Interestingly, some research suggests that critical analysis alone is not sufficient enough to change a person's viewing preferences or practices (Chyng Feng Sun & Scharrer, 2004). However, when the results of that analysis are "reconciled" with something as normative as religious beliefs or spiritual commitments, as in Justin's case, it seems to have motivated change.

For Kelly, against the backdrop of her *Twilight* experience, it was the intentionality of the media exegesis process that seemed to have been of greatest value.

> The process of media analysis is helpful because it guides us to choose wisely what we watch. . . . We should not interact with media without a set purpose and a discerning eye. Because the moment we do that, we allow our mind, mood, ideas, beliefs, and feelings to be molded by media.

Kelly discovered what media literacy theorists like Potter (2004) have long argued—that mindfulness matters and that a critical cognitive frame allows us to direct our media experiences in a manner consistent with our personal goals and beliefs.

Emily also reported that she had become more selective and analytical in her media consumption. But for her, the process of analysis took a more personal turn. Emily, who describes herself as "a very emotional and artsy person," turned media analysis into a journey of self-analysis, and media discernment into a process of self-discernment.

> What strikes me the most was to be able to apply media to my own life, my own story. You know, look at the story that's being told and see how I relate as a person to that. I think it helped me to grow as a person, especially with certain movies that we watched; looking at myself and seeing how I relate to that, seeing where is the pain, where does there need to be healing, and things like that, in the songs or movies. And I think it's really helpful for our spiritual walk, as well.

Emily's way of relating to media closely resembled Johnston's (2006) "appropriation" type, in which "the focus is not so much on encountering God as on finding ourselves, our spiritual center" (p. 70). Yet, as important as introspection and insight were for Emily, encounter was never far away. She exclaimed that media exegesis "has opened a whole new pathway in my relationship with God and in the way he speaks to me." Indeed, her practice of engaging media texts from a personal and spiritual point of view became transformative.

> I was looking at media in a completely different way, and I couldn't stop doing it. I think a lot of good things came out of it. I wrote a lot of things in my journal that I think helped me spiritually. And at the same time I think that changed my life and the way I relate to media—definitely changed my life.

Such transformation is no accident. It is the result of Emily taking the media analysis process and turning it into a spiritual discipline involving a high level of reflexivity, journal entries and all.

Phase Three: Media Conversations—March 7-28, 2013

If the skills of faith-based media analysis can be beneficial to seminary students on an individual level, might they also be useful in pastoral work with young people? How can faith-based conversations about popular media be facilitated, and what sort of value will they hold for ministry to youth and young adults? The modeling of media conversations in this section of the course, along with the accompanying media conversation assignment were meant to explore these questions. What emerged from the

students reflections was a sense that conversational skills related to media have great potential to enhance relationships with young people, and from these relationships come opportunities for teaching media literacy skills as well as for doing ministry and evangelism.

Having Conversations

The most frequent theme students expressed related to the value of media conversations was their potential for helping them relate to young people more effectively. This should come as a no surprise. For if media and communication are best understood in ritual terms (Carey, 1989)—as a process of shared meaning-making rather than an act of sending or receiving messages—then conversing with young people about their media is a way of entering the relational context in which they try to make sense of their lives. While students understood the importance of dialoguing with young people about popular media, they also recognized that as youth leaders they had to bridge what Lauren called "a gap between the church and their world."

When students spoke about relating to young people on the subject of media, the need for being open-minded and non-judgmental almost always arose. Lauren spoke of "being able to see past the myopia of my own ways." She felt "being in this class has given me spiritual openness, not necessarily to change my fundamental beliefs, but to be more accepting of people and just point them towards God." John also realized, "it's not about me, it's about those who I'm going to work with. So if you don't appreciate certain things you need to analyze it and understand why it is like it is." Unfortunately, some church leaders may speak negatively about young people's media or media practices

without fully understanding them. For that reason, Kayla stressed the importance of not rushing to judgment.

> A lot of times we . . . make quick judgments that "you shouldn't do that" and that blocks communication. But once we have an idea of what they're going through and why they're watching . . . it opens that communication and it makes them feel more comfortable that they can come up to you and talk to you and not feel like you're just going to judge them right away.

Kayla clearly understood how the use of adult authority may shut down communication with a young person, particularly in the area of media.

For Kayla, this exercise of ethical patience was a first step toward building understanding and trust with young people before proceeding into any kind of faith-based conversation. "Once they trust me the Holy Spirit will give me an opportunity to engage in a spiritual conversation with them, allowing them to reflect on their secular interests and how it relates to them as a Christian." Here, Kayla seems to have grasped the challenge of bridging the "secular" media interests of young people with their religious lives. She has also recognized the importance of tapping into God's agency in the meaning-making activities of media culture. Her reliance on the work of the Holy Spirit harks, again, back to John's theology of viewing, and becomes a crucial part of her approach to developing the faith-based media literacy of young people.

Justin, who worked in a university residence hall while taking the course, also saw the need for creating a space where young men could feel safe to discuss their media interests, particularly video games. As a first step, he used the media exegesis assignment to immerse himself in the video gaming world by playing all the way through Halo IV, a first-person shooter game popular with many residents.

> I learned a ton about video games. I mean, the gaming world is something that I haven't been super familiar with. . . . And so to wrap my mind around what is the

> appeal and understanding it—I get the appeal. I get how time can pass without you realizing it, now that I've experienced that, now that I've—you know—took the controller.

He also researched how the game was designed, which gave him a completely different perspective. He describes the video game industry as "a world that's been pretty mind-blowing. I didn't realize how much money was there. I didn't realize how much time goes into this. I didn't realize how much people pour in on the back side of that screen." Justin found this research to be valuable as he talked with young men about their gaming practices. First, this gave him "a little credibility with what I'm talking about because I've actually played the game, I actually know the storyline." Second, this allowed him to share his knowledge in a non-hierarchical fashion, as a fellow gamer.

> I don't have to tell them that I think it could be dangerous or a waste of their time . . . they've already heard that speech from their parents (most of them anyway). But asking them about what they like and don't like in a game as well as introducing facts about the gaming industry has led to several productive conversations around the dorm.

Overall, Justin would say that "learning to have media conversations with them without coming across as harsh or judgmental has been paramount in creating new relationships." He seems to have understood that gaming is a culture and that becoming literate in that culture is a key to gaining access. He adds, "It doesn't mean that I have agreed with everything that I have found in that world, but . . . I'm having conversation." And that, it seems, is what he and other students found lacking in the church—the ability to talk about media in an open and non-threatening way.

The difficulty of conversing about media was actually highlighted by Emily's fear of criticism in the classroom. The music video chosen for in-class analysis was produced

by one of her favorite groups, Mumford & Sons. When the video came on, her defenses went up.

> I really thought you were going to take that approach of, like, "This is really bad because of this and this and that." And we had already been in the class for a while and you hadn't done that yet. But whenever it was something personal that I was attached to, then it became really personal and I was ready to be defensive. . . . And then I realized, "Wow, I really am very defensive whenever it becomes personal and that's the same way with our youth."

Emily's comments revealed the extent to which media can become enmeshed with personal identity. They also illustrated the value of modeling conversational approaches with students. In the future, when roles are reversed and Emily becomes a facilitator, she may recall her own defensiveness and take steps to defuse that in others.

Megan also came to the course prepared to have her media preferences condemned. She was a fan of two television shows, *Grey's Anatomy* and *Scandal*. "I was pretty certain I was going to come in and be told that, like, those are bad shows, they're all terrible people and I should never watch them." Her pastor had already spoken disapprovingly of *Scandal* from the pulpit, but what she valued was "being able to analyze for myself what I'm watching instead of being told it's bad or it's wrong." For her, it was a matter of

> being conscious of what your needs are and what works for you and what doesn't work for you—it's part of having that internal conversation with yourself of, you know, "I'm not going to watch this." It's not a matter of "My pastor stood up front and told everybody not to watch this."

Megan's sentiments agree with Hoover's (2006) findings that religious people want to be seen as autonomous and in control of their media choices and are equally reluctant to take that decision-making power from others. In fact, Megan's valuing of internal processes over external authority gave shape to how she envisioned her role as a youth pastor. She

felt that in working with youth, "being able to discuss their thoughts on various media without judgment but, instead, equipping them to reach their own conclusions will allow me to connect with the youth and teach them a valuable life skill." In other words, she intended to offer youth the very thing she desired—an opportunity to think through media choices for themselves.

Teaching Others

Students were quick to recognize the possibilities for developing in young people skills they had learned in the media exegesis phase, and it was the media conversation assignment that gave them a chance to put this into practice. Kelly, however, went into the assignment with some trepidation.

> Honestly . . . when we started doing the project I was a little skeptical about it. I was like, "I don't know if it's actually going to work, if it's actually going to make something meaningful out of it with the youth." But once we did it, I mean, I was actually surprised that we really didn't have to come up with everything. They were just sharing their ideas.

Kelly appears to have discovered the power of tapping into young people's passions for their media. Given the right approach, they may be quite eager to discuss their ideas about a favorite movie or song. As Marsh's (2007) research indicates, most people have an "aversion to didacticism" (p. 154). But if insights are allowed to emerge from within a conversation, rather than being externally imposed, media conversations can be a gratifying experience for all.

The media conversation assignment had a positive impact on the way Kelly looked at media. Whereas, before she only thought of media as superficial entertainment and having no spiritual value for youth ministry, by the end her perspective had changed.

> After taking my time in this project, I have come to realize that movies can make you get into deep thinking and we can indeed find connections to Scripture. And what I like is that those connections to Scripture become more relatable. We find ourselves understanding it better, and actually connecting to it.

Although Scripture and popular media are often held apart in separate worlds, Kelly discovered that bringing the two together in a conversational setting actually resulted in a more powerful understanding of Scripture as it relates to everyday life.

The media conversation assignment also became transformative for two students, David and Tiffany. As a married couple, they decided to conduct a media conversation with their own children and a few of their teenage friends. Tiffany confessed that the class took her out of her comfort zone. "I'm so conservative and in the first assignment we need[ed] to watch Lady Gaga's video and I thought 'It's crazy—it's a crazy class.'" But after working through the initial shock, she said:

> It's so helpful to me because I have two adolescents in my house and now I can understand them better, and we are having conversations about it and when we watch a movie we discuss. . . . I think it's so very important for my family and for our ministry, too.

One reason parents may not initiate conversations about media with their children could have to do with their own upbringing. This appears to be the case for Tiffany.

> I grew up in an Adventist home, and I was taught that watching movies is a waste of time and affect[s] the spiritual life. . . . I watched any movies with my kids, but with a weight on the conscience that I was doing something wrong and giving a bad example for my kids. With this proposal to choose the movie and after watching [have] a conversation about it, I finally understand my role. As a mother and wife of a pastor I will not just be preventing my children [from being] exposed to evil, I'll teach them to identify the evil, analyze, and choose best.

It is not hard to sympathize with Tiffany, who was raised in a media-sheltered home but then found herself raising children with an uneasy conscience in a media-saturated

culture. It is perhaps the story of many Adventist parents. For her to "finally understand her role" is a powerful thing.

Building Bridges

Media conversations were seen by students as having value for mission and evangelism, as well. Lauren believed an ability to see God at work in the world of secular media would take her ministry to a new level with both churched and unchurched young adults. In fact, she emphasized, "I feel like our inability to see others' (and by others I mean outside the church) vantage points, truly hinders our ability to share Christ with them where they are." Eric also saw media conversations "as an excellent tool to create dialogue with people about their spiritual perspectives. I see the conversation as an 'open door' to individuals' personal belief about God and how they view the world." But it was Emily who best laid hold of the missional potential of conversations. She saw that media becomes woven into the personal and social fabric of people's lives. "It creates social groups . . . you know, people groups. And it makes people feel comfortable with each other because of that." On that basis, she believed Christians should become familiar with the world of popular media.

> I think it's important that we become aware of what's happening, that we become knowledgeable about it, and that whenever we're in a social context . . . with people [who] are unchurched, we can know how to build bridges, you know, from those conversations. . . . It's not shoving Jesus down their mouth or anything like that, but it's creating an opportunity for them to able to have the spiritual context and be able to open up through different ways.

Just before the end of the course, Emily had an opportunity to put that theory into practice. She was working on an art project with a young adult who had just started going to church. As they painted, they listened to popular music and a song entitled

"Sigh No More" began to play. Emily's friend told her the song made her think of heaven.

> I remembered everything about the class—and I knew, I was like, "Man, this is like such a good opportunity." So, I actually stopped painting and I sat down on the floor and she started to tell me that she had been wanting to feel God close to her life, like be present in her life. And she was asking for a sign and she felt like that song and that moment was being a sign. So we started to sing it together. And so she said, "I feel like God is speaking to me… I feel so much peace because I have that hope of heaven and things are going to get better."

Two nights later, Emily received a text from her friend saying that she enjoyed painting with her and wondered if she would study the Bible with her and her roommate, an invitation which Emily readily accepted. "But it was all because of that song and [because] I immediately remembered what I had learned in class. . . . So, I'm a big believer that media can open a lot of pathways for ministry." Indeed, had Emily not been sensitive to God's agency in media culture, she could have missed an opportunity to work with him on behalf of these two young adults.

Phase Four: Media Production—April 4-25, 2013

As simplified tools of media production become increasingly widespread and as consumers are encouraged to share user-generated content through social media and microblogging sites, what are the possibilities for youth and young adult pastors? How can they use these tools to capture and share spiritual stories? The media production assignment, as well as guest appearances from two Adventist media practitioners, were designed to explore these questions. What emerged from the students' experiences in producing media was a sense of how powerful digital storytelling can be and a passion to gain more media production skills.

The Power of Digital Storytelling

The power of digital storytelling is perhaps best seen through the eyes of Ryan who, on his own admission, was "not fond of watching movies or paying attention to media." For much of the class, he struggled to see any value in the class as we grappled with the world of secular media. However, that all changed when student media teams produced and then shared their spiritual stories with the class. He wrote:

> Media never came to my mind as a tool to use to bring people to the way of the cross that leads to heaven. In fact, my spiritual life was the same until we did the group videos in class. I was really touched [so] that I almost shared tears listening to how God is leading his people. Those testimonies made in the form of media from other classmates changed my view about how I can use media to reach people.

The compelling nature of the testimonies, layered "with background music" made an emotional impact on him. "I will conclude that media is a blessing from God but it can also be a curse. . . . We should remember to make Christ the center of every media we produce to change lives." For Ryan, producing media seemed to be one way to ensure that its power was being used correctly.

By contrast, Nicole, who had taken video production classes in high school, was no stranger to media. Nevertheless, the assignment reinforced for her "how powerful of a tool media can be in ministry." On a personal level, she said, "it has helped me to hear spiritual insights from other people. My team members had great stories to tell." On a professional level, she believed that with media "you can instantly expand your audience and reach people who are not looking for God." She shared that it was "beneficial to me spiritually knowing that the content of our video could uplift and encourage someone." For Nicole, then, media production was a way to broaden her spiritual influence.

Kayla saw the value of media production from an entirely different angle. For her, it had the capacity to develop the agency of young people.

> This is a great way for them to express themselves and tell stories uniquely. Many times they are so used to just taking in information from whatever people tell them instead of researching and producing it themselves. With digital storytelling, they are allowed to be free and independent. They are open to be creative and create their own stories. When they create their own storytelling, I believe they may be able to discover God on their own.

Kayla saw the power of media production to develop young people's voices and to help them become self-authors (Magolda, 2008). Her insight that creating stories allows young people to discover God for themselves is profound. God's primary mode of revelation is storytelling, although often we treat it as "just taking in information." Young people, it seems, could benefit from more opportunities to digitally craft and share their stories in the community of faith as a way of coming to spiritual awareness.

The Passion to Produce

Most pastors are communicators at heart who want to share a message with other people. Media production can provide a means of doing that within a culture that has placed a priority on stories and screen time. Even though Ryan was not much of a media consumer, he shared that "through this class I have developed a full passion to create media on my own and share how God has brought me to this point in life." Eric echoed that sentiment. "I would like to train in the whole [area of] media production." Lisa indicated that she already had plans to produce a video for her church's Pathfinder program. "I think it will give me some experience at filming and then my son could help me learn to edit." Of course, with only three class sessions devoted to media production, time for developing new skills in the course was limited.

David had already been pursuing media projects as part of his ministry. "I always liked media. Since the beginning of my ministry I worked doing radio and television programs. . . . I took care of nine churches in different cities. Each one had [a] radio or television program directed by my team." Even though their videos were "very amateurish," he reported great evangelistic results. Recently, he has branched out on the Internet, building his own website "where I try to be available to people who want to know God more, people who need spiritual help." David may be just one of a number of seminary students who are doing media production work on their own with little to no training, simply because they have a passion for sharing the gospel through media. It begs the question: how might the church benefit if it capitalized on this interest and offered media production training to seminary students?

Conclusions

This chapter provides a glimpse of 14 seminary students who were engaged with media culture, yet to varying degrees lacked well-developed ways of relating to it. The perceived spiritual value of this intervention derived, first, from students' increased awareness of media's role and influence in their lives. Second, when given an opportunity to critically and theologically analyze media, students began to see it not only as a form of entertainment, but as a meaning-making process that could encompass spiritual and theological questions. Third, as they opened up to the dialogue between faith and media, some became more selective in their media choices, as well as more sensitive to God's moving within media culture and practice.

The perceived professional value of this intervention centered on participants' sense that media literacy could provide a pathway for developing relationships with

young people. Seminarians envisioned these relationships as open and non-judgmental spaces where young people could be equipped with literacy skills of their own, increasing their ability to make wise media decisions. The relational potential of media was also conceived in evangelistic terms. Students sensed that media conversations might offer insight into the lives of secular young people and provide opportunities to build meaningful connections with them. Finally, media was seen as an effective tool for communicating the gospel to media-savvy young people and helping them author their own spiritual stories and identities.

Sifting through the learning reflections of students throughout the semester, there seemed to be indications that transformational learning was, indeed, occurring. Comments like "we have changed things in our home life" (David), "that changed my life and the way I relate to media" (Emily), "I finally understand my role" (Tiffany), "my media tastes and preferences are changing" (Justin), "this has led me to walk closer, more in tune with God" (Lauren)—all point to shifts in thought or action. However, the reflection that best expressed the result one hopes for in a faith-based media literacy course came from Lisa.

> As I reflect back, the entire class has been an extreme stretching and growing experience for me. You have taken me, sometimes kicking, screaming and scratching, into a world that I chose to leave behind several years ago. You have helped me to look at things—and better yet see things—in a new light, and I will be forever changed by the experiences.

Learning to look at things and see things in a new light is, indeed, at the heart of John's theology and also at the core of media literacy. It is not an easy process, but certainly one with the power to transform lives.

CHAPTER 6

PROJECT EVALUATION AND LEARNINGS

Summary of the Project Manuscript

This project sought to expand the skillset of twenty-first century pastors and youth workers by constructing an academic course in faith-based media literacy for 14 seminary students as part of their education at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Media literacy was presented as a pastoral skill with attention paid to the media practices of youth and young adults. As such, it focused on how young media participants select, interact with, and apply media in the context of their lived experience and identity formation, including their religious lives and faith development. Seminary students were encouraged to focus not just on the content of media texts or the influence of media industries but on how these intersect with the experience of media participants as they try to make sense of themselves and the everyday world through the lens of popular media. The four phases of the course—media awareness, media exegesis, media conversation and media production—were designed using an active learning cycle that moved participants from awareness to analysis to reflection to action. Readings in each phase augmented class lectures, viewings, and discussions. Major assignments gave students an opportunity to put what they were learning into practice by participating in a "Media Practices Survey" and "A Day Without Media" exercise, exegeting a popular media text,

facilitating a faith and media conversation with young people, and producing a digital story with classmates. Students reflected on their learning in each section by responding to two questions: a) "What value has this section held for your spiritual life?" and b) "What value do you see it having in your professional life with youth and young adults?" At the end of the course, students reflected on their class experience in a two-hour videotaped focus group. The qualitative data from these reflections, along with the researcher's own notes and observations, were included in the study. Quantitative data collected in the "Media Practices Survey" and qualitative data gathered in the "A Day Without Media" assignment were also incorporated.

Description of the Evaluation

What follows is a description of how data from the intervention (Chapter 5) was evaluated and interpreted, along with a report of the resulting conclusions and outcomes.

Evaluation Method

Employing a qualitative case study research design, written and transcribed data were evaluated using a process of content analysis. This involved organizing and reflecting on data as it emerged throughout the course, comparing it with my own observations and notes, and then conducting a close analysis of the final data using a coding process to identify common themes within and across the course phases. These themes were then organized into a chronological narrative, with an accompanying interpretation. Findings and conclusions were drawn inductively from the data, with attention paid to the quantity of coded passages corresponding to a single theme as well as to the significance of individual passages. As noted in Chapter Four, qualitative case

study design is an ideal choice when a researcher is studying a bounded system (such as a class) and wishes to provide a rich, multi-faceted description from which others can illuminate their own practice. A quantitative portrait of participants' media practices was descriptive and used only to provide an understanding of the research context. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of data in this study were not conducted for the purpose of testing a hypothesis or for presenting results that could be replicated or generalized to a wider population. Rather, they were intended to provide a potential source of insight for other theological educators exploring the value of faith-based media literacy education.

Interpretation of Data (Chapter 5)

A close analysis of the data revealed several themes woven throughout the four course phases. Data collected during the Media Awareness phase offered a portrait of Adventist seminary students who were engaged with and dependent upon media in a variety of ways, including media activities that have been officially discouraged by the Adventist denomination. The students described their media participation in ambivalent terms as they wrestled with the positive and negative aspects of media, with some students awakening in the first phase to a greater sense of personal agency related to their media practices. As students began to use the tools of critical and theological analysis in the media exegesis phase, several spoke of an increased awareness of media's significance and a lessened tendency to view it as mere entertainment. Several also reported heightened levels of spiritual discernment in their media selection, with some expressing a growing sensitivity to God's agency in the viewing process. It was while applying the skills of media exegesis with young people in the media conversation phase that the professional implications of faith-based media literacy came to the fore. Students

felt that media conversations had the potential to assist them in building relationships with young people, and that these relationships—especially if they were non-judgmental—would offer opportunities for developing the media literacy skills of young people and for reaching them on a pastoral and evangelistic level. As students engaged the visual storytelling process in the media production phase, many began to appreciate the power of media in a new way, seeing its potential for not only sharing spiritual content with others, but also for empowering young people to shape their personal stories of faith. Even the students most wary of popular media consumption expressed a keen interest in further developing their media production skills for use in ministry.

Conclusions Drawn From the Data (Chapter 5)

For this cohort of seminary students, based on their learning reflections, the course experience and its structured engagement with media did have perceived spiritual and professional value. While students' styles of negotiating popular media culture ranged from cautious selectivity to enthusiastic involvement, each seemed to be challenged to grow in their own way. Students who had a conservative upbringing or conversion experience that caused them to forsake popular media became more open to the significance of that media for others and to the pastoral opportunities it might present. Students who came with well-developed tastes in popular media, but had cultivated these—of necessity—apart from established Adventist practice, brought them into conversation with their faith, at times resulting in greater levels of spiritual discernment. Contrary to research that suggests students' media preferences may be resistant to insights from the critical process (Chyng Feng Sun & Scharrer, 2004), members of this class reported changes in their media preferences, perspectives and practices during the

period of the course, allowing the conclusion that some level of transformational learning took place as they attempted to reconcile their faith and media practices. Furthermore, based on the data, the first two phases—media awareness and media exegesis—seemed to have the greatest perceived spiritual value for students, centered on their exegetical work with media. While the last two phases—media conversation and media production—appeared to yield the greatest perceived professional value for students, particularly in the areas of building relationships and effective communication. This suggests the conclusion that the course design was well-balanced between the two main purposes of the intervention.

Outcomes of the Intervention

While the qualitative case study approach does not objectively measure results, the insights gained from this study are promising enough to commend the further exploration of faith-based media literacy as part of pastoral formation. The data suggests that the active learning approach taken in this intervention, along with the presentation of media practices as a locus for pastoral attention, allowed students to reflect on the intersection of faith and media in their own lives, as well as to envision the value of media literacy in their pastoral work with young people. How, or if, students will continue to develop and apply the skills taught in the course is beyond the scope of this study. However, it appears that seeds have been sown for the nurturing of media practices that are more closely aligned with their personal faith and pastoral ministry. Thus, one outcome of this intervention has been my commitment to continue the development of this course in future semesters.

The descriptive nature of this case study also lifted the veil of official church positions on media, offering a telling glimpse into the media attitudes and practices of a small group of Adventist seminary students. Consistent with Hoover's (2006) qualitative research, a gap between church positions and personal practices—even among pastors in training—became apparent. And so, a second outcome of this intervention, has simply been the creation of a seminal space where that gap could be acknowledged and constructively addressed—first with pastors in the seminary classroom and then with the youth and young adults they will lead and influence.

Summary of Other Conclusions

In addition to the conclusions reached from the intervention data (Chapter 5), a brief summary of the theological, theoretical, and methodological conclusions reached in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 will prepare the way for a set of overarching conclusions.

Theological Conclusions—Chapter 2

A study of the Gospel of John was undertaken in order to develop its theology of seeing as a foundation for engaging media culture. I concluded that the context of late first century Christianity to which the Gospel responded was marked by the loss of the Temple and its imagery as well as the threat of the Empire and its spectacle, resulting in a corresponding crisis of religious identity. I further concluded that these dynamics have much in common with the context of early twenty-first century Western Christianity, which has witnessed a loss of traditional religious symbols and authority as well as the inroads of popular media and culture, creating a similar crisis of identity for believers. Rather than competing with or accommodating to media culture, John's Gospel offers

contemporary Christians a path of symbolic transformation, in which believers are enabled to see themselves, their Lord, and the world "again" or "from above" (3:3). For John, this birth of sight occurs only by means of the divine agency of the Holy Spirit, precipitated by the loss and mourning of former ways of seeing. This miracle of sight is joined with the human agency of those who bear witness to the powerful truth of what they have seen under the interpretive, "re-membering" work of the Spirit. This work centers on "re-presenting" the divine identity of Jesus, as well as restoring the image of God in his followers. It entails a reordering of human desire in line with God's desire that we would see our true humanity in relationship to Jesus. It also enables believers to perceive God's glory (his presence and power) in the midst of everyday life, so that its mundane and broken realities are transfigured by a vision of "greater things" (1:50). Viewing, from a Johannine perspective, is a spiritual discipline dependent upon the agency of the Spirit, requiring the active participation of the viewer, and results in an alternative and transcendent rendering of the visible world.

Theoretical Conclusions—Chapter 3

A review of literature related to media literacy, in general, and faith-based media literacy, in particular, was also conducted. This literature, encompassing a wide range of disciplines, theoretical perspectives, and practices, was organized as a set of four media lenses (media effects, media industries, media practices, and media production), with four corresponding faith-based approaches that rely, in part, on those lenses (the cautionary approach, the worldview approach, the dialogical approach, and the creative approach). This allowed the contributions and limitations of each lens or approach to be delineated, even if in reality they often overlap. From this, I concluded that there is a need for a

balanced approach to media literacy that draws on the collective and corrective wisdom of the whole field. There are a number of healthy tensions that must be represented in any approach to media literacy, such as those between producers and consumers, texts and audiences, discernment and dialogue, and protecting young people from media as well as preparing them to engage it. These tensions take us well beyond the cut-and-dried approaches of the past, to approaching media with greater depth and complexity. In Chapter Four, I used the metaphor of learning to ride a bike to describe the balance and coordination of approaches that becoming media literate requires.

The literature review yielded one theoretical approach—the Media Practices Model—which attempted to balance the concern for media content, industries, and effects with an appreciation for how media participants select, shape, and incorporate media within the context of their lived experience and identity formation. Adopted as a faith-based approach, a practices perspective allows the pastor to consider the meaning and significance of a particular text or practice within context of a young person's everyday life and faith. It also offers space not only for appreciating the agency of young people but for considering God's agency in the midst of their media practices, as well. For this reason, it is the primary theoretical approach chosen for this intervention.

Methodological Conclusions—Chapter 4

After conducting a situational analysis of the seminary youth culture course I have taught for more than a decade, I concluded the course was well-situated to develop the concept of media literacy as a pastoral skill. I redesigned the course using the framework described in the first section of this chapter. Additionally, I discovered that the Media Practice Model's key elements corresponded well with the theological insights offered by

the Gospel of John (detailed in Chapter 4). This brought together my theoretical and theological research in a way that I had not anticipated. Finally, I concluded that a qualitative case study research design would be best suited to the purpose of my intervention, which was to explore and describe the perceived spiritual and professional value of teaching faith-based media literacy in the seminary setting through the experiences of students enrolled in a single academic course.

Overarching Conclusions

Bringing together the conclusions from Chapters 2, 3, and 4 with the conclusions in this chapter drawn from the interpretation of data (Chapter 5), it is now possible to make three overarching conclusions from the project as a whole.

First, what emerges is the key role of divine agency in media experiences and practices. Recent theories of media literacy highlight human agency in viewership by speaking of the "active audience" and "participatory culture." While honoring the meaning-making role of media participants, a faith-based approach to media literacy must acknowledge God's presence and activity, as well. Theologically, seeing and witness are dependent upon the Spirit, and without them the world slips into darkness. Recognizing ways in which the Spirit may be working in and through the symbolic witness of media culture to bring people to light and truth is key to understanding media literacy as a pastoral skill. For students in the seminary course, the assumption that God was present and active in their media practices enabled new spiritual insights and energized their witness as they conversed with others about shared media experiences. If the horizon of human agency is all that exists in media culture, as much secular media literacy practice assumes, then the only conclusion to be drawn is that media are merely constructs that

need to be deconstructed. However, if divine agency is factored in, another horizon opens and pastors can consider that media may become a vehicle for something much greater, even transcendent.

Second, what becomes apparent throughout this project is that media practices matter. In the end, the significance of media cannot be located solely within the content of a media text or the influence of a media industry. Rather, it is grounded in media practice—in *who* selects the media and *how* it is interpreted and appropriated in everyday life. This hermeneutical space is absolutely essential for the kind of meaning-making practices at work in John's Gospel, as he shapes the symbolic world of the late first century in new ways. This space is also important to the qualitative approach used in this research, as that approach tries to capture the nuances of how various students made sense of the media experiences they encountered in the course. Young people want to be heard and understood, and if the only attention given to media happens in the proclamatory space of the pulpit, pastors' efforts are likely to fall on deaf ears. However, when media is approached dialogically in the context of a media participant's lived experience and search for meaning, an interpretive, pastoral space opens up that can lead to addressing the "greater things" in a young person's life.

Third, what seems inescapable is the importance of relationships in media culture. Media has become part of the social fabric of young people's lives, the space in which they form bonds and through which they develop an understanding of themselves and each other. As in John's Gospel, where staying and seeing are integral to discipleship, students in the seminary course sensed that understanding young people's media would become an entry point into their world and lead to fruitful relationships with them.

Students also seemed to know the rules in this relational space—primarily, being non-judgmental and allowing others to think and discover for themselves. This open and exploratory space described by students seemed to echo the invitation of the Johannine Jesus and his followers to come and see. Being in relationship with young people in an incarnational way, and inviting them to see things more deeply with their own eyes may, in fact, be the preferred path of media literacy and discipleship within media culture.

Personal Transformation

A further way of assessing this project is to consider its impact on my life as a researcher and ministry practitioner. Three changes deserve particular mention. First, my increased grasp of the relationship between theology and practice has brought a new sophistication of thought to my work as an educator and student life administrator, especially as it relates to dealing with challenging and complex issues in a religious environment, of which media practice is only one. Second, the process of research and writing has been an incredible journey of discovery that has continued to unfold up until the last moment. Like putting a man on the moon, completing a project dissertation spurs many other insights and ideas along the way. Some are detailed in the next section, while others will take me in new directions. Thus, I leave this process energized and enthused for the next steps. Third, the years during which I completed this project (2010-2014) coincided with what I judge to be a period of theological retrenchment in the official discourse of the Adventist church. John's imaginative theology has been a balm for me during this somewhat difficult time, allowing me to better understand the church's failure to mourn its losses, and to appreciate my own need to see the Adventist movement "again" and "from above" through the regenerating lens of God's Spirit.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations for further action and research have arisen out of this limited intervention and research project.

1. The literature review noted a scarcity of Adventist scholarship in the area of faith-based media literacy. I recommend that this gap be addressed initially by adopting media literacy as a topic for the annual 180 Symposium sponsored by the Center for Youth Evangelism at the SDA Theological Seminary.

2. The literature review also found no evidence of a comprehensive faith-based media literacy curriculum for use in Adventist schools. I recommend that the North American Division Department of Education launch a task force to outline an Adventist approach to media literacy in grades K-12, including the development of a curriculum.

3. Further, the literature review found very few Adventist media literacy resources for parents. Consequently, I plan to begin research and development on an educational game for use in the home that would spark and guide after-media conversations between parents and children.

4. I also intend to explore the development of a six-session faith-based media literacy curriculum for use in Adventist youth groups or Sabbath Schools, including a leader's guide, participant booklet, and video resources.

5. While Chapter 2 briefly outlined a theology of seeing from the Gospel of John, a fuller dissertation-length treatment would be a useful contribution. I plan to write several articles and perhaps a book for general Adventist readers on Christian living in media culture, based on insights I have gained from my study.

6. Underlying this study are assumptions about a theology of culture which, given the scope of this document, could not be fully articulated. Therefore, I intend to outline in a peer-reviewed article a proposed Adventist theology of culture.

7. Any case study is an invitation to others to produce their own case studies in order to provide additional insights. I recommend that other theological educators interested in promoting media literacy as a pastoral skill develop their own interventions and report the results in a qualitative fashion, as this paper has done.

8. Given the interest in media production among intervention participants, I recommend that the SDA Theological Seminary offer a course in Media Production for Ministry, perhaps in conjunction with Andrews University's Communication Department. I further recommend that the SONscreen Film Festival organize an outreach that would offer media production workshops to Adventist secondary schools.

9. As a result of my research into the late-first century context, I would like to develop an academic tour of Italy, Greece, and Turkey that would explore early Christianity and ancient media culture as a way of illuminating contemporary issues.

10. Finally, as a result of this project, my wife and I plan to organize a faith and film discussion group through the small group ministry of our local church.

A Final Word

Why should media literacy be considered as an essential part of the pastor's skillset? Simply, because media have become the channels through which stories are told in contemporary culture. Media practices are rituals in which meaning is made and through which identity and community are often created and sustained. Pastors, too, are storytellers, and the symbolic practices they promote are intended to create and sustain

faith identities and communities. Mediating between these two worlds of meaning and belonging—media and religion—is increasingly necessary if church leaders are to prevent religion from being exiled from everyday life. Becoming proficient in the multiple literacies of media culture and learning how to connect these to the Christian tradition is arguably the new cross-cultural frontier for Christian discipleship and mission, particularly as it relates to young people. Thus, my hope is that faith-based media literacy will increasingly take its place alongside biblical literacy in the process of theological education and pastoral formation.

APPENDIX A

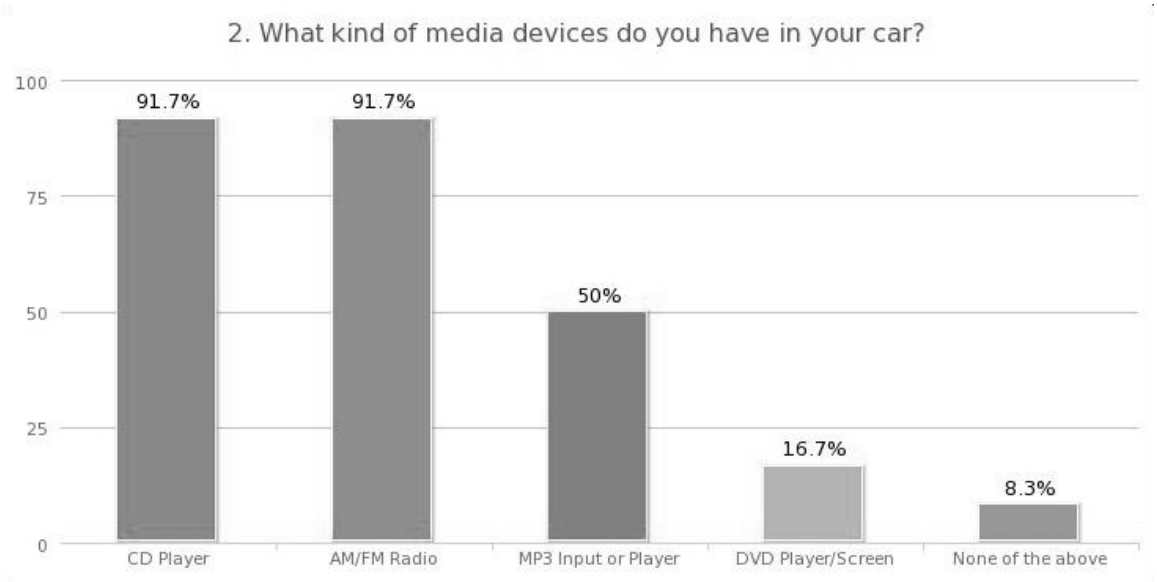
MEDIA PRACTICES SURVEY RESULTS

Media Practices Survey

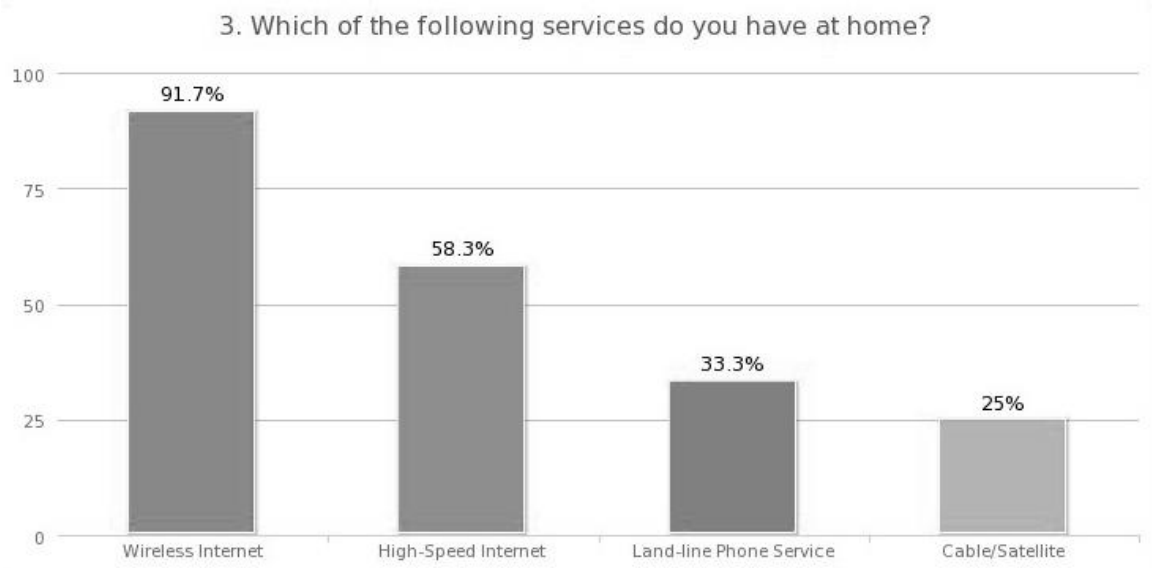
Summary Report, January, 2013

1. What media devices do you have at home and how many?
For each device, check the number that you have.

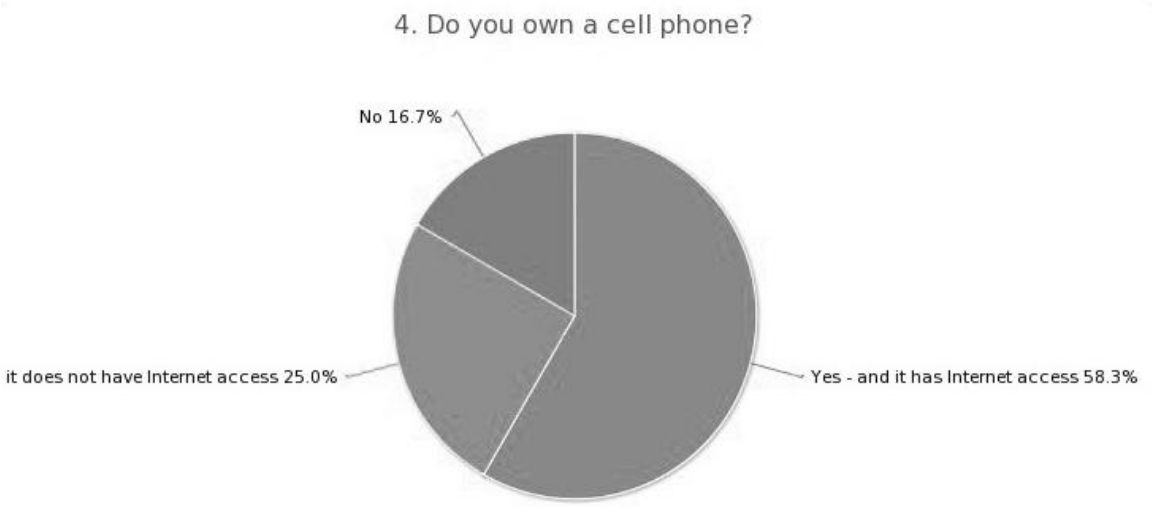
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+	Responses
Television	41.7% 5	33.3% 4	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
DVD (Movie Player)	41.7% 5	33.3% 4	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
DVR (Digital Video Recorder)	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Video Game Device (Playstation, Wii, Xbox, etc.)	58.3% 7	25.0% 3	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Portable MP3 Player (iPod, Zune, etc.)	33.3% 4	33.3% 4	16.7% 2	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Other Music Playing Device (Stereo, Radio, etc.)	33.3% 4	50.0% 6	0.0% 0	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Desktop Computer	58.3% 7	41.7% 5	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Laptop Computer	0.0% 0	66.7% 8	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Digital Camera or Video Camera	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Books and Magazines	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	83.3% 10	12
Tablet or E-Reader (iPad, Nook, Kindle, etc.)	50.0% 6	41.7% 5	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12



Value	Count	Percent
CD Player	11	91.7%
AM/FM Radio	11	91.7%
MP3 Input or Player	6	50.0%
DVD Player/Screen	2	16.7%
None of the above	1	8.3%
Satellite Radio	0	0.0%



Value	Count	Percent
Wireless Internet	11	91.7%
High-Speed Internet	7	58.3%
Land-line Phone Service	4	33.3%
Cable/Satellite	3	25.0%

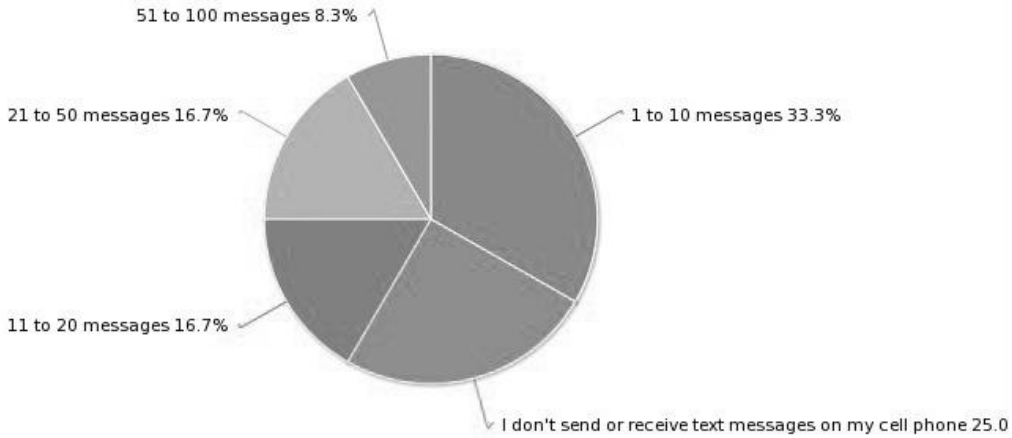


Value	Count	Percent
Yes - and it has Internet access	7	58.3%
Yes - but it does not have Internet access	3	25.0%
No	2	16.7%

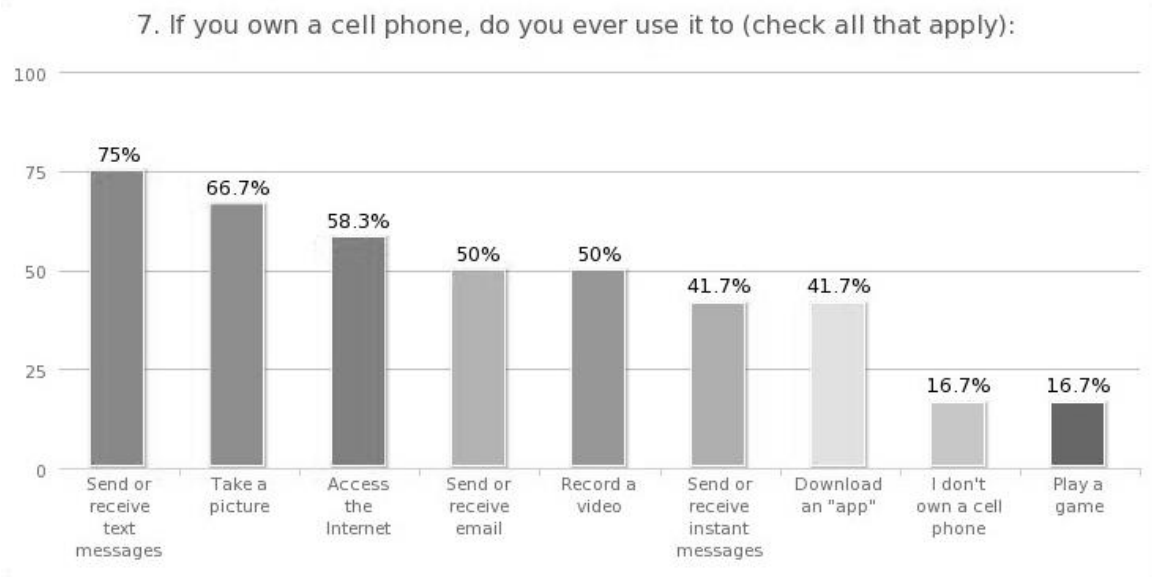
5. On a typical WEEKDAY (Monday-Friday), how much time do you spend doing each of these activities?

	None	5 min - less than 30 min	30 min - 1 hr	more than 1 hr - 3 hrs	more than 3 hrs	Responses
Watching television, movies or DVD's	8.3% 1	16.7% 2	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	0.0% 0	12
Listening to music on a mobile device (iPod, MP3 player, etc.)	25.0% 3	33.3% 4	16.7% 2	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	12
Listening to music on another device (car or home radio, computer, etc.)	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	41.7% 5	33.3% 4	16.7% 2	12
Playing video games on a console, computer or mobile device	75.0% 9	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	12
Using a cell phone for communicating (talking or text messaging)	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	58.3% 7	8.3% 1	12
Using the Internet for entertainment or socializing (playing games, visiting social network sites, instant messaging, watching videos, video chatting, creating content, etc.)	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	25.0% 3	66.7% 8	8.3% 1	12
Using the Internet for schoolwork or academic research	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	41.7% 5	50.0% 6	12
Reading magazines or books for entertainment (not for schoolwork)	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	25.0% 3	41.7% 5	8.3% 1	12
Engaging with more than one media device at a time (multi-tasking)	8.3% 1	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	50.0% 6	16.7% 2	12

6. On an average day, how many text messages do you send and receive on your cell phone?



Value	Count	Percent
1 to 10 messages	4	33.3%
I don't send or receive text messages on my cell phone	3	25.0%
11 to 20 messages	2	16.7%
21 to 50 messages	2	16.7%
51 to 100 messages	1	8.3%



Value	Count	Percent
Send or receive text messages	9	75.0%
Take a picture	8	66.7%
Access the Internet	7	58.3%
Send or receive email	6	50.0%
Record a video	6	50.0%
Send or receive instant messages	5	41.7%
Download an "app"	5	41.7%
I don't own a cell phone	2	16.7%
Play a game	2	16.7%

8. Have you ever done any of the following activities on the Internet? Please check all that apply.

	YES, I did this in the last week	YES, I do this, but NOT in the last week	NO, I do not do this	Responses
Watch a video	100.0% 12	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Use a social network site	100.0% 12	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Use a micro-blogging site such as Twitter	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	75.0% 9	12
Send or receive instant messages	91.7% 11	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	12
Video chat (Skype, iChat, etc.)	58.3% 7	33.3% 4	8.3% 1	12
Post videos or pictures online	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	12
Play online games	25.0% 3	16.7% 2	58.3% 7	12
Read blogs	41.7% 5	33.3% 4	25.0% 3	12
Work on my own blog	25.0% 3	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	12
Download or listen to podcasts	33.3% 4	25.0% 3	41.7% 5	12
Visit a virtual world	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	75.0% 9	12
Visit a government website	16.7% 2	58.3% 7	25.0% 3	12
Get financial information	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	25.0% 3	12
Send or receive email	100.0% 12	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Use a search engine	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	12
Look for health information	33.3% 4	50.0% 6	16.7% 2	12
Seek information or do research for homework	83.3% 10	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	12
Get news	66.7% 8	33.3% 4	0.0% 0	12
Buy a product	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	12
Rate a product, service or person	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	25.0% 3	12
Make travel reservations (air, hotel, car)	33.3% 4	50.0% 6	16.7% 2	12
Bank online	91.7% 11	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	12
Use online classifieds (like	8.3%	66.7%	25.0%	12

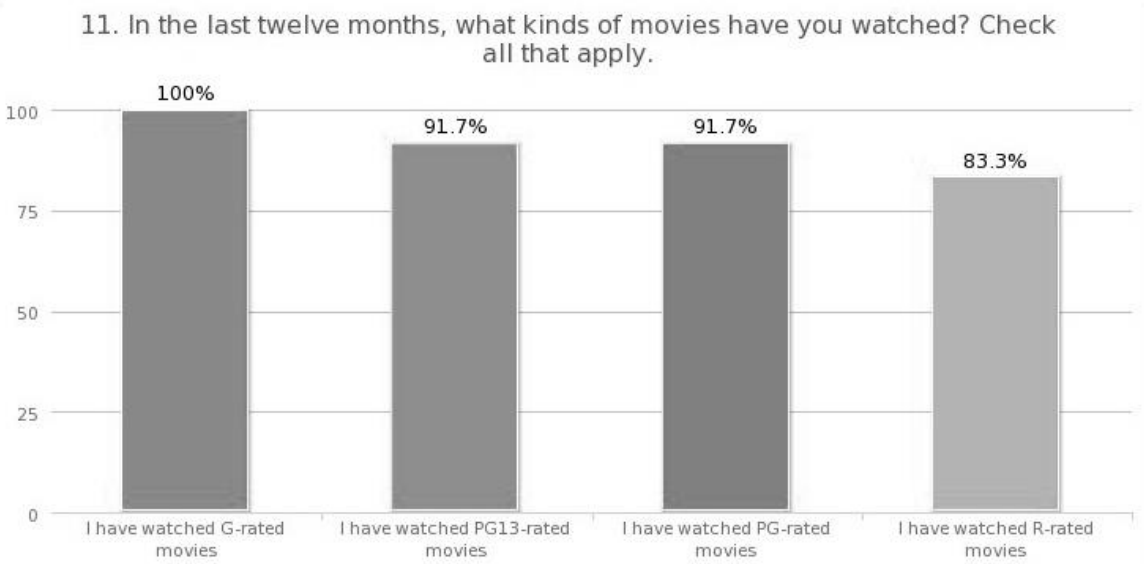
Craig's List)	1	8	3	
Participate in an online auction	8.3% 1	41.7% 5	50.0% 6	12
Listen to music online	75.0% 9	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	12
Look for religious or spiritual information	66.7% 8	25.0% 3	8.3% 1	12
View a religious service or sermon online	33.3% 4	58.3% 7	8.3% 1	12
Make a charitable donation	16.7% 2	33.3% 4	50.0% 6	12

9. Have you ever experienced or done any of the following?

	Yes	No	Responses
Been in a car when the driver was sending or reading text messages on their cell phone	58.3% 7	41.7% 5	12
Sent or read a text message while driving	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	12
Illegally downloaded music or videos	66.7% 8	33.3% 4	12
Received an unwanted spam text or email messages	91.7% 11	8.3% 1	12
Slept with your cell phone on or right next to your bed	83.3% 10	16.7% 2	12
Physically bumped into another person or object because you were distracted by talking or texting on your phone	33.3% 4	66.7% 8	12
Chatted , IM'd, emailed or communicated online with someone you don't know	66.7% 8	33.3% 4	12
Been bullied, harassed or deceived online	8.3% 1	91.7% 11	12

10. How often do you:

	Never	Less than once a month	Once a month	A couple times a month	Once a week	More than once a week	Responses
Watch movies in the theater	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	12
Watch movies at home	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	58.3% 7	25.0% 3	8.3% 1	12



Value	Count	Percent
I have watched G-rated movies	12	100.0%
I have watched PG13-rated movies	11	91.7%
I have watched PG-rated movies	11	91.7%
I have watched R-rated movies	10	83.3%
I don't watch movies	0	0.0%

12. If you do watch movies, how frequently do you use the following sources of information when making a selection?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Frequently	Responses
Movie trailers	18.2% 2	0.0% 0	18.2% 2	27.3% 3	36.4% 4	11
Secular movie reviews	20.0% 2	20.0% 2	30.0% 3	30.0% 3	0.0% 0	10
Christian movie reviews	50.0% 5	20.0% 2	20.0% 2	10.0% 1	0.0% 0	10
Recommendations from friends or colleagues	0.0% 0	10.0% 1	40.0% 4	20.0% 2	30.0% 3	10
General word-of-mouth	0.0% 0	18.2% 2	27.3% 3	18.2% 2	36.4% 4	11

13. How important is it that a television show or movie you choose to watch NOT contain the following?

	Unimportant	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Quite Important	Very Important	Responses
Crude/Profane Language	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	33.3% 4	25.0% 3	25.0% 3	12
Drug Use	25.0% 3	8.3% 1	16.7% 2	16.7% 2	33.3% 4	12
Alcohol or Smoking	33.3% 4	0.0% 0	16.7% 2	25.0% 3	25.0% 3	12
Violence	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	25.0% 3	41.7% 5	12
Sexual Dialogue/Gestures	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	33.3% 4	41.7% 5	12
Nudity	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	25.0% 3	50.0% 6	12

14. How do you determine whether or not watch (or continue watching) a television show or movie?

Count	Response
1	Based on how it makes me feel. There are some movies that disturb my conscience.
1	Content
1	However the show evokes my emotions.
1	If is inappropriate.
1	If it's fun or engaging. It needs to keep my attention and move quickly.
1	The content
1	Too much murder and blood
1	When is ok to my convictions
1	if it is funny or nice.
1	If the movie/TV show contains thematic graphic violence or any elements of the occult/dark spirituality (horror, hauntings, etc.) I turn it off.
1	First of all I consider whether the impact of the TV show on me it's negative or positive and weather it causes a great impact on me or if it just is a superficial impact, I prefer to watch something that I know will not affect my character in a negative way.
1	First I don't watch anything that is rated R. Then if I see that the show or movie has a message that I do not like (like sex, drugs, etc.) I stop watching it.

15. Can you identify a favorite television show or movie? If "yes," please share and briefly explain why it has become a favorite.

Count	Response
1	Avatar. Imaginary world. I wonder how heaven will look.
1	Comedy. It make me happy.
3	No
1	Pretty Little Liars and Law and Order SVU, I really like mysteries and suspense.
1	The Big Bang theory because it makes me laugh
1	Yes, it was based on true life story and encouraged never to give up whiles there is breath and strength within you.
1	I love the movie Breakfast at Tiffany's, It's one of my favorite movies because it is a classic and I am a fashionista, I love the fashion sense of the main character, I love the 1960's fashion and style and I can identify with the main characters' Irritants, I enjoy the love story that carries and the glamour and elegance, I also absolutely love the main song that carried on through the entire film Academy Award Winner: Best Music, Original Song For the song "Moon River" and last but not least I love Audrey Hepburn!
1	Grey's Anatomy: It's got action as far as the surgeries and then it also has romance and comedy in the relationship side.
1	Yes: How I Met Your Mother; It is my favorite because it is a love story that just makes sense. The show makes me happy, and laugh.
1	The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. It is consistently thoughtful and articulate. I don't always agree with his view points but I respect his intellect and commitment to shaping public discourse.

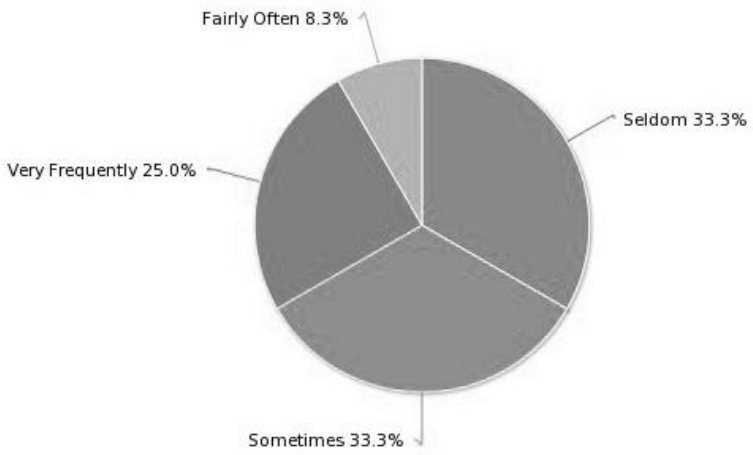
16. Has a particular television show or movie ever had a positive moral, spiritual or religious impact on your life? If "yes," please identify the movie or television show and briefly share your experience.

Count	Response
1	Ben Carson
1	I can't think of one at the moment.
1	I enjoy watching Bible study DVD's in my home.
1	IRIS, a Korean drama. How temptation can pull you to the edge.
1	No
1	No.
1	Not really
1	Yes,
1	Yes: Enchanted; As silly as this sounds, when this Disney movie premiered, after watching it, I decided that I would decorate my room for my roommate and buy her Christmas gifts, and speak with enthusiasm all month long!
1	Fireproof: How God love us even though we keep rejecting him. Only he can helps have love and give love.
1	Facing the Giants and Courageous. The positive effect was it made realize the importance of the Christian walk.
1	Soul Surfer was my very favorite Christian movie because It helped me realize what a great impact I can cause in the lives of youth as a pastor, mentor and friend, as I got see the how the youth pastor in this movie had such an influence in the life of the main character the movie.

17. Have you ever stopped watching a television show or movie for moral, religious or spiritual reasons? If "yes," please briefly explain.

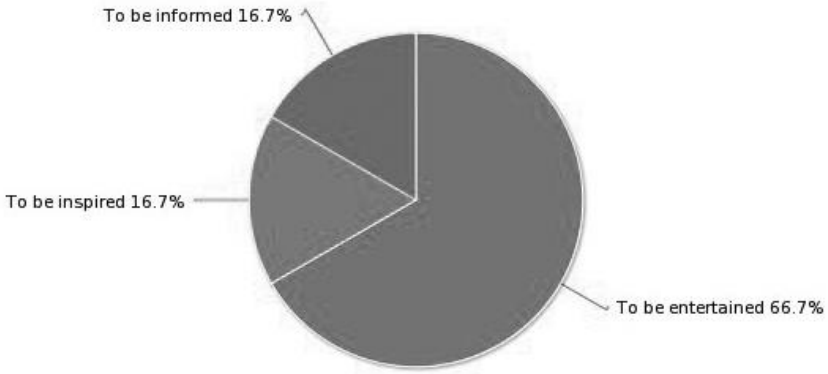
Count	Response
1	No
1	Yes
1	Yes, all of TV. I do not have TV in my home. I watch G rated and Christian movies.
1	Yes, because I have children.
1	Yes, The L Word. All of my friends watched the show religiously, but the amount of nudity and lesbian sex scenes were a bit too scandalous for me.
1	Yes...South Park and shows like that just take things too far so I stopped watching them because I felt like they (Family Guy etc.) were not appropriate.
1	Yes I stopped watching a TV show because it had magic a plenty of witchcraft and supernatural content I only watched it about two times and then I stopped because it just made me uncomfortable and I found it to be of a negative influence.
1	Yes, I stopped watching Grey's Anatomy and Desperate Housewives. After watching it I felt it was not good for me to watch.
1	Yes. My wife and I turned a movie off that we had rented a few months ago because it contained some pretty graphic violence that we weren't expecting.
1	Yes, I stopped watching "Teen Wolf", it just had too much stuff going on. I felt like it was turning a bit too diabolic for me.

18. How often do you discuss the moral, religious or spiritual meaning of movies with friends or family members?



Value	Count	Percent
Seldom	4	33.3%
Sometimes	4	33.3%
Very Frequently	3	25.0%
Fairly Often	1	8.3%
Never	0	0.0%

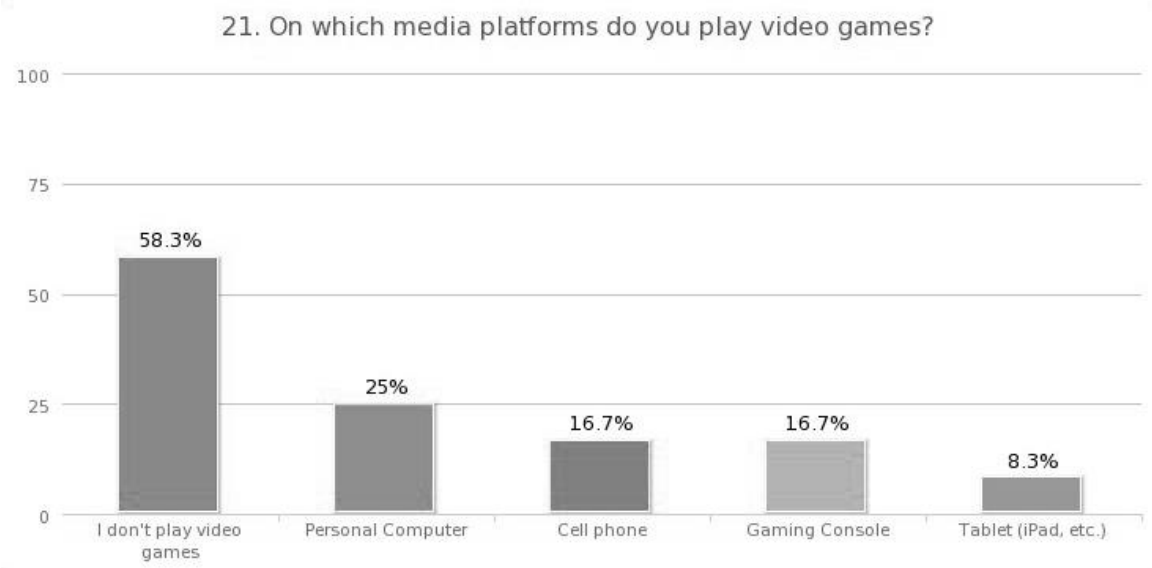
19. What is your most frequent motivation for watching a television show or movie? Select one.



Value	Count	Percent
To be entertained	8	66.7%
To be inspired	2	16.7%
To be informed	2	16.7%
To be challenged or broadened	0	0.0%
To escape	0	0.0%
To spend time with friends or family	0	0.0%

20. What television and movie genres do you prefer? Choose any that apply.

Value	Count	Percent
Comedy	10	83.3%
Christian	8	66.7%
Drama	7	58.3%
Action/Adventure	7	58.3%
Epics/Historical	6	50.0%
Documentaries	5	41.7%
Nature	4	33.3%
Domestic (home improvement, cooking, etc.)	3	25.0%
Animation	3	25.0%
News	3	25.0%
Science Fiction	2	16.7%
Musicals/Dance	2	16.7%
Crime/Gangster	1	8.3%
Reality Television	1	8.3%
Westerns	0	0.0%
War	0	0.0%
None	0	0.0%
Horror	0	0.0%



Value	Count	Percent
I don't play video games	7	58.3%
Personal Computer	3	25.0%
Cell phone	2	16.7%
Gaming Console	2	16.7%
Tablet (iPad, etc.)	1	8.3%

22. Which video games do you play and how often?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Frequently	Responses
Role Playing Games (e.g. Dungeon and Dragons, Final Fantasy, Grand Theft Auto)	83.3% 10	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
First- and Third-Person Shooter Games (e.g. Halo, Quake, Call of Duty, Battlefield, Gears of War)	83.3% 10	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	12
Platform Games (e.g. Donkey Kong, Sonic the Hedgehog, Super Mario Bros)	66.7% 8	8.3% 1	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
MMORPGs (e.g. World of Warcraft, RuneScape, EVE Online)	91.7% 11	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Life/Construction/Management Simulation Games (e.g. SimCity, The Sims, Petz, Creatures)	75.0% 9	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	12
Vehicle Simulation Games (e.g. racing and flight simulators)	66.7% 8	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	12
Strategy Games (e.g. Civilization, Empire Earth, Master of Orion)	75.0% 9	8.3% 1	16.7% 2	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Music Games (e.g. Guitar Hero, Rock Band, Sing Star)	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Sports Games (e.g. EA Sports, FIFA Football, 2K Sports, NBA Live, Madden Football)	66.7% 8	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	0.0% 0	12
Exergaming (e.g. Dance Dance Revolution, Wii Sports, Wii Fit)	75.0% 9	25.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	12
Card, Trivia and Puzzle Games	41.7% 5	25.0% 3	16.7% 2	8.3% 1	8.3% 1	12

23. Have you established boundaries for which video games you will play and which you will not? If so, please describe those boundaries.

Count	Response
1	After being addicted to SIM city a couple years ago, I rarely play any types of games.
1	I do not play video games
1	I don’t play.
1	My boundaries are simple, no killing games.
1	No
1	Yes, when they have too much bloodshed
1	none
1	I don't have clear boundaries but I don't really game a lot. I try to steer clear of graphically violent games.
1	I have seen many friends be completely addicted to games therefore I have decided to stay away from them
1	Certain games can only be played when the kids are awake. I don't play games dealing with the occult.

24. Who are your favorite musical groups or artists? List up to five.

Count	Response
1	Accapella
1	Casting Crowns
1	Chris Tomlin
1	Creed
1	Gospel Music
1	Hillsong
1	JJ Heller
1	Jaci Velasquez
1	Laura Marling
1	Mumford & Sons
1	Switchfoot
1	Casting Crowns
1	City and Colour
1	Frank Sinatra
1	Hillsong
1	Jack Johnson
1	Maranatha Songs
1	Mute Math
1	Ne-yo
1	Phil Wickham
1	Planet Shakers
1	instrumentals
1	Amy Grant
1	Casting Crowns
1	Celine Dion
1	Hillsong
1	Hymns
1	John Legend
1	Kelly Clarkson
1	Sleeperstar

Count	Response
1	The brilliance
1	Francesca Basticelli
1	Gungor
1	John Mayer
1	MLTR
1	Rapture Rukus
1	Safety Suit
1	choral
1	Brie Stoner
1	Hillsong United
1	Imagine Dragons
1	Israel Houghton and New Breed
1	Kirk Franklin
1	Pearl Jam
1	no
1	some local indigenous songs

25. What are your favorite music genres? Check all that apply.

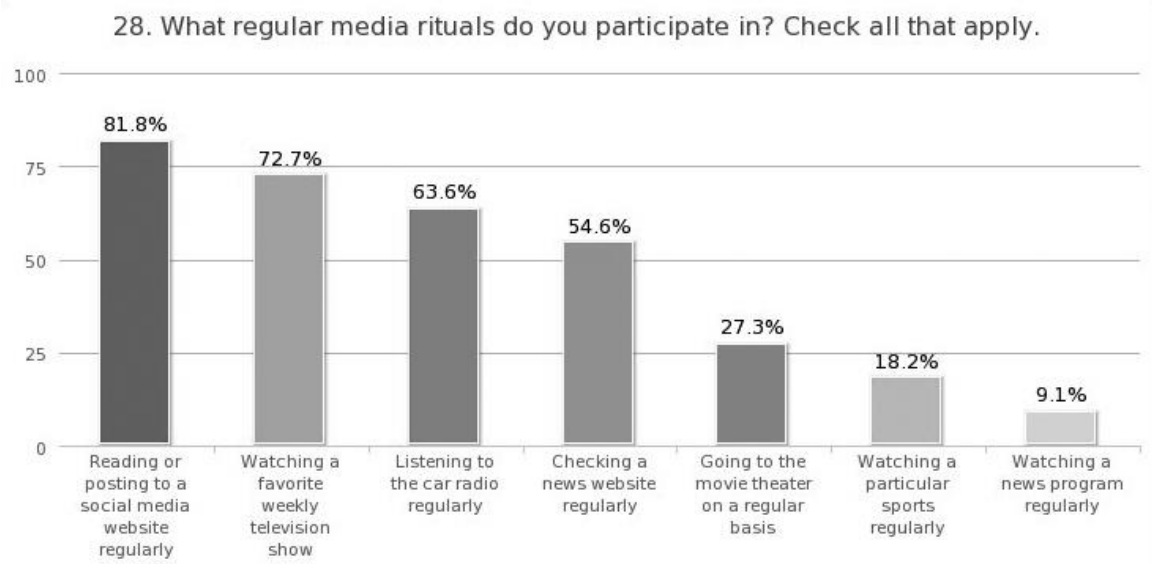
Value	Count	Percent
Christian/Gospel	9	75.0%
Easy Listening	4	33.3%
Classical Music	4	33.3%
Indie Pop	3	25.0%
Alternative Music	3	25.0%
Pop/Top-40	3	25.0%
Rock	3	25.0%
Country Music	3	25.0%
Other	2	16.7%
Jazz	2	16.7%
Singer/Songwriter (incl. folk)	2	16.7%
R&B/Soul	2	16.7%
Hip-Hop/Rap	2	16.7%
World Music Beats	1	8.3%
Latin Music	1	8.3%
Blues	1	8.3%
Reggae	1	8.3%
Dance Music	1	8.3%
European Music (Folk/Pop)	1	8.3%
Asian Pop (J-Pop, K-Pop)	1	8.3%

26. Can you identify a song or musical group that has a particular significance for you? If so, briefly identify that song or group and explain why the music and/or lyrics are meaningful.

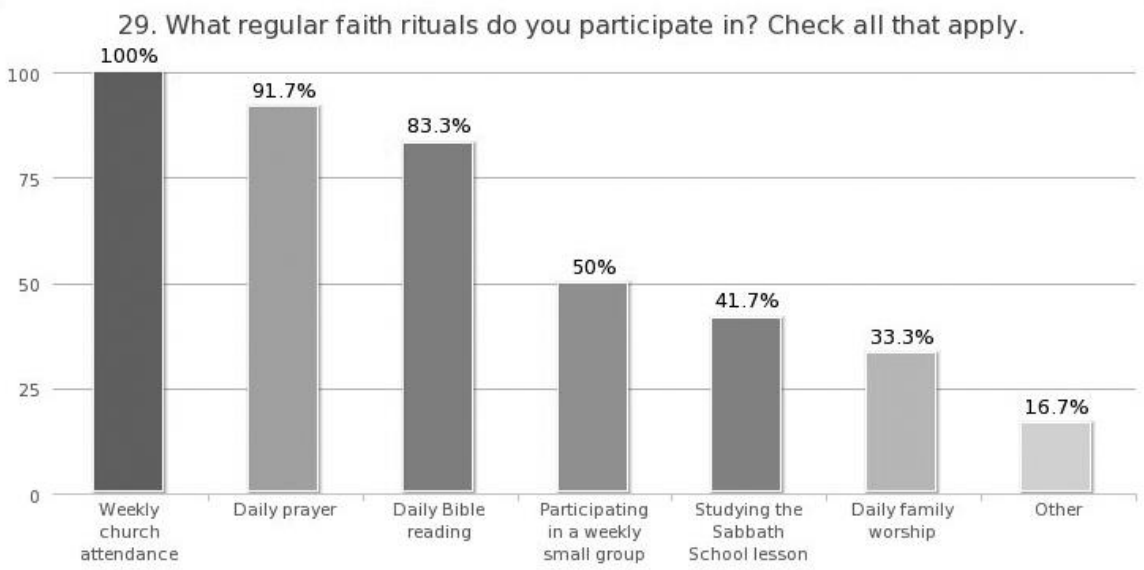
Count	Response
1	Chris Tomlin because He sings of God's love.
1	Creed and Casting Crowns speak to my heart and my past.
1	Hallelujah Chorus, It makes feel comfortable
1	JJ Heller- What love really means.
1	Maranatha singers, because I have peace.
2	No
1	no
1	Banana Pancakes by Jack Johnson; This song perfectly describes the relationship between my Fiancé and Myself
1	Switchfoot's albums have played a role in different chapters in my life. Their last album, Vise Verses, was particularly notable in encouraging me through a decently tough time.
1	I really Like the song Breath of God by The Brilliance it is just a gorgeous inspiring song the reminds me of how the Holy Spirit keeps on bringing us life and spiritual breath so that we can continue to have vital spiritual strength and he has the power to revive us when we are struggling to keep our faith and relationship with God alive in this world of darkness
1	He's Able by Deitrick Haddon reminds me constantly that God will take care of me and will never give up on me and that he will do what he says. I sing it when I get discouraged.

27. How frequently do you access the following religious media?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Frequently	Responses
Local Union Paper (paper version)	**41.7%** 5	**16.7%** 2	**16.7%** 2	**16.7%** 2	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Adventist Review (paper version)	**33.3%** 4	**16.7%** 2	**25.0%** 3	**16.7%** 2	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Adventist Review (online version)	**41.7%** 5	**33.3%** 4	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Ministry Magazine (paper version)	**50.0%** 6	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**25.0%** 3	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Ministry Magazine (online version)	**50.0%** 6	**25.0%** 3	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Spectrum Magazine (online version)	**50.0%** 6	**25.0%** 3	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Adventist Today (online version)	**75.0%** 9	**0.0%** 0	**0.0%** 0	**16.7%** 2	**8.3%** 1	**12**
Hope Channel	**41.7%** 5	**16.7%** 2	**25.0%** 3	**16.7%** 2	**0.0%** 0	**12**
3ABN	**41.7%** 5	**16.7%** 2	**25.0%** 3	**16.7%** 2	**0.0%** 0	**12**
Christian Radio Stations	**16.7%** 2	**8.3%** 1	**16.7%** 2	**8.3%** 1	**50.0%** 6	**12**
Christian (non-SDA) Television Stations	**58.3%** 7	**0.0%** 0	**33.3%** 4	**8.3%** 1	**0.0%** 0	**12**
Religious or Church-Related Facebook Group	**8.3%** 1	**25.0%** 3	**33.3%** 4	**16.7%** 2	**16.7%** 2	**12**
Adventist-Related Website or Blog	**33.3%** 4	**16.7%** 2	**25.0%** 3	**8.3%** 1	**16.7%** 2	**12**
Other Religious (non-SDA) Website or Blog	**33.3%** 4	**33.3%** 4	**25.0%** 3	**8.3%** 1	**0.0%** 0	**12**



Value	Count	Percent
Reading or posting to a social media website regularly	9	81.8%
Watching a favorite weekly television show	8	72.7%
Listening to the car radio regularly	7	63.6%
Checking a news website regularly	6	54.6%
Going to the movie theater on a regular basis	3	27.3%
Watching a particular sports regularly	2	18.2%
Watching a news program regularly	1	9.1%



Value	Count	Percent
Weekly church attendance	12	100.0%
Daily prayer	11	91.7%
Daily Bible reading	10	83.3%
Participating in a weekly small group	6	50.0%
Studying the Sabbath School lesson	5	41.7%
Daily family worship	4	33.3%
Other	2	16.7%

30. What experiences with media do you value most and why?

Count	Response
1	Internet: can find almost anything you need.
1	It is entertaining and gives me something to do
1	Not sure
1	Online chatting and email because it easy and convenient.
1	Sourcing for information and connecting with people. To enrich myself and share
1	Email. Family and friend communication.
1	Listening to music and thatching YouTube channels of original songwriter and artist because it inspires me to keep on writing music and it helps me to grow as an artist as well.
1	By far music. I spend much of my day listening to music, and much of my free time creating it. I also value seeing posts and photos that give me an idea of how my other friends are doing via Facebook.
1	I enjoy finding new shows to watch with my Fiancé. He likes very particular types of shows and I like a different kind, so finding a particular program that meets us in the middle allows for more quality time.
1	I enjoy using social networking sites like Facebook to stay connected with friends and also skype to be able to talk to my friends. Since most of my friends live far away (some in different countries) these are really great ways to stay up to day.

31. If you could change one thing about your life with media right now, what would it be and why?

Count	Response
1	I can change my with media am used to, it will be difficult adjust and get a substitute
1	I would change my cellphone and reduce the time I spend chat
1	Not sure
1	To watch more media that allows me to know Christ more.
1	Use media for spiritual growth
1	I would get an iPad to help me stay more organized so that I don't have to carry my laptop and planner everywhere.
1	Less TV, particularly news...today's brand of journalism is nauseating and rubbish. But most of what is on TV is simply a waste of time even if it's positive...it exists to waste my time.
1	Nothing, I am actually pretty content with the amount of media that I take in. At this point, I feel as if I am not wasting time on media because I've been able to learn how to multitask.
1	Maybe using media to create more real life relationships, use it as a bridge to get in contact with people and make an influence on them in a real life context, not just through media but as a bridge to then making an off the net impact on them

APPENDIX B

RESEARCH APPROVAL AND CONSENT

Andrews University
Office of Research & Creative Scholarship

December 27, 2012

Steve Yeagley
Tel: 269-208-3675
Email: yeagley@andrews.edu

RE: APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS
IRB Protocol #: 12-166 **Application Type:** Original **Dept.:** Doctor of Ministry
Review Category: Expedited **Action Taken**: Approved **Advisor:** Steve Case
Title: Teaching Media Literacy as a Pastoral Skill for Seventh-day Adventist Seminary Students

This letter is to advise you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed and approved your IRB application for approval of research involving human subjects entitled: *"Teaching Media Literacy as a Pastoral Skill for Seventh-day Adventist Seminary Students"* IRB protocol number 12-174 under Expedited category. This approval is valid until December 27, 2013. If your research is not completed by the end of this period you must apply for an extension at least four weeks prior to the expiration date. We ask that you inform IRB whenever you complete your research. Please reference the protocol number in future correspondence regarding this study.

Any future changes made to the study design and/or consent form require prior approval from the IRB before such changes can be implemented. Please use the attached report form to request for modifications, extension and completion of your study.

While there appears to be no more than minimum risk with your study, should an incidence occur that results in a research-related adverse reaction and/or physical injury, this must be reported immediately in writing to the IRB. Any project-related physical injury must also be reported immediately to the University physician, Dr. Hamel, by calling (269) 473-2222. Please feel free to contact our office if you have questions.

Best wishes in your research.

Sincerely

Sarah Kimakwa
Research Integrity & Compliance Officer
IRB Office

Andrews University
Seek Knowledge. Affirm Faith. Change the World.

Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
Informed Consent Form

Principal Investigator: Steve Yeagley, Adjunct Professor, D.Min. Candidate
4608 Greenfield Drive, Berrien Springs, MI 49103; Phone: 269-208-3675;
Email: yeagley@andrews.edu

Research Project Advisor: Steve Case, Ph.D., Doctor of Ministry Cohort Leader
Involve Youth, P.O. Box 2424, Carmichael CA 95609; Phone: (916) 849-7676;
Email: steve@involveyouth.org

Title of research project: Teaching Media Literacy as a Pastoral Skill for Seventh-day Adventist Seminary Students

Introduction:
I am Steve Yeagley, an adjunct professor of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at the SDA Theological Seminary. I am using this semester's "Youth and Young Adults in Contemporary Culture" course (DSRE 680) as the basis for a case study research project. Since you are enrolled in the course, I would like to invite you to join this research study. The research will last from January 10, 2013, until May 2, 2013.

Background information:
Faith-based media literacy is a movement which seeks to empower people to analyze, interpret, evaluate and create media within a biblical framework. Research indicates there is a gap between what people of faith say about media and what they actually do with it. This can diminish the role faith plays in our media practices and those of the youth and young adults we minister to.

Purpose of this research study:
The purpose of the study is to explore the value of teaching media literacy as a pastoral skill for seminary students. I want to consider 1) how we might work together to acquire faith-based media literacy skills and 2) how these might contribute to our spiritual and professional lives as pastors and youth workers.

Procedures
All course assignments will become part of the qualitative data for this study and will adhere to the course objectives and hour guidelines. You are required to do no additional work if you choose to be part of the study. Nor will the research add a burden to those choosing not to participate.

Possible risks or benefits
There is no risk involved in this study. There is no direct benefit to you also. However, the results of the study may help inform and improve the teaching of media literacy to seminary students in the future.

Right of refusal to participate and withdrawal
You are free to choose to participate in the study. You may also refuse to participate without penalty or any loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled. You will receive the same standard of treatment in the teaching and grading process irrespective of your participation in the study. You may also withdraw any time from the study without any penalty or any loss of benefit to which you are otherwise entitled if you had completed your participation in the research.

Confidentiality
The information provided by you will remain confidential. No one except principal investigator (Steve Yeagley) will have access to it. Your name and identity will also not be disclosed at any time. However, the data may be seen by an ethical review committee and will eventually be published in a Doctor of Ministry thesis and possibly elsewhere, but without ever giving your name or disclosing your identity. Please note that one of the course experiences will include participating in a video-recorded focus group. The nature of a focus group implies that what is said within the group will be known by other participants. However, if you choose not to participate in the research, your remarks will not be entered into the research project.

Available Sources of Information
If you have further questions about the research or your rights as a participant or if would like to receive the results of this study once it is completed, you may contact principal investigator (Steve Yeagley) at the Andrews University Student Life office, ext. 6683 or on his cell phone (269) 208-3675 or email yeagley@andrews.edu. The research project advisor (Steve Case) is also available to answer any questions you might have and can be reached at Involve Youth via phone (916) 849-7676 or email steve@involveyouth.org.

AUTHORIZATION
I have read and understand this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or other legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws.

Participant's Name (printed): _____

Participant's Signature : _____

Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness' Signature : _____

Date : _____

APPENDIX C

COURSE SYLLABUS

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

DSRE 608

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Spring 2013

Steve Yeagley

Andrews University
Seek. Affirm. Change.

Andrews University

DSRE 608

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

SPRING 2013

GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION

Class location:	Tan (Seminary) Hall, Room N310
Class time/day:	3.30 pm – 5.30 pm, Thursday
Credits offered:	2-3 credits

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT

Instructor:	Steve Yeagley, M.Div.
Telephone:	269-471-3215
Email:	yeagley@andrews.edu
Office location:	Campus Center, Student Life Office
Office hours:	9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.; 1:30 – 5 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of current developments in youth culture and the influence of youth culture on young people both in the church and the community. Students formulate a strategic response relevant to Seventh-day Adventist ministry to youth and young adults. This is done largely through 1) a study of popular media's dominant role in shaping youth identity and belonging and 2) the development of faith-based media literacy skills for use in pastoral settings with young people.

Prerequisite: None

COURSE MATERIALS

Required:

1. This course utilizes a "weekly readings/viewings" approach, consisting of assigned articles and videos each week. These are listed below and referenced in the "Topics and Assignments" section of the syllabus. They are also posted in electronic format on the course wiki at media-practices.wikispaces.com.

2. Readings:

Crouch, A. (2008). *Culture making: Recovering our creative calling*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Chapter 5.
Elnes, E. (2004). The world's most dangerous Bible study. *Direction, 33*(2), 201-206. Retrieved from http://www.directionjournal.org/33/2/worlds-most-dangerous-bible-study.html
Hess, M. (1999). Media literacy as a support for the development of a responsible imagination in religious community. Paper presented at the Media, Religion and Culture Conference, Edinburgh, Scotland. Retrieved from http://www.iscmrc.org/english/hessrelima.htm
Jenkins, H. (2004). The Christian Media Counterculture. *MIT Technology Review*. Retrieved from http://www.technologyreview.com/news/402567/the-christian-media-counterculture/page/0/1/
Mahan, J. (2005). Reporting on religion in unexpected places: Looking at the many ways religion and popular culture intersect. FACSNET. Retrieved from www.facsnet.org/issues/faith/ mahan.php. (no longer online)
Rasi, H. (n.d.). Adventists face culture: Should we love or hate the world? Education Department. General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.
Rideout, V. J., Foehr, U. G., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8- to 18-year-olds. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.
Romanowski, W., & VanderHeide, J. L. (2007). Easier said than done: On reversing the hermeneutical flow in the theology and film dialogue. *Journal of Communication and Religion, 30*, 40-64.
Turnau, T. A. (2002). Reflecting theologically on popular culture as meaningful: The role of sin, grace, and general revelation. *Calvin Theological Journal, 37*(2), 270-296.
Turnau, T. (2012). *Popologetics: Popular culture in Christian perspective*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R Pub. Chapter 2.
Turnau, T. (2012). The Turnau's movie night kit. Retrieved from http://www.turnau.cz/content/ turnaus-movie-night-kit

3. Viewings:

PBS Frontline. (2004). The persuaders. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/persuaders/
PBS Frontline. (2010). Digital nation. Retrieved from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/

Recommended:

1. An updated list of recommended resources such as books, articles, websites and news items will be maintained for and by students on the course wiki at media-practices.wikispaces.com.

OUTCOMES

Program Learning Outcomes

MA in Youth and Young Adult Ministry Program Outcomes

1. Articulates effectively a theology and philosophy of youth ministry.

2. Uses appropriate methodologies to disciple youth and young adults.
3. Understands youth and young adult culture relevant to its application in the biblical discipleship process.
4. Engages consistently in biblical devotional habits to be open to the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in his or her life.
5. Develop, direct, advocate for, and evaluate youth ministry for the broader church.

Student Learning Outcomes

The student should be able to:

1. Explain the relationship between contemporary faith and popular culture
2. Define faith-based media literacy and describe its importance to biblical discipleship
3. Describe several approaches to faith-based media literacy
4. Understand the value of a "media practices" approach for pastoral ministry with youth and young adults
5. Reflect on his/her own media practices, boundaries and principles from a spiritual and professional point of view
6. Outline a theology of viewing/seeing from the Gospel of John
7. View popular culture and media as theologically and missiologically significant
8. Analyze, interpret and evaluate various popular media experiences from a critical and theological point of view using several key questions
9. Facilitate faith and media conversations with young people
10. Empower young people to navigate popular media culture with a mindful and biblical approach
11. Tell a spiritual story using multimedia tools
12. Envision the effective use of media in preaching, worship and pastoral ministry with youth
13. Build an online media literacy community and set of resources for future use

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TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1—1/10/13

Class: 1) Course overview: Syllabus, Wiki, Research
2) Lecture: Intro to Faith and Popular Culture
Reading: Rasi: "Adventists Face Culture"
Mahan: "Religion in Unexpected Places
Wiki: Video Response
Due: None

Week 2—1/17/13

Class: 1) Lecture: Media Effects & Industries Lenses
2) Lecture: Cautionary & Worldview Approaches
Reading: Rideout: "Generation M2 Report"
Jenkins: "The Christian Media Counterculture"
Wiki: "Media Practices Survey"

Due: Reading Report, Video Response

Week 3—1/24/13

Class: 1) Lecture: Media Practices Lens
2) Lecture: Dialogical Approach
Reading: Turnau: *Popologetics*, Chapter 2
Wiki: "A Day Without Media"
Due: Reading Report, "Media Practices Survey"

Week 4—1/31/13

Class: 1) Screening: "The Purple Rose of Cairo"
2) Discussion
Reading: Turnau: "Reflecting Theologically on Popular Culture as Meaningful"
Wiki: Reflective Journal Entry #1
Due: Reading Report, "A Day Without Media"

Week 5—2/07/13

Class: 1) Lecture: A Theology of Viewing
2) Lecture: Key Questions for Media Exegesis
Viewing: PBS' "The Persuaders"
Wiki: VALS Survey
Due: Reading Report, Reflective Journal #1

Week 6—2/14/13

Class: 1) Analytical Exercise #1: Advertisement
2) Analytical Exercise #2: Music Video
Viewing: PBS' "Digital Nation"
Wiki: No Assignment
Due: Viewing Report, VALS Survey

Week 7—2/21/13

Class: 1) Lecture: New Media, New Literacies
2) Analytical Exercise #3: Social Media
Reading: Elnes: "World's Most Dangerous Bible Study"
Turnau: "The Turnau's Movie Night Kit"
Wiki: Reflective Journal Entry #2
Due: Viewing Report, Media Exegesis Project

Week 8—3/07/13

Class: 1) Conversational Exercise #1: Movie—"Whale Rider"
2) Discussion
Reading: Romanowski: "Easier Said Than Done"
Wiki: No Assignment
Due: Reading Report, Reflective Journal Entry #2

Week 9—3/14/13

Class: 1) Conversational Exercise #2: Movie—"Hugo"
2) Discussion
Reading: Hess: "Media Literacy as a Support for the Development of a Responsible Imagination"
Wiki: No Assignment
Due: Reading Report

Week 10—3/28/13

Class: 1) Conversational Exercise #3: Video Game—"Halo"
2) Discussion
Reading: Crouch: *Culture Making*, Chapter 5
Wiki: Reflective Journal #3
Due: Reading Report; Media Conversation Project

Week 11—4/04/13

Class: 1) Lecture: Media Production Approach
Viewing: "I Am Second"
Living It High School Outreach: "Video Testimonies"
Clear Summit Productions: "A Letter from Patmos"
Wiki: No Assignment
Due: Reading Report

Week 12—4/11/13

Class: 1) Guest Practitioner: Visual Storytelling
Reading: No Reading
Wiki: No Assignment
Due: Viewing Report

Week 13—4/18/13

Class: 1) Guest Practitioner: Internet Ministry
Reading: No Reading
Wiki: Reflective Journal #4
Due: Digital Storytelling Project

Week 14—4/25/13

Class: 1) Digital Storytelling Screenings
Reading: No Reading
Wiki: No Assignment
Due: Digital Storytelling Project

Week 15—5/2/13

Class: 1) Final Focus Group
Due: Nothing Due

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

Credit-Hour Definitions

A 2-credit course taken at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary requires 90-120 hours for course lectures, reading requirements and other course projects. Estimated reading speed is 15-20 pages per hour. Estimated writing time is 2-3 hours per page. Estimated media production time is 5-10 hours per minute of video (working in a team of 3-4 people). For this course, the instructor estimates that a total of 95 hours will be distributed in course activities as follows:

- Class Sessions 30 hours
- Weekly Readings/Viewings and Discussion Posts 15 hours
- Weekly Wiki Assignments 5 hours
- Media Exegesis Project (5-6 pages) 15 hours
- Media Conversation Project (4-5 pages) 15 hours
- Digital Storytelling Project (2-3 minutes) 15 hours

Criteria for Grades

All Class Projects will be assessed using the designated grading rubric (see Assessment Guidelines). Reading/Viewing Discussion Posts and Wiki Assignments will be graded on a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory/Not Completed" basis.

Assessment Submission

- Weekly Reading/Viewing Discussion Posts should be posted online to the course wiki (media-practices.wikispaces.com) before the beginning of class.
- Weekly Wiki Assignments are to be completed or posted online in the course wiki.
- Written projects (Media Exegesis, Media Conversation) should be submitted electronically to the instructor at his email, yeagley@andrews.edu.
- The Digital Storytelling project is to be uploaded to YouTube and embedded in the course wiki or submitted to the teacher in a file format suitable for uploading and embedding.

Late Submission

Late assignments incur a 10% daily penalty.

Assignment and Project Guidelines

1.	Weekly Reading/Viewing Reports	20%
2.	Weekly Wiki Assignments	20%
3.	Media Exegesis Project	20%
4.	Media Conversation Project	20%
5.	Digital Storytelling Assignment	20%
	Total	**100%**

1. **Weekly Reading/Viewing and Discussion Posts – to be completed before each class period**

    a. Each week an article or video segment will be assigned for reading or viewing. After doing so, you are to post at least one comment (100-200 words) in the discussion thread related to that particular article or video segment. Comments should respond in a thoughtful way to an idea expressed in the assigned material. You may reply on the previous post of a classmate, but this will not count as a required post.
    b. Your post will be evaluated on a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory/Not Completed" basis. Unsatisfactory posts will be those that make no reference to ideas in the assigned material.

2. **Weekly Wiki Assignments – to be completed before each class period**

    a. Each week a short assignment will be given that must be completed on the wiki – such as filling out a survey, writing a reflective journal entry, posting a news item, etc.
    b. These assignments will be evaluated on a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory/Not Completed" basis. Unsatisfactory work will be that which fails to complete at least 2/3rds of the assignment.

3. **Media Exegesis Project – to be completed 2/21/13**

    a. You are to exegete a current popular media text in the context of your own media practice and biblical understanding. Select a popular media text that has been part of your own media practice. Let the Key Questions (see Appendix) guide you in the analysis process. Your paper should be **5-6 pages (approx.1800 words)**.
    Possible media texts include a television program, a video game, a web site, an album, song or video, an advertisement or commercial, or a movie

    Your paper should:

        i. Describe the media text – its formation, format, content and purpose.
        ii. Interpret the text's appeal and meaning from multiple points of view, including your own.
        iii. Evaluate its message in the context of Scripture and your biblical understanding.
        iv. Formulate a practical response to the text that explains how you will use the text (either through incorporation or resistance) to build a meaningful, God-honoring life.
        v. Utilize at least four credible sources (industry experts, media critics, biblical scholars, etc.)

    b. Projects will be assessed using the Media Analysis Rubric in the Assessment Guidelines.

4. Media Conversation Project – to be completed 3/28/13

a. Working with a class partner, you are to plan and execute a "Movie and Conversation Night" with at least four other young adults, ages 18 – 22. You are responsible for 1) selecting a movie with input from the young adults (only movies PG-13 and below), 2) screening it beforehand and 3) outlining an approach and questions you will use to lead a one-hour faith conversation with the group after the screening. Costs for the movie rental or theater admission and any snacks you may wish to provide are your responsibility and should be divided equally between the project partners or with the movie discussion group, if agreed. This assignment may be carried out in a home-like environment or a theater-and-cafe setting.

b. Each student is to prepare a 4-5 page paper detailing: 1) The criteria and process used for selecting your movie, 2) what was done to prepare for the media conversation and your facilitation plan, 3) what was learned from the experience about facilitating faith and media conversations and 4) recommendations for future practice. Your project will be assessed using the Media Conversation Rubric in the Assessment Guidelines

c. Methods for facilitating conversations will be modeled by the instructor in two different classroom movie-and-conversation exercises on March 7 and March 14.

5. Digital Storytelling Project – to be completed 4/18/13

a. Working in groups of three or four, you will produce a two- to three-minute digital piece that will respond to a faith-based "story prompt" provided by the instructor. Output must include some combination of digital images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips and/or music in a file format compatible with YouTube. You will use the everyday media tools available within your group and on the internet (suggestions will be posted on the wiki) to complete the assignment in a limited amount of time. It is understood that the experience, technical skills and media tools of the groups may vary.

b. Your group's finished Digital Storytelling Project is to be shared with the class on 4/18/13. In addition to screening your project, your team should also share what the production process has taught you about media and media literacy. Your project will be critiqued by your peers and assessed by the instructor using a standard Digital Storytelling Rubric below.

Media Exegesis Rubric

(Adapted from a rubric based on Wiggins & McTighe's Six Facets of Understanding by Katrin Becker)

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Score
1. Critical Explanation of the formation, format, content and purpose of media text	**In-depth:** atypical and revealing account, goes beyond what is obvious; makes subtle connections; well supported by argument and evidence; novel thinking displayed	**Developed**: an account that reflects some in-depth and personalized ideas; goes beyond the given but the argument and evidence are still insufficient	**Intuitive:** an incomplete account but with apt and insightful ideas; account has limited support/argument/ data or sweeping generalizations	**Naïve:** a superficial, fragmentary or sketchy account of facts/ideas or glib generalizations; more descriptive than analytical or creative	
2. Personal/ Cultural Interpretation of the message and meaning of the text from multiple viewpoints	**Revealing:** a nuanced interpretation of meaning; sees subtle differences in diverse interpretations; effectively critiques and encompasses other views	**Helpful:** a helpful interpretation of the meaning, sees different levels of interpretation; acknowledges the plausibility of other views in the context of one's own	**Plausible:** a plausible interpretation of the meaning; places own point of view in perspective with others but does not carefully consider them	**Simplistic**: a simplistic or superficial reading; unaware of differing points of view	
3. Theological Evaluation of the message and meaning of the text	**Thorough**: evaluates at a deep and nuanced level with an insightful biblical arguments; willing to incorporate new theological insights	**Balanced:** evaluates multiple aspects, positive and negative, with sound biblical arguments; actively weighs new theological insights	**Reasoned:** evaluates a limited number of aspects with biblical reasoning; demonstrates openness to new theological insights	**Dogmatic**: accepts or rejects as a whole with limited or proof-texted biblical support; not open to new theological insights	
4. Practical Response	**Wise:** response is sophisticated and gives evidence of a deep and honest accounting of one's developing desires, identity and purpose	**Insightful:** response is creative and reflects a sustained awareness of one's developing desires, identity and purpose	**Thoughtful:** response is reasonable and reflects a general awareness of one's desires, identity and purpose	**Unreflective**: response is mechanical and does not emerge from a sense of self-awareness or purpose	
5. Writing Style and Grammar	There are few or no errors in punctuation, capitalization, grammar & spelling	There are a few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	There are many errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.	Errors in grammar, capitalization, spelling and punctuation interfere with understanding.	
					Total

Media Conversation Rubric

Criteria	4	3	2	1	Score
1. Selection of Movie	Fully describes the movie selection process and the selection criteria used	Describes the movie selection process and touches somewhat on the selection criteria used	Describes the movie selection process but does not include the selection criteria used	Mentions little or nothing about the movie selection process or the selection criteria used	
2. Conversation Preparation	Fully describes the preparation process and outlines the facilitation plan	Describes the preparation process and touches somewhat on the facilitation plan	Describes the preparation process but does not mention the facilitation plan	Mentions little or nothing about the preparation process or the facilitation plan	
3. Learning from the Experience	Fully describes what was learned and how the learning occurred using specific examples	Describes what was learned and touches somewhat on how the learning occurred	Mentions some lessons learned but does not elaborate on them	Mentions little or nothing about what was learned from the experience	
4. Recommendations for future practice	Offers recommendations for future practice strongly supported by what was learned	Offers recommendations for future practice somewhat related to the learning experience	Offers recommendations for future practice but unrelated to what was learned	Offers no recommendations for future practice	
5. Writing Style and Grammar	There are few or no errors in punctuation, capitalization, grammar & spelling	There are a few errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	There are many errors in grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.	Errors in grammar, capitalization, spelling and punctuation interfere with understanding.	
					Total

Digital Storytelling Rubric
(Adapted from University of Houston at digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu)

Category	4	3	2	1	Score
1. Purpose and Point of View	Establishes a purpose and point of view early on and maintains it throughout.	Establishes the purpose and point of view early on and maintains it most of the time	There are a few lapses in focus, but the purpose and point of view are fairly clear.	It is difficult to figure out the purpose and point of view of the presentation.	
2. Dramatic Question	A meaningful dramatic question is asked and answered within the story.	A dramatic question is asked but not clearly answered within the story.	A dramatic question is hinted at but not clearly established within the story.	Little or no attempt is made to pose a dramatic question or to answer it.	
3. Emotional Content	Audience is deeply and emotionally engaged	Audience is emotionally engaged	Audience lapses in emotional engagement	Audience has little to no emotional engagement	
4. Clarity of Voice	Voice quality is clear and audible throughout.	Voice quality is clear and audible most of the time.	Voice quality is clear and audible some of the time.	Voice quality needs more attention.	
5. Pacing	The pace fits the storyline and the rhythm helps the audience really "get into" the story.	The pace is occasionally too fast or too slow for the storyline, but the rhythm is fairly engaging.	Some rhythm but the pace does not always match the storyline. Audience is not consistently engaged.	The pace is mechanical and does not match the story line or engage the audience.	
6. Soundtrack and Images.	Soundtrack stirs a rich emotional response that matches the story line and images well. Images excellent.	Soundtrack stirs an emotional response that somewhat matches the story line and images. Images good.	Soundtrack is okay and not distracting, but does not add much to the storyline or images. Images need improvement.	Soundtrack is distracting, inappropriate or not used at all. Images poorly chosen.	
7. Economy	The story is told with exactly the right amount of detail throughout - not too short or too long.	The story seems to drag somewhat or needs slightly more detail in one or two sections.	The story needs more editing. It is noticeably too long or too short in more than one section.	The story needs extensive editing. It is too long or too short to be interesting.	
					Total

CLASS POLICIES

Classroom Seating
Students may be seated anywhere in the classroom they choose.

Disability Accommodations
If you qualify for accommodations under the American Disabilities Act, please see the instructor for a referral to assist you in arranging accommodations.

Late Assignment Submission
All late assignments incur a 10% daily penalty.

Additional Policies
Because we will utilize internet resources from time to time in class, please bring a laptop, tablet or other internet-capable device with you to class.

Examinations
"Credit is not granted in courses unless the required examinations are completed by the student. Students are expected to follow the published examination schedule. In cases where the schedule requires a student to complete four exams in one day, arrangements may be made with the dean to complete one of the examinations at another time." *AU Bulletin*

Class Attendance
"Regular attendance at all classes, laboratories and other academic appointments is required for each student. Faculty members are expected to keep regular attendance records. The syllabus notifies students of the attendance requirements." *AU Bulletin*

Teacher Tardiness
"Teachers have the responsibility of getting to class on time. If a teacher is detained and will be late, the teacher must send a message to the class with directions. If after 10 minutes no message has been received, students may leave without penalty. If teacher tardiness persists, students have the right to notify the department chair, or if the teacher is the department chair, to notify the dean." *AU Bulletin*

Class Absences
"Whenever the number of absences exceeds 20% (10% for graduate classes) of the total course appointments, the teacher may give a failing grade. Merely being absent from campus does not exempt the student from this policy. Absences recorded because of late registration, suspension, and early/late vacation leaves are not excused. The class work missed may be made up only if the teacher allows. Three tardies are equal to one absence." *AU Bulletin*

"Registered students are considered class members until they file a Change of Registration form in the Office of Academic Records." *AU Bulletin*

Excused Absences
"Excuses for absences due to illness are granted by the teacher. Proof of illness is required. Residence hall students are required to see a nurse on the first day of any illness which interferes with class attendance. Non-residence hall students should show written verification of illness obtained from their own physician. Excuses for absences not due to illness are issued directly to

the dean's office. Excused absences do not remove the student's responsibility to complete all requirements of a course. Class work is made up by permission of the teacher." *AU Bulletin*

Academic Integrity
"In harmony with the mission statement (p.18), Andrews University expects that students will demonstrate the ability to think clearly for themselves and exhibit personal and moral integrity in every sphere of life. Thus, students are expected to display honesty in all academic matters.

Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) the following acts: falsifying official documents; plagiarizing, which includes copying others' published work, and/or failing to give credit properly to other authors and creators; misusing copyrighted material and/or violating licensing agreements (actions that may result in legal action in addition to disciplinary action taken by the University); using media from any source or medium, including the Internet (e.g., print, visual images, music) with the intent to mislead, deceive or defraud; presenting another's work as one's own (e.g. placement exams, homework, assignments); using material during a quiz or examination other than those specifically allowed by the teacher or program; stealing, accepting, or studying from stolen quizzes or examination materials; copying from another student during a regular or take-home test or quiz; assisting another in acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., falsifying attendance records, providing unauthorized course materials).

Andrews University takes seriously all acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts as described above are subject to incremental discipline for multiple offenses and severe penalties for some offenses. These acts are tracked in the office of the Provost. Repeated and/or flagrant offenses will be referred to the Committee for Academic Integrity for recommendations on further penalties. Consequences may include denial of admission, revocation of admission, warning from a teacher with or without formal documentation, warning from a chair or academic dean with formal documentation, receipt of a reduced or failing grade with or without notation of the reason on the transcript, suspension or dismissal from the course, suspension or dismissal from the program, expulsion from the university, or degree cancellation. Disciplinary action may be retroactive if academic dishonesty becomes apparent after the student leaves the course, program or university." *AU Bulletin*

Language and Grammar
There is an expectation that a student enrolled in a graduate program possesses advanced written language skills, particularly in the language in which the degree is acquired. Thus, no special consideration will be given to English as a second language learners or native-English speakers who have yet to obtain mastery in written English. Such students are advised to seek the assistance of the campus writing lab or procure the services of an editor prior to the submission of their assignments. *Tips for success* include reading your assignments aloud and having someone else do likewise prior to submission. This practice will provide you with immediate feedback on your written assignments.

Emergency Protocol
Andrews University takes the safety of its student seriously. Signs identifying emergency protocol are posted throughout buildings. Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting that specific location. It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during any evacuation or sheltering emergency.

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

Steve Yeagley, M.Div., is an ordained pastor in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and a D.Min. candidate in the Youth and Young Adult Ministry cohort at the SDA Theological Seminary. He served as a pastor and youth pastor in churches for nine years before coming to Andrews University where he initially worked in marketing and enrollment. Since 2004, he has served as Associate Dean for Student Life at the University. As an adjunct professor of youth ministry at the Seminary, he has taught the course "Youth and Young Adults in Contemporary Culture" for over fifteen years, reflecting his academic interests in faith development, youth culture, media literacy and emerging forms of worship and ministry. Other professional experiences include extensive short-term mission trip leadership, laying the groundwork for the Undergraduate Leadership Program at the University and co-authoring the book *7 Principles for Youth Ministry Excellence* (2007, Advent Source).

Steve is married to Manuela Casti Yeagley. She is currently finishing her Ph.D. in practical theology at King's College, University of London. She has taught at Italian Adventist Junior College (Villa Aurora), Adventist University of France (Collonges) and Newbold College in the United Kingdom. She was born in Sardinia, Italy.

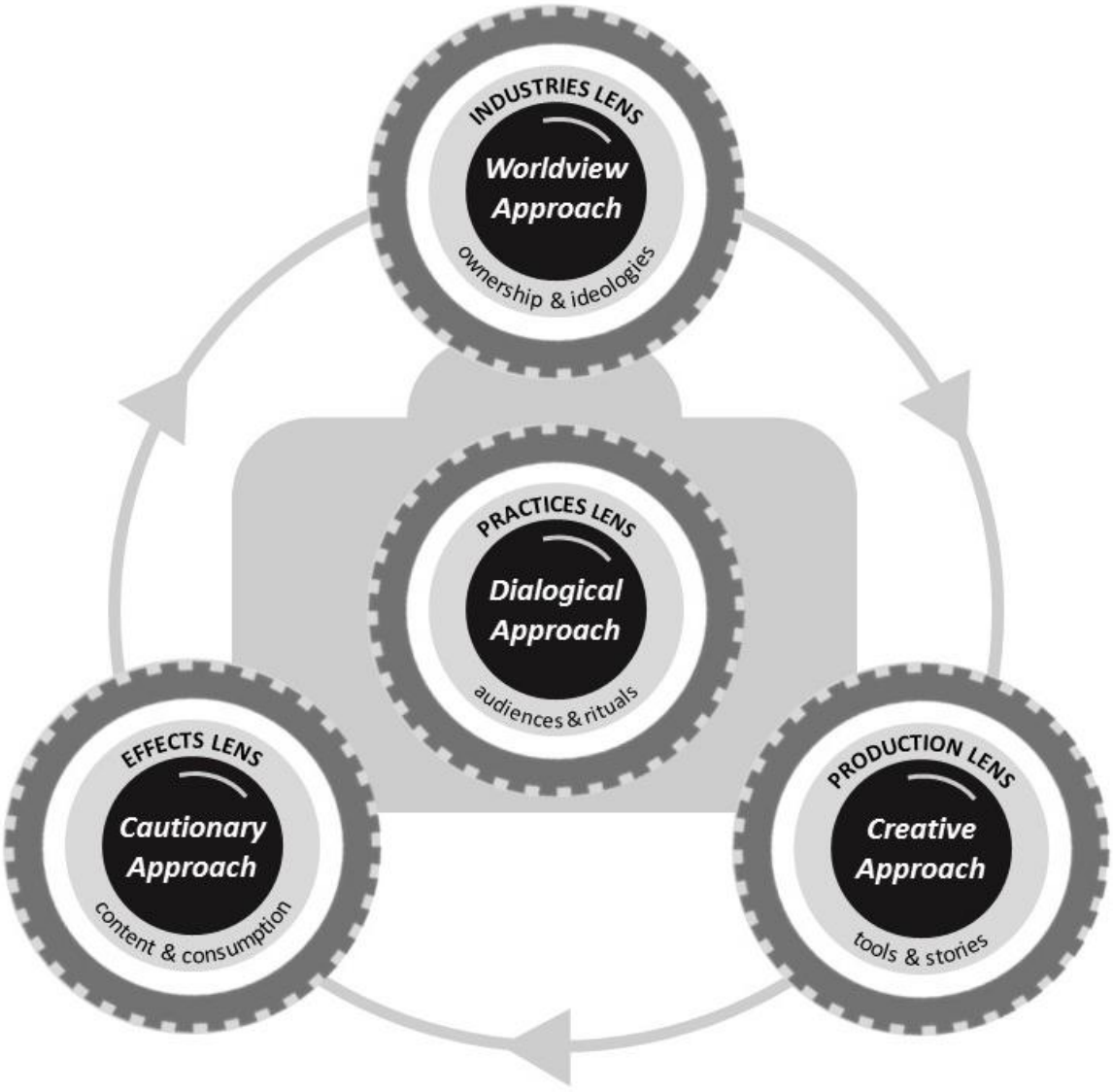
APPENDIX 1

Key Questions for Media Exegesis

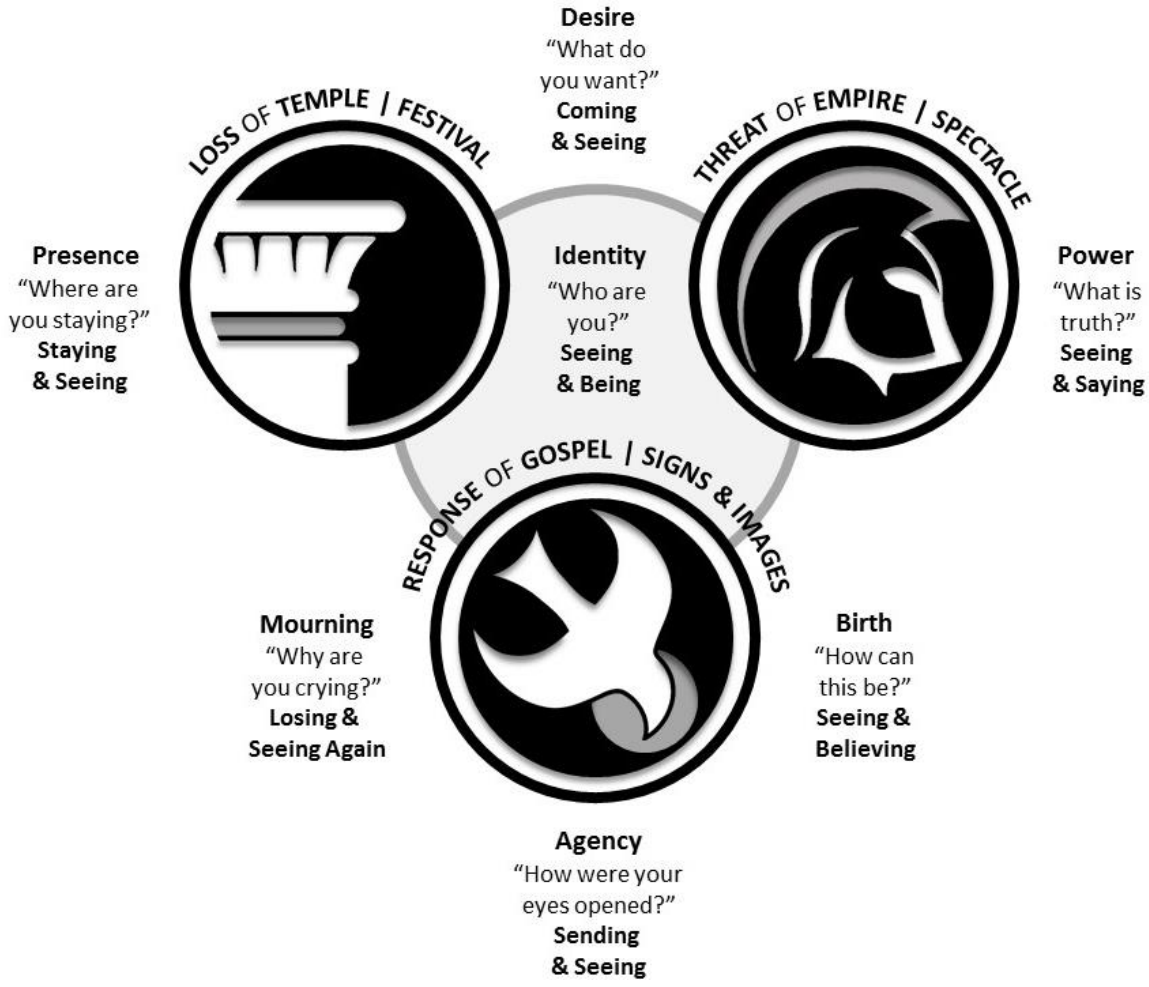
Critical Explanation	**How is this made?**	
Authorship	• Who made it?	Who created this message, for whom and in what context?
Format	• How is it made?	What creative techniques are used to attract my attention and convey a message?
Content	• What is it made of?	What values, lifestyles and points of view are represented in, or omitted from, this message?
Purpose	• Why was it made?	Why is this message being sent?
Personal/Cultural Interpretation Audience	**What do I/others make of it?**	How might different people understand this message differently – given their knowledge structures and lived experiences?
Theological Evaluation Scripture	**What should I make of it?**	How does my biblical understanding illuminate this message? How might this message illuminate my understanding of the Bible?
Practical Response	**What will I make with it?**	
Reflect	• How am I made?	What needs or desires motivated me to select this message? What does that reveal about how I am made and what I am made for?
Respond	• What will I make with it?	How will I use this message to build a life that reflects God's purpose for my life?

APPENDIX D

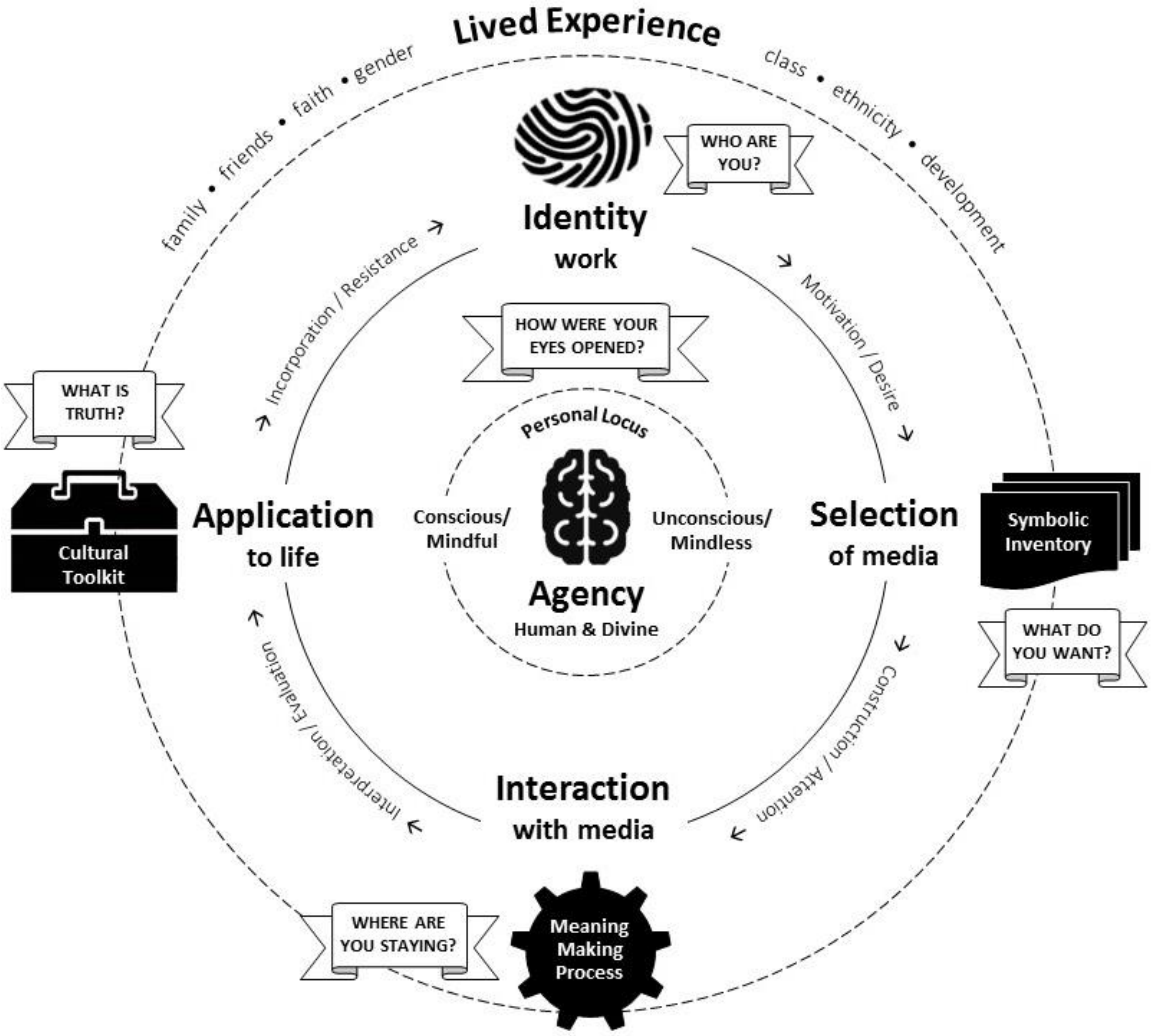
CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS



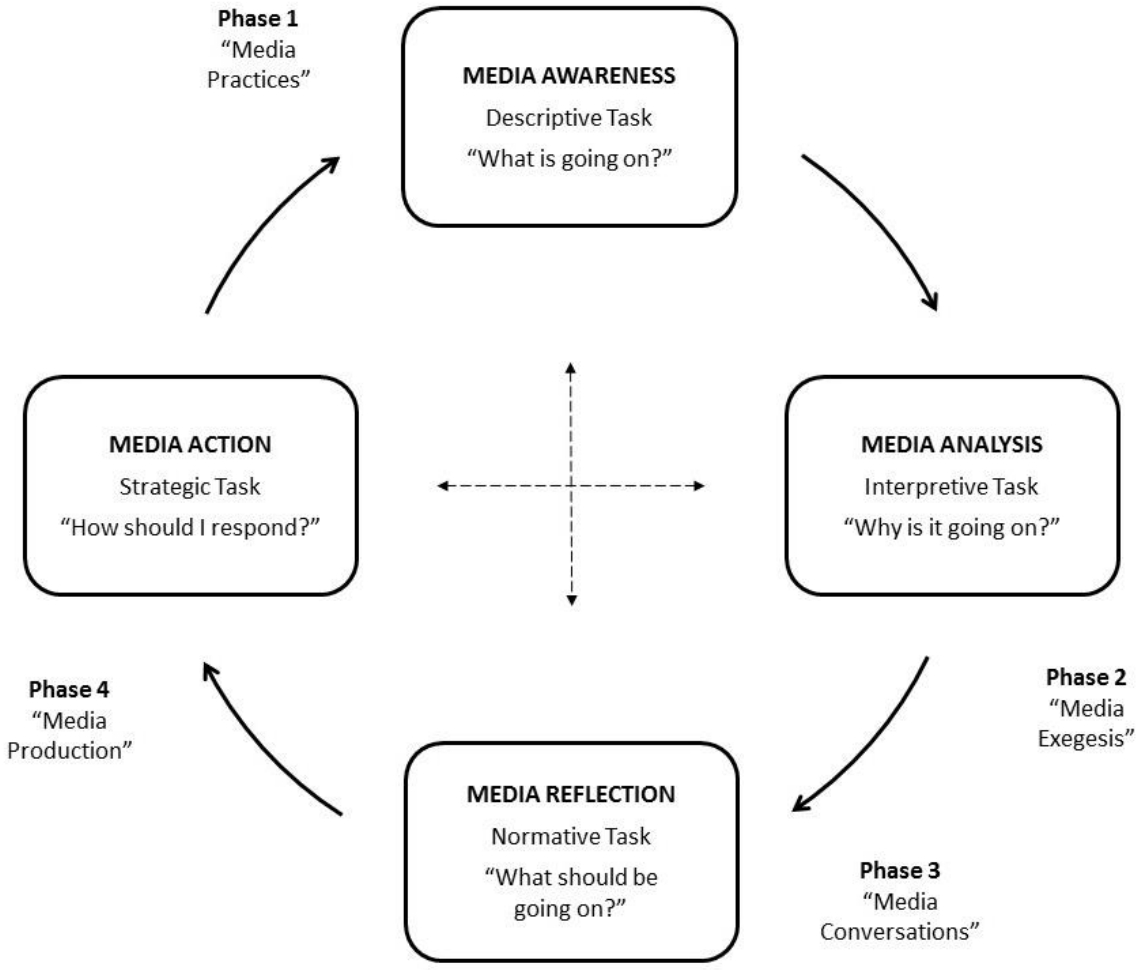
D1: Media Literacy Lenses and Corresponding Faith-Based Approaches.



D2: Visual and Symbolic Context of the Gospel of John with Textual Themes Related to Seeing



D3: Media Practice Model – adapted from Steele and Brown (1995).

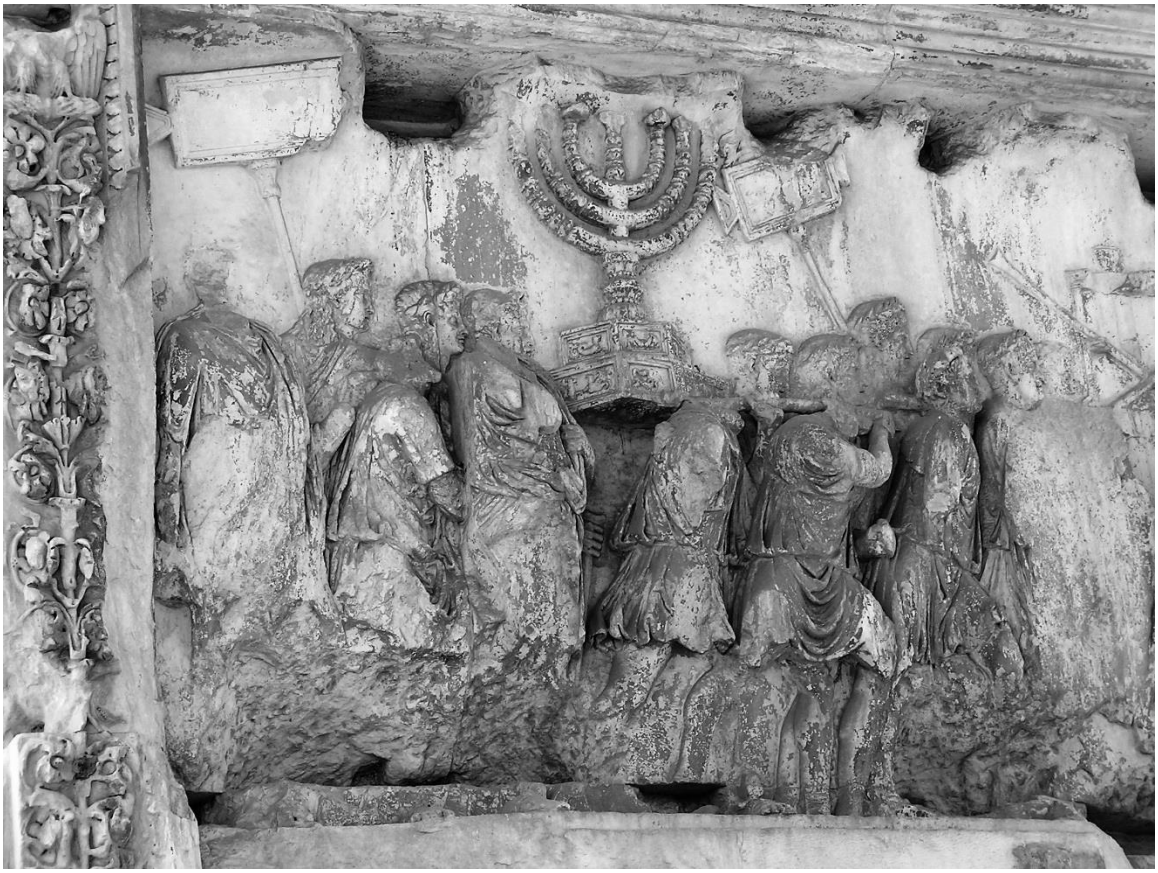


D4: Media Spiral—adapted from Jolls (2008) and Osmer (2008).

APPENDIX E

SUPPLEMENATAL ILLUSTRATIONS

E1: The "Judea Capta" coin (or sestertius), minted in 71 A.D., commemorates the victory of the Emperor Vespasian in the Jewish Revolt. Front: head of Vespasian. Rear: A bound Jewish male captive standing (left) with a mourning female counterpart seated (right) under a palm tree. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic License by Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. http://www.cngcoins.com. Accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaea_Capta_coinage#mediaviewer/File:Sestertius_-_Vespasiano_-_Iudaea_Capta-RIC_0424.jpg



E2: This relief on the Arch of Titus features a golden candlestick and other items taken from the destroyed Second Temple, as they are paraded in Rome following the victory of General Titus in the Jewish Revolt (70 A.D.). The Arch was built by Emperor Domitian in honor of his brother Titus and dedicated in 85 A.D. Photo credit: Gunnar Bach Pedersen. In the Public Domain. Accessed at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Arch_of_Titus#mediaviewer/File:Fra-titusbuen.jpg

E3: The Arch of Titus (foreground) was a symbol of Roman victory and a reminder of Jewish defeat. It overlooks the Colosseum, which scholars believe was funded by spoils from Jerusalem's destroyed temple. The Colosseum was inaugurated in 80 A.D. with 100 continuous days of games. Photo credit: Don Knebel. No copyright or license. Accessed at http://currentincarmel.com/no-hungry-lions-here.

APPENDIX F

SDA CHURCH MANUAL STATEMENT ON MEDIA

Modern Media

Like our bodies, our inner beings need wholesome nourishment for renewal and strengthening (2 Cor. 4:6). Our minds are the measure of our persons. Food for our minds is of the utmost importance in developing character and in carrying out our life's purposes. For this reason we should carefully evaluate our mental habits. What we choose to read, hear, and watch, whether by book or magazine, radio or television, the Internet, or other modern media shapes and impacts our character.

Books and other literature are among the most valuable means of education and culture, but these must be well chosen and rightly used. There is a wealth of good literature, but equally there is a flood of literature, often in most attractive guise, that damages minds and morals. The tales of wild adventure and of moral laxness, whether fact or fiction, however presented, are unfit for Christians of any age.

"Those who indulge the habit of racing through an exciting story are simply crippling their mental strength and disqualifying their minds for vigorous thought and research."—CT 135. Along with other evil results from the habit of reading fiction, we are told that "it unfits the soul to contemplate the great problems of duty and destiny" and "creates a distaste for life's practical duties."—CT 383.

Radio, television, and the Internet have changed the whole atmosphere of our modern world and have brought us within easy contact with the life, thought, and activities of the entire globe. They can be great educational agencies through which we can enlarge our knowledge of world events and enjoy important discussions and the best in music.

Unfortunately, however, modern mass media also can bring to their audiences almost continuous theatrical and other performances with influences that are neither wholesome nor uplifting. If we are not discriminating, they will bring sordid programs right into our homes.

Safety for ourselves and our children is found in a determination, by God's help, to follow the admonition of the apostle Paul: "Finally . . . whatever things are true . . . noble . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely . . . of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

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