

Video Production Ministry and Evangelism

(Powerful Video
Production Ministry Made
Easy and Inexpensive)

by Bruce Cripps

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License to copy and use this book is granted for purpose of creating video productions by church/Christian groups to glory God, to lead people to Jesus and to sustain/nurture the faith of the body of Christ.

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Preface – Producers for God

Lights, Camera, Action – Evangelize. I am psyched by how current technology makes creating spiritual videos cheap and easy, and by the many effective and powerful ways that spiritual videos can be used to:

- Outwardly express your faith and assist in your personal witness,
- Promote and advance your church’s spiritual program,
- Support and inspire the faithful,
- Teach spiritual truths,
- Evangelize your community,
- Spread the word throughout the world (e.g. the internet’s world wide web), and
- Fulfill “The Great Commission” (Mark 16:15 “...Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”)

Visual presentations of spiritual messages connect well with the youth and with the increasingly visually oriented society we are in. This is one of the reasons why many churches present pageants with the youth. Some churches already use short spiritual videos to amplify their weekly sermon messages.

In a higher degree than the plays put on in church, the spiritual video can easily extend beyond the church's outer shell. Cast and crew members are naturally motivated to show copies of their videos to relatives, friends and associates. Those who are involved in creating spiritual videos become excited about their video masterpieces: which energize them to promote the church and to carry out the Great Commission. That is one reason why I prefer home grown videos in the local church over using pre-made videos.

The home grown spiritual video connects very well with the local congregation when they see people they know on the screen. Local congregants are also very forgiving towards the imperfection of the congregation’s own actors as opposed to actors outside of the congregation. Additionally, home grow videos can be personalized to the congregation and to the minister's sermon.

Perhaps, you may want to put a collection of videos on a single DVD to use as a fund raiser for the youth program, the food pantry or some other targeted program. Additionally, you might want to broaden the range of video viewership:

- Hold a mini film festival with your videos (and perhaps add other Christians' works)
- How about approaching your local cable operator to put it on the free local access channel?
- And maybe, you can get your spiritual shorts shown at a local movie house before they show the trailers.

It is important for me to stress that spiritual videos do not replace the Church's spiritual program. It should be crafted to augment the spiritual program. Unity and focus is important for the life and the existence of a church, which guided by the Holy Spirit, serves the one almighty God and the one all-compassionate Savior.

In this book, I make it easy for you to make your own spiritual videos for use in your church and in your evangelism program. It is easier than you think. But it does take some time and work. However, you should reasonably be able to make a five minute spiritual video at a one per month rate. You keep the costumes and the scenes simple, and the message powerful. The results of your labor will be very rewarding.

The primary emphasis of this book is the drama but I also relate the techniques used for making dramas to also making: sermons, lectures, live performances, music videos, testimonies, interviews, documentaries, and instructional how-to videos.

Continue on and I will show how to be a Producer for God.

SECTION 1: The Spiritual Mission

This nontechnical section introduces video production as far more than just making YouTube type videos, but as a robust spiritual program that is powerful, simpler than you think and inexpensive to start up. How this program melds with and augments your church's or Christian group's ministry is presented while also showing that such a program can be started with just a few people and at nearly no financial risk.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Imagine a video production ministry program that:

- Is far more than just making videos and showing them;
- Complements and supplements your church's existing spiritual program;
- Multiplies the reach and impact of your existing spiritual program;
- Has broad supporting spiritual coverage with a high degree of comprehensiveness;
- Is a robust and adaptable spiritual program - scalable in size to match your church's size, needs, resources and vision; and
- Is inexpensive.

Such a ministry is simpler than it appears. You should be able to produce one short spiritual video (1-5 minutes in length) per month. But keep in mind the purpose of this ministry is to:

- Serve and honor the Lord,
- Lead others to Jesus and to a lifesaving commitment,
- Support, teach, grow and inspire the faithful,
- Equip the followers for fulfilling the Great Commission, and
- Grow the Church.

Making videos just for the sake of making and showing them is vain. This ministry must be conducted for a higher purpose.

Read on and I will teach you how you start this exciting ministry in your own church or Christian organization.

In a Nutshell

In the next few paragraphs, I briefly and simply summarize key aspects of how a spiritual video ministry may work. I will provide step-by-step details in later chapters with the technical aspects starting in Chapter 3. This up-front summary addresses:

- The Short Spiritual Video Production process including pre-production, production and post-production phases;
- The Video Release to include its premiere and follow-on showings/distributions as part of your spiritual program and the Great Commission;
- Trade-offs of Simplicity and Complexity – to start off, use the Cheap KISS principle; and
- The Gross Start-Up Costs – assuming that you have zero dollars to start a video project.

Short Spiritual Video Production

Pre-conceived thoughts of the video production process scares people away from even starting before they learn what it really takes and how simple it can be. Those suppressive ideas were probably created by watching too many Hollywood tabloid TV shows about the making of some 100 million dollar blockbuster movies. Fear not about your video production; technology has tremendously simplified video production and has driven down the cost.

One point that people do not think about is how rich the spiritual video production process may be in opportunities of teaching spiritual truths to production participants. The production process (as well as the video showings) should be used to build up the Body of Christ: the body of believers! I cannot stress this enough and I make suggestions on this throughout this book.

Pre-Production

Pre-Production includes all those activities that occur before the day that shooting begins. This includes all of the planning and preparation activities such as:

- Selecting or creating the script (many already exist on-line with little or no costume and set requirements),
- Casting and crew acquisition (people to which you are ministering - talent not necessary, but get signed releases from them or from their guardians),
- Rehearsals (one or two may be enough – I have done well with no rehearsals thanks to shooting multiple takes and to the current video editing technology),
- Costuming (as much as possible, have the actors use their regular clothes),
- Acquiring and preparing the set (try to use the church or someone's home – make sure you have permission and any required permits),
- Acquiring and/or making props (do not get too elaborate, but out-takes of props work great for covering up acting and shooting mistakes),
- Acquiring equipment (e.g. cameras, lights and microphones – do not spend anything when starting out - for even smartphones take good videos), and
- Arrangements for feeding the cast and crew during the shoot (helps to reduce noise on the set from cast and crew members not directly involved in the current take).

Also, consider pre-production as spiritual planting and growth opportunities for:

- **Christian Fellowship** every time you gather others with the common purpose of serving the Lord through the video ministry as you prepare for the shoot;
- **Spiritual Learning/Teaching** as you select the script and as you rehearse – contemplating the spiritual message of the video; and
- **Great Commission Experiences** as you recruit the cast and crew - especially when reaching out to use those who have not yet accepted Jesus' saving grace.

Production

Production includes all those activities that occur during the shooting of a video. This includes all of the activities necessary to capture the story/message on camera with the visible cast and the unseen crew such as:

- Set set-Up of:
 - Visible scenery and props
 - Cameras and associated equipment
 - Lights (including light checks)
 - Microphones and sound equipment (including sound checks)
 - Cable runs (and taping them down)
- Safety assurance (equipment and production services)
- On-set cast preparations and nurturing of:
 - Actor costuming and make-up
 - Orientation – pep-talk, safety discussion, scene walk-throughs, personal conduct (especially noise)
 - Near-by off-set hangout and food area (helps keep to noise down on the set)
- Active Shooting
 - Camera work to get the right shots, views and angles
 - Light effects to make sure that the characters and scene objects will be seen adequately and with the desired mood
 - Talent performance and direction (including continuity maintenance from take to take)
 - Takes and re-takes
 - Monitoring – the visual and the sound
 - Out-Takes, cut-aways and inserts
 - Recording sound-effects
 - Recording Voice-Overs (V.O.) and Off-Screen (O.S.) dialog
 - Considerations for post-production and salvaging the shoot
 - Set noise considerations
- Packing up and restoring the location

The above list of production activities looks like a lot of stuff, but I find it moves along quite well with good up-front planning. For the simple and effective stuff I do, a single scene skit will take me about three hours: 1 hour setup, 45-90 minutes shooting and 45 minutes packing up.

Similar to pre-production, production has **spiritual opportunities** for: **Christian Fellowship, Spiritual Learning/Teaching** and **Great Commission Experiences**. Plus, if you are shooting outside the four walls of your church, you also may bring community exposure to your spiritual message and to your church/Christian group. To all involved, this is a Christian service experience – even for those playing the villain.

Post-Production

Post-production occurs after shooting the video or scene. During post, the recorded video is edited and put in a form ready for public consumption. It includes:

- Cutting and splicing the best clips or takes in order to best tell the spiritual story or lesson of the project.
- Enhancing the video to compensate for shooting mistakes.
- Adding out-takes, cutaways and inserts to complement the story and/or cover-up shooting problems.
- Mixing, editing and enhancing the recorded audio.
- Adding sound effects.
- Incorporating music (observe copyrights and intellectual property rights).
- Creating and incorporating special effects (really fun to do but do not try this on your first video).
- Adding titles and credits.
- Rendering the video in a form that can be used by a DVD player or by another computer.
- Making sure that everything that can be seen or heard in the video is legal; that you have the rights and/or permissions to use the materials.

Post-production editing for a Christian video is definitely a notable Christian service experience. It is also an intensely creative artistic expression experience – as much work as writing a good sermon or more. While editing my first video, I was amazed at how creative one can be with some basic video editing software – especially when covering-up bad acting in my first video: Heaven’s Portal: Stuff. I was the sole actor (www.calvarywood.com/Supporting Files/Stuff Site.wmv). My editing experiences almost make me feel that I can perform miracles – even walk a foot above the water. With a green screen, I can.

I find that post-production is not so much difficult (as I will show in the Post-Production chapter), but rather time consuming; figure on one to three hours of editing for each minute of video runtime. So, allow your editor a couple of Saturdays to edit a five minute video. The finished product will greatly inspire your post-production computer geek. Once you get into it, it can be really fun.

Video Release

The release of the video can simply mean the showing of the video to others including showing it in the church. That is a trivial way of looking at it and that is likely to yield trivial results. Keep in mind that you are presenting an important spiritual message reflecting the Word of God in a form to lead others to Christ, inspire God’s children, grow the community of believers, and practice the Great Commission. The video release has the potential of deeply reaching many seekers and partakers of the faith. Don’t blow it!

Maximize the extent that the distribution and showing of the video will reach and affect the hearts and minds in a spiritually beneficial manner. Read the Video Release chapter for ideas about the video **Premier** and further ideas on the **Spiritual Message Distribution**. I hope this chapter will spawn many more of your own ideas.

Simplicity and Complexity

Do not trap yourself into making video production too complex. Apply Cheap KISS principles similar to gorilla filmmaking but even cheaper. On your first video, try not to spend any money – be ultra-cheap. And remember the old KISS joke: Keep It Simple Stupid. In this book, I will show you how inexpensive and easy producing spiritual videos can be, and still have powerful impacts in a multitude of ways.

Many of the resources to make spiritual videos are probably right under your nose and you do not know it. Use what you already have plus available free stuff. Then beg for the rest. For example, did you know that most smartphones and tablet PCs are capable of shooting high-definition video? Surely, someone in your church has an iPhone or Android phone. And you can make a tripod mount with some wire (also phone and tablet tripod mounts can be purchased for about ten dollars).

The most valuable resources (and perhaps to most difficult to acquire) are responsible people to help out. You can take it on all by yourself, but I do not recommend it. Try to get a couple more adults to assist and show them how easy and rewarding spiritual video production can be.

After you produce a spiritual video or two, you may aspire to raising the bar. However, you will likely discover much more you can do at the Cheap KISS level, and decide to stay at that level. You can stay at this level for a long time and continue to have significant spiritual impact on your audience or flock.

Gross Start-Up Costs

Equipment

You can get fancy and buy a lot of video equipment and spend an exorbitant amount of money, but I do not recommend it for your first video. I have seen beginning skiers buy a lot of expensive ski equipment only to decide they do not like skiing after the first lesson. You do not have to invest much money to determine if a video production ministry works for you. In this section I show you that you need not spend much money on equipment to get started. The equipment in the below picture is all that you need to start and this may be a little bit overkill. The technical principles that I present in latter charters will also apply when you are ready to upscale your video productions a couple of notches.

Picture of Start-Up Equipment

- A smartphone camera,
- A tripod with a wire smartphone mount,
- Light to illuminate faces and eliminate facial shadows,
- Light dimmer switch cable to control light level (optional),
- Extension cord,
- Microphone for improved sound recording (optional), and
- Computer with video editing software.



When considering the cost that I list below, remember that you are just a beginner and should try for the lower cost range. Even so, you can still have fun making your first video and from there you can further grow your ministry.

Camcorder: \$0.00 to \$300.00

Use your smart phone or borrow one. If you are fortunate enough to know someone with a real camcorder, borrow it so you can make better long distance shots. If you insist on buying a camcorder, you can get one with reasonable amateur capabilities for under \$300, but try to get one with an input for an external microphone.

Tripod: \$0.00 to \$40.00

Having a steady camera while shooting your video is very important. So, I consider a tripod as a “must have” item. Borrow one from a photography friend of yours and tell him/her that you need it for only a couple of hours. For the most part, you can get by with one for less than \$30. However, you will still need to attach your smartphone to it which can be done by creating a mount by bending wire or you can buy a cellphone tripod adapter for about \$10.

Microphone: \$0.00 to \$20.00

Audible dialog is very important for your drama or comedy. At a distance, sound pickup from a cellphone is poor. If the camera is at a distance, then place another phone in recording mode close to the speaking actors, and then have your post-production combine the better audio with the video. It is more acceptable having a cellphone in camera view than a microphone. However, a microphone will yield better quality sound. You can get a mike for under \$20, but

not the type that filters out background noise (quiet on the set!). Make sure that the mike works with your recording camcorder, smartphone or computer.

Lights: \$0.00 to \$30.00

Today's camcorders and smartphones can capture good video with a relatively low level of light which lessens the need for big expensive lights. However, good lighting is still important especially for eliminating shadows on the faces of the actors. But, you do not have to spend a lot of money – just be a little creative. For instance in a pole light made for 40 watt incandescent bulbs might be able to use a 40 watt compact florescent bulb that gives off nearly the same amount of lumens as a 150 watt incandescent. Also, you can get a 300 watt halogen work light on a stand for about \$20 and connect it to a \$10 dimmer switch cord. Caution: halogen lights get hot and you need to take safety precautions. You may have a friend in construction or emergency services from which you may borrow work lights on stands.

On your first video, do no worry about the artistry of lighting such as lighting to create special moods or effects. Just use lighting to get rid of shadows on the actor's faces and on important props or set features. I discuss lighting effects in a latter chapter for when you want to raise the bar in your cinematography. Anyway, some of the lighting effects can be incorporated into your video by your post-production geek with video editing software.

Computer: \$0.00 to \$2,000.00

Now, do not tell me that you do not know anyone with a computer. You probably have a computer that can do the editing job and/or know someone who does. Of course, you need video editing software which is discussed in the next section. Additionally, for a one to five minute project, you will need about 10G Bytes of storage available. Your processor speed depends on the processing requirements of the editing software and the size/complexity of your project.

If you are buying a new computer and expecting to do serious video editing with the extra bells and whistles, do not go for less processor than specified for your selected editing program. I like portability. So I use a Windows 8 tablet PC, but I went with a heavy duty processor that suffices for me for several years. However, my Apple friends look down upon me – hay, I have to stay compatible with the computer I must use in my day job.

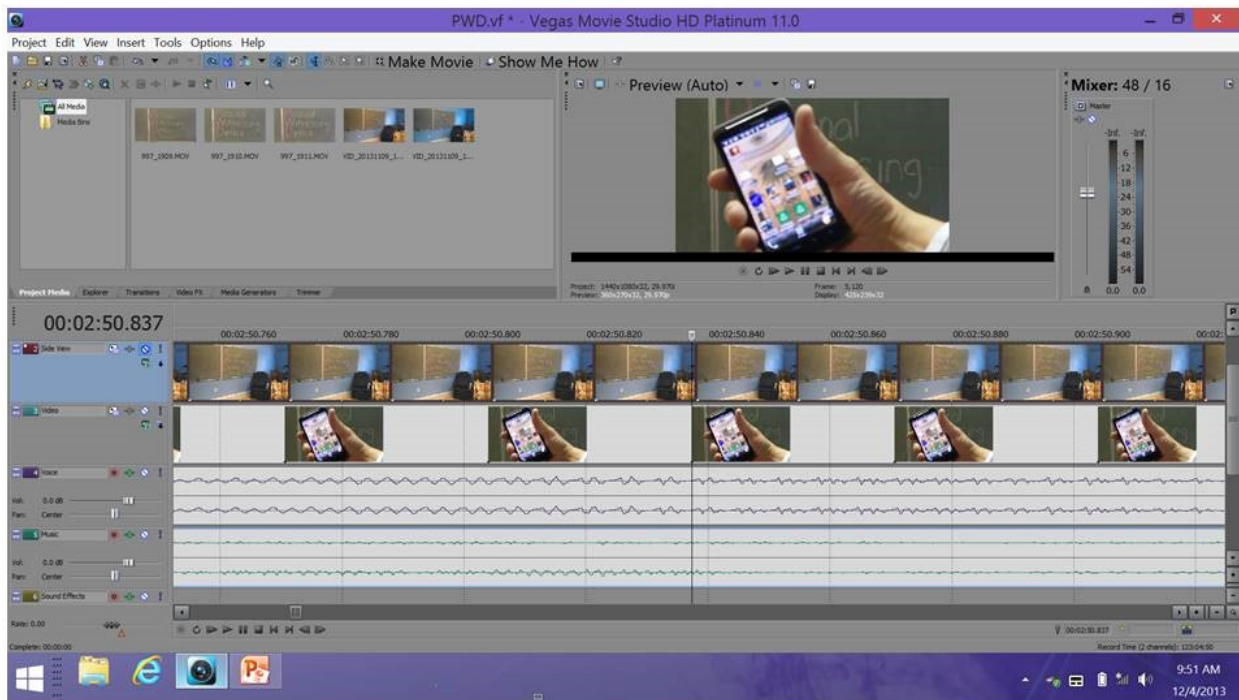
Even Android and Apple tables and smartphones are becoming more capable of video editing. You can shoot your video on one and edit the video on the same device. The editors for these devices are still simplistic, that that might be all you need for your first video.

Video Editing Software: \$0.00 to \$150.00

Your computer probably came with free video editing software that will probably do the job if your project is not complex and you do not have to synchronize multiple audio tracks. Also, a

significant number of video editing programs are available as free downloads from the internet. Most free editors are simplistic and they do not give you the capability for precision editing (except for a few like Lightworks – but the free version has a limited number of output formats and the install tries to put other programs on your computer that you may not want). Also, more and more on-line editors are popping up to do all your editing work on an internet cloud (such as with Google and YouTube using a smartphone or computer). If you are combining multiple sound tracks, pick an editor that can display the audio wave forms to may synchronizing tracks easier.

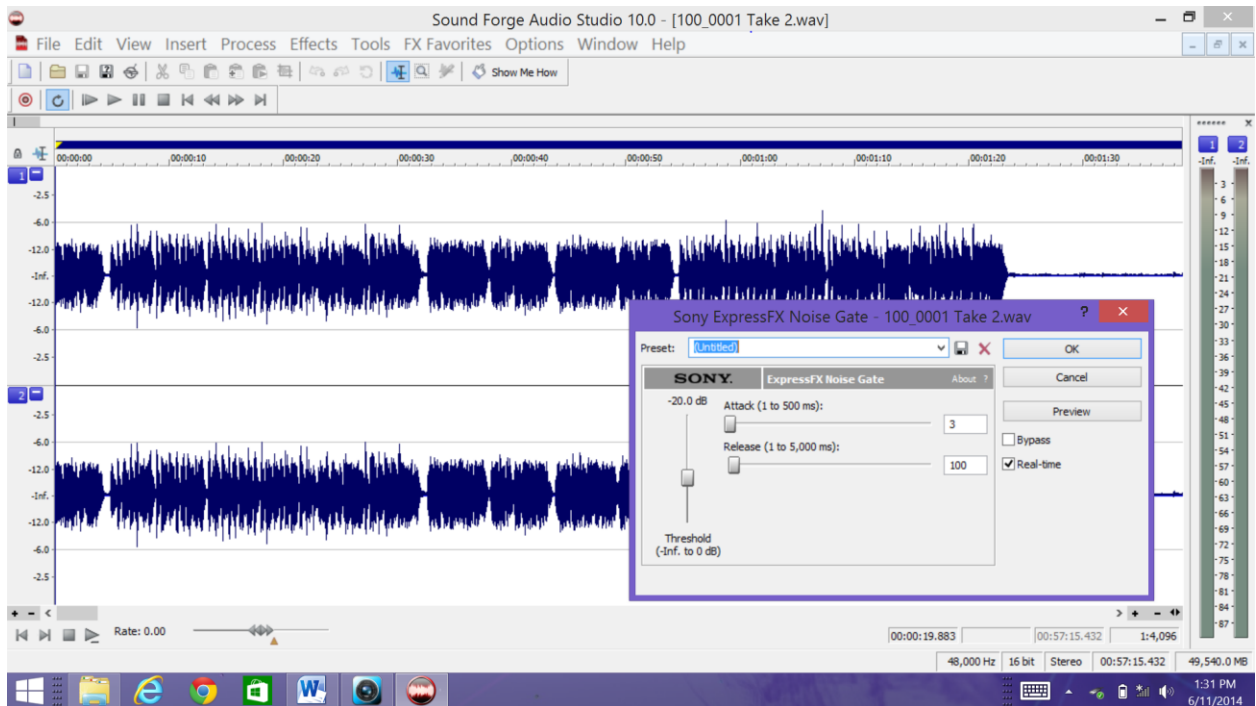
For my editing, I typically use three video tracks and three audio tracks. The software I use cost about \$100.00 (Sony Vega Movie Studio 11). It comes with a good number of visual effects including Green Screen special affects (so if you are shooting in your home, you can appear to be in Jerusalem). It also came bundled with a pretty good sound editor (great for noise reduction, juicing up the audio and making special sound effects). Additionally, I found the integrated tutorials and in-line helps to be very useful.



Sound/Audio Editing Software: \$0.00 to \$50.00

Unless you have to make repairs to your recorded audio tracks (e.g. noise removal) or you are trying to get fancy with your sound, your video editor probably has all the audio editing features you need and you will not need special sound editing software. As I mentioned above, my video came with a pretty good sound editor: Sound Forge Audio Studio. I have also had good

experiences with a free audio editor called Audacity which includes a few features I use that my Sound Forge does not include.



Human Resources: \$0.00

Production Crew: 3 or 4 responsible adults (minimum) with 1 having some video production potential, and all being volunteers at \$0.00

If you are working with children, you need at least two adults minimum at all times with the children to mitigate potential legal issues. I would recommend one or two more as backups. Most of the adults need not have video production skills. The later chapters in this book should provide enough video production knowledge to get started. I will keep repeating, "It is easier than you may think."

The post-production person needs some computer savvy, but need not be experienced yet in video editing. This book and the tutorials in the video editing software should provide enough knowledge for the post person to get through the first video project with some time and effort. I recommend that the post person be involved in the shoot of the video as well as doing the solitary computer work. Let me issue this disclaimer, "I take no responsibility for the post person getting a "big head" upon completion of the project."

Actors: the number is ??? at \$0.00

Use as many actors as your first simple script requires and as many as you can handle. The amount of talent required need not be great but is nice to have some. The techniques discussed in this book are very applicable when you have no available acting talent (thanks to the power of current video editing software). For a single-scene short video, I would recommend that the actors be available for two rehearsals and two hours on set for the shoot. I have created moving spiritual shorts with no rehearsals and the actors getting the scripts for the first time at the shoot.

Sets and Costuming: \$0.00

Select a first script or skit where you can use:

- An already existing set such as the church building or someone's home, and
- The actors can use their own street clothes.

Many such scripts or skits are available free on the internet. Or, you can write your own screenplay tailored specifically to your spiritual program. If you are doing an interview style video, then you just need a couple of chairs to populate your set.

Food: \$0.00 to \$25.00

Get a couple of pizzas and some drinks to reward the cast and crew after the shoot. Also during the shoot, food off from the active shooting site acts as a noise reduction mechanism for those not immediately involved in the current on-camera take.

Miscellaneous: \$0.00 to \$100.00

You should probably plan on some incidental costs that pop-up and results in some unplanned human resource efforts or money expenditures: perhaps an extra morning of effort to resize an actor's costume or ten dollars to replace a burned-out halogen bulb.

I have not mentioned yet the cost of your premiere. Can you get church members to donate a covered dish for the after-party? Do you need decorations? Can you get free announcements or publicity in your local paper or radio station?

When you distribute your video, do you have some blank DVDs or are you going to distribute it on a free video hosting/streaming site like GodTube?

There are also some costs that you cannot quantify for which you may not have to pay, such as electricity and heat at your shooting location.

Overall: Low \$ risks with substantial potential benefits

If you abide by the Cheap KISS principle for your first spiritual video production, you can get by for next to nothing with the video editing software likely to be the most costly item (which can

be used for follow-on projects). You may get by paying \$0.00, but consider a top limit of around \$200.

Only expand expenditures in future productions if such a spiritual program appears to provide a benefit to your church's or organization's overall spiritually. Do not base the decision on dollars alone. The deciding factor may be as simple as being led by the Holy Spirit. What is the value of one soul being saved or one of the faithful not falling by the wayside?

Over the course of a year with a dozen spiritual video projects, the monetary value for the stuff you beg and borrow to get could be in the range of \$1,000 to \$3,000. If you are an IRS qualified charity, give letters of donation showing dollar values to the substantial givers so they might get a tax break.

Chapter 2 – Spiritual Program Features

Spiritual Commitment to Jesus, His Great Commission and Growing/Nurturing the Flock

When you implement a video production ministry in your church or Christian group, make sure it is Christ centered and consistent with biblical principles/teachings. This program must be about Him, not you. You and this ministry are just instruments for servicing Jesus which includes:

- Telling others (within the Church and external to the church) about Jesus, His Love and His gift of eternal life,
- Help in the spiritual growth of all Christians including in your church,
- Nourish them with His Word and impart His principles to them,
- Extend your Christian fellowship to others (perhaps in some cases to those in distant lands),
- Grow the size of your church or group to increase your ability to spiritually and materially serve more people (especially in your community),
- Influence the moral foundation and beliefs within your sphere of influence to make a better society,
- Impart a spiritual fortitude to others facing worldly temptations which surround us and beat on us, and
- Equip Christian Soldiers as they march on to spiritual victory against Satan's war to claim souls for his unholy purposes.

You and your church are most likely doing all of this in some way or another to varying degrees of effectiveness to varying demographic groups. Jesus and the apostles used various communications mechanisms to reach the hearts and souls of people. Christians today have more communications mechanisms to reach people thanks to new technology. However, churches have difficulty adopting technological changes that can potentially improve their effectiveness for reaching and serving people for Christ.

Satan has very well leveraged the new communications technologies for his purposes even though this technology could not exist if God had not created such magnificent order and predictability of nature that consistently obeys God created physical laws of the universe right down to the smallest entity we have not yet discovered.

That which God created, we should use for His purposes. Video technology is another tool we can use for serving Him and others to Him. Video visually connects well to this generation. Televangelists have used television to reach many on a mass scale, and hopefully, your church

has benefited from them. My forte is with metaphors presented in short dramas (a type of parable telling).

The program I present in this book uses the power of a video production ministry primarily on a micro scale with some mass scale potential. I believe in the cumulative power of many small Christian entities led by the unifying Holy Spirit resulting in a divine synergistic moving of many hearts and minds to Jesus. Some might consider this a “grass roots approach” of a different flavor. Use whatever works best for you in serving Jesus consistent with his will. But also try to identify that which is not effective and lessens the fruits of your efforts. In this book, I discuss a new spiritual program/tool that I believe may help you and can be tailored to supplement your spiritual program in a well-integrated fashion that can amplify your endeavors to serve the Lord, practice the Great Commission, bring others to Christ and grow/nurture the faithful.

My discussions are heavily oriented towards producing dramas (which is my forte). However, much of what I teach about dramas is applicable to other types of videos such as music videos, interviews, documentaries and lectures. I include a special chapter at the end of this book about how to make these other types of videos utilizing the information from the previous chapters plus a few extra tips.

I have said that this video production ministry “should not be about you.” But, it can be for you! I have to admit that the efforts I have put into this ministry has tremendously helped me grow spiritually and in my ability to serve the Lord. Perhaps it may help you. Read on and pray about it. Also, I can definitely benefit from more people praying for me – so add me in your prayers.

Imparting the Word and Feeding the Flock

As you create your spiritual video production ministry/program, you want its impacts to be felt external to your church (out into your community and into the world) and internal to your church (building your church and congregants spiritually and in numbers). The following table briefly shows you some potential Spiritual Growth and Great Commission opportunities that a ministry of this type can make available for your Christian group and/or church.

Spiritual Growth and Great Commission Opportunities

	Pre-Production	Production	Post-Production	Premiere	Distribution
Spiritual Growth	<p>Script Selection Spiritual Enlightenment</p> <p>Rehearsals with Story Message Amplification</p> <p>Experiential Learning</p> <p>Fellowship Breaks</p> <p>Set & Prop Creation</p> <p>Costuming</p>	<p>Experiencing the Story</p> <p>Experiencing the Scene Context</p> <p>Making the Message Personal</p> <p>Wrap-up Fellowship</p>	<p>Post-Production Emersion into the Story/Message</p> <p>Spiritual Brainstorming on the Final Presentation of the Video's Message</p>	<p>Visual Spiritual Message Presentation in Mass</p> <p>Make the Message Come Alive</p> <p>Excitement for the Message</p> <p>Celebration of the Message</p> <p>Cast/Crew Q&A</p> <p>Spiritually Inspires Cast, Crew and Audience</p>	<p>Sunday School Lesson or Sermon Supplement</p> <p>Personal One-on-One Presentations</p> <p>Personal Witness Tool</p> <p>Other Church and Christian Group Presentations</p>
Great Commission	<p>Casting (Friends, Cattle Calls...)</p> <p>Crew Recruiting</p> <p>Resource Acquisition</p> <p>External Set/Location Acquisition</p> <p>Fund Raising</p>	<p>Walk-On Extras</p> <p>External Location By-Standers</p> <p>Excite Participants to Solicit Viewers of the Message</p>	<p>Packaging the Spiritual Message for Wide Distribution</p> <p>Soliciting Providers of Music and Sound Effects</p>	<p>Inviting Guests</p> <p>Event Advertising & Promotion</p> <p>Guests Experiencing and Receiving the Message</p> <p>After-Party/After-Event Fellowship</p>	<p>External Visual Spiritual Message Presentation in Mass</p> <p>Show to and/or Witness to Friends, Relatives and Acquaintances</p> <p>Personal Witness Tool</p>

Externally Reach:

Participating cast, crew and supporting church members have friends, relatives and acquaintances that do not belong to the church (or participate in any church) and/or do not have Jesus in their hearts as their personal Lord and Savior. Provide mechanisms for participants to show their videos to those they know around them. Such mechanisms may include:

- Fliers to the premiere,
- DVDs and CDs to show on a video player or computer,
- Electronic copies to a USB memory stick or an SD memory card,
- A web link to the video so they can download it to their electronic device (e.g. smartphone, tablet PC, iPad or computer)

Today with the internet, your video and its message may be spread to many people throughout the world. Such internet services that can be utilized include:

- Video hosting sites like YouTube, GodTube and Vimeo to name just a few,
- Social networking sites that permit inclusion of video files or video links such as Facebook,
- Email hosting sites to send video links in email messages, and
- The church's web page or internet site (via links to video hosting sites or direct download from the church site).

Other mass media distribution can include:

- Use of local public access channels available from your cable television provider,
- Local movie house presentation during the advertising and the coming features period before the main feature, and
- Distribution through your denomination's events.

I personally like one-on-one external individual showings on my Personal Witnessing Device (PWD). What is a PWD? It is a smartphone, a tablet PC, iPad or laptop configured with apps, documents and media files that support your personal witnessing to others. On my PWD, I have as shown below:

Personal Witnessing Device PWD

- A Bible application that will provide daily Bible verses, multiple complete versions of the Holy Bible with easy search features and various devotionals,
- Copies of my videos that I share during witnessing (works wonderfully as an ice-breaker or lead-in to a witnessing discussion),
- A small set of witnessing verses for discussions about God's salvation plan,
- A PowerPoint graphical visual about my growth in Christ,
- A set of my spiritual scripts,
- Christian music to spiritually lift me up and inspire me,
- Church picture,
- Link to my church's web site, and
- Link to www.calvarywood.com.



I highly recommend that you configure your smartphone or tablet to be readily available for an impromptu witnessing opportunity, and also, for helping you in your own faith. For those of you who are more adept at witnessing, your PWD may become your PET (Personal Evangelism Tool).

Internal Reach:

Internal to your church, Christian group or video production team, a video production ministry offers many teachable moments for spiritual instruction and learning. The following examples are just a few spiritual growth opportunities of which you might take advantage. However, I am sure that your spirit inspired creative mind can formulate and implement even more spiritual growth prospects.

Story Selection Process: Whoever is involved in selecting or creating the stories will be exposed to a wealth of spiritually inspiring scripts, skits, plays and other various story presenting ideas. Keep in mind that even if you choose to just do an interview video, the person being interviewed has a story with a beginning, a middle and an end (note that most interviews are to some degree scripted to make sure the point of the short interview is communicated to the viewer).

To get your video production ministry started, the first story will probably be selected by someone spiritually mature. But after the ministry is started, do not let the adults horde all the

spiritual inspiration received in the story selection process - involve the youth in selecting the subject matter. Of course, the youth will need guidance and it is good to have a mature spiritual leader give the ultimate approval for what stories you actually produce. I know that kids can be spiritually inspired by just reviewing the scripts in print because I used my scripts while teaching Sunday school. The kids' parents would tell me that their children would tell them about the story lessons in the scripts. At some point during the selection process, use it as a group spiritual enlightenment opportunity by discussing the story with others:

- the tie to scripture,
- the moral lesson,
- potential impacts on others based upon how the story moves you,
- the need to be told,
- how it can be used in your spiritual program, and
- how the video will penetrate the hearts of the audience.

The story selection process can involve writing your own short screenplay. The thinking and the research that goes into writing a screenplay can be deeply moving inside the heart and mind of the screenwriter. Additionally, the story can be tailored to match and augment your spiritual program. Writing your own takes more work but has its uplifting rewards. You need not use standard screenplay formats (which is awkward to write in at first). However, screenplay templates and apps are available to assist in using the format which actually helps out in shooting the story.

As I write this book, the founders of YouScreenWriter are in the process of adapting their screenwriting and video production tools to church and Sunday school usage. They were inspired by a draft copy of this book and I am helping them out. They are taking an integrated on-line cloud based approach. You may want to check out their progress.

Rehearsal Process: Rehearsal time is the prime opportunity time to impart the spiritual truths and message of the video to the cast. You have the cast as an audience. As you do the first reading, start discussing with the cast the spiritual meaning of the story and how it applies to them and to the perspective audience. The screenplay is a metaphoric tool of presenting spiritual knowledge in a way that resonates with the reader and the audience: much like presenting the message in parables. Let cast members express their own interpretations of the story: to reinforce the message within themselves, to add important emphasis to the other cast members and to bring out important aspects of the spiritual message that you may not have seen in the story for yourself.

During the various phases of rehearsing (the basic reading/memorizing, the visualization of the setting, the putting the character into the characters, and the bringing the larger story together during dress rehearsals), keep reinforcing the spiritual message of the story and the valuable spiritual service the cast is providing to the church, to all who view the finished video and to

themselves. Make sure that the cast feels uplifted for all the work they are putting into video project. Letting them have a little fun goes a long way also.

With the technological advances in digital video and video editing, you may be tempted to skip the rehearsals and jump right into shooting your video. But if you do that, you will miss the spiritual nurturing opportunities that rehearsal time may provide.

Production Process: During the active shoot, activities can get a bit hectic. Try to plan your shooting schedule to allow some time to discuss the spiritual meaning or message of the video. Use the set, the props and the costumes to emphasize your spiritual talking points. Use such a director's talk to set the mood for the shoot and bring the actors into character. But then, make sure the cast and the crew go away from the shoot with the spiritual message in their hearts and penetrated into their minds. This will also be important for the extras participating in the shoot that were not at the rehearsals. Perhaps, you may want to have an after-shoot sit-down discussion to emphasize the key spiritual points. Pizzas or other food may keep the cast and crew around for such a discussion.

Premiere Event: Premieres can have both an internal and an external reach. Internally, you affect the church members, cast and crew before, during and after the premiere. Being that they have a vested interest in the video, they take pride in seeing the video and how others will respond. They will want to come out to the first showing, and their pride will motivate them to get friends, relatives and acquaintances to come to the premiere. You may want to include the additional motivator of having an after-party following the premiere and an extra spiritual talk that complements the video.

The setting for the premiere is your choice that fits best with your overall spiritual program. Such settings may include:

- A regular church service (e.g. supporting the sermon or the children's sermon),
- A regular Sunday school time,
- A regular monthly cover dish dinner,
- A youth group night, or
- A specially scheduled premiere event.

During the premiering event, make sure:

- The audience gets the message of the video with some sort of spiritual talk whether it be a few guiding remarks or a full blown sermon, and
- The cast and crew are bolstered to want to do more videos and do "more whatever" for the church; and especially for Jesus by showing your appreciation for them and giving them a few accolades.

The after the premiere affects are also important to nurture. Try to foster follow-on:

- Participation in serving the Lord and the church,
- Sharing by attendees and participants of the video message whether it be by external talk about the video or by personal sharing of the video on DVD, on smartphones or by computer streaming, and
- Production of more spiritual videos and premiere events.

At the premiere, make sure that all attendees are given something by which they may share the spiritual message and bring others to the Lord. Perhaps give out DVDs of the video, a “playbill” showing the internet links for on-line viewing of the video, or a very stirring sermon relating to the video’s spiritual message. If you know the date for the next video’s premiere, advertise that also.

Internal/External Reach

I like it when the line between the internal reach and the external reach becomes blurred. It is a transition for the church from the inner to the outer and back to the inner. Then keep it repeating. For the spiritual introverts, this reach may be the spiritual space which emboldens them to begin sharing their faith with others.

Follow-on Showings: The gift of spiritual video production is a gift that keeps on giving. Your video can be reshowed to those in your church who did not attend the premiere event and can be done so with a multitude of venues and in your various church groups/organizations. Hopefully some of those from outside the church will be in attendance for these showings (try to attract some to these follow-on spiritual sharing opportunities). Some people may want to see it multiple times. I had one woman in my square dance club who asked to see my Heaven’s Portal: Stuff numerous times and would usually con someone else into seeing it with her. She did a good job of talking it up. Also, videos are very portable so you can bring your videos to your shut-ins in their homes or nursing homes.

After you have done multiple videos, you may want to group them together in a combined showing or mini-film festival. Turn the festival into a fund raiser for a special spiritual purpose by taking an offering, charging admission and/or selling DVDs of them. Perhaps you can combine the showing with videos from other amateur Christian video producers. Rather than a film festival, make it an arts festival which includes Christian paintings, music, dance, theater, video and other art forms.

Activating the Holy Spirit within the Body

An important attribute that your spiritual programs should have (including the video production ministry) is whether Holy Spirit is felt within the church body and the bodies that the program touches (including yourself). And then, the Holy Spirit will move and give direction to those

who have the Holy Spirit active within them. If a spiritual program is not Spirit led and/or does not grow the spirit within others, then perhaps the program should be eliminated, modified and/or replaced with something else.

Other Miscellaneous Aspects

Be creative in maximizing the impact and reach of your spiritual video ministry. Part of being creative for me is listening to God. Perhaps I take too much credit for how creative I am; as I believe many of my ideas come from Him – especially when I wake up in the middle of the night with ideas, and the ideas keep churning in my head (not letting me get back to sleep).

Perhaps you may want the community to know the church is active in helping in the life of the community by making a documentary video or a public service video announcement such as a food drive for the poor and how members of the community help (not necessarily church members). Even though a community service project may not have a direct spiritual message, the Spirit may still be felt.

Hollywood seems to be missing a spiritual component. Perhaps your spiritual video ministry may raise-up some spiritually well founded future filmmakers to counter godless influences in media. There are Christians involved in film and video, but a greater influence is needed by additional talent committed to Jesus Christ. Videos made by aspiring cast and crew members may be used in their portfolios to get into film school such as the program offered by Liberty University.

In these first two chapters, I wanted to present the most important aspect of a spiritual video production ministry. That is, this ministry must have a spiritual purpose with spiritual benefits and must be Christ centered. If video production for you is not for Christ and His followers (present and future), then do not read on to the following technical sections of this book.

SECTION 2: Simple Technical How-To

This section describes how to make short spiritual videos to include the technical aspects of Preproduction, Production and Post-Production. Some of the advice given in this section may not coincide with other books on making films and videos; because this ministry is driven by a spiritual purpose, and realizes that many churches have limited funds and limited available talent. For instance, some descriptions that I have read in the casting process seem heartless (especially the audition descriptions), which I believe can be detrimental to spiritual growth for cast wannabes (a.k.a. “want to be’s”). My recommendations for casting are to employ compassion - particularly since the digital video and editing technology facilitates making the actors look good in spite of talent level. Most of the information presented here can be up-leveled to those having the capabilities and resources for producing more professional like videos.

Chapter 3 – Preproduction

Preproduction is the phase for planning and preparing to make your video which is described in the various sections of this chapter.

Key Guiding Influences for the Video Project

Before you jump into making your first video project, doing some up-front planning will make your production easier to accomplish, well focused, more impactful and more resource effective. Since you do not yet have experience in producing videos, how would you know what all you have to incorporate into your plans? You won't know. And much of the knowledge you need you will have to learn from future experiences. But do not let that stop you – it did not stop me. However, I will give you some good starting tips.

The plans you make during pre-production evolve as you go and you fill in the blanks a little at a time. However, you can go to the opposite extreme and plan the project to death. Remember that KISS thing I mentioned earlier? As you start, think of the following three simple things and make note of them as your key guiding influences:

- Purpose: What is your reason or agenda for making the video (e.g. to teach moral lessons or to make biblical teachings relevant in today's world)?
- Use: How do you plan to use the finished product (e.g. in a focused ministry like the children's sermon topic, or a general ministry to the masses around the world)?
- Limitations: What up-front constraints do you have in completing the project (e.g. available talent, set locations, time and/or money)?

The above list may not seem like much, but those items will greatly help you to effectively proceed with your video production and guide you on your way. From these key guiding influences, you can evolve the rest of your project and put together more specifics in your follow-on detailed plans (whether recorded formally on paper, or just kept in your mind).

Video Characteristics

Early in your planning, try to identify the characteristics of your video within the limits of your project's guiding influences. These characteristics will influence your project's schedule, cost, resource requirements and the video's ultimate usage. Some important characteristics include:

Target audience(s) such as:

- Regular church attendees
- Children
- Unchurched and/or non-believers

- Any of many demographic groups
- Local residents
- Those who do not tithe

Type/genre/sub-genre such as:

- Drama
- Comedic Story
- Stand-up Performance
 - Comedy
 - Musical
- Music Video
- Interview
- Lecture/Sermon
- Documentary
- Serial Webisode

Note: Not all of the above would be considered genre or sub-genre. Most religious films are placed under drama or history. But do not confine yourself with genre unless you are pitching your video to large production or distribution companies.

Length such as:

- Feature Length (do not even think about it – at least, not yet)
- Sitcom Length (about the length of a sermon – maybe after you get some experience)
- Commercial Advertisement Length (may grab initial attention, but you need follow-up with the viewers)
- One to Five Minute Short (In a lecture, I have been told that the attention span of the internet generation is less than four minutes and try not go for more than 2.5 minutes)

Complexity considering purpose, talent, resources and schedule:

- Number of sets/locations (There is plenty you can do with one set.)
- Amount of special effects (At first, limit to lighting enhancements and some stock sound effects. But once you get experience with good editing software, you will be tempted to go crazy)
- Stunts (Safety first - leave to the more experienced. There are a number of safe things that can be done by using special effect techniques, but extra knowledge is needed which is not covered in this book (e.g. recording a make believe punch in reverse and playing it back in reverse so it looks forward).)
- Artistic shots (Nice to have, but probably not necessary for your first video)
- Cast size (Use 1 to 3 key actors and add stand-around extras so that the less talented young actors can feel good about being in a video)

- Dialog length (Hollywood likes little dialog, but you may have to substitute dialog for actors that cannot act with body language. If they cannot remember lines, I tell you in the production chapter a simple way how to get around this, but it requires additional shooting time.)
- Character intricacies (Characteristics that may require advanced acting abilities, special types of shots, special make-up or extra character development time).
- Movements/motion (For initial video, limit character and object movements to that which can be captured by the camera mounted on a tripod.)
- Lighting effects (You can do neat stuff with lights, but for your first video, just work on removing shadows on faces and providing enough illumination on key objects.)
- Controlled or uncontrolled set (Do your first video in a limited access room rather than dealing with an open public location where shots cannot easily be repeated.)
- Sound pick-ups (Make sure you have a least one microphone placed in a position to clearly record the dialog even if it is a cell phone close to the actors. If you have the funds for shotgun microphones or wireless lavalier microphones, that is great especially in a noisy environment)
- Noise environment (Shooting on a noisy set will necessitate special microphone set-ups, and/or use of an audio editor to mitigate the noise. If too noisy, then you may need to dub in recorded voice-overs.)
- Wardrobe (Keep simple and select scripts that use ordinary street clothes.)
- Make-up (Skip the prosthetics until later productions – the older kids think they are fun to wear until they get too hot or itchy.)

Story/Script Selection

Your script selection depends on the type of video you want to make. All videos should be scripted one way or another – even interviews where questions/topics are prepared in advance, or randomly taped natural events where the video is scripted after the events to tell a meaningful story.

The most important part of a movie is the story or script. You have many options to get that terrific script for your spiritual short. Many sources for free or low cost scripts are available. I have some of my own scripts on www.calvarywood.com. Bob Snooks has a very large selection of free plays he wrote on www.bobsnooks.org. If you want skits that come with a sound track CD with sound effects, try www.christianskits.com. The internet has too many sources for skits and scripts than I can list in this book. Just go online and search away. The best part of doing the searches is reading so many spiritually inspiring stories.

Believe it or not, there are thousands of wannabe writers with good enough talent to appeal to local audiences. Some are Christians that do not have obvious Christian outlets for their writing talents. They are starved for any audience and are grateful for any opportunity to show off their talents. You might want to give them a chance to use their special talents to honor the Lord.

Many areas have writer groups, clubs or associations with members seeking outlets to show their stuff. If the Christian members know that they can get recognition writing spiritual shorts, some may respond to the calling; and perhaps aid in their spiritual growth.

There are a number of screenwriting festivals with quite a bit of talent walking around. I went to several Screenwriting Expos with thousands of amateur screenwriters and a good dose of pros. I was very impressed and I learned much to help my writing. The socials at the Expo are great for networking to discover talent.

Then, there are a number of colleges with courses in film and screenwriting. Give Christian film students a chance to improve their film talents and build their portfolios. It is hard enough to be a Christian in college; a chance to work on spiritual videos will aid in spiritual develop and later influence what Hollywood puts out.

The key points that I would look for in a script are: spiritually sound; good characters; conflict; simple sets; simple costumes; easy to produce; fits your available cast; and matches your target audience. Also, make sure you check for and observe copyrights.

I like to write my own scripts and put them in standard screenplay format. To aid in formatting as I write, I use a free Word template that I downloaded from the Microsoft Office site. There are numerous free screenwriting templates and macros you can get off of the internet. The free template should suffice for your short spiritual videos. In writing your own, you can tailor the scripts to match your spiritual program and create the stories/messages that strike close to home. Be on guard about being too preachy or too “on the nose” with predictable events. Conflict is a great way to gain interest, move the story along and help to reveal character. The use of subtext (where the character’s words mean something different to the audience) adds an unspoken dimension to the story. A very good reference book for screenwriting is *The Screenwriter’s Bible* by David Trottier.

If you plan to write a full length feature movie, then get *Final Draft* or *Movie Magic* from the *Writer’s Store* (www.writersstore.com) or some of their many other screenwriting books and tools. These professional tools not only format your script, but also have a large repertoire of story and character development aids. If you like interactive assistance as you write your feature, you can use online screenwriting tools which combine the support of a screenwriting community such as www.youscreenwriter.com. *Youscreenwriter* is currently undergoing a transformation to better fit church applications.

Set Planning: Location, Permissions, Budgeting and Creation

Your script should state most of the characteristics of the set you will need to use. Extract the set requirement information from the script. Some of the information may be succinctly described where other information has to be extracted/inferred by the action that takes place (e.g. “falls to the ground” would infer that the location should not be in a cactus bed). Unless you are doing all of the set planning and creating yourself, write the set requirements down (even if doing it yourself, this is helpful).

After identifying the set requirements for the script, formulate more specific implementing requirements based on your specific constraints such as budget, available sites (e.g. the church, someone's home, a public location, a private production facility...), a donor's preference, safety, schedule, number of required on-set rehearsals, and amount of site prep/modification.

Once you have your set requirements, then, secure your location for the times you need it and secure the permissions to use the location. If using a public location, a permit is often required. Even in non-public locations, getting permission in writing to use the location is a wise move with some of the following usage criteria in a location agreement:

- Rights to show the location's images anywhere with any media of distribution.
- Rights to show anything in the location that is subject to copyright and/or intellectual property laws (e.g. pictures, statues, books, logos and coke bottles - which may have to be temporarily moved if rights are not secured).
- Rights to make alterations to the location (e.g. moving furniture, temporarily removing objects, and bringing your own props/decorations). Make assurances that the location will be restored to its previous condition (take pictures to document previous condition).
- Liability limitations and need for insurance (your church probably has sufficient insurance coverage).
- Times that the location may be used.

If you do not want to write your own location agreement, you can search the web for a sample agreement. I like to use an entertainment contact software package called Showbiz Contracts by Mark Litwak (or Automated Contracts for the Film & Television Industry) which can help you write up a host of contract types for films and videos. You just fill in a few boxes and the software creates the agreement. Then, you can add your own agreement tailoring. The software costs about \$130 from www.writersstore.com.

After spending your zero dollar budget on the location, now you have to consider the funds you have left for creating your set. Hopefully, the location matches your script so well so that the set will require only a few no-cost modifications such as just moving furniture or bringing secular pictures from home to hang in a Sunday school room to create the appearance of a non-Christian home. Do not forget the personnel resources and stuff you need for the modification and set prep. Keep the amount of set modifications to a minimum – particularly if you must make the modifications, do the shoot and restore the location in the same day. Acquire and/or prefabricate the set modifications prior to the shoot. Of course with more complex sets, the set building and modifications will need to take place prior to the day of the shoot. A set completed in advance may also be useful to workout shooting kinks during rehearsal times.

Keep in mind that set planning and preparation provisions are necessary for the filming/taping equipment to include: cameras, lights, microphone booms and cables. Allow adequate room for them. Some provisions might also be necessary to conceal these items from the camera's view.

Also in your set/location planning, try to include a close (but not too close) off-set room/area for cast and crew in their down-time, to congregate away from the active shoot/take by others. Hint: a mouth full of food makes less noise than a talking mouth. If the area is sound isolated enough, then use it for practicing lines and coaching.

Cast Selection

My philosophy and approach to casting differs greatly from what is taught in film school and from what you will read in books about filmmaking. Their approach seems to be heartless and cold with no regard to fragile egos and the faint in heart. They are casting for commercially viable productions for money making propositions. For their purposes and the sums of money they invest in a production, they need to be business matter of fact. They are not interested in nurturing the spiritual development of potential cast members.

For spiritual videos by a church or Christian group, I consider casting to be much more than selecting people to play the characters. Casting includes the spiritual development of not only those selected for the parts, but also for all those who try out. Of course, you have to match people to parts but there will be times when you will have to fine roles for people for the sake of spiritual nurturing. Fortunately, the digital video and editing tools can make actors look good in spite of their limited talent.

You may know all your candidate actors already so that making selections are simplified. If you do not have pre-knowledge to match parts to actor, you may need some type of audition. Be true to the part, but also empathic to the auditioners. Consider those who do not make the cut as a future video candidate that you can nurture. The nurturing can be specific directions or making them a set assistance. And consider adding extras for the less talented to get their faces on film. When selecting future scripts, keep these other folks in mind.

If you are planning to distribute the final video, get written releases from all who participate. Especially if children are involved – get guardians signatures too. Further to add a level of personal protection for the actors, I recommend that you incorporate into your release an option to use stage names in the credits rather than their real names. Some states have special restrictions on foster children in pictures and videos. www.cybercollege.com has an example of a talent release form or you can use entertainment contract software to create releases such as Showbiz Contracts by Mark Litwak.

Source for actors may include:

- Members of your own church, youth group or organization and their friends, acquaintances and relatives – use for nurturing the spirituality of your members and when members bring in friends and acquaintances, that is a simple form of evangelism.

- Other churches – good for building bonds between the churches that might be useful later for a larger community service endeavor.
- Local theater groups – great source of somewhat skilled talent that already has been bitten by the acting bug, and extends your pool of those to whom you can evangelize.
- Schools – elementary schools, high schools and colleges are good talent sources that can result in attracting youth into the family of God.
- Recruitment advertisements/cattle-calls – you put a recruiting ad on the radio or in the paper to come to an audition. Be kind to responders because you want all to know Jesus through this ministry whether or not you can find a role for them. The ad is an extension of the Great Commission.
- Press release announcements – similar to an ad but written in news story form with more inspiring information about what you plan to do. Often times, the local media will run the story as a news article for free.
- Screen Actors’ Guild (SAG) – Usually involves salaries/payments and union contract requirements (SAG has low budget agreements available). Not recommended yet for you unless you are Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, GA which regularly makes feature length productions.
- Casting Society of America – takes much of the work away in casting, but it is not free.

If you are using a combination of children and adults and you cannot vouch for the integrity of the adults, then for the safety of the children, you may want to have background checks run on the adults.

Anecdote: As an elective offering at Baptist Camp Lebanon in New Jersey, I made a video with whoever would sign up for the elective I was teaching. I created a saleable script that could accommodate a variable sized class. I only had the kids for 40 minute per day for 4 days. In that time, we shot scenes at 7 locations in the camp. I had 6 wonderful kids with varying acting skills. I cast all six. With only about 2.5 hours of time with them, the dialog had to be simple. The main line for most of the actors to repeat was “Got It”. The video was also titled “Got It”. It turned into a pretty powerful video about the persecuted church.

As I edited the video in my camping trailer, I was driving my wife bonkers by playing many clips of spoken “Got It’s” over and over again. It is amazing how many different ways “Got It” can be said.

Rehearsals

As you would expect, rehearsals are for the actors to learn their lines, create/formulate their characters and work out their movements. When you give out the scripts, you may want to give the actors tips or suggestions about making their characters come to life. Explaining the scenes and the associated meanings will help them act their parts (as well as being an opportunity for nurturing their faith development).

On YouTube, you can find many acting tips by acting coaches that will post tips to gain your interest for shelling out money to go to a course they present. You can learn a lot from the combination of these free promotional videos from many acting coaches and still not pay anything. Use these ideas as you act as an acting coach.

In addition, be a spiritual coach to the actors and crew. Use the rehearsal time to help the actors and the crew learn and understand the lesson of the video.

I usually think that developing the character is more important than memorizing the lines – and more fun. And when the actors have fun, their minds may be more receptive to memorizing the lines. Anyway, if they have difficulty memorizing, in Chapter 4, I will tell you about how to work around memory problems at the time of the shoot during production.

In between rehearsals, encourage the actors to rehearse their parts by themselves and do their own homework before the next rehearsal to get better results when all come together to rehearse. However, characters do not fully come to life singularly – they need the interaction of the other characters to fully come to life. The words on the paper can be spoken in many ways. Besides the overall context of the scene, the way the words are spoke by one character may be influenced by the way previous speaking actors say their lines (and the chemistry created between the characters/actors).

Dialog Development Exercise: Give two of your actors each the same line to say: “Got It”. After the first actor speaks the line, have the second speak their line in context to the way the first actor spoke their line. Repeat this exercise with the first character saying “Got It” in the following ways:

- As a command
- As good news
- As bad news
- Argumentatively
- As an instructive comment
- Suggestively romantic
- Submissively
- Placating manor

Rehearsals not only help the actors get their lines perfected, but also, they help the director and the crew to further plan the actual shoot, adjust lighting particulars, refine the sound recording requirements, and work out the shooting logistics. Even though I have done tapings with no rehearsals, I would still recommend two or three rehearsals.

First Reading – initial script familiarization; formulate interpretation of characters; creatively play around a bit; and check the matching of actors to characters.

Cold Read Exercise: At some point during the cold read session, as one actor reads their lines, do not let the other actors study their next lines. Have the other actors look directly at the speaking actor to register what the one actor is saying, how the line is said and the emotion given to the line. Then have the next actor speak in a fashion that complements the emotion conveyed by the previous spoken line. This will help build the chemistry between the characters/actors. This may also inspire some alterations you may decide to make to the script.

Normal Rehearsals – memorizing lines, costume measurements, develop the characters, workout/practice stunts, tailor the script, establish actors’ marks/positions, work out implementation issues, and practice songs.

Speaking with Emotion Exercise: A fun way to get emotion into your speech is to recite the alphabet or count numbers as if you are in conversation. My wife and I had an argument with this. Not a real argument. For a film course, I had to make a silent movie short. As if we were arguing before I shot her (with a prop pistol), I was shouting the alphabet at her as she responded with countering numbers. Being a silent video, the appearance was more important than the actual words spoken (i.e. the gestures and the angry faces).

Dress Rehearsal - with costumes, on set, with video equipment and with crew. Final adjustments to the script. Workout final timing of stunts and gags. Also helps the crew to plan the shots and the shooting logistics. Pep talk and re-assurances. Integrate sound effects not being entered later during post or just as a cue for actors. Finalize actors’ marks/positions.

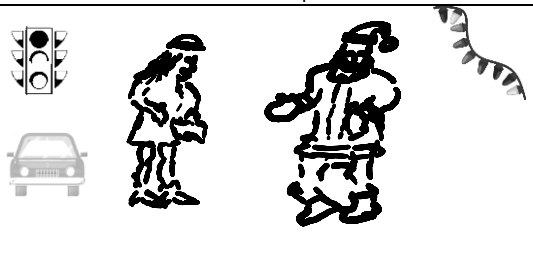
Script Tailoring

As you proceed towards production, you will likely encounter reasons for deviating or modifying the script. Some reasons relate to adverse production realities such as not being able to obtain the set the script calls for. So, that the romantic sidewalk café becomes a hotdog cart. Sometimes changes may be inspired enhancements resulting from an artistic impromptu rehearsal adlib. Whatever the reason for the script changes, embrace them unless they adversely impacts the production such as doubling the cost, delaying production too much or reducing safety. You will need disciplined flexibility. However, do not let the changes cause chaos and confusion amongst the cast and crew. Hopefully, script tailoring during pre-production will improve the final video and reduce and/or constraint the need for changes during production.

Storyboards

Used to pre-visualization scenes of a movie before entering production. Storyboarding is a useful tool for planning shots, angles, set requirements, stunt choreography, and shooting resources. They look much like comic strips. For your short video, storyboards may not be necessary, but consider them for key scenes on your larger productions.

Storyboard forms/templates (with one to six frames per sheet) may be downloaded from the internet. You can hand draw the images, use clip art or insert photographs. Different storyboard formats are available (depending on preferences) with varying amounts of information. Also, professional storyboard software (with many bells and whistles) may be bought from the Writers Store or other online sources.

Storyboard: The Real Saint Nicholas	
Scene: 1	Seq: 1
	
Background: Christmas Holiday Street Scene	
Action: Inebriated bad Santa stumbles across street. Makes unwanted pass at attractive female crossing in opposite direction. Female tries to ignore him and walks away faster	
Dialog: Santa: Fa la la la la. (Shouting) It's Christmas time. How about taking Santa home and giving him a little holiday cheer.	

From this storyboard frame with text comments, one can extract planning information for: casting (Santa character actor and pretty woman), costumes (scruffy Santa suite and woman's shapely winter outfit), props (booze bottle in paper bag), location preparation (city street decorated for Christmas), safety (traffic control), permit requirements (shooting on a city street almost always requires a permit), shots (capturing motion), sound (shotgun mike to capture dialog while eliminating unwanted background noise), and sound effects (street sounds).

Shot Planning

Rehearsals provide great opportunities for planning your shots and formulate any special shooting requirements. As the actors are running through their parts (especially during dress rehearsals), have them stand in the approximate spots as they would during the video shoot. Mark up a script with your shooting ideas. Besides the actors rehearsing, the crew can rehearse their technical parts. You will probably want to use:

- One distant establishing shot that tells the viewer the location and setting for the scene.
- Multiple close-up shots as the characters interact and/or converse. For instance, an angled solo close-up for each speaking actor – especially for those who cannot memorize lines (I explain in Chapter 4).
- Miscellaneous set/prop features that you later edit into the video to add to the visual story and/or to cover-up shooting imperfections.

Visit the shooting location and visualize the geometry of the set/location. Try to see the set as the camera will see it – even take pictures if it helps. For instance, your eyes will perceive the lighting and shadows than the camera. Try to determine:

- Where you can and need to locate the cameras.

- What type of camera mounts are needed (such as a simple tripod, a truck to move the camera with the action, a portable stabilizer system for Point of View (POV) motion segments, or a crane for high angle views).
- What set features you need to keep from camera view (such as what might be reflected in a mirror or window).
- Any special camera requirements needed (such as zoom or fish eye lens or your smart phone has all you need).
- What types of lights are needed and their placement.
- If special filters or gels are needed (keep this simple for your first video and you can get more artistic as you get more experience).
- What types of microphones and mounts should be used, and where they can be located (do you have to hide a microphone in a flower?).
- Where you can run cables.
- Any special safety precautions.

As you gain more experience with additional videos you produce, you will desire to raise the bar and get more artistic with your shots. This is great but it adds to the complexity, time and cost of the shoot. For your first few videos, be simple minded, enjoy the activity and make it fun for everyone. Remember that your congregation will be forgiving of imperfection for the work done by amateur congregation members – especially as you are in a start-up mode for this ministry.

Costuming

If you are doing a period piece such as a story directly from the Bible, you will need to have costumes reflective of that period of time. Many churches have no qualms about putting together some simple robes because they are easy to make and do not cost much. That is great and reasonably permits you to do some Bible story videos. If your script calls for a Roman centurion, costuming becomes a bit more complex and you may want to consider buying or renting the costume.

I am not handy at making costumes and I am too cheap to buy them. I will buy a few props or some fashion accessories. Out of my cheapness, I prefer to select scripts where the actors can use clothes they already own. There are many spiritual lessons you can present with present day settings where present day clothes can be used. If you do not have the wardrobe you need for your present day story, try flea markets, thrift shops, consignment shops, yard sales, church bazaars, friends or the internet (you will find many sites when you search on “used clothes”).

If you need to buy or rent costumes that are not common clothes, you probably have a party shop close by where you can get some costumes, costume accessories, make-up and wigs. However, you might do better from a theatrical costume store where you can buy or rent the costumes, and the quality will likely be better. Most locales do not have theatrical costume stores nearby, but many costume stores have the option to acquire their costumes from their internet sites or placing phone orders.

Props

For adding information to the story or for mitigating shooting mistakes, a certain number of props are essential. Go through your script and list the props that you will need. Most scripts will not list the props that you will need. To a degree, the story infers some types of props, but sometimes they are not obvious until the time of the shoot. Overlooking an essential prop is easy to do. Spend some time analyzing the script for the prop subtleties.

If your script requires no props, include something as a prop of which you will take a close-up so the video editing person can slip it in to cover shooting discrepancies such as when an actor is delivering his lines and a booger oozes from his nose which is not caught at the time of shooting. The editor can still use the spoken dialog, but switch the video view to the prop.

Exotic props can be bought from theatrical shops. But chances are, you have most of the props you need all around you or the props can be easily make. Often times, kids enjoy making props as a complementary art project. One problem with some props; kids like to play with them and may break them. Kids love to play with my clapper board.

Anecdote: For my “Book of Life” video, I had a child draw a simple picture of a family sitting on a couch – mother, child and father. The story, based on Revelations 20:15, was about having your name in the “Book of Life.” I opened the video with a close-up of the picture. I ended the video with a close-up of that same picture, but I had the image of the father fade away. That simple prop had enormous impact on those viewing the video. I would hear gasps and see strange looks on viewers’ faces as Daddy disappeared.



Equipment Determination and Acquisition

For your first video, you should need very little equipment if you follow my advice from previous chapters and subsections. As you gain experience and want to raise the bar, then, go for the more elaborate - but do it little by little. Exploring new equipment is fun – kind of like Christmas toys. However, these toys can also serve Jesus Christ in leading others to Him.

On your fist video, the minimum equipment requirement is a camcorder (e.g. a consumer camcorder or a smart phone), a light (a pole lamp or work light on a stand or maybe regular lighting is good enough if there are no objectionable shadows on the faces), and perhaps a microphone (that plugs into the camcorder to improve dialog pickup). Also, do not forget the extension cords and cables.

If you have more equipment available to you, that is great for improving the quality of the shoot and for redundancy in case a piece of equipment goes bad (e.g. a light bulb or battery). In the production section, I tell you more about what equipment you need for what situations which will give you more insight into your equipment list that you make while in your pre-production planning.

The equipment list will serve you well in your cost estimating/budgeting, in your acquiring of the equipment, and in your getting all the equipment to the shooting site (as a checklist and as a delivery coordination document if you have multiple people bringing the equipment). Make sure that you make an equipment list which identifies each item, how it is to be acquired, who is responsible in acquiring it, who is responsible for getting it to the shoot and to whom it is to be returned after the shoot. If you have to purchase the item, include the cost in your budget. If the equipment is borrowed, make note of the person's name for the rolling credits, a thank you note and/or a tax credit letter.

Crew Acquisition and Preparation

You do not need a large crew for your first one to five minute video. If you are working with children, you need at least two adults at all times with the children to guard against improprieties between an adult and a child, and also to mitigate potential legal issues. I would recommend one or two more as backups. Most of the adults need not have video production skills – for the most part, the skills will be learned as you go. Also, involving your youth in crew activities will be a good learning experience for them and will eventually off-load some of the work from you.

Anecdote: Some years back ago; I took an adult education course on filmmaking. The course covered various characteristics of movies, what makes a good movie and the various high level functions of the people who make the movies (e.g. producers, directors, etc.). However, the lectures did not touch upon the nuts and bolts of doing a shoot nor editing the video. Yet, the course required the students to make several video shorts. The project assignments were stated like “make a silent movie” or “make a video that creates suspense.” Without specific instruction on making a video, the students produced some very good videos. The students learned as they did their own video assignments.

For a simple short, two to four crew members will be good. You can use some of the actors as crew members when they do not have to be in front of the camera. When I taught video production electives at a summer camp, some of the young actors enthusiastically wanted to take a turn at the camera work. If you have the kids work the camera, make sure they do not move the camera to fast or jerky.

For the most part, you will get your crew from your church or Christian group. Then, use members to recommend others you may recruit. Other sources for crew members include:

- Local amateur theater groups – numerous abound and may be a source of production equipment such as lights and microphones
- High Schools - many teach video production
- Advertisements - the local papers, in a radio spot, or entertainment industry journals
- Production Directories

For the most part, I do not use the formal titles of crew members (e.g. gaff) because you will be doing multiple crew roles spanning several video production disciplines. You will have to be a generalist rather than a specialist. The formal crew titles and roles will be important if you start using professionals. For your interest, the following table briefly describes to roles by title (the list may seem long, but it is incomplete).

Crew Role Descriptions	
Producer	Oversees the project from conception to completion. Typically has supervisory and financial control over the project. Helps to raise money to fund the project, and to see that the funding is well spent throughout the production and marketing of the film. Often times involved in the marketing and distribution processes.
Executive Producer	Oversees the production logistics and monetary aspects of a film. May be involved in casting actors, hiring the crew, making project arrangements with studios and shooting locations, and acquiring resources necessary for making the film. Enforces the shooting schedule and the budget to make sure the film is finished on time and under budget.
Director	Responsible for directing the performance of the actors and the technical aspects of making a movie or video. Involved from the selection of the script to the completion of post-production. Needs to be able to have a good grasp of the “Big Picture” of the production.
Assistant Director	Assists the director and handles many of the nitty details and makes sure that things do not fall through the cracks. At times, acts as the director’s liaison to off-load some coordination burdens from the director. Must reflect the director’s vision of the project while trying to keep the production on schedule and within budget.
Director of Photography	A DP or DoP is a high level Cinematographer trusted with making key artistic decisions about the visual appearance of a film. Works closely with the director: from analyzing the script to discovering the photographic heart of a screenplay (in pre-production); to providing a film with its unique visual identity/look (during production) to provide a film with its unique visual identity, or look; to digital grading of the film/clips (during post-production).

Cinematographer	In charge of the camera and lighting crews for achieving artistic and technical decisions related to the image. Often times, operates the camera and may also be the director of photography. Ensures that the lighting sets the proper mood of the scene, and provides proper coverage for the various shots and camera angles. Ensures that the images are captured from the various perspectives (shot types, angles and motion) and with the desired effects as desired by the director and/or DoP.
Grip	Responsible for all the equipment that supports cameras including tripods, dollies, tracks, jibs, cranes, and static rigs. Works for the DoP, works very closely with the camera operator and operates equipment supporting/moving the cameras. Sometimes the grip will make/fabricate special camera mounts when such necessary mounts do not commonly exist.
Special Effects Director	Leads the special effects team that creates mechanical, optical and computer generated illusions to make a movie more exciting and/or more believable. On scene special effects may involve mechanical props, fog machines, rain, makeup prosthetics, scale models, pyrotechnics, green screens and more. Special effects are commonly incorporated during post-production with computer generated imagery, sound effects, modifying body features, lighting effects, airbrushing and green screen backgrounds. If you cannot afford to shoot in Israel, shoot in front of a green screen then add the Mount of Olives imagery (from a licensed stock video/photograph source) during post-production.
Production Designer	Usually the head of the art department and is involved in the conceptualization, organization and implementation of a physical world surrounding a story in a production. Responsible for the overall look of the sets, props, wardrobe and make-up. Often times, needs to do in-depth research for establishing the characteristics for the set and costumes (especially period piece stories – e.g. lifestyles of 1 st century Corinthians).
Script Supervisor	Responsible for maintaining a film's continuity according to the script so that essential parts of the story are not missed during the shoot. Films are generally not shot in order but shot as segments most convenient to the available locations and the actors at the time. The script supervisor keeps track of what parts have already been shot and what remains. Also, keeps track of script changes, and during the shoot, makes sure of positional replication between takes/retakes of actors, props, costumes and set items (e.g. does the preacher hold the Bible in the right hand or the left?).
Gaffer	Is the chief electrician which handles lighting in coordination with the DoP. The gaffer should be knowledgeable in creating various lighting effects such as: creating lighting moods with color gels and light angles; creating flickers and flashes; casting shadows; and using light to create sensations of motion.

Best Boy	An assistant to the gaffer often considered the best electrician on a film/video project and is a senior lighting position. Coordinates with and gives direction to the lighting team. Also works out the logistics of the lighting activities including ordering lighting equipment, arranging its delivery, and ensuring that it arrives in the right place at the right time. Needs to work with facility managers and maintenance personnel of the shooting location.
Sound Engineer	Arranges for, sets up, tests, troubleshoots and operates sound recording equipment during the shoot including various types of microphone pickups (e.g. shotgun and wireless lavalier mikes), and partially mixes the audio with a sound board. For musicals, records the music (including vocals) with a digital sound board, and when the video portion is made, plays back the recorded music to which the actors will lip sync. Mixes and edits tracks sound during post-production (sometimes attempts repair of poorly recorded audio). Edits in music and sound effects.
Makeup Artist	The term seems self-explanatory, but the artist needs to be aware how the makeup will appear on film/video and under the theatrical lighting. Often times, the makeup specifically defines the characters' images that must be consistent with the characters' conceptualization envisioned by the director and the DoP. Also, the makeup artist is responsible for makeup visual continuity between takes and scenes (e.g. is the temporary tattoo always in the same spot and not faded?).
Hairdresser	The term seems self-explanatory, but the hairdresser must be aware how the hair responds and holds up during the action of a scene. During the fight scene, James Bond's hair must stay perfectly in place, while the Bond girl's hair must bounce just right as she sways her head to give him a seductive look. Also, the hairdresser is responsible for visual continuity between takes and scenes (e.g. does the blonde hair show the same amount of dark roots on shooting day 21 as on day one?).
Costume Designer	Responsible for the clothing worn by the actor which must be consistent with the scene including the setting, mood and action of the scene (no wardrobe malfunctions). Considerable wardrobe research may be needed for period pieces. Also responsible for visual continuity between takes and scenes (e.g. the man's tie must be the same length throughout the scene or the lady's hot pants should split the same way as she bends over from take to retake to retake).

Production Coordinator	Provides administrative services relating to the management and maintenance of schedules, budgets, staff, and many other resources so that nothing is wasted or forgotten. Creates and updates the large production board which shows the people and resources needed for each day of production. Also performs a host of other administrative duties to keep the cast, crew and various departments happy (e.g. prepare/file paperwork, prepare contracts, order equipment, make travel arrangements and answer phones).
Production Assistant	Is usually thought to be an on-set entry level position for breaking into the industry with a wide variety of unskilled chores. This is often times a learning position with many nuisance tasks that more senior staff wants to dump on someone else. A good job description is "other duties as assigned." Some PAs will be assigned off-set tasks in the office, costume department and etcetera.
Music Composer	Creates and arranges music that complements the moods for the various scenes in the movie. The music should elevate the emotional impact of the story without overwhelming the story. Sometimes the composer will also produce, perform and record the music.
Stunt Coordinator	Determines the resources (stunt artists and equipment) and tasks necessary to create and film stunts as necessary for heightened physical effects that may be dangerous to performers (e.g. fights, explosions and accidents). Must mitigate the dangers involved in the stunts! Supervise and design the rigging, choreography and rehearsals of the stunts. Works with the director, DoP and camera personnel to determine the best ways to visually capture stunts on film or video. During the shooting of stunts, the stunt coordinator may have to create work-arounds to unforeseen problems that pop-up on location and enforce safety principles.
Caterer	Provides food and beverages to the crew and cast at a side location to the shoot. Then the cast in costume need not change outfits to get a drink or a bite to eat. More importantly, a convenient food location gives those not actively involved with the current shooting activity a place to go so they do not interfere with the active shoot and do not make noise that will be picked up by the microphones.
Animator	Creates images and imagery by using sequences of hand-drawings, sculpted objects and/or computer generated objects. Their animations may be classical cartoon characters, spinning company logos, stop motion objects, 3-D action scenes and near real life visual representations of reality. The ability to make life like animations is often used to replicate background imagery and to sometimes create virtual actors for less noticed characters in a scene (e.g. people in a crowd).

Editor	Review recorded clips, orders them in proper story sequence, selects the best clips (or segments of clips) and combines the best of them to make a complete story. Attempts to make corrections for filming/taping deficiencies, and at times, makes artistic improvements. Edits in audio, music and special effects. Sometimes, the technical geek that makes the superstar appear to be a superstar in spite of missed lines and visual miss cues.
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Prior to the shoot, all crew members should know their duties and all they are anticipated to do. Then, at the shoot, the crew will have to make corrective and/or creative adjustments because problems occur in spite of perfect planning. Having the crew participate in rehearsals will facilitate a smoother shoot. During the rehearsal, crew members can work out issues pertaining:

- Types of shots needed
- Actor/character appearance
- Equipment selection, positioning and operation
- Prop placement
- Lighting effects
- Set refinements and modifications
- Sound pick-up optimization and noise mitigation
- Cable runs
- Motion following and timing
- What is possible, practical and impossible
- Safety
- Building synergism between cast and crew

Anecdote: A production assistant (PA) in the industry is commonly an unpaid intern and is the lowest ranking member at a shoot. They generally handle unskilled tasks that others do not want, and they are frequently used as “go-fers” that run miscellaneous errands. I usually use my Special Ed adult son as my production assistant. He takes great pride in telling people that he is my PA. Tell you the truth, he is an invaluable help to me when I do a shoot.

Budgeting

If you have limited funds or have to ask others for money to produce your video or set up a video production ministry, then creating a budget is a good idea. You may want to absorb some costs out of your own pocket, but you do not want to get blind-sided by big unanticipated costs for which you will be responsible. Make a budget and add a little extra for unanticipated costs. With the budget, you will know how much money you will need and how much for which you will have to ask. Include costs for: equipment (e.g. cameras, lights, microphones, video editing PC, etc.), royalties (e.g. script, music and any other intellectual property), costumes, location/set rentals, permits, set construction, props, clean-up and food. You may also need to include costs

When you are ready to make your feature length movie, you can buy some very sophisticated movie production scheduling software from the Writers' Store. These super-duper movie schedule programs will prompt you through common movie production activities to build very elaborate production schedules including activities that you would not normally imagine.

Some movie production software suites combine and integrate both budgeting and scheduling. I suspect that your need for this level of sophistication will not justify the expenditure.

Legal Considerations

Christian groups, organizations and individuals should be law abiding and should honor the legal rights of others. Be aware of necessary legalities, make sure you are legally protected, and observe the law. You should seriously consider:

- Intellectual Property Rights (Scripts, Music, Pictures...)
- Releases
- Permits
- Insurance
- LLC

Intellectual Property Rights – includes scripts, music, photographs, paintings, sculptures, movies, videos, sound effects and written material. Any such works are automatically copyrighted and does not require filing or registering for copyright protection. However if your intellectual property is challenged for copyright infringement, you need some mechanism to prove that your stuff was created first, and this is best done by filing for a copyright (go to www.copyright.gov). Also, there are registering organizations such as the Writers Guild of America, but a copyright holds greater weight of proof. There are several factors that determine the enforceable duration of the copyright (e.g. 70 years after an author's death, or whether some modifications are made which restarts the clock). To be on the safe side, assume all work made after 1922 is copyrighted, and then seek legal permission for usage in writing (e.g. obtaining a license or buying the ownership rights).

Releases – You should always obtain signed releases from all the performers in your video, and in some cases, from owners of your shooting locations. Failure to do so may prohibit the showing and distribution of your video.

Performer release forms may be downloaded from the internet (you can find many using your search engine) and tailor for your specific needs. If the performer is a minor, you should get the signatures of both the performer and their parent or guardian. For the protection of the performers, I modified my release form for the performers to indicate the names they want shown in the credits: be it their real names or stage names for anonymity.

Location release forms are often required by commercial and public locations. The release needs to specify the conditions for the shoot (e.g. time, date, fees, royalties, liability, insurance, modifications to the location and restoration of the location), the usage of the video, and the conditions of distribution. You may also need to acquire a release for images seen through a window of a business across the street.

Permits – Many public locations (e.g. parks, beaches, streets, schools, college campuses, municipal building, etc.) may require that you obtain a permit before you shoot on those locations. Usually, permits will require fees and conditions of usage (e.g. police protection, insurance and custodial clean-up). Some gorilla producers will shoot without permits by making the shoot very fast so that police will not have time to catch them.

Insurance – To protect yourself or group against liability for injuries, insurance is recommended. Often times, churches have insurance coverage that may also cover you. Some policies may require an additional nominal-cost rider that you buy for a specific activity. Check in on this. If your church or Christian organization does not have insurance, contact your insurance agent to discuss your options. If you are shooting an expensive feature, you will need to consider other insurance needs such as film completion risks because the main star may get deathly ill.

Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) – If you plan to make many videos on a regular basis, your production group may want to form a LLC for personnel liability protection. The LLC will have full liability, but the LLC owners/principles are personally protected to a degree. Forming an LLC is easier than you might think. Apply for an LLC in your state. Each state has their own rules and fee structures. Fees are usually quite small. When I formed Calvarywood Productions, I had spent less than one hour filling out an on-line form and making a payment with a credit card. To complete the application, I had to go the IRS site to obtain a corporate ID number. Then, I had to log back into the state site to report the federal ID number.

Safety Planning

Keep your cast and crew safe. Try to envision potential hazards and take steps to mitigate them. Some obvious steps to take include:

- Sandbags to keep light stands from tipping,
- Using cool LED lights rather than hot Halogen lights,
- Wide tape to hold down wires and cables to prevent tripping,
- Replace worn wiring before the shoot,
- For outdoor shoots, plan rain dates,
- Carefully choreograph and adequately rehearse stunts,
- First aid kits,
- Emergency services call list,
- Background checks on staff members,

- Safety briefings for cast and crew, and
- Adequate number of responsible adults to watch the kids.

Catering

If you sit through the closing credits of a movie, you will usually see a credit for “caterer”. Food for the cast and crew is important during the making of a movie - especially on long shooting days. For your one to two hour shoot to do a less than 5 minute short, have someone bring a few snacks to munch on during the shoot. Then to reward the cast and crew after the shoot, get a couple of pizzas.

For the premier event, get some of your church members to cook up food in the church kitchen or bring some of their favorite covered dish specialties. Don’t forget to thank them.

Transportation

To get the cast, crew, scenery, props and equipment to the shooting location, some transportation arrangements may need to be made. Make sure you plan how they will get to the site and who will be doing the transporting. Print out maps for the drivers and give them money for gas, tolls and parking. Hopefully, you will not have so much scenery that you have to rent a truck. Give the drivers a phone contact number in case they get lost, and get their cell numbers for when they are late.

When transporting minors after the shoot, have instructions on paper listing where the minors are to be taken and who the minors are turned over to. A parent/guardian sign-off line would be good to have that includes time of drop-off /pick-up.

Chapter 4 – Production

The big first day of shooting has come and everyone is excited. Your pre-production planning is bullet proof and the shoot will go perfect – if you believe that, stand on you head. How can you know everything that will happen; this is your first time? Unanticipated things will happen, but roll with them. Things may get a bit chaotic. However, your preplanning should lessen the chaos and make it manageable. What you learn from this shoot will make your next production better. In spite of all that can go wrong, I anticipate that your first production will yield spiritual dividends and people will be spiritually moved in a very good way.

For your first shoot, allow time for the production activities to go a little long – figure on a half day for a single scene of a one to five minute short or at a minimum three hours to do set-up, cast prep, shooting, equipment breakdown and clean-up. The following sub-sections will provide you information to do your first shoot and give you tips for raising the bar on follow-on projects:

- *Set Set-up*
- *On-Set Cast Preparations and nurturing*
- *Active Shoot*
- *Breakdown and Clean-up*

Set Set-up

Physical set up will include, to varying degrees, the following:

Visible Scenery and Props – Hopefully you applied the Cheap KISS principle so that you need to make almost no changes to the shooting location except for moving some furniture and bringing in some light weight props. Take a few pictures of the set before you make any alterations to it so you know where to put things back after the shoot. As you arrange the set, try to picture how the camera will see the set (a smart phone in camera mode will help you visualize) and arrange the set accordingly. Also, utilize storyboards and checklists you made in your pre-production planning to make sure you have set-up everything properly and completely. When you set-up the cameras and lights, you will still have to move a few things around.

Cameras and Associated Equipment – Most stories can be shot with one camera or smart phone. I like the luxury of shooting with two or three cameras to simultaneous capture the scene from multiple angles, so as to cut down of the number of takes that are necessary to get all desired angles. You won't have to be resetting up the camera for each angle and have the actors repeat the scene for each angle. In almost all your videos, you will want to utilize multiple angles. However, extra cameras might also get in the way.

You will have to set-up at least one camera and the equipment supporting it (e.g. tripod, truck or crane). I consider camera stabilizing devices a must because a shaky hand usually makes the video very amateurish. As you do camera set-up, have someone (or two) stand in the approximate locations that the actors will be in during the shoot. Check the camera view at each position and shot type (explained in the active shoot section) – making sure you have enough room for the camera and that each camera view will not be recording unwanted subject matter. Move the scenery and props as necessary. Further, the camera views will have to be rechecked after the lights are set-up.

Camera settings features on modern camcorders make capturing quality images relatively easy. Settings that you may check are discussed in the following bullets, but the first three (resolution, focus and storage media) are probably all with which you will have to concern yourself on your first simple shoot:

- Resolution – For showing the video on high definition televisions, you will probably want to set the camcorder to 1080p (“p” stands for progressive scan) or 1080i (“i” stands for interlace scan which uses less bandwidth and memory than the higher quality progressive scan). For sharing the video on YouTube, you may use a lower resolution for faster streaming, but I suggest shooting the video at 1080 resolution, and then, render a lower resolution version of the video with the video editor for internet sharing. If you plan to do video zooming (with the camcorder or during post-production), then select a higher resolution (digital zoom effectually reduces the image resolution on the screen).
- Focus – Make sure the key images in the video have clear lines and not fuzzy as you look through the viewfinder. Most of the time, auto-focus will work well enough. However, auto-focus may get confused (such as with motion, the key character is not in the center of the picture, or the background dominates over the foreground), and/or automatically focus on the wrong objects in the camera’s view, in which case, you will have to select manual focus and use the manual focus controls. A large external monitor makes manual focusing more exact. Some cheaper camcorders and smartphones may have a fixed focus which eliminates the bother of focusing, but other image quality factors are compromised.
- Storage Media – Permits the selection of capturing the images on the camcorders internal memory or on a removable storage device (e.g. SD memory card). I like the use of removable memory media that I can plug directly into my editing computer. Most smartphones do not permit an easy to remove storage media card and forces you to use a cable to transfer your video clips.
- Custom Image Adjustments – Most camcorders and smartphones allow you to make special adjustment for brightness, contrast, color saturation and sharpness. Brightness varies exposure so as to make the shot darker or lighter. Contrast varies the difference between dark and light. Saturation varies the intensity of color and is often times used to cause color objects to stand out from ordinary imagery. Sharpness attempts to turn less defined image lines/edges to clear well defined lines. Some pricey camcorders may even allow you to adjust red-green-blue (RGB) proportions to create special color effects. These image adjustments may reduce your need for attachable light filters.

- White Balance – Compensates for unwanted color biases introduced by your lights such as incandescent bulbs (reddish) or florescent lights (bluish). This adjustment is to ensure that white will really appear white on your television or projection screen (and colors will appear the appropriate colors). Most camcorders have incandescent, florescent daylight and cloudy automatic white balance settings. Better camcorders have a manual white balance setting mode where the camera is pointed at a white or grey calibrated white balance card and the camera operator will fine tune the white balance. Manual white balance adjustment can be used to alter the mood or temperature of the shot.
- Shutter speed - Is a way of controlling light exposure on the film or image sensor which is great for static images. However, for fast moving objects (e.g. bobsled races), a slow shutter speed creates blurring; so, you may want a faster speed if light permits. Most of the time for video, you will want to have a shutter rate double your camera's frame rate - for example use 1/60 of a second if you camera's frame rate is 30 frames per second. For that bobsled run, you may want a shutter speed of 1/500 of a second. If you need smoothing, then you may want the slower rate (at the risk of blurring). But if you want crisp images of motion, then use the faster rates (at the expense of harsher images).

Lenses – For your smartphone, you have very limited lens choices, but for many of your simple cinema graphic productions, you can make do with what comes with the phone unless you need long distance zoom or telephoto capabilities. For the most part, your zoom capability will be moving the camera closer to your subject. Digital zoom capabilities for most smartphones produce fuzzy images unless your smartphone has a super large amount of pixels to capture images (however, much more memory is required). You can buy some smartphone lenses (macro, wide angle, fish-eye and telephoto) that you place in front of the smartphone's existing len. These lenses either clip onto the phone or magnetically attach to a metal ring you adhere to the phone. Not many stores carry smartphone external lenses; so, you will most likely have to go on-line to buy them.

Basic camcorders usually come with zoom lenses built in. Some camcorders allow additional lens options by having a thread on the end of the lens or by having the capability to detach the lens to permit attachment of other lenses. For your first few videos, do not complicate the production with a lot of fancy lens options. As you rise in your cinema graphic artistry, you will want to tryout different lenses and filters.

For the beginner, magnification will be your most important lens feature to concern yourself with. Magnification will affect the distance you must place your camera relative to your subject. Remember, the higher the magnification, the more important a tripod or steady camera support becomes. Also, greater magnifications tend to make the image darker unless you increase the lighting or increase the aperture of the lens.

Lens speed is a characteristic of optics used in creating lens. Lens speed pertains to the amount of exposure time is necessary on the film or photo sensor to produce the desired brightness/illumination of the target image. Depending on the lens speed and the light on the

subject, you may need to adjust the lens aperture (i.e. aperture) or shutter speed. Many camcorders allow their electronics to adjust these automatically. If the image looks good in the camcorder viewfinder, do not worry about the lens speed for your first amateur production.

Most professional lenses are not single lens, but a combination of lenses to optimize the quality of image reproduction versus the money you want to pay. The physics of the lens' design results in a speed characteristic (or intrinsic aperture) of the lens (relating to the amount of light that is allowed to pass through the lens). A wider lens will allow more light to pass through it.

Aperture adjustment refers to how much you open or close the light opening behind the lens and in front of the film or image sensor. In dark ambient light, you want a large opening (or lower f-stop number). In bright sunlight, you want a smaller opening (or larger f-stop). Aperture adjustments also impacts focus depth of field. A smaller opening increases the depth of field and makes the camera less sensitive to focus distance (and reduces focus problems), but you may need to increase the light on the set. A larger opening makes the focus depth of field smaller and makes the camera more sensitive to focus distance (less able to keep the entire set in focus). Notice in many movie scenes that the main character is in focus and the surroundings are intentionally out of focus to give more attention to the character. The out of focus surroundings are created by using a large opening (low f-stop number), but this may require lighting on the subject to be reduced.

All lenses to some degree create image aberrations such as color distortion in areas of the image (particularly outer edges), image linearity (e.g. bending lines or non-uniform image proportions), shadowing effects/color fringing (especially since camcorder lens systems passes the light image to three different color filters that go to three separate image sensors). The cheaper lenses have less compensation for these aberrations.

Filters – Attach to your camera lens to allow the image to be altered prior to the image reaching the film or image sensor in your camera. The need for filters is reduce by all of the electronic image adjustment features in today's camcorders and in the video editing software. However, electronics do not eliminate the camera filter needs totally; plus some seasoned cinematographers still like the option to use old school camera filters to produce certain artistic effects. Gradient neutral density filters are commonly used where the difference is great between light objects and dark objects – especially where the details of these objects are important to be viewed. Another important filter is a polarizer filter to remove annoying reflections from mirrors, water surfaces and sky polarization. You attach the polarizer to your camera lens and turn it to minimize the reflections. You can also use combinations of color filters to alter the mood of the image and create a variety of effects.

Lights - Today's camcorders do not need a lot of light compared to film cameras to capture images. You can get away pretty simple -- forget about those 2 to 3 thousand watt lights.

Note: Lights can be a significant SAFETY ISSUE. Many types of lights get hot and can burn you. Their cables you can trip over. And their stands can be knocked over. Use sandbags or weights to stabilize them and keep them from tipping. Anyway, cool LED lights are getting brighter and are quickly coming down in price and soon you might be able to afford them. I bought a couple of Neewer CN-216 dimmable LED camera lights that run on batteries (no cables to trip over) for less than \$70 each. They are bright enough for most indoor shooting. However, if you are shooting a person with dark complexion standing in front of a window on a bright sunny day, you will want to use brighter lights (e.g. halogen lights) to lighten to person unless you want to get a silhouette.

You might be able to get away with normal available light. Check the lighting closely in the view finder to see if it is adequate.

For your first video, it is okay to use just one light since your congregation will be forgiving of imperfection. With one light, you can do away with most unwanted shadows and still make your video look pretty good. You will need to have the light close to the camera though. At a broadcast media conference, I saw one setup where a ring of LED lights fit around the camera lens which is great for on-location news coverage (that setup had to be pricey).

The problem with single light setups is the lack of depth conveyed on the recorded imagery. Objects seem flatter. With multiple lights, you can create more of a three dimensional effect even though the video will be displayed on a flat screen.

Academically you will hear that basic filmmaking takes about 4 lights.

- The key light provides most of the illumination for the character.
- The fill light is to take away shadows on the face.
- The back light separates the actor from the background for a 3 dimensional appearance.
- The background light is used to light up the background and to take out shadows cast by the other lights.

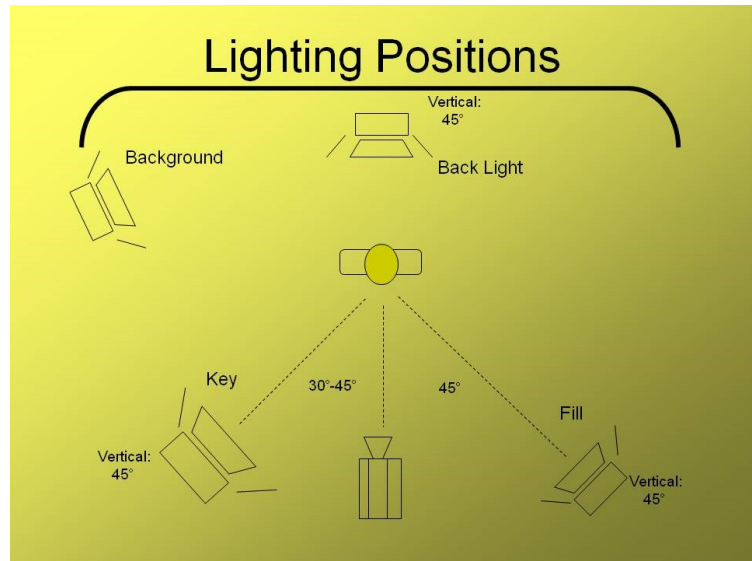
The most essential lights are the key and the fill lights. So, figure on at least two lights. The key, fill and back lights are per actor. If you have two actors, you can make the key light for one actor be the fill light for another actor and vice versa.

The **Key Light** is the most important light illuminating the character. It will be the brightest light, placed at about 30 to 45 degrees horizontally from center and vertically between camera level or 45 degrees above.

The **Fill Light** is needed to remove unwanted shadows -- particularly on the face. It is placed about 45 degrees off of center horizontally on the opposite side of the camera. It is usually placed above camera level up to 45 degrees. But, check the viewfinder for the best placement. Someone with deep eyes may need the fill light below camera level. Usually the fill light is set at about half the brightness as the key light -- except when the fill light is being use as the key light for another actor.

The **Back Light** is used to separate the actor from the background and to somewhat create a 3 dimensional effect. It is located behind and above the actor. It creates a little glow around the actor--particularly around the hair.

The **Background Light** illuminates the background and eliminates unwanted shadows Created by the other lights.



So, you have no money for lights? For about ten dollars, I picked up a 250 watt halogen light from Home depot with mounting clasp that I can clap on a stand, a door or whatever. The lights must be mounted on something and probably elevated. I have been going cheap and clasping them to doors, bookcases and step ladders. If you get serious, then get adjustable light stands.

I like to control the lighting especially since I can do it cheaply -- less than \$25 per light. Dimmer switches give you a great deal of control over the lighting. For about ten dollars, I picked up a 300 watt dimmer switch from Home Depot ready for the light to plug into it. For higher wattage lights, you may have to wire up your own dimmer.

This is my HomeDepot special flood lamp with dimmer.

- The 250 watt Halogen light was about \$10
- The 300 watt dimmer was about \$10
- The 3 prong to 2 prong electric adapter is probably around \$2. But, make sure your lamp is properly grounded.

Halogen bulbs get hot and they can burn you. LED flood lamps are cool and thus safer. However LED flood lamps are still very expensive, but they are coming down in price.

Cheap Lighting



For daylight taping, diffuse reflecting screens are great for lighting up the face which might appear as a dark shadow in the camera. Some of these screens are pricey. But I found some on the Ritz Camera site for between \$40 and \$50. The larger screens may be rough for younger members of the production team to handle. You may be able to get by with a plain white poster board.

Special theatrical lights can create some great artistic effects, but they can cost big time. Then, you can add color filters or gels to change the mood of the scene.

If you have a video projector, you have a special-effects light. When connected to a computer with Power Point, you can use it as a spotlight, a color lamp, or a pattern casting light (including simulating shadows like those cast with blinds). Be careful with the projector because their bulbs are very expensive. You may want to have spare bulbs. My Heaven's Portal scripts use a spot light and for that, I used an old slide projector with a clear circle on a slide to make a spotlight

Perhaps you should consider the special lighting effects in the video editing software. But, know the capability of your editor before committing to this method of special lighting.

Anecdote: As I was about to shoot my Heaven's Port: Hot Babes video, the bulb on my slide projector blew out. I decided to continue with the shoot and try to fix the lighting effects with my Sony Vega Movie Studio software. During editing I had to darken the imagery of the undesired objects on the set (including a folding divider wall and a bookcase). Then, I added an artificial spotlight. Having a real spotlight would have been better, but the editor saved the video and people around the world have seen the video on my website.

Microphones and Sound Equipment (including sound checks)

The quality of the audio is very important, but tends to be neglected by beginners. Camcorders come with pretty decent microphones and smartphone camera microphones are built in. So, why bother with external microphones and their extra costs?

With camera mikes, you do not have to bother with the entire microphone setting up, and all those clumsy cables. Then, if you have to move the camera as the character walks along, the mike moves along with the camera. If you need a little better quality than what came built into the camera, you can buy a small shot-gun mike that attaches to the camera (but are not as good as the larger boom mounted shotgun mikes).

Camera Mike vs. External Mike	
<u>Camera Microphone</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•No extra cost•No set-up•Moves with camera in moving shots•No cables•Camera position and direction effects recorded sound quality	<u>External Microphone</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Additional cost•Better sound quality•More control over sound recording•Lots of cables•Positioning and/or hiding mikes•Can mix in multiple mikes

However, the quality of the camera microphone's sound pickup varies with the camera position, direction and distance from the actors. For instance, if you point the camera at one person (or an object), the dialog of an actor to the side may be not as good as a head-on shot. Be aware that the further you place the microphone from the speaking actors, the lower the sound pickup quality will be in terms of volume, bandwidth and noise.

I like to plug external mikes into the camcorder because I have more control over the sound. However, external microphones do cost more, but you don't need to get extravagant to get good sound (\$20 for an omnidirectional). Then, you can add an inexpensive mixer (\$50 from Radio Shack), then you can add more microphone pickups and have even more control. Of course, you have to deal with positioning and hiding the mikes and all those cables.

As I mentioned before, I like to have the control and quality that I get from external microphones. Additionally, I like at least two mikes for adequate coverage for multiple actors, backup redundancy and multi-dimensional sound (2-D at least).

Most new camcorders are equipped for stereo sound, but fewer consumer grade cameras still come with audio input jacks for external microphones. If you are getting a new camcorder, try to get one where you can plug in external mikes.

Shotgun Microphones - Many pros say that you should use shotgun microphones. The wonderful things about shotgun microphones are the high gain and clarity of sound you get from the actor at which you point the mike and the rejection of noise from the surroundings. If you go professional, use them. B&H Photo (www.bhphotovideo.com) has a good selection of shotgun microphones.

Omnidirectional Microphones - If you are a church with a shoestring budget, you can still get good results with less pricey mikes. My work to date has been on a shoe string. I use a couple of under \$20 omnidirectional microphones, and I have a couple back-up omnidirectional mikes from a dollar store. The dollar mikes are okay for speech, but you don't want to use them for music because of their limited bandwidth. I am very pleased by the sound of the other omnidirectional mikes. Since omnidirectional microphones pick up sound from all around, you can use one microphone for multiple speakers and pointing the microphone is not critical. But, quiet on the set! Omnidirectional mikes pick up all of the surrounding sounds and noise.

Wireless Microphones – They are wonderful for eliminating the cables from the site of the camera and for their mobility. Also, you can pick up a wireless microphone at a reasonable price at Radio Shack. Additionally, you got to have a receiver that you will probably route through a mixer and then, to the camera. The biggest negatives to wireless mikes are Radio Frequency Interference (RFI) from other local transmitters, forgetting to use fresh batteries and some have very limited range.

Audio Equipment

- 2 External Microphones of Same Type
 - Shotgun mikes are great but pricey – \$250 and up
 - Wireless mikes are wonderful -- \$50 and up
 - Wireless lapel mike \$50 and up
 - Omni-directional mikes will do and cheap – \$1 to \$50 (but quiet on the set!)
- 2 Microphone Mounts, Stands or Booms
 - Hide in flowers
 - Dangle from ceiling
 - Tape to broomsticks
 - Go and buy stands for \$25 (but keep out of sight)
- Portable Audio Mixer/Pre-Amp
 - 4 Mike inputs
 - Mono or stereo outputs
 - My less than \$50 Radio Shack unit works fine
- Cables, Connectors and Adapters
 - From mikes to mixer
 - From mixer to camcorder
 - Match connector types with adapters
- Earphones
 - Monitor sound levels on set
 - Noise canceling headsets (now available in \$20 range)

Wireless Lapel Microphones - Are also reasonable in price now and share many of the characteristics of other wireless mikes. The lapel mikes are easy to hide -- unless the character is wearing a string bikini. And they are wonderful if a character has to move around the scene a lot. One thing to do with lapel mikes, if you are hiding the mike behind clothing and if the actor is to move, tape the mike and clothes so that the clothing will not rub against the mike and make unwanted noise.

Smart Phones – You can use your smart phone as a miniature digital recording system that can be placed near the speaking actors and be easily hidden from camera view. If the video has a present day setting, laying a smart phone in open view may just look like a prop. You will have to copy the recorded audio into your video editor, and then you sync the phone audio with the camera's video track. I like to record the smart phone audio while the phone is in camcorder mode (as opposed to audio only mode) to help me align the phone audio with the camera's video.

USB Microphones - As a backup audio recording system, I picked up a couple of USB omnidirectional microphones that plug directly into my windows tablet computer. So, my little tablet is a limited recording studio. I still have to deal with cables, and keep them back from camera view.

Bluetooth Wireless Microphones – This new type of microphone has some very interesting possibilities but read the specifications closely before you buy them to make sure they are compatible with your equipment. Some will connect directly to your computer's Bluetooth interface, some will pair with Bluetooth equipped camcorders, and some require a separate receiver that plugs into your camcorder or computer audio jack. Some bluetooth lapel microphones have an earphone jack for two-way communications.

Audio Mixers – Very useful option when using external microphones to: permit more microphones than you have inputs to your sound recording device (camcorder, computer or digital recorder), balance the sound between microphones, allows increasing sound levels from microphone used by a soft-spoken actor, and optimize the sound levels to match the dynamic range of the audio recording device. I use a four channel battery powered Radio Shack mixer that cost me about \$50. Make sure you use a fresh battery before you start your shoot. You do not need a big mixing board unless you are recording a concert or a music video. I think that you will want to keep your set-up simple and be relatively mobile without having a sound van. Even with my small mixer, I still have plenty of cables with which I have to connect up to.

Audio Recording Devices – May be a camcorder, a computer, a digital sound recording system, or a smart phone. If you use an analog recorder, the sound will have to be converted to digital before your editor can use the audio. Nowadays, digital recorders are preferred. After you place and connect your microphones and/or mixer on the set, make sure you check and adjust sound levels for each microphone for the way each actor speaks. Also, check that no unwanted sounds are being pick-up by the microphones or by a bad cable connection. Make adjustments

accordingly whether it be moving slider controls on the mixer or moving microphone connections. Many recording devices have recording level indicators that show you if the sound is too soft or too loud: too loud often results in distorted sound.

Headsets - Used to monitor the sound quality and amplitudes as you check your sound levels and as you do the shoot. Things happen during the shoot that may degrade the sound pick-up such as the microphone moves or a battery dies. Good noise cancelling headsets greatly improve the sound monitoring over standard earphones because you will hear only the sound picked-up by the microphones. Hopefully, your sound recording device has a headset jack so you can monitor the sound as you are recording the video. It is good to monitor the sound in real time, but some recording devices do not permit this capability and you have to make your sound checks after the audio is recorded.

Cables and Wires – Unless you are shooting with fully contained audio/video camcorders running on batteries, and with available light only, you will have cables and wires. You may be surprised how much wiring and cable running you will have to do. All of this wire needs to be hidden from camera view during the shoot and precautions need to be taken to prevent them from being a safety hazard. Run the cables and wire so people can walk around the set without tripping over them or pulling over a hot light. Wide tape (e.g. gaffers tape or duct tape) is commonly used to neatly hold the cables down on the floor. Tie strips are great for grouping cables together and to hold them to fixed objects (e.g. to light stands). Tie strip mounts with sticky tape can secure cables running up a wall (but the tape can damage the wall). Velcro strips are also great for securing cables and these strips are reusable.

Remember that cables and wires do go bad (especially their connectors) and they seem to have a way of disappearing into Never-Never Land: so make sure you have spares. Regularly inspect your cables and wires for fraying, loose connectors, shorts and potential safety hazards. For your high wattage lights, do not use light-weight extension cords: cord current ratings should well exceed the current ratings of the lights.

Video Monitor – A very useful capability is to have the on-location ability to playback the last take you just recorded to see if you had any shooting errors. Those little camcorder displays make it difficult to catch the smaller shooting deficiencies. A larger on-set monitor would greatly help spot the small flaws. Some camcorders allow you to directly connect to an external monitor (via HDMI or Firewire interface) where you can view the video during shooting or as a playback. A laptop computer can also serve as a handy on-set playback monitor. Some sort of video monitor is a helpful tool for maintaining continuity between the various takes for a scene such as observing positions of the actors, clothes, hair and props to match them in the next take or retake.

Equipment Carts – For organizing your equipment and transporting them, get some carts with wheels and make up several functionally oriented carts. For instance, make a sound cart which

holds your basic sound equipment and cables and which has a flat top to place your mixing board. I use an old over-sized suitcase as my lighting cart – it gets a little heavy but the wheels are great.

On-Set Cast Preparations and Nurturing

When the cast arrives on the set, they will need to be prepped for the shoot in terms of their physical appearance, reinforcing their lines (with possible scene run-throughs), general orientation and state of mind adjustments.

Actor Costuming, Hair Dressing and Make-up - Seems like an obvious thing, and if you go with my recommendation that you select scripts that use the actors' own street clothes, then these appearance tailoring tasks may seem trivial. However, you still must ensure that the actors come dressed/made-up appropriately for the parts they play, or else, make quick on the set adjustments. In your case, appearance adjustments will entail continuity of appearance between takes and retakes or from scene to scene shoots. You want the jacket zipped up the same amount in all views (even if each view is shot separately), hair messed up the same way and the fake facial scar in the same position. If you are shooting against a blue screen or a green screen, make sure your actors do not wear clothes the same color of the screen unless you want those clothes and body parts to be transparent.

Anecdote: I shot a short video over four days at Camp Lebanon. One actor, in back-to-back scenes shot on separate days, could not wear her same outfit for both days which created a wardrobe discontinuity. To keep the audience from noticing this discontinuity, I had to change the scene order at the time of editing. Fortunately, my script was flexible enough to make the scene order adjustment with some artistic editing. The integrity of the story was maintained.

Orientation – Which may include a pep-talk, mental attitude adjustments, a safety discussion, and a personal conduct talk (especially about noise on the set). Your actors and cast need to be tuned into why they are at the shoot; be motivated/encouraged to do their parts; committed to making sure they and all others on the set stay safe; and behave in a way that facilitates the successful completion of the shoot without disruption, unwanted noise and/or injuries. Part of the orientation is common to all on the set, but some individuals may need special attention (e.g. the very insecure needing encouragement). Perhaps you may need to have actors do a few brief relaxation exercises (e.g. deep breathing, meditation and/or prayer) or exercises to build confidence (e.g. a team cheer/song and/or prayer). Remind the cast and crew of the good service they are doing and the potential positive impact that may result from the performance. In the safety discussion, do a walk-around the set and point out any safety hazards, how to avoid injuries/damage and how to respond to a safety incident. Be sure to emphasize the rules of the shoot (especially behavior and the need for silence when the camera is running) and why the rules must be followed. They will be on a “hot set”. Also, take this opportunity to use the shoot

as a spiritual development opportunity by explaining the spiritual message/relevance of the scene (e.g. even explaining a single prop may provide spiritual enlightenment such as a nail).

Releases – Make sure that you have all of the cast’s releases in order and signed. For minors, make sure you have the approving signatures from a parent, guardian or person legally responsible for the child. Include the name they want to be used for the credits.

Last Minute Part Prep – Some of the actors may not have their parts totally down/memorized and may need a quick going through their parts before you start the cameras rolling. Also, checking how ready the cast and crew really are is a good idea by asking them some particulars about their parts. For the actors, have them mimic or act like their character to help them get into character (but do not let this get out of hand and cause loss of discipline on the set). I am one who believes that capturing the character is more important than having the dialog perfect. Have the actors do a preliminary walk-through of key scene parts, and at the same time have the crew make adjustments to their equipment (e.g. sound checks, move lights for eliminating unwanted shadows, and camera settings). Make sure the actors know their proper standing/moving positions and the camera person knows what to do to capture the action of the scene. A quick recording and playback of the walk-through may help cast and crew to get their act together and to make fine adjustments (hopefully only fine adjustments).

Near-by Off-Set Hangout and Food Area (helps to noise down on the set) – When you do not need cast or crew members on the set, encourage them to hang-out in a location where they will not be heard during the active shooting. Food will help keep them in that area. The social aspect of the hang-out should contribute to the team building affect and fellowship. However for the well behaved not in the current shooting activity, having them in the active shooting area could be a good learning experience that will help develop them further, and may permit the off-loading of work on you in future shoots.

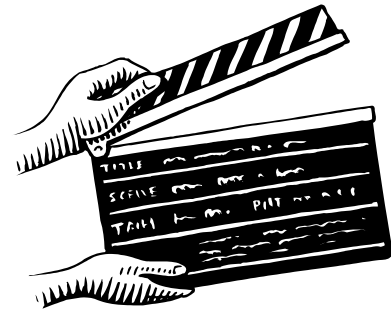
Capturing Memories and Promotional Pictures – For memorabilia purposes, potential “how it was made” videos and pictures for promotionals, have someone capture the activities of the shoot. The cast and crew will love seeing these pictures and clips at a later date. And try to find or create a picture that can be blown-up for a promotional poster.

Active Shoot

Now you are ready for the actors to do their acting and the crew to optimally capture the action and dialog with the camcorder and/or smartphone. This is the time you have been anxiously waiting and preparing for. Now let’s go over some of the “how to’s” you may need during the active shooting. Use the advice as applicable for your particular production. The following discussions are meant to give you enough information to conduct your first video shoot and to give tips on how to raise the bar for follow-on projects. Use the information applicable to your skill level. Your church audience will be very forgiving because they like to see the church’s

local talent and they realize the first projects will not be perfect. Strive for quality within your limitations and you will get better in future projects. Your first shoot has much to teach you.

Clapper Board Sync – Use at the start of each take to designate and mark each take visually on the recorded media to assist the video editing person to efficiently sort through and order the scenes/takes. Be sure to include the identifiers for scene, take number and media (e.g. sd card number). The clapper person should make sure that the clapper information will be clearly seen by all the cameras and may even verbally speak the information.



The most important function of the clapper board is for synchronizing the sound with the video in post-production: especially if the audio recorder is separate from the camera. When the clapper is closed, it creates a sound spike that the editor can visually see on the sound track waveform. The editor will visually match the sound spike on the audio track with the visual closing of the clapper shown on the video track. When the audio and video are out of synchronization, this is called a lip flap. When the difference is greater than one tenth of one second, a significant number of people can notice the lip flap, and the video may appear to be a poorly dubbed film.

I recently downloaded a free electronic clapper board app for an Android tablet PC. It will display the video title, scene and take information. It provides a 5 second countdown with an audible beep each time the displayed countdown second changes (for video-sound sync). And, it displays a precision time to sync up multiple cameras. The name of this app is DigitalClapper from QuArt Studio.

A clapper board is not an absolute necessity, but is quite useful. Additionally, kids of all ages love to use them and are entertained by them. You can buy a physical clapper board from Amazon or download a free clapper board app for you tablet pc.

Camera Views - The two basic views are the Master Shot and the Side View (or Pops). Get these basic shots first – especially if you are limited in shooting time. Once you get these, then you can go for the artistic shots.

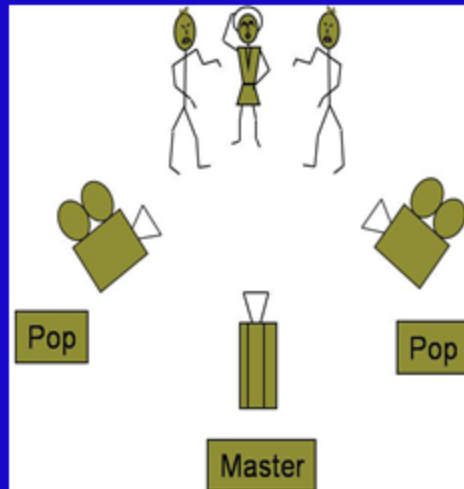
Basic Shots

Master Shot

- Most essential
- Used for the scene
"Establishing Shot"
- Used to reestablish the scene between other shots
- Sometimes used for the complete scene

Pops

- Medium close-ups
- Side view



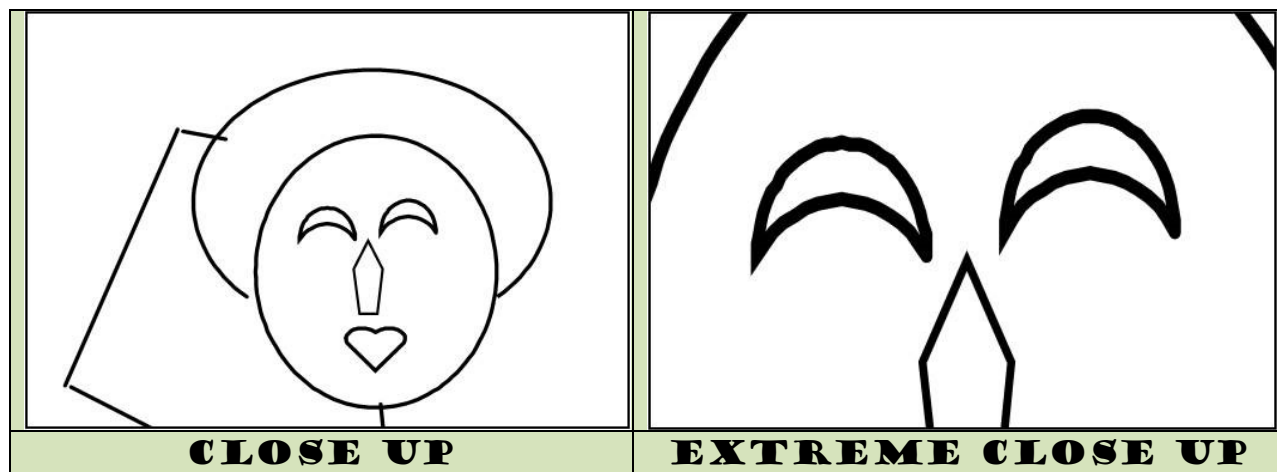
The **Master Shot** is the most essential view of a scene. It is commonly the first shot of a scene for setting up the scene as an “Establishing Shot” wide view. The purpose of the Master Shot is to convey scene essentials such as location, time of day, characters of the scene and their relative positions, mood of the scene, and to some degree, action. Sometime it is used to reestablish the scene – particularly in long scenes. Sometimes it is used for the complete scene when the fine details conveyed in close-ups are not needed for showing image particulars or maintaining the interest of the viewer. If you are limited in time and money, the whole video can be shot as Master Scenes. But consider what you lose. Sometimes, the master shot is placed later in the scene because the director does not want you to know the scene’s location and contents (usually for building suspense or for intentionally creating viewer disorientation).

Pops are medium close-ups from the side that show minor details not sufficiently conveyed by other shots. They add interest in the scene, show dialog interaction between characters (even if one does not speak) and give a sense of action. They are usually filmed at angles, and switched back and forth between actors as they deliver their dialog.

Shot Framing – Relates to how you fill the frame with the subject matter to visually and artistically communicate all the visual information you want to convey, leave the impression you want to impart, and make the imagery interesting (and even captivating). The next set of my crude images visually demonstrates the effects of frame shots from a far distant shot to an extreme close up. When creating scripts, you usually do not provide camera direction or what level of zoom to be used. This is the job of the director to determine; who may decide on the set

or write it into a “shooting script”. However, if you are not the person using the camera, the camera man will need shooting directions.

SHOT FRAMING	
	
MASTER SHOT	FULL SHOT
	
KNEE SHOT	MEDIUM SHOT
	
WAIST SHOT	MEDIUM CLOSE UP




Out-Takes - Are wonderful! You might think they are put in to enhance the story. But, frequently they are used for covering up mistakes in acting, directing or filming. The post-production geek comes to save the film: armed with his video editing computer and his collection of out-takes.

Out Takes

(a.k.a Cat in the Window Shots)

- Views of set objects or people (often as extreme close-ups)
- Taken out of sequence
- Relatively insensitive to sequence
- To be inserted in video to:
 - Cover up mistakes
 - Hide scene splicing mismatches
 - Compensate for actors not in exact positions or poses between takes



- Take many Out Takes
- Use in post-production to:
 - Save the scene
 - Add visual interest

Out-takes can be of objects or people and are oftentimes shot as extreme close-ups. Out-takes are often called, “Cat in the Window Shots” with the analogy that putting an animal (like a cat or dog) in the set works well for covering mistakes during the shooting.

When filming out-takes, you can do them out of sequence: before, during or after filming a scene. Take plenty of them. If someone is holding a book, take a close-up of a page in the book.

Have a computer on the set? Take a picture of something revealing on the screen. If filming a murder mystery, take close-ups of clues.

Make sure that you take some outtakes that are insensitive to the action in the scene. These can be used as anytime cover-ups when the post-production person has problems putting the scene together. Also, keep these clips in your bag of tricks for future cover-ups.

Need Multiple Shots, Views, and Out-Takes – Common reasons for changing shot angles, changing closeness of views and including various extra images into the scene is to: create interest, create a sense of action, vary the viewers' attention to important imagery (focus/redirect focus of attention whether static or in motion), add important facts/exposition, and add artistry. This is very true. However as are you are working with children and amateur cast/crew, the likely most important reason is to compensate for acting errors (or plain bad acting) and shooting deficiencies. Young actors are prone to making errors in speaking their lines and in making gestures/movements incorrectly in a single unbroken take. You need to have breakpoints for your editor to unnoticeably cutout the bad stuff and insert sections that were done correctly. Recording multiple shots, view and out-takes provide you with these breakpoints. Additionally, make sure you make multiple retakes of each so you can select from the sliced up best pieces.

How to Shoot Those Who Can Not Remember Lines: If an actor(s) cannot remember lines or you had to use someone at the shoot that was not slated to do the part, use the following technique that will permit the editor options to make the actor look good and to successfully present the story. The key to this technique is capturing the actors from multiple shots and views.

- Place Actor 1 in the position where he/she will deliver the dialog.
- Place the camera in the position in which Actor 2 is to be standing so that the camera will capture a close-up from the view of Actor 1 (or shot can be taken over the shoulder of Actor 2).
- Tell Actor 1 (possibly multiple times) his/her's first single line to be spoken.
- Have the Actor 1 repeat the line multiple times with perhaps presentation advice (e.g. facial expressions, gestures and intonation).
- Instruct and have Actor 1 do the following after starting the camera rolling:
 - Do not deliver the line immediately,
 - Hold a body position and a facial expression for a few seconds as if he/she were listening to Actor 2 deliver a previous line (you may have the previous line spoken or give a five finger silent count-down),
 - Speak the line of dialog,
 - Hold the position as if you are listening to Actor 2 deliver the next line and
 - Repeat the process until you have a good take of the one line.
 - If Actor 1 keeps getting stuck on a line, phrase or line, then record audio of Actor 1 reading the part, so that, an outtake or insert can be dropped into the video track as the audio is presented.
- Repeat the process for the next line(s).
- Once finished with Actor 1, repeat the process for Actor 2.


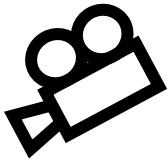
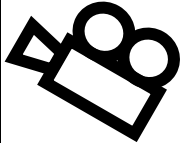
- Film some outtakes, cutaways and/or inserts that can be placed into spots where the various clips/takes of the actors' visual actions/expressions do not mesh together well.



If you have actors who can memorize their lines, then shoot them together in their conversational positions – shooting from the side and back of them. When shooting them together, you can take advantage of the chemistry created by actors responding to how the other previously delivered his/her line. If you use two cameras simultaneous, you can reduce shooting time.

Another technique to help actors with their lines is the use of cue cards or a teleprompter. You can turn your computer or tablet PC into a teleprompter with freeware apps, software or on-line application. I have personally used an on-line teleprompter from cueprompter.com which works on PCs and tablets. Also, you can use a PowerPoint like program on a computer and a medium sized display for cue cards.

When I shoot a video, I like to make three takes from each angle/shot because of the young actors may improve the delivery of their lines with each take or have more interesting expressions. Also in the chaos of a shoot, you may not be aware of all the imperfections that creep into any one take (e.g. subtle unwanted sounds, a misplaced object or some shooting discontinuity). If you have the luxury of time, review takes on the set for shooting discrepancies so you can shoot a correcting retake while the cast and crew are still on the set.

Vertical Camera Orientations – Another way to create moods and psychological effects is by using different vertical camera orientations/angles such as those listed in the following table.

Common Vertical Camera Orientations (Angles) and Their Effects		
Eye-Level	Normal real-world angle that shows subjects as we would expect to view them in real life. Angle of view is horizontal with the ground and eye-level in height. It is a fairly neutral shot.	
High Angle	Shows the subject from above with the camera elevated and angled down towards the subject. High angles are used to create the effects of diminishing the subject, making them appear smaller, less powerful, less significant or even submissive.	
Low Angle	Shows the subject from below with the camera lowered and pointing upwards towards the subject. Low angles give the impression that the subject is taller, more powerful or dominant. If the subject is moving, it appears to be going faster.	

Bird's Eye	<p>The camera is almost directly overhead and puts the audience in a godlike position looking down on the action. People look insignificant. Moving subjects appear to be moving slower. It can be used to show a different spatial perspective, and reveals to the audience things that the characters on the ground cannot observe.</p> <p>The bird's-eye views are used for sporting events (e.g. football and hockey) to better convey factually and spatially the action on the field, but it tends to convey less emotion.</p>	
Slanted/Oblique/Canted/Dutch-Tilt	<p>The camera is purposely tilted to one side so the horizon is on an angle for dramatic effects, and perhaps psychologically unbalancing emotions such as disorientation, unsettledness, drunkenness, unsteadiness, instability or danger.</p>	

Point of View Shots (POC) – Can employ various angled views (or combinations thereof) from usually a moving character’s perspective and commonly insinuates motion (e.g. running after the bad guy, or just turning the head to catch a glimpse of a scantily clad sexy body). POV shots tend to be dynamic. The camera is held at a character’s eye level (whether standing, on the floor or other positions) and is moved as the character’s eyes are expected to move. The camera may be handheld or mounded on a stabilizing device which permits camera motion in multiple dimensions/axis. Often times, the cameraman will be wearing the stabilizing device. Try to avoid excessive jumpiness. I once created a dizzying POV segment by holding a camcorder up to my head as I square danced (before GoPro cameras were available): weaving in and out; doing swing-thru’s; and spinning around.

Green Screen/Blue Screen Special Effects – When you cannot shoot at the real location called for in the script or you want to create a Superman effect, you can have your actors perform in front of a green or blue screen (actually, other uniform colors may be used). The background can be uniformly painted walls and floors or can be a cloth drape/mat. I bought a 10 by 20 foot green screen mat for about \$40, but because the material is thin, you cannot have lights behind it that might show through. In post-production, the editing person will insert the background with the “chroma keyer” feature available in some video editing software. The editing is relatively simple if the following considerations are observed during the shooting:

- The background must be a single uniform color;
- The background should not have visible wrinkles or seams;
- Actors must not wear any colors that match (or nearly match) the background color;
- The background should be uniformly illuminated with shadows minimized;

- Since the screen may be limited in size, the camera may have to be kept in a single position, and the actors will have to change positions to get the switching/alternating side shots for the back and forth dialog;
- Help the actors mentally visualize the background, especially if the action of the scene correlates to specific items in the background;
- When obtaining the background images, get multiple background images of the location that will match a head-on establishing shot and at least two opposing side shots (to the right and left of the establishing shot);
- If the background is a video with moving objects or persons, make sure that the moving objects/persons will not be walking/traveling through your inserted characters. Maintain a free area between the camera and the expected locations that your inserted characters will stand;
- Make sure your background images are of sufficient resolution to allow your editor to zoom in on the images to better match the sizes of your characters with the background images and to keep proper relative size perspectives; and
- If you are using stock images from someone else or another source, make sure you have permission or license to use the images.

Monitor Video and Audio – Interactively during the shoot, check on the quality and content of what is actually recorded (or have someone do it for you). It is easy to have the camera angle or zoom level off a bit and you end up capturing stuff that you do not want in the video (e.g. a microphone or a by-stander). Also, microphones may pick-up undesired noise or not record a soft-spoken actor. Monitoring as the video is being shot is great for taking instant corrective action. However, directors may be too busy and moving around too much to watch a video monitor and listen through a headset. If you have a big enough crew, your camera and audio persons can do the instantaneous monitoring. Your fallback is playback of the clips you take on location which is now quite easy to do. In the old film days, you had to wait until the film was developed before catching shooting deficiencies. Film is expensive; so, you could not afford to do many retakes. Digital recording media is relatively cheap and is reuseable.

Continuity Preservation – When repeating scenes, the actors will always do something different than before (such as hands or body positioned differently or they will place a prop in a different spot). Also, clothes, hair and props seem to mystically change positions between takes and retakes. These little mismatches play havoc in post-production editing. You or some other crew member (e.g. script consultant) need to guard against these undesired differences. If you cannot pickup on or remember the difference that cause discontinuity, then refer back to the clips previously recorded and match their positions. Monitors and playback capabilities are wonderful tools to maintain continuity. Also, do a double check to ensure that all parts of the script/scene are recorded before breaking down the set or ending the shoot (missed script sections even happen with the professionals).

Recording Sound-Effects – Sound effects can do wonders in beefing up the impact of your story if done well. They add another sensory dimension to video, elevate emotions and grab your interest. You may or may not record special sound-effects at an active shoot. For your first few shoots, you will probably want to skip creating special sound effects. However, one sound effect you record at the active shoot is at least ten seconds of ambient background noise to be used later by your post-production editor (e.g. keeping background noise continuity when a picture is inserted or adding back noise after special audio editing of the dialog – incorporating noise into audio recorded after the shoot). As for getting special sounds, you may want to purchase them from the many sound-effect internet sites. But, the one thing I have noticed about making special sound effects, kids of all ages love to make them. For your simple beginning video, you will not need a Foley artist. Let the kids have some fun. You do not necessarily need the real noise objects to make the noise. Experiment with some sound making objects (e.g. hitting two pieces of wood together can sound like a gunshot) and even combine some sounds together (Star Wars’ Wookie Chewbacca sounds were created by combining bits and fragments of animal sounds including walruses). In post-production, the sound editor can modify the sounds and insert them into the video. Your camcorder will likely be an excellent device for capturing various sound effects. I had also plugged a USB microphone into my computer to record sound effects for my video “A Family Getting By” which is an audio play set to static pictures.

Recording Voice-Overs (V.O.) and Off-Screen (O.S) Dialog – Dialog in your video does not necessarily have to be spoken by actors seen on the video. In my Heaven’s Portal videos, the admitting angel is off-screen when delivering the angel’s snapping dialog in response to admission candidates trying to fast-talk their way into Heaven. Often times, an O.S. is spoken before a character enters the scene visually (e.g. “Hello, I am here – is anyone home?” and enters the scene through a door.). A V.O. is usually dialog separate from the characters of the current scene but adds important inform to the scene (e.g. an emergency alert heard over a radio on the set or a mysterious speaker over a telephone). Because the actors may be difficult to track down after the shoot, record the voice-overs and off-screen dialog at the shoot. If dialog is talking through a phone or a door, do not worry about making these audio recordings sound like such since the video editor can add the filtering effects.

Another type of V.O. is used for correcting dialog deficiencies in the original video recording where the post-production editors find problems in the recorded dialog (e.g. not enough volume or excessive microphone hum). Then, the actor is called in for a special voice over session where the actor will speak the dialog directly into a microphone while attempting to sync the dialogue with a playback of the original video from the original shoot. Once the new audio is recorded, the post person will do his/her magic to make the audio fit into the original video recording (e.g. direct audio replacement with no video adjustments, select a back of the head view as dialog is played, or slice up each audible word and manually align to mouth movement).

Of course this new V.O. will not have the same matching background noise, so then the editor will have to add in the noise for the audio captured during the original shoot.

Breakdown and Clean-up

Release Verification – Before anyone leaves the set, make sure that you have all of the cast’s releases in order and signed. This should have been done in pre-production or when the cast arrived on the set. However, you might have a walk-on or last minute extra to get releases from. Do not let any actor off the set without a signed release from them (or make arrangements to get the signed release). You should clean-up this legal loose end if need be.

Packing Up and Restoring the Location – Unless the set is dedicated fulltime for your video production, you will have to pack up your equipment, props and scenery. Allow sufficient time to do so. Typically for my shoots, packing up takes about a half hour to an hour. Also, make sure that you restore the condition of the location to its original state or better – especially if you would like people to continue to let you use their location in future projects. Use pictures you had taken on first arrival to the location as a guide for restoring the location. Then, conduct a restoration inspection to verify that everything is back in its place with nothing missing and in original condition. You may want to take pictures of the site’s condition when you leave so you have proof of complete location restoration if you are questioned about it.

Mini-Cast/Crew Reward and Comradery – After the shoot, the cast and crew may have worked up an appetite and/or want some follow-up fellowship. This can be a great continuing opportunity for:

- Encouraging them to participate in future projects,
- Further discussion on the spiritual message of the video,
- Build a spiritual team relationship/fellowship,
- Encouraging them to bring friends and relatives to the premiere, and
- Instructing them how to use the work they have done in their personal witness.

Everyone Home Safely - Particularly if you are shooting with minors, make sure everyone gets home safely and/or properly turned over to a responsible person, parent or guardian. You should be concerned about and take responsibility for the well-being of your cast and crew. Thank them and give them encouragement as they leave. A prayer of thanks and a request to God for their well-being is very much in order.

Chapter 5 – Post-Production

The Magic, the Power and the Art

Now that your story is “in the can” as a group of recorded clips with various takes and possibly on multiple media storage devices with files not clearly labeled, you may expect that your finished presentable video will come together by magic. It may seem that way, but the magic does not happen instantaneously. For simple videos, figure one to three hours of editing for one minute of runtime.

For the magic to occur, you need a magician with the power to make things appear and disappear – the computer geek with the video editing software. Tell your actors to be kind to the editing person if they want to look good in the video. I have found that the post-production person(s) commands tremendous power at the twitch of her/his magical wand: the mouse click (if on a tablet PC, a twitch of the finger). As this person gains experience, so will her/his artistic ability grow to present imagery that tells/shows the stories of your projects and make the impossible possible. I love the magic to make mistakes go away (within reason) and to make the actors seem that they had their lines down perfectly (at least the audience will not see all of the prompting to get the actors to recite their lines correctly). What power and what artistry are at the command of the post-production person(s)!

Basic Editing Overview and Guidance

Before getting into the editing details, let me give you a high-level overview of the video editing process and some guidance.

- Script and Director’s Notes – Prior to editing being accomplished, the post production person needs to understand the story from the written script’s perspective and from the director’s perspective. At the very least, the post person needs a copy of the script. If the director is kind, the director will provide a marked up script that provides the director’s vision of the story and scenes. Other director insights pertaining to the various takes/clips would be helpful (e.g. performance quality indicators for the various takes/clips and which clips are preferred). Study these and do not be shy to ask the director questions.
- Import the Video/Audio Data – Enter the recorded video/audio clips into your computer to first review/analyze and then edit them into a complete video. Make sure you have sufficient amount of disk space to hold all of the data. For your one to five minute video, you may need 10 to 20 GBytes of space even though the finished video may only take up 20 Mbytes. During the editing process, you will later import other sound or video data such as sound effects, music and downloadable stock video footage (**make sure they are all legal**).
- Review/Analyze the Recorded Video – You will need to review each applicable clip/take to:

- Determine what is useable and what is not,
 - Assign a relative quality rating for each line,
 - Identify areas likely to need corrective action,
 - Formulate your editing approach, and
 - Determine extra video/audio data that will be needed to supplement the data recorded during production.
- **Selecting and Switching between Clips/Shots/Views** – Once you have an idea of the best parts of your video recordings, you will put them on the various editing tracks in time sequence and order them to obtain the desired affects and for the most impact consistent with the script/story. To get the best results, you will need to mix and match different shots and angles which allow you to create interest and to edit around shooting deficiencies. You will most likely need at least one wide angle establishing shot to place the viewer at the scene. And then, you need a sequence of close-ups to capture facial features during dialog: switching back and forth between the communicating characters (a character does not have to speak to say something). Make sure the matching of cuts is logical, non-distracting, seamless and consistent with the story.
 - **Audio Track Editing** – You are most likely not making a silent movie. Sound accentuates the story and makes it come alive. The primary source of your audio will come from your video clips and/or from a separate digital audio recorder for higher quality sound from the production shoot. Not all audio clips are created equal, but try to make them seem so, as you take audio from one video clip and match it to a different video clip. Try to synchronize the video and audio delivery of dialog to less than 10 milliseconds. Some audio clips will be noisier than others where you may need to port the audio clip to an audio editor for noise reduction or noise matching. You may end up with gaps on your audio tracks where you will need to copy some background noise from one clip and paste it into the sound gap. You will want to add your music into a separate sound track, as well as a separate track for your sound effects. If you plan to play the video on smartphones, you may want to juice up the volume to compensate for the limited audio output of the phones.
 - **Title and Credits** – Are usually text inserts or overlays that are very easy to make with your editing software. You may or may not put the title at the absolute beginning as some videos will have a short introductory scene before showing the title. If you delay the title, still put one frame of title as your first frame, even though you may not visually see the first frame when you play the video. The first frame is often times used as an identifier in your file manager icon, in your DVD burning software for a start button and in your internet/social media posting site to entice people to view your video. If you have an important star or someone financing the video, you may want give recognition to them in the opening credits (e.g. “Made possible by a grant from...”). The closing credits roll is the place where the cast and crew can point to when showing off to friends and relatives – an ego booster. When the cast and crew are minors, you may want to protect them by using a stage name for them or not putting their names in the credits – have the parents decide. Closing credits are good

places to include music (especially if your local talent performed the music), but respect intellectual property rights and copyright laws.

- Learning the Editing Tools – Prior to the start of post-production, hopefully your post person started playing with and learning the video and audio editing tools. Many of the editing programs come with easy to follow tutorials (like my Sony Vega Movie Studio). Additionally, many tutorials for these editors can be found on YouTube. I found the tutorials eye-opening about the power you have as an editor and all of the magical tricks you can pull. I found that the tutorials with my editor were relatively easy to follow but it does take some time to go through them. First go through the tutorials for the basic editing, and later on, go through the advance stuff. And from time to time, you may selectively go through individual tutorials necessary to do a particular editing task at hand that you previously had not yet learned. Your first editing projects will definitely be a learning experience. It is also a wonderful experience of artistic expression and creativity. Figure one to three hours of editing for one minute of run-time on a simple editing project. Patience is typically needed for all artistic masterpieces. The editing person should be given a great deal of recognition even though he/she is an unseen person.
- File Library – Over time and multiple projects, you will want to build a file library of video and audio clips that can be re-used/recycled for future projects. Each of your projects will likely have something you may want to incorporate into a yet unplanned masterpiece. At your leisure, to may just record some interesting sounds on your smartphone for future sound effects and capture pictures/video for future green screen scenes. Also when you have some spare money, you may want to buy some royalty free clips, sound effects and musical loops. By building a file library, old stuff can be made new while making future projects easier, more efficient to produce and less costly to create.

Post-Production Process

Copy Video to Editing Computer – Usually, this is an easy process unless you are copying your video clips from analog video media like VHS (dropping frames is quite common) and some digital video (DV) tape can be a bit lengthy if you have to do a real-time video playback. For video on tapes, you may have to wait until you open your editing software, and then, perform a video capture.

Most camcorders today permit direct video file transfers to your computer through:

- Swapping in and out a memory card (e.g. SD memory cards)
- USB cable between camcorder and the computer, or
- Wireless connections (e.g. Wi-Fi or Bluetooth).

Before transferring in the data, create a directory on the computer/server where you want the raw video clips to be stored and from which you will access them from your video editing software.

If your camcorder uses memory cards, remove the card from the camcorder and put the card into your computer. If your computer does not have a slot to insert a card, you may have to insert the card into an adapter that will then plug into your computer's USB port.

If the direct data transfer is by cable, then connect the appropriate cable type between video recording device and the computer (most likely a USB cable since FireWire is seldom used by newer camcorders). Be sure you have the correct version of cable. For instance, USB comes in versions 1, 2 and 3. Additionally, devices may have different USB connector sizes (e.g. normal, mini, micro and various proprietary sizes). If your video camera is a smartphone, after you connect the phone to the computer, the phone may require you to enable data sharing features (probably selected through the "settings" application on the phone). To the computer, the video camera will look like an external drive.

If your camera and computer has wireless capabilities, then copy the data wirelessly. However, I have found that many camcorders tend to have their own peculiarities for establishing connections and transferring the data; while with some, you just do a simple device pairing and copy like you would with an external drive. My Canon camcorder required a download of a special application which is not particularly user friendly (I prefer swapping the memory card).

With a file manager/explorer application, you navigate to the directory on the card or camera with the video clip files (some camcorders bury the files in a tree of subdirectories). Select the desired clips, select copy, navigate to the destination directory on the computer and select paste. Data transferred from memory cards usual goes fast. For some wire transfers from camcorders, you may want to take a coffee break while the data transfers.

The most time consuming type of video data transfers are when you have to playback of the video in real-time which older video tape cameras make you do. Most video editing programs have a video capture feature to perform this playback form of video data transfer. I remember when this was wonderful state-of-the-art stuff. However, you use the equipment that is made available to you – whatever quirky old interfaces that comes with it (composite video, s-bus, RGB...).

Cataloging and Grading the Clips – Once you have the video in the computer, you can now view and evaluate the various clips with which you have to create the finished video. You can preview and evaluate the clips using your video editing program or by using most any video playing application. I use a combination of both: video player for gross initial checks to eliminate totally unusable clips and the editor for a more detailed evaluation.

Chances are that you will have no one perfect clip and you will have to inter-mingle portions of duplicate takes. I evaluate clips line by line against the script and put my ratings in a spreadsheet or table (see Clip Rating Sample) using the following method:

1. Number each line, character dialog and/or action paragraph of the script.
2. Using a spreadsheet or a word processor table, list the script line numbers in the left column.
3. Across the top row, list the video clip identifiers (whether it be consecutive numbers or file names created by your video camera).
4. While watching each clip, give a rating to each line of dialog or action and enter the rating into the spreadsheet or table such as:
 - a. G(reen) for good, Y(ellow) for useable, or R(ed) for probably un-useable (I say probably because you may not have anything better, and perhaps, you can doctor it up with the editing program).
 - b. If one clip is exceptionally good, add another rating indicator such as a “+” after the G.
 - c. You may want to add a single word note or abbreviation into the table cell (e.g. noise or EC for extreme close-up).
 - d. Add color shading to the cells according to your ratings.

Clip Rating Sample						
Script Line	Clip 1 MS	Clip 2 Jane	Clip 3 Carol	Clip 4 Carol	Clip 5 J&C	Clip 6 Traffic
1	G					
2	G	G				
3	Y focus		R	G++	Y noise	
4		G			Y noise	
5						G
6			G	Y clothes	G	

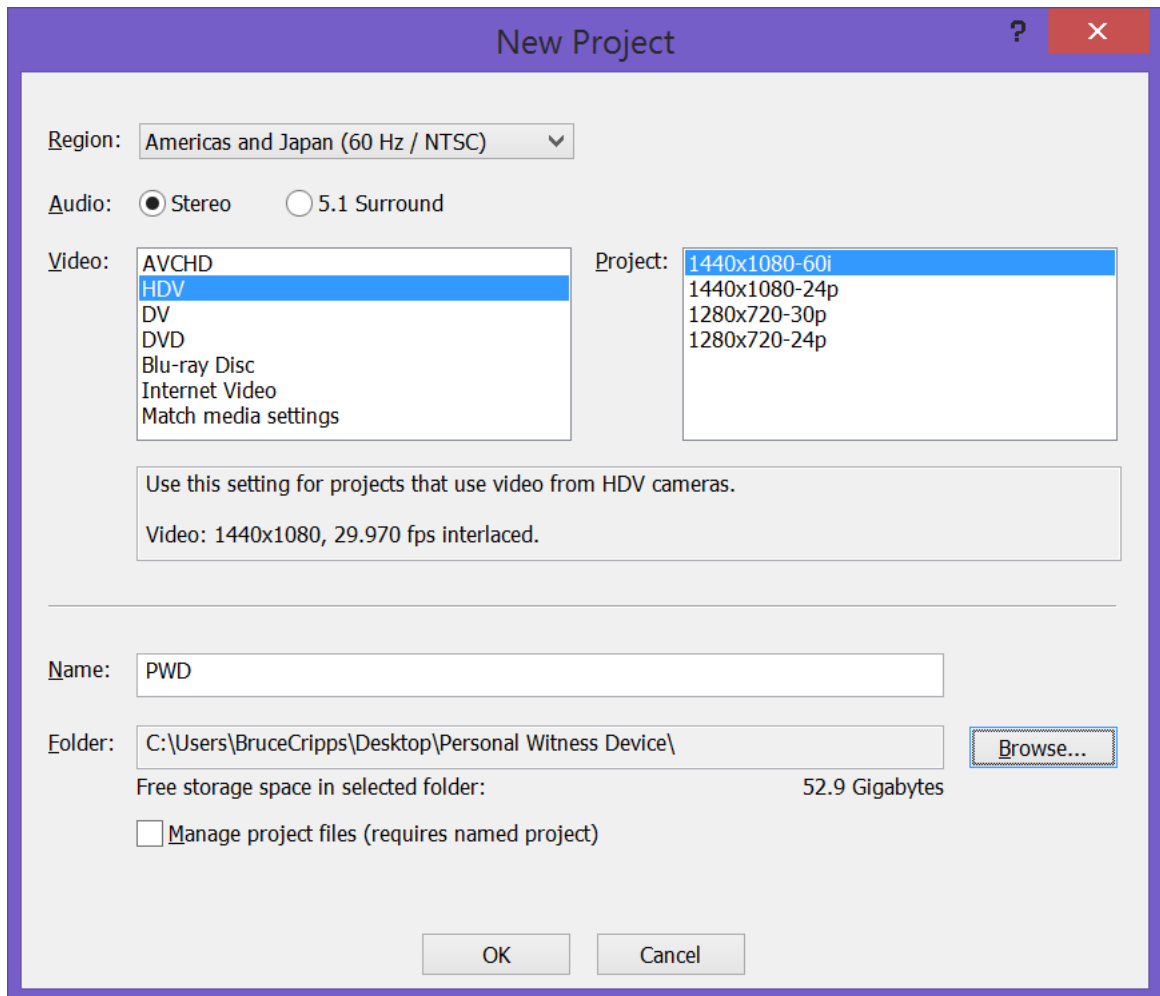
From the sample rating chart, Carol flubbed her first close-up line but nailed her second try. Also for showing Carol’s lines, you will likely cut between two clips because she was not perfect throughout any one clip.

My clip rating table tends to have more columns because I like to make two or three takes for each view/shot just in case of errors not caught during the time of shooting (noise is

my biggest nemesis). This clip rating scheme may not be Hollywood, but it works well for me.

Starting the Editing Program, Project Name/Directory and Stipulating the Properties –

Now you are ready to start building your video using your selected video editing software. When you open the editor program, the program will likely ask you for a project name (or file name) and for a directory where the project (and associated files the program will generate) is to be stored. Some editing programs will prompt you to enter some characteristics of the video format and audio you plan for your final video.

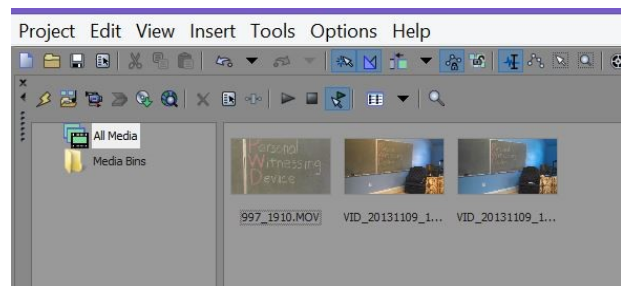
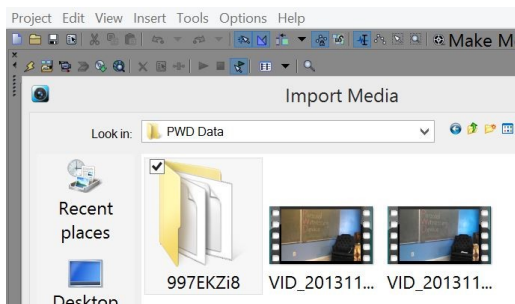


The higher quality video and sound characteristics will use higher amounts of computer memory, disk space and processor performance. If you have a lower performance computer, you may be forced to select the lower quality characteristics. The lower settings will probably do fine if the video is only for YouTube, GodTube, Facebook or other internet social media. I like to select quality levels that will be suitable for showing

in my church. If you also want to display the video on the internet at lower bandwidth speeds, then after you render your higher quality version of the video, you can render an internet lower quality version. If you edit the project with lower quality properties, then you may not be able to create a higher quality version without a complete re-edit.

Many editing programs will allow you to change properties during the editing process using the “Properties” option from the “File” drop-down menu. These programs do not create a video file during the editing, but appears to do so by creating a special edit file which contains a sequence of edit commands which point to different parts of your source video files. You cannot move or delete those source files on your computer until you finally render the video when a new video file is created.

Importing Project Media – Next, you need to make your video clips available to the editing software by importing them into the list of available media (video, pictures and sound). The software will have an “Import Media” function under the “File” drop down menu or the program may have an import icon/button to click on. The first picture below shows a pop-up file directory after clicking on the import function from which I selected a couple of clips. The second picture shows the clips in the project media window available for use by the editor. You do not have to import all of the media when you first start the editing. You can add more media as you go along (and you certainly will). Note that the third clip was added after the first two clips.

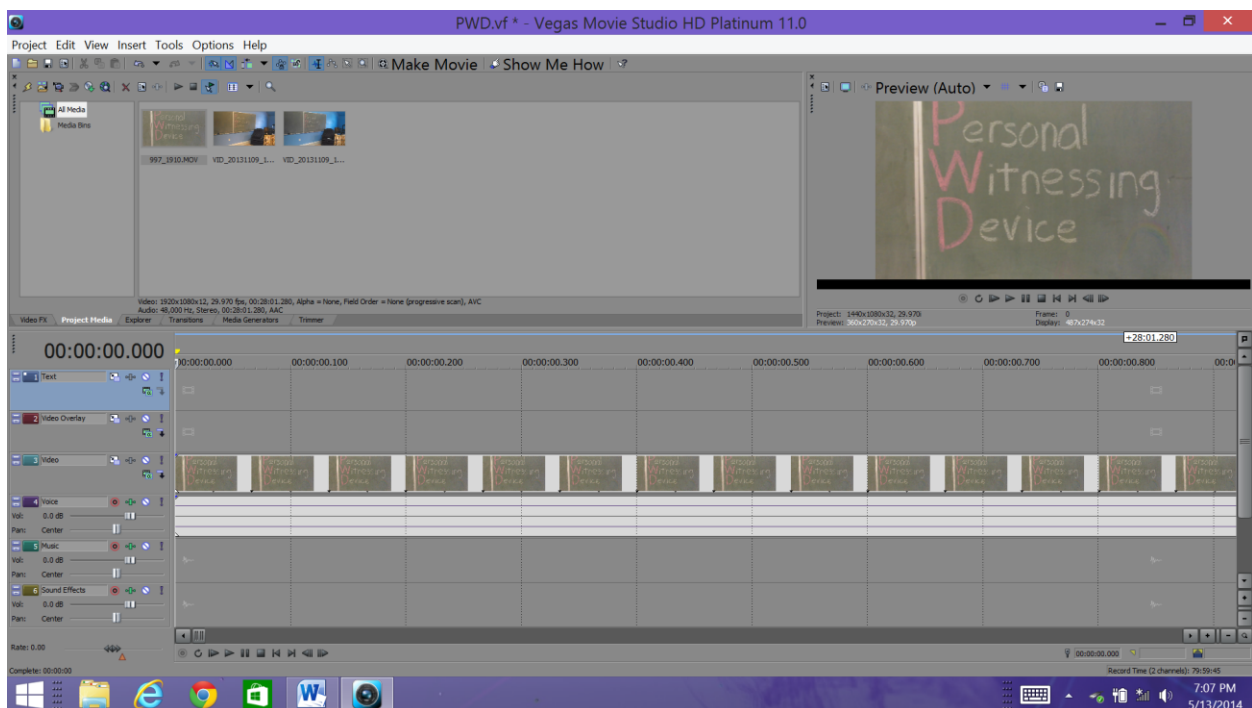


The imported media are not limited to video. A good editing program will allow you to import pictures, music, sound effects and audio files. Also, you may be able to select different presentations of how the files are shown in the project media window (e.g. icons, lists and picture tiles).

Moving and Editing the First Clip in the Track Timeline – Now to edit your first clip, but you first have to move it to a video track timeline by clicking/grabbing on the clip file and dragging it into a video track. The audio will come along with it and the program will put it in a sound/audio track. You can place the clip anywhere on the timeline. For instance, you may place the first clip 15 seconds to the right of the beginning to leave space/time for the video’s

title. I usually put the first clip all the way to the beginning, and after the editing is essentially complete, I do a “Select All” and then, move everything to the right to make room for the title and opening credits.

Most editing programs let you make changes to the track timeline view such as the height of the track and the time granularity. Set up the timeline to your preference. However if you are like me, you will keep changing the view to fit the editing operations you are performing at the time. To make precise cuts, I expand the timeline. To see the cuts and placements in a bigger context, I will condense the timeline. Additionally, you can view and play your edits in a larger preview window. Most editors that you buy have a preview window that you can adjust its size and/or move to a second monitor for a very large view.



The video editor that comes free with your computer probably has only one video track and one sound track (with a sound track that will not show the waveform of the audio). Most of the editing programs that you buy will allow multiple tracks like the one shown above. The tracks shown above are somewhat considered basic and I can add additional tracks such as an additional video track when I want to do a lot of switching back and forth during editing between clips from different angles. The usages for the tracks shown above are:

- Text – Use this track for the title, the final credit scroll and text inserts (such as Bible quotes or information inserts like “Dastardly Dan”, “Next Day” or “Pedro’s Casa”).
- Overlay – Use this track for adding overlaid special effects or action shots against a green screen.
- Video – Use this track for the primary video you recorded. I will often times add a second video track and switch between them by muting or changing the

transparency/opacity for whichever track I want to show at any desired duration on the timeline.

- Voice – Will be used for the audio from the clip you put into the video track. If you have a second video track, then the program will most likely create an associated second voice track.
- Music – The usage for this track is obvious. It is for the music you add to the video. The music will most likely be added near the end of the editing process unless a character is singing in the video. When the professionals make a movie, they will want the voice, music and sound effect tracks to be separate because if the movie is distributed to foreign countries, the voice track can be swapped out with a track dubbed in another language.
- Sound Effects – This track is used for enhancing the video with sound effects such as a squeaky door closing or laser gun shots. This can be fun and artistic to make.

Your first clip and the edits will be for your opening establishing shot. You will probably not need to do much editing on it except to trim off the unwanted beginning part and to cut off the excess end of this lead-in event. Most of the time with the establishing shot, you will use one or less lines of dialog before you switch to close-up shots where you will have most of the dialog. After the establishing shot, you will either switch to close-ups or to a sequence of action events from a different angle than the establishing shot.

Moving and Editing the First Close-up Clip in the Track Timeline

Once you have the close-up clip in a video track, you can split/slice/cut it up anyway you want, move segments/events around and delete the unwanted portions. Use your previously created clip rating table/spreadsheet as your editing guide. When you split your clip into segments/events, your editing program will most likely split the associated audio track, and keep the video and audio linked together unless you intentionally unlink them. Space the parts you want to keep in approximate the time positions (or a little bit wider but not less space) to make room for inserting segments from another clip (whether it be a second take from the same camera position or from a different camera view).

A big part of the time, you will not delete the unwanted stuff at this time, but rather, move it over to the end of timeline in case you later decide to use those pieces later (such as grabbing an audio portion to use against the video of another clip).

Moving and Editing the Second Close-up Clip with the Same View in the Track Timeline –

Since your first clip probably is not perfect, you may use better portions of another clip with the same camera view. However, where do you put it on the track timeline for editing?

- If your editing program only has one video track, then place the clip at the end of your edits of the first clip and edit the second clip like you did the first. Then, you cut and paste the portions/segments/events that you want to keep into the appropriate timeline positions along with the first clip edits.

- If you have a multi-track editor, then place the clip (at least temporarily) in an available track such as the overlay track or a second video track you open/insert into the timeline. I like the to see the two clips together so I can make better judgments in where to make the splits/cuts, and get the optimal durations and adjust timing for minimizing how obvious the cuts and splicing will be. To playback only the second clip track only, you will have to mute the first track or temporarily set the first track opacity/transparency to zero/100. Once you have edited the second clip, you have the choice of moving the parts you want to keep into the appropriate position on the first track or keep those edits on the second track. Remember to delete or move out of the way the stuff you do not want to keep in the video.

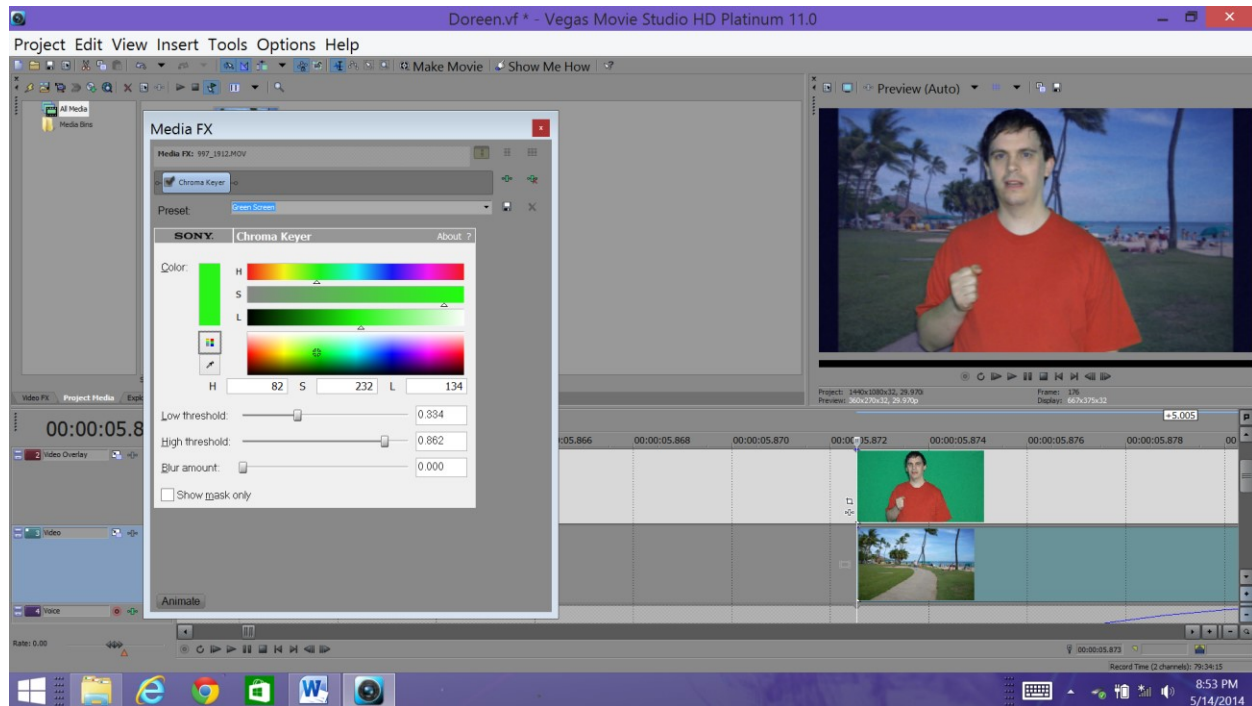
Moving and Editing the Close-up Clip from Another View in the Track Timeline – Once you have placed and positioned all of the clips for one character close-up view, then you do likewise for the second character close-up view much like you did for the second clip from the first character view.

Mending Clip Deficiencies with Outtakes, Cutaways and Inserts – You will mostly likely have situations where the only two slices of clips you can put next to each other will not visually match each other (e.g. a discontinuity or you had a stalker run past the camera). Don't worry. That is why you shot the outtakes during production. And you can still make or find some other images to insert into problem gaps. Cover-up these problems by moving outtakes into the problem timeline spots much like you would do for adding a clip in that area. Even if the mismatching clips remain mismatching, the insert placement will give time for the viewer to forget about the mismatching imagery. However, select an outtake that will seem to be a logical placement (unless you are making a comedy). When you add the outtake, you will need to make sure of the audio track continuity by:

- Adding a segment of background noise copied from adjacent clips. If the background noise segments are too short, you can butt-up multiple noise segments next to each other to match the duration of the outtake. To prevent sound dropouts of concatenated noise segments, you can overlap them slightly.
- Continuing the dialog from the preceding (or following) segment but without the video from that segment. To have the audio without the video, you will have to cut/split that segment and you have three choices of how to eliminate the video: 1) you can blank out video by making it completely transparent, 2) use a video mute function (sometimes the mute function is available for only a complete track), or 3) unlink the audio from the video and delete the video.

Of course, not all outtakes, cutaways and inserts are put in a video to cover up mistakes. Often times they are used to enhance the story and/or add exposition, but you will edit them in the same way.

Green Screen Editing – If you are doing green screen special effects, you will put the video clips in the overlay or special effects (FX) track that will be electronically superimposed over the video track. To achieve this overlay, select the program’s green screen or “Chroma Keyer” feature. In my editor, I select the “Media FX” menu and then select “Chroma Keyer”. From the Chroma Keyer window, I select the color to key on and adjust the thresholds to balance the green screen image with the background. The color of the screen does not have to be green; it can be blue, red or a multitude of other colors as you can see from the rainbow of colors in the Chroma Keyer window below.



The image in the video track may be a video clip or a still picture background. Try to match the background image with the green screen video overlay (e.g. size, angle and position). If you are matching back-and-forth dialog close-ups, use multiple background images on the video track that will match the background image for the applicable close-up image. For instance, if the setting is a beach, one background image may be the ocean for the two character view (or establishing shot), one image up the beach for the Character 1 close-up, and one image down the beach for the Character 2 close-up. When the background is very distant, you may get away with a single background picture and just shift the image left or right in the editor for the associated view angle (and perhaps blur the background a little bit).

Video Touch Ups – Your video editor you bought will most likely have a long list of image enhancement and/or modification features. You can have a lot of fun exploring those features. However on your first few videos, you should concentrate on learning just a few of these features such as:

- Brightness and contrast,
- White balance for color balance,
- Image size (digital zoom adjustment) and image position,
- Blurring,
- Fading, and
- Time stretching and time compression.

Text – Your editing program will have the capability for creating text for titles, credits and text inserts. Make sure the text is sized and timed so it is readable by the audience on the target video displaying device (e.g. television, projection screen, computer or smartphone). Show the text for a long enough period, but a title displayed too long reduces initial interest. Editing programs usually have features to add pizzazz to your text, but sometimes add unnecessary complexity to something that should be very simple. Remember that the ending rolling credits are to be used to reward, inspire and further motivate the cast and crew. Also, you will want to include the project’s benefactors, those supporting the production and those making donations (of money, equipment and resources). Respect them and honor them in the credits. To draw attention to the credits, you can add in attention grabbing music and/or insert interesting images.

Sound Editing

Once you have the video in place, now you need to make sure the sound is right and then you can enhance it and add special sound effects. When you added the video on to the timeline, you already did some sound editing because the video clips already had a sound track attached to them. If all is perfect, you will not have to do any editing on the audio. I do not think I ever edited a video without touching up the sound. Plus, I like to add some music during the title and the final credits.

This sound editing section is somewhat basic even though your editing software will have many features such as auto-sync between audio tracks. However, I hope that I will give enough information to get you started on your first few spiritual videos.

Setting the Sound Track View - I like to set my sound track timeline view so I can easily see the sound waveform. Seeing the waveform provides a frame of reference as you try to align the audio to video events or even to other audio events. I will compress the timeline to see where the audio and video events are located in time. Then for the precision cuts and alignments, I will expand the timeline (zoom in) to nearly the video frame level of magnification. If you have to move the audio around, separate from the video, try to align the audio to within three video frames.

Audio Level Adjustments – Your editing program will probably have two types of volume adjustments: one for the audio track and one for individual audio event/segments. And, the same is the case for right and left balance. These adjustments for the whole audio track level are easy

to spot because they are usually obviously shown to the left side of the track in a track control area.

The volume control for individual audio events/segments will likely be hidden until you touch the magical invisible spot when you adjust the volume. For the individual segments, your program probably will use a default level of 100%. The event sound level will likely be represented by a line across the duration of the event. At 100%, that volume line will be located at the very top of the track and appear indistinguishable from the boundary line between tracks. To change the volume of the audio event, position the cursor on the volume line and drag it down or up.

For the most part, you will want the volume levels to be essentially the same between tracks and events except when creating an effect. Use the playback feature to verify the sound levels you want and make adjustments as needed. Set the volume levels for your worst target viewing device (e.g. cellphone), but not so high that the sound will be distorted for your premiere event sound system.

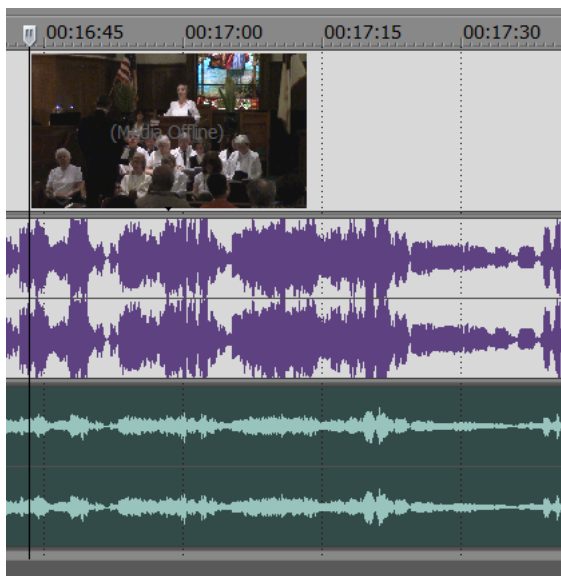
The sound balance feature for individual events is likely to be more hidden than the volume control. Try a right mouse click or a double click on the audio track to see if the balance control pops up.

Match the Sound Tracks – I already discussed volume adjustments so you are aware that you need to adjust the volume between tracks for a pleasant natural sounding balance. You also need to match the sound synchronization/waveforms between tracks so you will not have an annoying echo, and you need to match the timing of the audio with the video so your great work will not look like a poorly dubbed foreign movie.

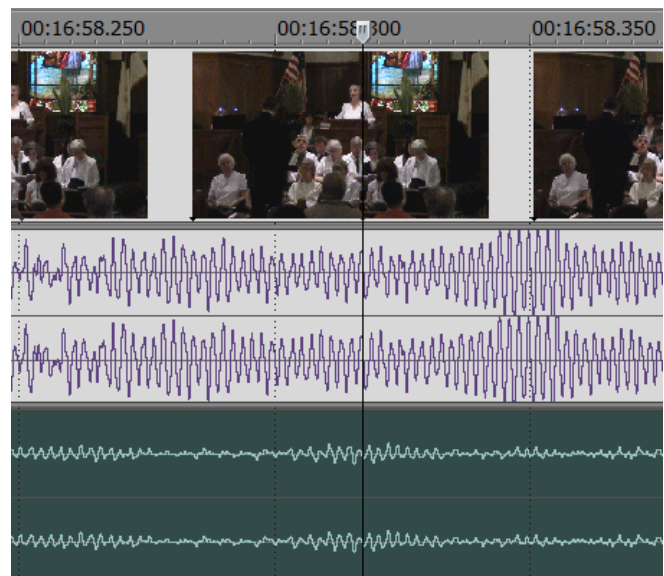
If sound matches between clips/cuts, GREAT you have almost no work to do. If not, use sound from other views if simultaneous recordings were made. For example, you may have recorded a concert with multiple cameras and multiple views. Let's assume that all cameras recorded a whole concert.

- Place the video clips for each camera in their own video-audio track pair. If you align the audio track forms, then you essentially aligned the video track frames (unless the audio track is unlinked from the video track).
- In a medium condensed audio track view, look for waveform envelopes which resemble each other between tracks. An envelope is the outer shape of a waveform. You will not see exact envelope matches; being that the microphones from each camera recorded audio from different positions. [See below picture]
- Move the similar sound envelopes right or left to align to approximately the same time on the timeline.

- Playback a short amount of various sound envelopes to verify that you got the matching audio. Since you have not yet done the fine synchronization adjustments, a playback of all sound tracks simultaneous will probably produce annoying echoes. If you do not have a matching audio envelope, try searching again.
- Once you have matching audio envelopes, expand the timeline so you have a clear view of the audio waveforms. [See below picture]
- Move the similar sound waveforms right or left to align until the waveforms match up on the timeline.
- Playback the aligned sound tracks simultaneously to verify their synchronization.



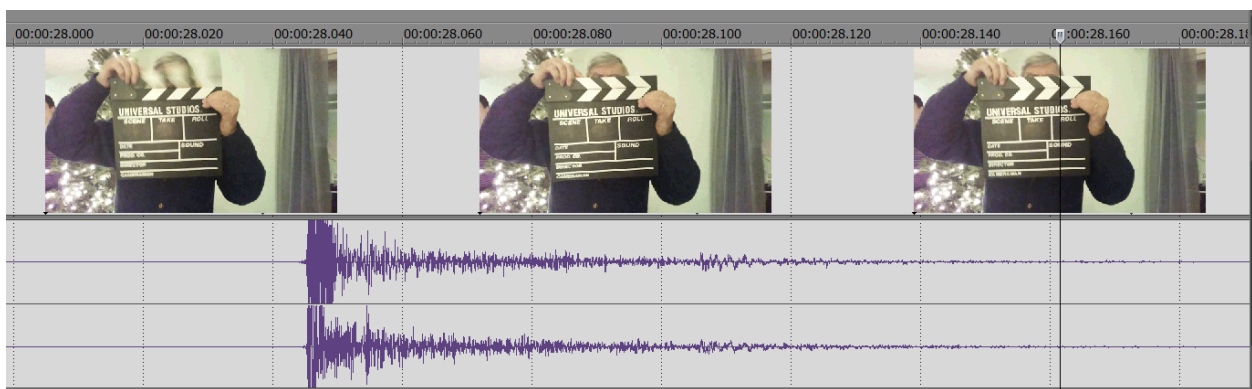
Envelope View
Somewhat aligned.



Waveform View
But, needs closer alignment.

Aligning Audio With Video – You should keep the audio track synchronized within 0.1 seconds of the video frames (6 frames 60 fps or 3 frames at 30 fps) or else your video will seem like a badly dubbed foreign film. Slide the audio track to the right or left until audio and video align. If you have expensive recording equipment, the video and audio clips may have accompanying precision time codes synced to a single time source. This pricy equipment makes audio to video synchronization easy and precise. I will assume that you will not have precision time coding. If you are trying to align audio that was not recorded with the camera used for video track (i.e. from another camera with the video stripped off or from a separate sound recorder), you will have to make some manual alignment judgments such as:

- If the video was shot utilizing a clapper board and the audio and video clips/segments captured the start of the recording clap, then you have a good reference for matching the audio and video. On the video, look for the point where the clapper board completely closes. On the audio track, look for the waveform spike created when the clapper board closed. Move the audio or video track to the right or left until the audio spike aligns with the video clapper closure.
- If a clapper board was used but the cut up segments do not contain the clap, you may want to consider doing a side edit (at the far right side of the track view or as a separate video project) with the original video and audio clips where:
 - Using the recorded clapper closure, you align the video and audio tracks
 - Link/group the tracks together so when you move one track, the other track will move with it.
 - Cut/split/slice the paired segments/events of interest.
 - Cut/copy and paste (or drag) the segments simultaneously into the desired place on the timeline.
 - Delete the residual side edits when no longer needed.
- If no clapper board or other synchronizing device are on the clips, then:
 - Search and align the segments/events for distinctive clues for matching video and audio features such as:
 - Distinctive sound waveform changes caused by action captured on the video clip (e.g. door closing or footsteps), or
 - The start of someone speaking and their lip actions are clearly noticeable.
- If the sound cannot be synchronized with the video, then while the audio is playing, insert video clip of:
 - An outtake, cut-away or other insert,
 - Show a distant view where the difference in synchronization is unperceivable, or
 - Show an angle where the cause of sound cannot be seen.



Audio Vidio Alignment with Clapper Board

Anecdote: I have seen where one character's dialog had to be re-recorded and dubbed in after the shooting. The dubbing actor's reading of the lines did not match the original video recording. So, for that one actor (and that actor only out of a half dozen speaking actors), the camera angle shown on the screen was the back of that actor when his dialog was played. When other actors spoke, that one actor's face was often seen.

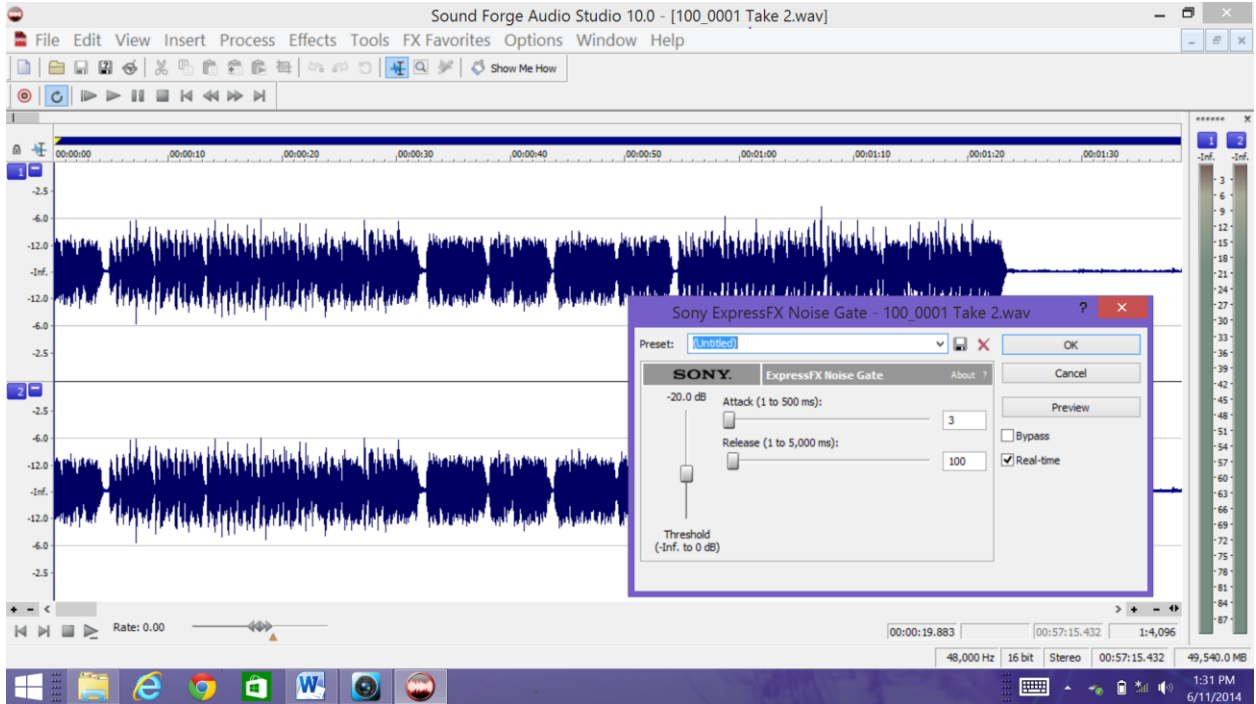
Ideally, you will want the best quality sound track recorded during production phase which would be from a digital sound recorder, if the crew used one, and hope that the director captured enough synchronizing events to facilitate good sound-video alignment during post-production. You still have the option of allowing only one dialog sound track to be rendered.

Maintain consistent background noise – Make sure that the video does not have an unnatural abrupt change in the background noise unless the change is intended. The background levels can be quite noticeable from different microphone types or from microphones placed at different distances from the dominate noise sources. Additionally, if you are inserting a photographed image, that segment of insert time will have no background noise. To make the background noise consistent throughout a scene:

- Search a lengthy segment of silence with the highest level background noise (it is amazing how noisy silence can be), copy a slice of that noise, and paste that noise into the areas needing noise equalization in an appropriate sound track (which can be a separate audio track you create just for background noise).
- Where simultaneous but different background noise is recorded on different tracks and neither/none dominate, you may have to copy the noise from both tracks and mix them together.
- If the copied noise is not long enough for the sound duration needing to be matched, paste the noise segment back-to-back multiple times to get the duration you need. You may have to slightly overlap the pasted copies to minimize perceived splicing sound glitches.
- Record new or obtain stock audio noise recordings that are consistent with the scene and would be dominate enough to make the background noise from the other clips to be unperceivable. Then, edit this new noise into the video.

Another option you have is to port the audio tracks with background noise into an audio editor for noise removal (see Audio Editor Program Example below). This works well if the peaks of the noise are far lower than your lowest sound level of your dialog and/or intentional noise from a recorded action. My video editor allows audio segments to be directly ported into an audio editor (from a pull-down menu option). I will make my sound edits with the external sound editor program. And then, port the edited audio back into the video editor. Common noise reduction techniques used by audio editors are:

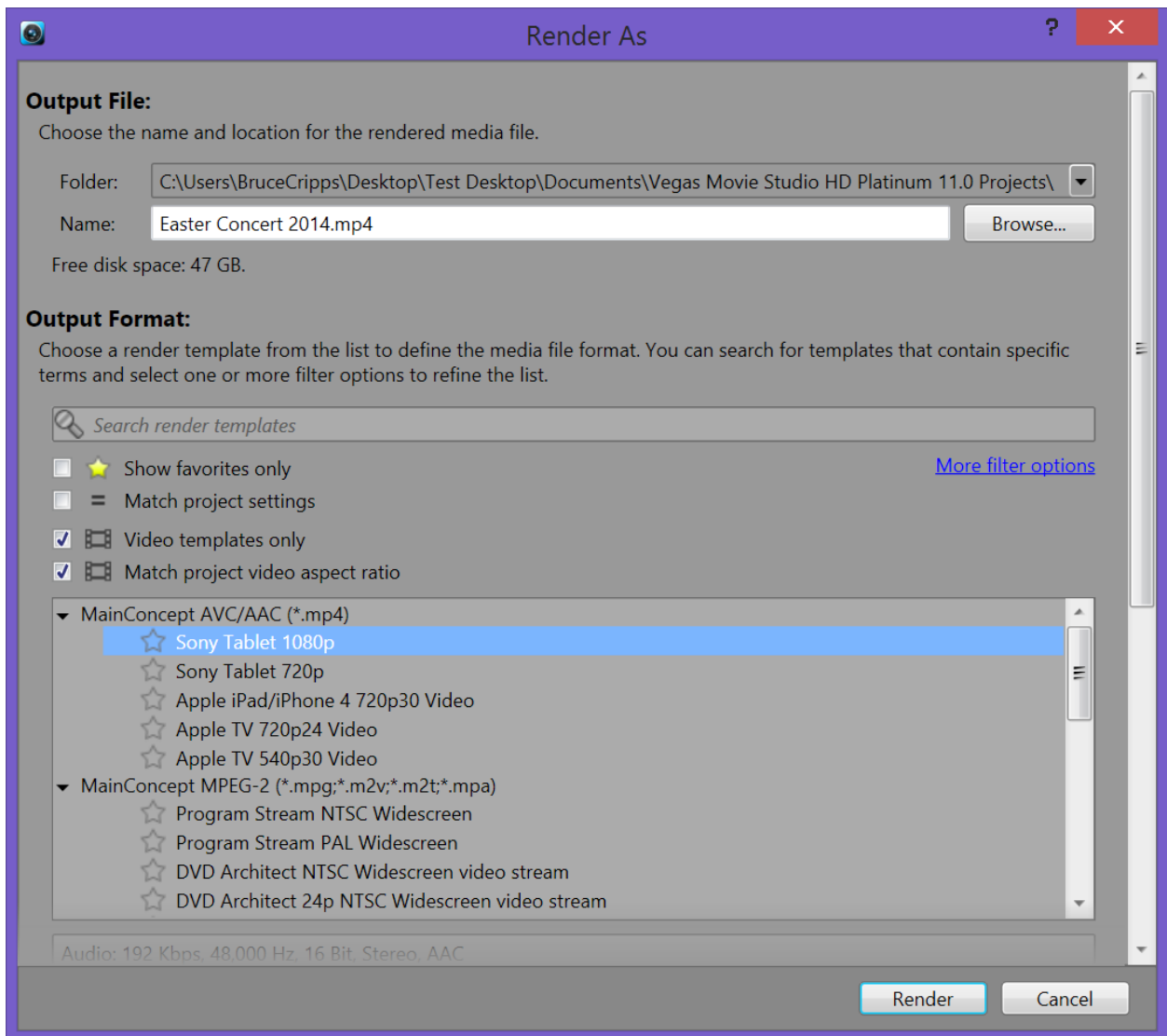
- Frequency filtering (bandwidth and/or notch filtering),
- Removing all sound below a selected sound threshold (noise gating), and
- Sampling a sound/noise segment and subtracting that amount of sound/noise from the rest of the recording (noise profile removal).



Audio Editor Program Example

Rendering

The video that you edited can only be viewed with the video editor program until after you select the commands to generate a video file in a format for your intended mass viewing device(s) such as other computers or TVs with a DVD player. The creation of such a portable video is commonly called rendering. The initiating command on your editor may be something like: “Render”, “Make a Movie” or “Burn a DVD”. Once you select the rendering command, you will be prompted to select various rendering options such as video format, resolution, frame rate, audio fidelity, bandwidth, and file destination.



New televisions have a 1080p resolution and some now are 4K. However, these resolutions will take up more disk space than a standard DVD for a feature length movie, and would have to be burned onto Blu-ray disks. Select resolutions that fit your target storage media or distribution medium. For your church premiere, you will want at least a 720i resolution, but for your social site showings, a lower resolution rendering with high compression ratios will play better over limited bandwidth internet services. YouTube now accepts upload of 1080p, and then, plays the video back at lower resolutions to accommodate slower internet services and/or slower viewing devices. If you are rendering an hour video at 1080p, do it overnight and have a good night's sleep. As you would expect, lower resolutions render faster.

After the rendering is complete, watch the video completely for quality discrepancies. Sometimes, the editing program will not put all the pieces together from the various clips based on what you think the editor command file thinks it should do. Make note of what did not render correctly. If the rendering is not correct, try rendering again (perhaps with a

different format). If the rendering produces the same errors, then you may have some re-editing to do in that/those section(s).

DVD Making

Even though DVDs are becoming passé, most of your church goers probably still use DVDs, and thus, you should still burn DVDs for distribution (as well as other distribution media). DVDs are not hard to make, but try to pawn it off onto someone else the making of additional copies because making a lot of copies is a slow mechanical process unless you have a gang DVD burner.

I am a little ahead of myself. After the rendering, then you will create a master DVD from which to make copies. Some video editing programs include a DVD creation routine built into the editor. How convenient and simple, but may not have all of the features as in stand-alone DVD authoring/creating/burning programs.

My Sony video editor came with a separate DVD burning program/editor (DVD Architect Studio) which links to a DVD porting button so it looks like the DVD software is part of the video editing program. If you have not yet rendered your video, the “Make a Movie” button will initiate a DVD compatible rendering, and then port the rendering to the DVD software. Also, the Sony DVD making software allows me to run it independent of the video editor which is great for combining multiple videos onto one DVD. The DVD program has a lot of fancy features and options that may take some time to learn.

If you are burning just the one video on to the DVD, the DVD creating software that came with your computer or free shareware may be good enough. Try it. However, the free software may not have all the features for creating buttons, allowing scene selections or inserting images.

Once you make your DVD copies, you need to label them. A Sharpie pen works but not very impressive. To impress, create DVD labels with your computer, print them on adhesive DVD label blanks, and then, carefully align and stick the labels onto each DVD. Give this job to someone else who has the spare time. Try not to touch the bottom side of the DVDs too much - especially with dirty hands. Insert the DVDs into protective sleeves – I like the sleeve with the clear cellophane window so you need not have to put a label on the sleeve in order to see what DVD is in it (provided the DVD is labeled).

Chapter 6 - Making Other Video Types

I love making dramas, but many of you will prefer other types of videos. And as much as I would like to stick with only dramas, I still have a need to make other types of videos. Whatever type you want to make, from time to time, you will be called upon to make a different type.

Much of the discussions I presented to you about dramas are applicable to other video types like:

- Sermons and Lectures
- Live Performances
- Music Videos
- Testimonies
- Interviews
- Documentaries
- Instructional How-To Videos

Sermons and Lectures

On GodTube and YouTube, I have seen many great sermons and lectures with moving messages but visually boring. The message that stirred you while sitting in a church pew does not translate emotionally as well on a flat screen with a single camera view. Watch a major televangelist on the television and notice that they use multiple camera views and some camera motion to make the sermon presentation more interesting and to emphasize particular aspects of the message.

Like in the drama, you should shoot the sermon or lecture from multiple angles. Since these are live events, you will need multiple cameras to shoot them even if some of the cameras are high resolution smart phones or tablets mounted on tripods. Do not use hand held cameras unless you are trying to create a particular effect or else the camera is attached to a stabilizing device.

Strategically place cameras at various angles to get the shots you want. Not all cameras need to be manned at all times. Positions you may want to include are:

- Head on distant camera to get an establishing shot of a wide view and at times during the sermon, close-up views with the camera's zoom lens. Note that since this camera is at a distance from the speaker, the audio will be of degraded quality unless you are using an external microphone placed close to the speaker.
- Side view close-up that will capture the speaker's facial expressions and hand gestures. Note that this camera might be close enough for sound quality to be used as the primary sound track.
- Audience or congregational shots to capture listener reactions to the sermon or lecture. If this camera is on a tripod, a lateral scanning of the audience adds a sense of motion to the

presentation, but do so sparingly and not too fast. TV audiences' reactions to speakers can very much be influenced by showing how the TV audience perceives the speaker – Amen. Additionally, visually zoom in on the audience for rare special effects (but do not overdo it).

- Mobil camera views (if you have someone carrying a camera on a stabilizing device) can provide a probing effect as well as a motion effect, but do not make the video audience seasick. Also if the mobile camera is aimed at and slowly walked around the speaker, it could put a 3D image of the speaker in the minds of the TV audience that will last a while in the minds of the TV audience: even if the speaker is not viewed again by that camera. Be cognizant that a person walking around with a camera can distract the live audience members as the speaker is trying to make a strong point in the sermon/speech. Do not count on using the audio from this camera for the primary track unless it is being used to capture audience members' comments or reactive sounds.

Lighting also has an influence on how your recorded video is perceived. In watching a recorded live video, one thing that bugs me is not having a good view of the eyes which are obscured by shadows. Video seems to accentuate shadows that you would not notice while sitting in the pews. Eyes communicate much to the viewer. For instance, eyes may show if the preacher is speaking from the heart or from a paper. Notice that cartoon characters have enlarged eyes. Animators know that the eyes communicate and convey emotions. You cannot make your speaker's eyes larger, but you can make them more visible with lights shining from the right angle(s). Make-up will also help. However, congregants seem to not like male pastors to be wearing make-up when they shake the pastor's hand after the service.

Also remember that video is a flat visual media unless you want everyone wearing 3D glasses. While you sit in the congregation, you are seeing in 3D. Judicious use of lights can make your speaker appear less flat on the TV screen.

Use the lighting tips that I described earlier in this book within the limitations of your auditorium or sanctuary. Live audiences are more accustomed to and accepting of light stands on a stage as opposed to surrounding the pulpit. So in your church, you may have to make the light stands and fixtures blend into the sanctuary and appear to be a natural part of this venue.

Sound recording is the most important aspect of your sermon/lecture video. You want your video audience to understand every inspiring word that is spoken. The audio portion can be distributed as part of your video or as a separate audio only recording (e.g. MP3 over the internet). Generally, you want the microphone to be very close to the speaker for optimizing the sound quality, get good volume, maximum bandwidth pick-up and minimal noise. Some things you might want to consider for recording your video's audio is the following:

- Tap into the facility's sound system for the audio to be recorded on a video camera or a digital sound recorder. The facility's sound system will most likely yield the best sound

if the speaker is speaking into a microphone and doing so correctly. Many pastors and lecturers do not know how to speak into a microphone correctly. Many people want to hold/place the microphone too far from the mouth which reduces volume, makes for tinny sounding speech, and when the sound engineer boosts up the pick-up volume, ambient noise is amplified. Many speakers will pop their “P’s” when holding the microphone. Popping P’s can be reduced by holding the microphone a bit to the side of the mouth (thus eliminating large impulses of air hitting the microphone). When tapping into the sound system, you have to match the input/output impedance, get the right transitioning cable connectors and make sure you do not overdrive the camera’s audio input.

- If the facility is already using a digital audio recorder with their sound system, get a copy of the recording (on CD, USB flash drive or SD card) so you can load the audio into your editing program on your post-production computer.
- Place a separate microphone on the speaker’s podium or have the speaker wear a microphone with a connection to your camcorder or computer. This microphone can be wireless (with an extra receiver box) or a direct cable connection (make sure no one trips over the wire).
- Use a shotgun microphone that is made for picking up sound from a distant speaker while blocking out side noise.
- Place a smartphone with an audio or video recording app next to the speaker. Smartphones can be easily hidden from view. Then later, copy the recording into the editing computer.

For any recording device that uses batteries, make sure that the batteries have sufficient charge to complete the whole recording session. An audio monitoring device is very useful during the event to ensure proper sound levels and if your sound pick-up devices are working properly. Make sure you do a sound test prior to the event and set your initial sound levels. You might have to adjust the levels during the event as audio conditions vary (e.g. increased background noise or the speaker gets hoarse).

Pre-plan the Recording with your technical crew (the cameraperson, the sound engineer and the editor) or at least give them an advance copy of the sermon with key points of emphasis marked. Let them know in advance of the event, what aspects of the message needs particular emphasis and what type of mood you want to set. You would film a message of repentance different from a celebratory message (e.g. how you will show audience reaction).

Live Performances

Live performances can very much be like shooting a sermon or lecture, but larger in scope and greater dynamics. You will most likely be capturing more performers with a wider stage/field of view and with more motion. Pre-planning of the shoot is more important with more insights to the activities and actions of the event. If the event is like a sports event, then draw upon your knowledge gained from such events to pre-visualize and anticipate how the action will play out. For plays and concerts, attend the rehearsals to learn what will take place so you can best set-up to capture the visual action and the sound. Write up and pre-brief camera and sound instructions for your crew. During the later rehearsals of the cast, have rehearsals of the recording crew and trial checks for camera views and sound pick-ups. You will probably need more camera views to capture all of the action and the entire cast. If you are short on cameras, plan to move camera positions while you are capturing the action from another camera – it will look like you have more cameras than you do but timing the moves can get complex. You will also need more strategically placed microphones. Additionally, editing will also be a greater challenge. Be kind to your post-production person, and capture shots that can be inserted in places where there are deficiencies in capturing the live action (e.g. during an out of focus segment, insert a prerecorded clip of an eagle flying while still utilizing the audio).

Indoor Performances and Outdoor Performances may have similarities, but they are two totally different animals. Outdoor shooting is far more difficult because you have far less control over the shooting environment particularly with:

- Camera Positioning – Outside venues tend to be larger which require cameras with telephoto and zoom capabilities to capture close-up details. Or you can place extra cameras near the subjects you are shooting (if you can predict ahead of time your various camera shots). Some of your more extreme camera operators might want to create and use special camera mounts for where cameras are not meant to be located. Outside locations can inspire your cinematographic artistry to go beyond ordinary shots.
- Lighting – God provides us a wonderful light source in the sky, but clouds and time of day angles can create cinematic challenges. The sun may be located contrary to imagery you are trying to capture: casting unwanted shadows, making people look like silhouettes, causing actors to squint, creating unwanted reflections and washing out color differences of gradient colors. Your shooting angles may be dictated by the angles of the sun. Light Meters can help you adjust and compensate for the light conditions. Today, your camera will have a built in light meter with automatic self-adjustment for typical situations. Many camcorders and smartphones have three or four automatic light compensation settings for commonly encountered light conditions. However, you may want to make the light adjustments manually to create your perfect picture.

A common tool for reducing shadows on faces is the reflecting screen to direct sunlight at actor's face, and the screen does not need an electric power source. Reflecting screens come in various reflecting colors. You will need a separate person to handle the reflecting screen. If you plan to use electric lights in bright sunlight, then they will need

to be the ultra-high brightness types which get very hot and uses lots of power. Night time lighting is easier to control and you can get away with lower power and lighter lamps such as the new LED types. However, the illumination from these lamps drops off quickly for the imagery further away from the lights (which is a good thing if you want a night time effect.)

- Sound - Background Noise is far more difficult to control in outdoor settings. You have very distracting wind noise to deal with for which you will need to use a wind shield/guard over your microphone (not 100% effective) and have the microphone close to the mouth. Most outdoor locations will have some continuous ambient noise (e.g. crickets singing or portable generator humming or crowd murmuring), some of which you may filter out with sound editing software (but do not count on it). Shotgun microphones could help reduce this ambient noise; otherwise, have the microphone close to the mouth if the ambient noise is too great. Also, expect some passing noise (e.g. airplanes, loud trucks and shouting kids). Additionally, your outside sound pick-up area may be larger where you may need more strategically placed microphones which need continuous monitoring and adjustments – particularly if the event is also being streamed live. Do not forget all of the microphone cables if you are not using wireless microphones, and even wireless microphones have limited range.
- Power Source Locations – The number of power outlets available at outside locations are generally much less than inside buildings. If your equipment is not powered by internal batteries, then you will need long power cables, multi-outlet power strips/junction boxes and an outside power source such as an outlet on the outside of a building, a generator or a power inverter connected to a large battery. If you are using batteries, make sure they are fully charged prior to beginning the shoot. Do not exceed the power ratings of your power source, circuit breakers and cables. Also, ground loops and inter-device electro-magnetic interference can be transmitted through power cables.
- Weather Conditions – God controls the weather – you don't! And He tends to let the weather run on automatic. Make contingency plans for bad weather such as rescheduling shooting dates and/or times. If you plan to continue to shoot no matter what the weather may be, make sure: your cast and crew are safe and comfortable (e.g. protect against slipping, electrocution and heat stroke); and that your equipment will not be damaged (your equipment costs money and may take valuable production time to wait for replacements). Also, weather has lighting impacts and it may cause imagery mismatches or discontinuities with other recorded clips or scenes (e.g. shadows cast in a wandering desert trek).

Music Videos

The art of music penetrates the heart and influences the state of mind. Adding visuals to the music amplifies the influence of music - even when listening to the music without the visuals but after the visuals had been previously seen in combination with the music. Your congregation will most likely be spiritually moved by various types of music videos to include videos where:

- The artist(s) is the primary image in the video,
- The artist(s) is surrounded by imagery related to the message of the music,

- The imagery is shown rather than the artist(s) whether related to the music's message or not related, and
- A story or drama is shown in combination with the music.

In all of these types, the finished video should utilize a single sound track for continuity of sound with the imagery synchronized with this sound track. The easiest way to achieve this synchronization is to use the following production technique:

1. Make the music soundtrack first (even if it is not the final sound track),
2. While shooting people singing and/or dancing, play the initial soundtrack at the shooting sessions for the cast/singers/dancers to which they will respond and synchronize to. In outdoor locations without power outlets, I played the soundtrack from my smartphone connected by amplified speakers powered by a battery. This worked very well for my young performers to sing along with.
3. Make sure that singers really sing along with the video rather than lip sync. Video can often times detect fake singing because the lips' formations of the words may not match the sound of the soundtrack.
4. Similarly to the singers but a little less critical, make sure the musicians actually play their instruments even if no sound comes out of the instruments due to lack of power on the set.
5. With the soundtrack prerecorded, the singers need not worry so much about making vocal mistakes. Encourage your performers to be more visually expressive with their actions (e.g. smiling, flirting, hand gesturing, adding subtle dance like body movements and acting out aspects of the song).
6. If the soundtrack needs re-recording, during a retake session, play the initial synchronizing soundtrack through earphones to the singers and musicians (or at the very least, to the director).
7. In post-production, add enhancements to the music as necessary such as adding additional instrumentation and sound effects in additional/separate recording sessions to be blending into the primary recording. Even in professional recordings, oftentimes singers and/or musicians are recorded in separate sessions and mixed together by some geek, or rather, sound engineer on a computer at a later time.

Like in every type of video I do (if I can), show the performers and imagery from different angles to make the visuals more interesting and to allow for mistake cover-up cuts without noticeable video jumps.

Take plenty of shots with different views and angles so the post-production person can magnify the impact of the video with his editing magic. If you watch professionally produced music videos, you may notice that the image changes (e.g. angles, views, magnifications, scenery, costumes and inserts) quite frequently: every 2 to 6 beats. However, do not expect your post-person to get that complex on the first music videos, but capture an ample amount of video variety to let the post-person to be creative.

A technique I like using during the initial soundtrack recording is to utilize a little green screen magic (can be used during other shooting sessions too). Green screens are great for placing the performers in locations at which you cannot shoot such as in distant lands or on Mars. Make sure that your performers do not wear colors the same color as the screen during the green screen sessions or their clothes may disappear.

Anecdote: I shot a music video with campers at Baptist Camp Lebanon, NJ with a green screen because I wanted to show more camp locations than I had time to shoot. For the camp music video, I used a combination of actual on site recorded video and green screen picture inserts behind the initial sound session.

Depending on the nature of your music video, make a shooting script for your video. If you are just shooting a performer in a studio, the performer already knows what to do, but the script becomes a guide for the camera person and setup crew. Videos portraying a story or drama will need to be more heavily scripted and rehearsed. Your scripting will be more timing sensitive than for making a straight drama because the action needs to correspond to the phrasing of the music and the beat. Even choreography is a form of a script - useful for not only the performers, but also for the shooting crew to maximize the impact and impressions of the dancing with the best views and shooting positions.

Planning for a music video may likely be as detailed as for the dramas I discussed earlier in the book. The number one item to plan for is the place, studio, quiet room or stage where you record the music track used in the final video. Next would be the sound equipment you will use. If you use complex choreograph, you may want a medical person at the shoot and have an accident insurance policy. Much of the rest of the planning would be similar to shooting a drama. The on-site director should be someone who can visualize the marriage of the visual imagery/action to the music.

Testimonies

We have all heard testimonials where one or two people describe a moving and emotional incident in their life such as how they came to know Christ or how Christ had helped them through a bad time. Usually, testimonies are used to persuade others to make a choice, take an

action and/or make a commitment. For me, the most effective testimonials I heard are at live events, and testimonies on video media seems to lose something. Somehow, Christians have a way of taking compelling testimonies and make them boring. A few Christian groups do make good video testimonials such as the Billy Graham organization and you can learn from them.

Keep your testimony videos visually interesting by using some of the following techniques:

- Tape and switch between angles and views of those giving their testimony. Have multiple strategically placed cameras rolling as they speak.
- Testimonies usually have moments of intense emotions. So, place a camera to capture extreme close-ups of the speakers' faces to highlight their inner feelings as the testimony is delivered.
- Position cameras on some in the crowd who you think may have an emotional response while listening to the testimony. Have your video editing person insert crowd emotion cuts into the final video.
- Either before or after the live testimony, record or obtain images or events relating to the testimony being given (e.g. their child in the hospital, scenes of a disaster or their life committing baptism). Edit some of these into the video, and often times, you can still use the testimonial audio over the imagery of these outtakes.
- Edit out thinking gaps and excessively long periods of silence to keep the video version of the testimony moving. When you cut out these sections, switch to a different camera view or an outtake to maintain apparent continuity of imagery. I have seen testimonies filmed with a single camera, and when portions were cut out, my concentration would be disrupted by the jump in the speaker's position due to the cuts.

Whenever you cut out portions of the testimony or add extra imagery, have the speaker review the edited version for accuracy and that the edits still maintain the intent of the testimony. Respect the speaker's opinions and suggestions for the final product.

Additionally, give your recording crew insights into the testimony prior to the event so they can plan out the shooting to maximize emotional response of the video's audience.

Interviews

Even though interviews may seem spontaneous, they are usual highly planned out and scripted. The person being interviewed may not be aware of the scripting, but the interviewer is very much part of scripting the questions and how the interviewee will be perceived by the audience. Keeping the interviewee in the dark about the questions is a common technique used to make the subject look bad, but occasionally it is honestly used to create a sense of spontaneity. Generally to make the interviewee look good, the interviewer will discuss the questions with the

interviewee prior to rolling the cameras. For infomercials, both the questions and the answers are highly scripted, rehearsed and focus group evaluated.

Use multiple camera views to add interest and to create conversational effects. At least one camera should be capturing the facial expressions of the interviewee. Sometimes, the interviewer's questions are re-recorded after the interview because the sessions did not have enough cameras to get good views of the interviewer or the interviewer had a make-up malfunction. Do not insert questions that were not part of the interview, or move around interviewee response in the final edit without the interviewee's permission. In making interviews, the Christian thing to do is to be honest!

Anecdote: During the Vietnam War, a so-called reputable news organization aired an interview with a general where the news organization moved around answers to questions, and in the process, made the general look bad. Unknown to the news organization, the general secretly recorded the interview session which he used to show what he really said to each of the questions.

Documentaries

Documentaries are real life dramas. Frequently they will use re-enactments of events (giving opportunities to present the events in optimized video form) or use past recordings of events that are less than optimal for the documentary's presentation. However, actual recordings of past events add to the viewer's perception of authenticity. Some documentaries capture actual events as they are happening such as done by war correspondents and for reality television programs.

Most documentaries utilize a narrator or masters of ceremonies (MC) to tell the story as the imagery is being shown. The narrator is also responsible for setting and maintaining the pace of the documentary. Often times, documentaries will use interviews of subject matter experts or persons who were involved in the actual events presented in the documentary.

Much research usually goes into the creation of the documentary to reflect the real life story, to bring out the most interesting parts of the story and to maintain the accuracy in the information being presented. The research will be used to create a script that will be utilized for the shooting, narrating, acquiring video/sound clips and editing. Good documentaries take time to create and a significant amount of planning goes into them.

Reality programs may be considered documentaries even though the events are scripted before the events happen. Even product promotions are scripted into their contrived events. Cast members are screened, psychologically profiled and selected to create the spontaneous reactions that the producers desire. Cast members may be unaware that they have been set-up, or in essence, scripted. Conflict is essential to these types of documentaries. Then in post-production,

reality gets further edited. Reality programs are interesting and entertaining, but their documentary relevance may be questionable unless you are into the study of human behaviors under the conditions set up by the producers.

Most of all, prioritize truth and accuracy over your own agenda even though an agenda might have been the initial motivator for doing the documentary.

Instructional How-To Videos

I go on YouTube quite often to learn how to repair, assemble and make stuff. For instance, I bought a medium sized reflecting screen that came with a small storage pouch, but with no instructions on how to fit it back into the pouch. If someone was watching me, I would probably look silly packing the screen away. That gave me a video idea about having kids putting the screen in the pouch. The video got quite a lot of laughs. Of course before I made the video, I learned how to pack the screen away from a YouTube video and I looked like an expert.

Unless they are very long, you do not have to be entertaining in Instructional How-To Videos. The key purpose of these types of videos is to teach or instruct in a clear and unambiguous manner. Of course if these videos are long, you may need to throw in a joke to relieve viewer tension and to reset their minds to get them listening to you if you lose their attention.

Most of the video views will be close-ups of the how-to actions and the actions must be clear. Make sure the actions and items in the video are well lit and that labels are readable. The narration must match the actions, spoken succinctly, broken down into short statements and kept simple. You can record the narration as the actions are performed, or record the narration at a different time and later edit the audio into the video at the appropriate matching times. Make your instructions are couple of academic grade levels below that of your intended audience.

Anecdote: When I worked in an Army Integrated Logistics Directorate, the training people would write technical manuals at the 5th, 7th or 9th grade levels. The Army even disseminated a very successful logistics bulletin/magazine showing how to make repairs to trucks and helicopters in comic book form. I will not detail the wardrobe of the two instructing female comic book characters, but they did show much detail. The characters have changed much from those days.

Section 3 – Disseminating the Message

This section presents multiples ways on how to reach others with the message of your completed spiritual video, how to maximize the impact, and how to use the video for the glory and honor of our Lord Jesus Christ

Chapter 7 – Video Release

After all of the work to produce your spiritual video, you will want to present or show the video for maximum spiritual impact on the maximum number of potential receivers of its spiritual message. The first group showing (or premiere) is a special opportunity to emotionally plant the message in the hearts of the audience because first showings often times generate an elevated level of receptiveness - especially if an audience member knows one of the cast or crew members. Since the message is now in an electronically copyable form (e.g. dvds or uploadable) and a broadcastable form (e.g. internet, social sites and video hosting sites), the message of your video may live on for years all over God's creation. Make the most of getting the Word out to others for Jesus commanded us to "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." Via the internet, my spiritual videos have been seen in many countries; yours can too.

The Premiere

The setting for the premiere is your choice that fits best with your overall spiritual program. Such settings may include:

- A regular church service (e.g. supporting the sermon or the children's sermon),
- A regular Sunday school time,
- A regular monthly cover dish dinner,
- A youth group night, or
- A specially scheduled premiere event.

However, do not under cut or underestimate the value of a premiere. Cast, crew members and those aiding in the creation of the video have a vested personal interest in the video, and they take pride in seeing the video and how others will respond. They will want to come out to the first showing, and their pride will motivate them to get friends, relatives and acquaintances to come to the premiere. A minimal approach given to the premiere may yield disappointment and a disincentive to follow-on support and participation for the video production ministry. You may even want to include the additional motivator of having an after-party following the premiere and the extra spiritual talk that complements the video.

Determine Desired Impact

The how, when and where of the premiere should suitably match the why. You made this video in service to the Lord. You want it to be heartfelt and inspiring to a significant size audience and to the participants that put their heart into the production. The first public showing is important.

In choosing the venue, the activities and the promotion techniques for the premiere, consider the following:

- Honoring the Lord rather than detracting from Him
- Raising the Level of Church and Individual Spirituality
- Expanding the Reach to the Non-Regular Church Goers (e.g. relatives, friends, acquaintances and strangers)
- Raising Church Recognition in the Community
- Having a Gain in Enthusiasm in and for the Church
- Creating Christian Fellowship Opportunities
- Gaining Enthusiasm for the Lord
- Gaining Enthusiasm for the Church
- Creating Opportunities to Teach or Preach
- Supporting Regular Worship
- Inspiring Participants to do More Videos
- Using as a Fund Raiser
- Making waves and having an influence in the community for a spiritual and/or noble cause
- Having a lasting memory and/or effect.
- Promoting spiritual commitments

Make a Quality Presentation

When presenting the important spiritual message of your video to a large audience (especially when it includes guests), make sure the video can be seen well and heard clearly by the whole audience. That 22 inch TV with tinny speakers at the front of the sanctuary will lessen the impact of the message and the enthusiasm of the occasion. Project the videos on a large screen or show them on a large high definition television. Consider that the smallest important image should be seen in the back row (note that not all the images in the video are important but still nice to see). Then if you can, pipe the video's audio into the church's or facility's sound system, or into an external sound system. Many new flat panel televisions have small speakers with limited bandwidth. Some of your more shy actors may speak softly. I have a hearing deficiency (even when using my hearing aids) and I want to hear the whole message with all of the dialog.

Issue Invitations

You want to draw as many viewers as possible to the premiere not just to have a large audience, but to use the video and the event to reach the hearts and minds of many for Jesus. This is an instantiation of the Great Commission. Yes, this event is to bolster and inspire those with immature faith and the steadfast faithful. This event also should serve to draw the unsaved to a soul saving relationship with Jesus, and to lead unchurched Christians to commit themselves to actively serve Jesus.

In an appealing way, the word needs to be spread about where and when the Word is presented. Some ideas on spreading the word (or rather extending the invitation) include:

- Encouraging motivated cast, crew members and church members to use their personal relationships and influence to invite relatives, friends, acquaintances and social media contacts.
- Providing fliers or little invitations to potential attendees (with time and directions) that inspire people to come and act as an event reminder. Some businesses may be willing to post fliers/posters where customers may see them. Also, use your organization/church's mailing list to distribute fliers.
- Posting details of the event on local community bulletin boards and/or community service announcements in newspapers, on radio stations, on web sites and your organization/church's social media page.
- Sending out press releases in a news story format.
- Promoting the event in free and/or for fee advertising media.

Do not approach the invitation as just a way to get people out to a church event. But rather, approach the invitation as serving Jesus and following through on His Great Commission.

Make a Memorable Experience

During the premiering event, make sure the audience gets the message of the video with some sort of spiritual talk - whether it be a few guiding remarks or a full blown sermon. Perhaps a related track to give out will provide message reinforcement. In a more elaborate premiere, include a "playbill" for the audience to know and remember:

- The scripture verses pertaining to the video,
- The goings on in the special event,
- The cast and crew,
- The supporters and donors,
- Acknowledgements of those providing resources, property and equipment,
- Anecdotes pertaining to the making of the video,
- The internet link for the video and related spiritual information,
- The emphasis or broader message of the video (e.g. a written spiritual message),
- Future events, and
- The advertisers that support and make possible this and future spiritual events.

Make sure the cast and crew are bolstered to want to do more videos and do "more whatever" for the church and especially for Jesus by showing your appreciation for them and giving them a few accolades. Include verbal recognition by the minister/master of ceremonies and in print in the bulletin or playbill.

To spread the memory and the message, make an electronic copy (e.g. DVDs or CDs) available which goes beyond the first showing and perhaps around the world.

Perhaps the premiere event is not about the video, but rather, another special spiritual occasion that a video can make even more memorable. For instance, I wrote a script (“The Choice”) that would very well complement a baptism service and bring home to significance of the choice. Also, video production techniques in this book can be used to record special services/events and be made available to participants as a remembrance or to others who could not normally attend.

After-Party or Meet and Greet

While an after-party is a joyful celebration and fellowship experience, it is also a time for nurturing the faith of attendees and participants, as well as, nurturing the participation level in serving the Lord. At the after-event, try to foster follow-on:

- Sharing by attendees and participants of the video message whether it be by external talk about the video or by personal sharing of the video on DVD, on smartphones or by computer streaming,
- Participation in serving the Lord and the church, and
- Production of more spiritual videos and premiere events.

Additionally, you might use this event for recruiting future casts and crews – not only for the next video, but also for other church activities and for positions in the church. The activities for your after-event are something that you will decide. However in my church, food is a wonderful enabler for fellowship.

Distribution

People cannot benefit from your spiritual video if they do not see it. The premiere event will benefit only as many who participate in or attend the premiere itself. However, your video has the potential of being seen and benefitting a far larger number of people for Jesus Christ. This is why you should consider some of your many distribution options. Do not distribute it for yourself; distribute it for Jesus in concert with the Great Commission and the need for spiritual growth (individually and as a group/church). Anyway, you and/or your church/group will most likely benefit, but focus on the higher spiritual cause. Pray for God’s direction for the distribution of your video. In considering the methods/types of distribution, be sure to consider the purpose and desired impacts.

	Distribution Opportunities
Spiritual Growth	Sunday School Lesson or Sermon Supplement Personal One-on-One Presentations Personal Witness Tool Other Church and Christian Group Presentations
Great Commission	External Visual Spiritual Message Presentation in Mass Distribution Show to and/or Witness to Friends, Relatives and Acquaintances Personal Witness Tool

Determine Distribution Purposes and Desired Impacts

In considering the methods/types of distribution, be sure to consider the purpose and desired impacts. Consider the same bulleted items as listed for the Premiere’s desired impacts; those gross categories also apply for distribution but oriented outside and beyond the premiere venue. When formulating the distribution approach, keep in mind your duty to the Great Commission and to a widened scope for the spiritual growth of others (many others). Is your aim oriented solely for local church consumption, or worldwide, or something in-between, or all of this?

I have to say that a worldwide influence does appeal to me, there is a need for such distribution, and I have short videos that have been seen worldwide. However, I cannot have a one-on-one relationship with all viewers worldwide to lead them to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ with extra supporting conversations. On a worldwide basis, you are scattering seeds and hoping that others are available to help the seeds grow. Still, this distribution method has signification impact to a certain level for the many receivers of the spiritual video message.

On the local level, you can supplement the message of your video with your own personal (or the group’s) interaction with those receiving the video message. You will not be exposing the message to as many people; however, you can drill down deeper into the hearts and minds of the video viewers. This method is just as impactful as the worldwide distribution, but in a different way.

You will likely utilize multiple distribution methods/types/techniques within your abilities and within your available time, but focus/emphasize just on a couple. Perhaps recruit helpers/assistants/leaders from you group/church to carry the burdens of implementing addition types of distribution. For instance, get someone to do the DVD burning, someone to do the

website hosting, someone to upload to social sites, someone for taking-up the personal faith facilitator role....

Another potent use for your spiritual video is to raise funds and support for your video production ministry, for your church at large and/or for a specific cause/mission/project. Combine a group of videos to distribute for direct monetary sale and/or funding raised from included advertising.

Types of Distribution

Based upon your purpose and desired import for your spiritual video, you select the types of distribution and associated media to achieve desired results. Such types include:



Media Devices

DVDs –Even though DVDs are becoming passé and obsolete, they are still the primary distribution media for most people. Churches will continue to use DVDs long after the rest of the world has moved on to newer and better distribution means. My church still has a video tape library. Notice that most tablet and laptop computers do not come with DVD drives as standard equipment. But at least for a few more years, you will want to make some DVDs to give out.

DVDs are easy to handout, to mail and to pass along. They are also good for putting a collection of your short videos for sale as a fund raiser. However for mass distribution, you will need a gang DVD burner (which make multiple copies one at time) or a DVD burning service. DVDs do take time to burn; allow time to make them and see if you can con someone else to make

them. For a professional appearance, you will want to print up DVD labels to stick on the disks. Also, do not forget the DVD cases or envelopes.

Also, you will need a DVD creating program to create a copyable DVD image and your first physical DVD. Some video editing programs come with the DVD making capability built in. My video editor came with a separate DVD program, but with a wealth of features to make my DVDs look professional to include customized buttons and scene selection guides.

For your DVDs, you will need to select the appropriate format for how you want your video to be viewed. You are probably thinking that you want it in a format to play on a DVD player which most people of my generation will want to do. If you intend your video to be played on computers, then you will want to burn your video on DVDs in a computer oriented format.

Removable Memory Devices –USB memory sticks (or flash drives) and memory cards (e.g. SD cards and micro-SD cards) have become popular for storing data and for sharing data between computers without going on the internet. The larger ones are capable of transferring full-length high definition movies. Making copies is far faster than copying DVDs. Many tablet PCs have USB ports and/or SD card slots. Your smart phone may be able to use micro-SD cards.

The biggest drawback to these memory devices is cost. Even when buying in bulk, they are more expensive than DVDs. As of this writing, 1 GB and 2 GB micro-SD cards were \$1.50 in quantities of 1000 when buying them on-line from China.

Internet Site Hosting and Sharing –You cannot find a lower cost mass distribution method than to use the internet. The potential number of people you can reach is astronomical. The internet is how my videos have gotten seen in so many countries. You have numerous choices on how to get your video to be seen on the internet: many of them free. YouTube is probably the most success of the video sharing sites, but there are others such as GodTube. Even social sites like Facebook and twitter now have video sharing features. Now there are live video streaming sites (e.g. Live Stream and Google Hangouts) where many can watch your live event at one time and will save your live video for others to view at another time.

You do not know how to put your video on one of the sites? You probably have several kids in your church that can show you – it is almost child's play.

Remember that the larger file size high-resolution videos can be slow to up-load and down-load. Some people's computers and/or internet services may not be capable of viewing high resolution videos. However, some sites like YouTube automatically sense viewers' connection speeds and change the video resolution automatically so those with slow connections can view your video (however, the auto-resolution feature is not perfect). Social sites usually have a file size limit. To get around social site limits, put a link that sends the viewer to a site with a higher file size limit like YouTube.

Be mindful that the internet is used by some crazy weirdoes. So make sure you include sufficient protection in your video and it's postings for the cast members – especially for children!

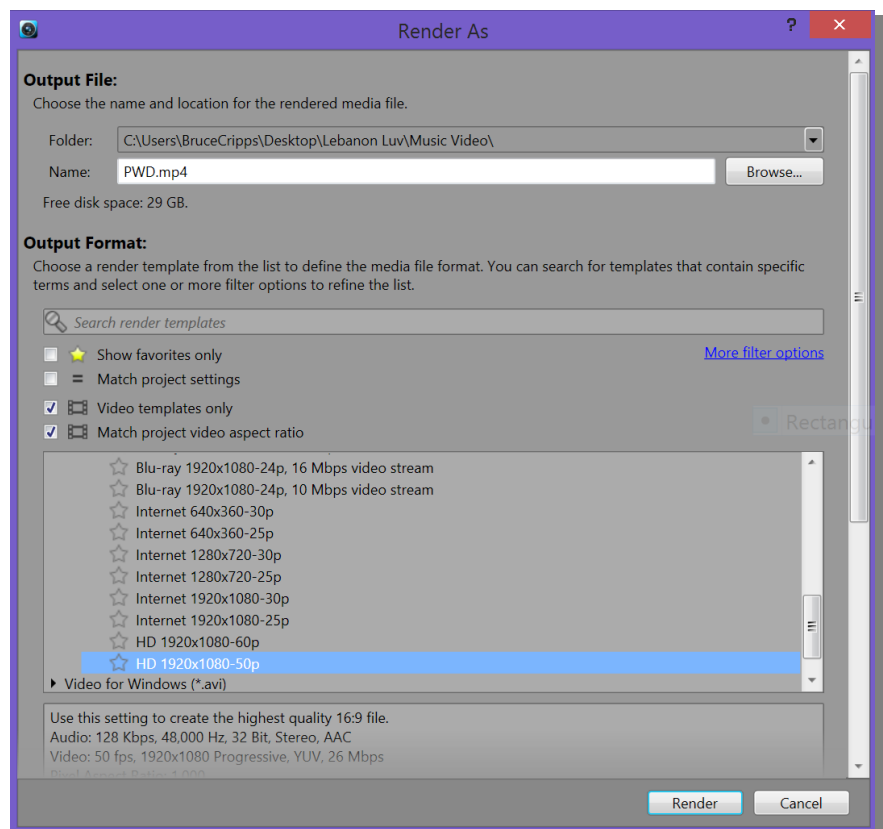
You can also post your videos on your own web site. However, web hosting sites are likely to have monthly data quotas on your account. Of course for addition fees, you can increase the quota amount. Don't want to pay those additional fees? To get around hosting site limits and larger quota fees, put links that sends the viewer to a site with a higher usage limit.

I do recommend posting on Christian video sites like GodTube. They can use your support. I like it that GodTube screens video postings for appropriate content for Christian family viewing.

Rendering for Distribution Media

The media you use also impacts how you or your post person renders the video and in how many forms. Prior to putting your video on the selected media, you must render it in the proper format such as:

- Resolution - High resolution Blu-ray; medium definition; standard definition; or very low definition cell phone quality.
- Aspect Ratio – Widescreen; standard screen; vertical cell phone screen; or some custom shape.
- Compression Ratio - No compression for the highest picture quality (at the expense of needing a large amount of disk space and longer time to burn a DVD); or high compression for using limited disk space and less transfer time (at the expense of picture quality); or some in-between compromise.
- Sound Quality – Speech quality which requires relatively low bandwidth and



disk space; symphonic music quality which requires higher bandwidth and a large amount of disk space; or some in-between compromise.

- Frame Rate – Low frame rate for lower amount of disk space and for low bandwidth requirements (at the expense of jumpy motion); television frame rates (US is 30 or 60 fps and Europe is (25 or 50 fps) whichever is comfortable on the eyes (at the expense of high disk space and bandwidth requirements); motion picture frame rates (mostly 24 fps but some 48 fps); super high frame rates if you plan to show the video in slow motion as you might for seeing if the football crossed the goal line before the knee touched down (crazy on the disk space and bandwidth requirement; or some in-between compromise (particularly for internet distribution).
- File Format – DVD player compatible format (several available) or computer format (numerous formats available)

My \$100 video editing program has numerous format templates from which to select and includes variations for each of the format characteristics listed above - many more templates than shown in the picture above. When selecting a template, I will click on several template names, read the descriptive characteristics for the templates, and select the template that best fits my intended usage.

Film Festivals

Film Festivals have become popular and when you get good at making videos, you may want to submit your work to some of them. I do not mean Sundance, Tribeca or Carnes. I mean some of the many local film festivals around the country or some of the Christian film festivals. You probably live within a couple hours' drive from a local film festival. Christian film festivals are much fewer in number but a good number of them exist. Look for these festivals on-line. Some of these festivals come and go depending on participation and those willing to fund them.

Most festivals require entrance/submission fees. Make sure the festival operators are reputable. Paying the fee does not guarantee that your video will be selected for public viewing. Your video will be subjected to a screening process. The screening process will likely involve submissions of a description of the video (e.g. logline, treatment and/or synopsis). The next step would include someone or a panel watching your video to make the final selections.

If you are lucky enough to be selected, you will be notified of your selection and given opportunity for a better showing time and a better showing location at the festival - of course for an additional fee.

For the festival viewing, you will want to have posters and fliers made to encourage attendees to see your video. Personal interaction with festival goers also provides opportunities to witness for our Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondary Mass Showings

Search for other opportunities for showing your video in public venues such as:

- Cable TV public access channels dedicated to local events and news. Many of these types of local channels were created under the influence of federal cable TV regulation.
- Local movie theater pre-movie showings (during the preview and advertising time). Maybe you can talk a theater operator to show your short for free if the owner is an independent.
- Christian school classroom instruction opportunities or public events.
- Waiting room entertainment such as doctor's offices or food pantry waiting lines.
- Denominational gatherings, conferences and conventions.
- Church covered dish meals.
- Funerals when the video emphasizes the gift of eternal life for the deceased and for the living in attendance (needs to be done with great sensitivity).
- Family or group reunions

Be creative and innovative in searching non-traditional opportunities for group showings. Pray to the Lord for guidance in finding and implementing such opportunities.

Personal Witnessing Device (PWD)

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, I personally like one-on-one external individual showings on my Personal Witnessing Device (PWD). Putting your video on your smartphone, a tablet PC or iPad is so convenient for witnessing for the Lord, or showing off your church. I was one who had a hard time witnessing to others. My PWD is a crutch/aid that helps me talk to others about the Lord and their relationship to Him; showing one of my videos serves as an "ice-breaker" for a deeper discussion about faith.

I find many people receptive to me showing them my videos. I think some folks just might be caught off guard by asking them if they "...would like to see the video I made." Then the power of the video is magnified if you follow it up with you're personal testimony and some amplifying scripture verses. I have trouble memorizing scriptures, but I can quickly bring up witness verses on my PWD. Equip that cellphone and/or tablet as an aid for your witnessing. They are great for impromptu witnessing opportunities.

Post-Script

This book has given you the basics for you to get going with a video production ministry, and you probably know more than you think.

Consider my first film class with myself and my fellow students without previous filmmaking experience. We were required to make three videos. But, the course did not give the down and dirty details on how to make videos. Yet, the students made their videos anyway. Some were very entertaining.

The best learning experience is doing it. You learn as you go and build upon your learned experiences. You may be a bit self-conscious, but you may be surprised how much talent you already have.

With home-grown talent, it does not take professional talent to emotionally move the congregation. It is probably more effective to show local productions than to show slick Hollywood productions.

Also, your own productions are a good foot in the door for witnessing to friends and acquaintances. People respond positively to personal experiences like what you went through to make the video, and then, lead into the message of the video. These personalized videos are good for evangelizing the unchurched and the unsaved. However, there is a time limit on these people and they may die on you before receiving the Word and message that lead them to a saving faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Do not delay! **Do it now!**

Sample Forms and Checklists

You may use the following forms and checklists to help you get started. Feel free to copy these forms, or better yet, tailor a set of your own.

Cast List (Sample)

Character	Scenes	Actor/Stage Name	Contact Info	Minor	Re-lease	Skill Level	Fee \$
Ruth	1,3	Terry Tyme T Squared	Cabin 1 (000) 000-0000	Y	Y	B	0
Roger	2	Harry Hart Thraub	A List Talent Agency (000) 000-0000	N	N	A	1000

Cast List

Character	Scenes	Actor/Stage Name	Contact Info	Minor	Re- lease	Skill Level	Fee \$

Equipment List (Sample)

Type	Source	Cost (\$)	Who Gets	Acq'd	Comments
Camera	Bruce	0.00	BC	Y	Using Bruce's smart phone
Tripod	On-line Store	10.00	BC	N	Smartphone mount for Bruce's personal tripod
Light w/stand	Hardware Store	25.00	TT	N	Use a standard halogen worklight on stand
Power Extension Strip	Terry Tyme	0.00	TT	Y	Bring from home
Microphone	Bruce	0.00	BC	Y	Use Bruce's old smartphone a close in mike and as digital audio recorder
Digital Audio Recorder	NA	0.00			“ “
Audio Mixer	NA	0.00			Mix and edit in post-production from smartphone audio
Audio Cables	NA	0.00			
Total Cost		35.00			

Equipment List

Type	Source	Cost (\$)	Who Gets	Acq'd	Comments
Total Cost					

Costume List (Sample)

Character (Mult. Line OK)	Scenes	Item: Clothes & Accessories	Hair & Makeup	Source	Cost \$	Who Gets	Acq'd
Ruth	1,3	Queen's Robe	--	Theatrical Rentals Inc.	35.99	TT	N
“	1,3	--	Wig	Party Shop	26.00	BC	Y
Total Cost					61.99		

Costume List

Character (Mult. Line OK)	Scenes	Item: Clothes & Accessories	Hair & Makeup	Source	Cost \$	Who Gets	Acq'd
Total Cost							

Storyboard Template

Storyboard Project:

Scene:	Seq:
Background:	
Action:	
Dialog:	
Special Effects (Video/Audio):	

Production On-Set Setup Checklist

Done?	Item	Comments
	Visible Scene Alterations	Changes to anything visible to the camera (e.g. furniture, wall decorations or things casting shadows)
	Site Restoration Record	Log and/or take pictures of items of set items requiring position restoration after the shoot.
	Green Screen (if applicable)	Setup green screen to be uniform and without wrinkles. Minimize shadows and light leaks.
	Props Positioned	Large props plainly visible and small props that actors will grab and use.
	Remove Copyrighted Items	Remove items you do not have legal permission to use or intellectual rights (e.g. pictures and Mickey Mouse stuff).
	All Batteries Charged	In cameras, lights, teleprompters, audio recorders, mixers and in props.
	Camera Positions Practical	Various views require that cameras can be placed in multiple positions to capture those views. Check!
	Camera Settings	Cameras have various settings effecting picture quality (e.g. resolution, focus, white balance and shutter speed).
	Monitor (optional)	Good for reviewing the recorded scene to if retakes are needed and helps in selling the equipment for particular shots.
	Light Set-ups and Checks	Ensure that sufficient light is shown on characters' faces and other important set features, but minimize shadows.
	Sound/Microphone Set-ups and Checks	Ensure that dialog is intelligible and noise minimized. Set and test levels for each actor, and keep mikes out of sight.
	Power Cables	Run cables from power source to items needing external power. Make runs safe and avoid tripping hazards.
	Headset	Good for monitoring sound quality during the shoot. Best to use noise canceling headsets so you hear what the camera hears.
	Signal Cables	Run sound and video cables as needed so as to minimize noise pickup. Make runs safe and avoid tripping hazards.
	Crew in Place	Ensure that the crew is in their places and know what to do. Be prepared to make adjustments during the shoot.
	Cast Coordination	See Cast Checklist.
	Signed Release	Verify that you have signed releases for each person appearing in the video, and releases for minors must also be signed a parent or guardian. Include name for final credits (e.g. stage name)
	Make Safety Check and Safety Speech	Verify that the set with all of the equipment, props and scenery are safe. Then, tell the cast and crew about the rules for safety and point out any potential safety hazards.
	Verify Liability Insurance	Beware of potential liabilities, minimize such risks and make sure that you have appropriate insurance coverage and that the shoot will be conducted in compliance to the insurance terms.
	Re-verify Permits and Site Permissions	Verify that you have all of the site permits and permission need for the shoot in writing and that the shoot will be compliant with their terms and conditions.
	Crew Sign-in Log	Make sure everyone is on set and you have their names for the film credits.
	Off Active Set Location	Where cast and crew can gather with creating noise which during shooting on the active set.
	Catering or Snacks	Snacks for cast and crew to raise spirits and keep them quiet.
	Dressing Room and Makeup Area	Ensure sure the dressing room and make-up area are appropriate and provides for modesty of the performers.
	Costumes and Makeup	Ensure that the performances costumes and makeup are put on appropriately and consistent from take to take.

Production Shooting Checklist

Done? (√)	Item	Comments
	Sound Sync Marker	As you start a take and before any dialog, make a short sound spike (like with a clapper board) so the editor can easily synchronize the sound from multiple sound recording devices or cameras.
	Establishing Shot (1)	A wide angle shot that lets the audience where the scene takes place. Usually at the beginning of the scene unless the director wants to conceal the location to be revealed later.
	Close-ups or Medium Close-ups for Each Character (3) Face on or Over the Shoulder Views	Need multiple takes to add interest and to facilitate post-production cover-up of mistakes during recording; some of which may not be noticed during the shoot.
	Close-Up or Extreme Close-Up of Expository Items	Items like letters, heart monitors, pieces of evidence and props needed to give the audience important information.
	Cut-Aways, Out-Takes and Inserts	Items that may add information to the story, but will help the editor cover-up shooting mistakes and discontinuities.
	Other Necessary Shots	The above shots are the basic, but your script may necessitate other shots and zoom levels (e.g. Point of View shots, motion shots, panning shots and angled shots).
	Artistic Shots	When you have gained the talent to be a bit artistic in your shooting, you have time to record extra artistic shots and once you captured the basic shots, go for these shots to impress the audience.
	Record Background Noise	While no one is talking or making added noise, record a half minute of the set's natural baseline background noise for the post-production editor to use to fill editing noise gaps.
	Continuity Checked	Between each take, verify continuity of such things as same character positions, hair droops the same way and prop is in the same hand.
	Re-Check Camera Settings	Especially when shooting outside as light conditions change (e.g. sun positions and clouds, re-check and adjust camera settings).
	Playback Checks	If you have the time before cast and crew leaves, playback the recorded video to detect if anything needs to be re-shot or you missed shooting something.
	Script Line Check-off	Have someone check-off each line in the script as it is shot and add any notes that will help the post-production person.
	Last Minute Retakes	Based on playback checks, script line check-offs and the director's whim, cross the T's and dot the I's for the recording session.
	Walk-On Releases	For each substitute actor, walk-on or extra, secure a release.
At Completion of the Shoot		
	Restore Site to Original Condition	Put the set back to its original condition and cleaner than before starting the shoot.
	Pack-Up and Return Stuff	With care for the equipment, props, costumes and such, pack-up and return stuff to their proper place and/or owner. Be sure to thank the owners of the stuff
	Minors Turned Over to Responsible Person	Ensure minors leave the shooting session with the pre-designated person responsible for taking the minor home or to a designated safe place.
	Parting Remarks	Praise and thank those involved. Make encouraging remarks to promote participation in future projects. And provide parting instructions as necessary.
	Recordings to Post	Gather up and provided the video and audio recordings to the post-production editor. Also give the editor notes written on scripts or other logs that will aid the editor when putting the video together.
	After Shoot Gathering	Why not finish the shoot with a celebration with food?

Post-Production Cataloging and Grading the Clips

Once you have the video in the computer, you can now view and evaluate the various clips with which you have to create the finished video. You can preview and evaluate the clips using your video editing program or by using most any video playing application. I use a combination of both: video player for gross initial checks to eliminate totally unusable clips and the editor for a more detailed evaluation.

Chances are that you will have no one perfect clip and you will have to inter-mingle portions of duplicate takes. I evaluate clips line by line against the script and put my ratings in a spreadsheet or table (see Clip Rating Sample) using the following method:

1. Number each line, character dialog and/or action paragraph of the script.
2. Using a spreadsheet or a word processor table, list the script line numbers in the left column.
3. Across the top row, list the video clip identifiers (whether it be consecutive numbers or file names created by your video camera).
4. While watching each clip, give a rating to each line of dialog or action and enter the rating into the spreadsheet or table such as:
 - a. G(reen) for good, Y(ellow) for useable, or R(ed) for probably un-useable (I say probably because you may not have anything better, and perhaps, you can doctor it up with the editing program).
 - b. If one clip is exceptionally good, add another rating indicator such as a “+” after the G.
 - c. You may want to add a single word note or abbreviation into the table cell (e.g. noise or EC for extreme close-up).
 - d. Add color shading to the cells according to your ratings.

Clip Rating Sample						
Script Line	Clip 1 MS	Clip 2 Jane	Clip 3 Carol	Clip 4 Carol	Clip 5 J&C	Clip 6 Traffic
1	G					
2	G	G				
3	Y focus		R	G++	Y noise	
4		G			Y noise	
5						G
6			G	Y clothes	G	

From the sample rating chart, Carol flubbed her first close up line but nailed her second try. Also for showing Carol's lines, you will likely cut between two clips because she was not perfect throughout any one clip.

My clip rating table tends to have more columns because I like to make two or three takes for each view/shot just in case of errors not caught during the time of shooting (noise is my biggest nemesis). This clip rating scheme may not be Hollywood, but it works well for me.

References:

The Holy Bible!!!

The Screen Writer's Bible by David Trout

Screenwriting for Dummies by Laura Schellhardt

Filmmaking for Dummies by Bryan Michael Stoller

Complete Idiot's Guide to Digital Video by Karl Bardosh

Contracts for the Film & Television Industry by Mark Litwak

Movie TV Contracts Pro software

www.ChristianFilmmaker.com

www.ChristianFilmmakers.org

www.Writersstore.com

www.CyberCollege.org

www.Calvarywood.com

www.GodTube.com

www.eHow.com

www.Education-portal.com

www.wiseGEEK.com

www.Wikipedia.org

Section 4 - Starter Scripts

I have included a set of starter scripts to help you in starting up your spiritual video production ministry. They are copyrighted, but you may use them on the following licensing terms:

Honor System License for Scripts

The script may be copied without charge provided that the cover page information is retained.

The script may be freely used for making videos to be used for the glory of God and serving Jesus Christ.

Videos or films made using these scripts may be freely shown and /or distributed for the glory of God and serving Jesus Christ.

All copies of the video or film shall include:

- Copyright ownership information, and
- Author listing in the credits.

Notification of script usage shall be sent to the author at bruce@calvarywood.com, and if practical, a copy of the video will be made available to the author with free license for the author to use.

The screenplay author shall not be responsible for negative consequences relating to the use of his scripts.

The screenplay author does not require financial reimbursement for use of these scripts and claims no requirement for any portion of monies raised from videos/films made using these scripts. However, the author will accept monies freely given for such.

"CALVARYWOOD SHORT SPIRITUAL SCRIPTS I AND II"

STARTER COLLECTIONS

FOR BEGINNER SPIRITUAL VIDEO PRODUCERS

by

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Video Shorts Titles

CALVARYWOOD SHORT SPIRITUAL SCRIPTS I

HEAVEN'S PORTAL: HOT BABES

In this comedy, teenage goodtime Tony suddenly appears at Heaven's Portal where he tries to fast talk the admitting angel to let him into that Big Bash on High to check-out the Hot Babes. The angel searches the database to determine if Tony is to be admitted or sent to the place with the "really hot babes." Very easy to produce and well suited for beginning producers.

BORING

To her TV couch potato younger brother and her video-gaming boyfriend, Mary tries to dispel the notion that reading the Bible is boring. Good as a foot-in-the-door for a youth Bible study, but follow-up will be necessary to continue and grow further interest. Props include a TV and a video game box. Also, TV sound effects are needed, but beware of copyrights and royalties.

HURTIN' HEART

A "Do Unto Others" story with chilling emotional impact. Young Linda Lustious totally humiliates the boy who later becomes her emergency cardiologist. Moderately complex to produce and requires two sets: a school and a hospital room which can be made simple.

HEAVEN'S PORTAL: MOMMY!

This story addresses limited mortality and preparation for eternal life through a very young child (age 4 to 7) singing "Jesus Loves Me" who suddenly appears at Heaven's Portal. The script is easy to produce and suitable for the beginning producer.

THE BEGINNING METAPHOR

In this corny comedy, the "Creation Story" is discussed in the context of the basic truths about our relationship to God the creator; which

transcends the specific events of the creation. Some simple biblical style costuming needed and has some added complexity of shooting outdoors (e.g. lighting and background noise).

A FAMILY GETTING BY

To promote missions giving, this audio comedy of a typical American family is contrasted against stark visual pictures of people in severe poverty. Make sure you have the rights/licenses to use pictures and sound effects in your production. Making your own sound effects can be fun.

HEAVEN'S PORTAL: STUFF

In this comedy, a moderately successful male tragically appears at Heaven's Portal with some of his important stuff; thinking he can purchase his way into heaven at the last moment. Very easy to produce and well suited for beginning producers.

A SPIRITUAL LIFT

A very short and simple story for churches looking to raise funds to make their church structure handicap accessible. Very easy to produce and well suited for beginning producers.

SELLING SECRETS

An office thief of secret documents encounters a tough looking group of evangelist students with unpolished presentation skills of the gift of eternal life. Somewhat complex to produce.

HARD BOILED TROPHY

To a larger child, getting the trophy for finding the most eggs at an Easter egg hunt is more important than a very young child getting any eggs. A moving story. Somewhat complex to produce.

THE REAL SAINT NICHOLAS

A cute and comical encounter between an angelic little girl and a drunken fake Santa Claus. The quick witted girl teaches the fake about the real

Saint Nicholas before the North Pole gig. This story is especially heartwarming and moving. The outdoor setting requires noise control considerations.

CHRISTMAS DOLL

Christmas is all about Santa, gifts and dazzling secular decorations to a youth who mocks Heather's nativity display. But, Jesus is the reason for Saint Nicholas (a.k.a Santa Claus). Requires a neighborhood decorated for Christmas and is somewhat complex to produce.

CALVARYWOOD SHORT SPIRITUAL SCRIPTS II

AMAZON: BOOK OF LIFE

This simple little drama, with a couple of chuckles and an adoring "Aahhh", conveys the importance of having a soul saving relationship with the Lord. This script is very easy to produce and is suited for beginning videos producers.

THE TRANSPORT

A futuristic drama of the "Persecuted Church" brought home. Very impactful! Requires 5 distinctly different shooting locations and can be complex to shoot.

THE CHOICE

Church or sports is the dilemma presented to Charo - a star athlete who is contemplating a commitment to Christ or being a superstar soccer player. This script is very easy to produce and is suited for beginning videos producers.

LUCY FEUR AND GABBY EL

Satan's sexy temptress, Lucy Feur, attempts to seduce a college student to a pot party with a follow-up invitation to come down to her place afterwards. Guardian angel, Gabby El, attempts a rescue. Some special costuming is needed for Lucy.

FAST FOOD GRACE

Comedy where the children from one family think it is strange for another family to say grace in a public fast food restaurant. The little girl almost gets the point.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Bobby, a young teenage boy under the influence of others, makes decisions as to what to do and who to follow. He and Tom decide to go to Karen's for

a good time and for getting high or intoxicated. Requires four distinctively different sets.

PC PILATE

Pilate contemplates the fate of Jesus and seeks a politically correct decision where he can claim no responsibility. This script requires some simple special costuming, but is very easy to produce and is suited for beginning videos producers.

SEXUALLY IRRELEVANT

A frank drama about teenagers dealing with issues about sex. This script is a great facilitator for deeper discussions about sex, abstinence and biblical guidance. Moderately complex scene to shoot, and requires a car. This script is also a good reading script for a teenage Sunday School class discussion.

THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPE

Tara seeks a gift to give to a Christian friend, but her shopping companions keep suggesting secular Christmas ornaments. Requires a Christmas Shoppe like setting with a large selection of ornaments; otherwise, easy to shoot.

NO GOD TALK

Presents the concept the Great Commission and a new Christian's obligation to witness. Lee wants to witness to her "Tough Crowd" friends but don't know how. Requires four sets but are easy to shoot.

PURE HEART

Little Cassidy, a very young Sunday school student, wants a truly pure heart, and acts to get one in her own way. Easy to shoot and child's dialog is short. However, extra camera angles will add to emotional impact and aahhh factor.

HEAVEN'S PORTAL: TRANSGRESSIONS

As a result of an auto accident, a corrupt

politician and a deacon find themselves at Heaven's Portal before the admitting angel. Easy to produce, but needs elevator prop/set.

GOT IT

A group, considered subversive and destabilizing to society, operates in secret to avoid capture, re-orientation and rehabilitation. If they would voluntarily surrender themselves, they would be treated with compassion and be given minimum incarceration time. Written to raise concern for the Persecuted Church. Various shooting locations, but minimal dialog and easy to produce.

THE REAL SAINT NICHOLAS

A cute and comical encounter between an angelic little girl and a drunken fake Santa Claus. The quick witted girl teaches the fake about the real Saint Nicholas before the North Pole gig. This story is especially heartwarming and moving. This is an encore inclusion from CALVARYWOOD SHORT SPIRITUAL SCRIPTS I. The outdoor setting requires noise control considerations.

"CALVARYWOOD SHORT SPIRITUAL SCRIPTS I"

A STARTER COLLECTION

FOR BEGINNER SPIRITUAL VIDEO PRODUCERS

by

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Preface

EXT. PORCH DAY

Still on a high after making just a couple of spiritual videos, Bruce Cripps sits, stares at his table PC and ponders on how to get churches and Christian groups to do similarly.

BRUCE

(V.O. of his thoughts)

I have found this exciting and powerful way to present God's Word and spiritual concepts that can be used for worship and for evangelism, but how can I make the point of its effectiveness and ease to do?

He looks up and views a small part of God's creation: a lake, birds gliding through the air, and trees rustling from a comfortable light breeze.

BRUCE (CONT.)

The idea of making spiritual videos can be intimidating, but I found that making such videos to be not that bad. Actual, it was kind of fun. And boy, I had a great time showing them to friends and co-workers. What an easy way to break the ice for some spiritual discussions!

A small bird pecks for some food around plants at the edge of the porch.

BRUCE (CONT.)

Perhaps, I can make it easy for churches and Christian groups to make spiritual shorts - and inexpensive too.

Concentric rings form on the lake as a fish

breaks water.

BRUCE (CONT.)

I know. I'll make my easy to produce spiritual scripts available for download and put a free spiritual production tutorial on the internet. And, I will include my lessons learned.

A large long billed bird dives into the lake and comes up with fish in its bill.

BRUCE (CONT.)

Got it!

THE END

HEAVEN'S PORTAL®: HOT BABES

by

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INT. HEAVEN'S PORTAL NIGHT

Tony stands in a beam of light surrounded by nothing but black. Tony wears a backpack.

TONY

Hey man..., where am I? Is anyone here? Yooooou whoooo?

ANGEL (VO)

You are at Heaven's Portal.

TONY

Cool. Beam me up Scotty. You got some nice babes up there?

ANGEL (VO)

Just one moment... I don't see your name on the list.

TONY

Hey man, I'm Tony.

ANGEL (VO)

I know you are Tony.

TONY

I gotta go to that big bash on high and checkout the hot babes.

KEYBOARD CLICKING sounds.

ANGEL (VO)

Neither do I see your name in the database. We may have to send you to the place with the really hot babes.

TONY

Cool.

ANGEL (VO)

Not really, with all that fire and brimstone stuff, they are not too cool.

(Exaggerated)

Believe me!

Tony grabs his iPod from his backpack.

TONY

Until you find my name, I'll
play a little Grateful Dead.

ANGEL (VO)

Haven't heard of them.

TONY

Your kidding. They've been
around for ever.

ANGEL (VO)

Hmmm, there are not many who
have been around forever.
Only one that I can recall.

Tony puts the earpieces in his ears and starts
bopping his head to unheard music.

ANGEL (VO)

Perhaps if you -

Tony bops his head and wiggles to the music -
hamming it up.

ANGEL (VO)

(Yelling)

Perhaps if you -

Tony stops still and removes one earpiece.

TONY

You gotta problem?

ANGEL (VO)

(Frustrated)

You have the problem if we
cannot find your name in the
right list! Tell me now, in
what church did you worship?

TONY

Sometimes, Mom would drag me
to Calvary Baptist, but that
worship stuff was for the
folks with the grey hair...,
and the dye jobs.

ANGEL (VO)

That's not good.

TONY

Yeah, they gotta be more
funner and stifle their
preachin'.

KEYBOARD CLICKING sounds.

ANGEL (VO)

(Perky)

Oh, I found something on you.

TONY

Hey, beam me up and I'll
liven up the party.

ANGEL (VO)

Not so fast. You were in the
inactive file. Your
commitment quotient appears
very low, and you did not
pray much.

TONY

So, where are you going with
this?

ANGEL (VO)

I think you are going to be
fixed up with some really hot
babes.

Tony looks puzzled as the light fades to black. A
red glow appears in the background showing Tony's
silhouette.

THE END

Production Notes:

Script can be changed to a female lead by
changing "babe" to "hunk".

An ACCIDENT sound effect (or the like) can be
inserted during opening title and credits.

Beam of light can be created by a video projector
or inserted as a special effect during editing.

"BORING"

by

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INT. LIVING ROOM DAY

Little BOBBY sits on a couch with television remote in hand - in couch potato fashion. He looks bored with all television offerings, but is not motivated to move.

(V.O.) Audio of PROGRAM 1 is heard.

Bobby clicks the remote.

(V.O.) Audio of PROGRAM 2 is heard.

Mary enters with Bible in hand.

BOBBY

A hundred fifty satellite channels and still nothing on.

Bobby clicks the remote.

(V.O.) Audio of PROGRAM 3 is heard.

MARY

You're a really boring kid.

Bobby clicks the remote.

(V.O.) Audio of PROGRAM 4 is heard.

BOBBY

What? I can't hear you.

Mary grabs the remote, clicks off the television and throws down the remote on the couch.

MARY

You're boring. You do nothing all day but watch TV - even when there is nothing worth watching.

BOBBY

That's not so. I play video games when you're boy friend brings his X-Box over.

MARTY, Mary's boy friend, enters through front door with X-Box in hands.

MARTY

Hi Mary. What's shaking.

MARY

I'm trying to impress upon Bobby that there are better things to do than watch TV all day.

MARTY

That's right Bobby.

Marty holds up his X-Box above his head.

MARTY (CONT)

Grand Theft Auto!

BOBBY

(With arm gesture)

Yes!

MARY

And better than video games.

MARTY

What's better than X-Box?

Mary holds up her Bible.

MARY

This.

BOBBY

And you call me boring.

MARY

For occasional entertainment, TV and video games are good.

(Points to Bible)

But this is life changing stuff.

BOBBY

Huh?

MARY

It has conflict. It has love. It has greed and corruption. It has triumph over evil. It has suffering. It tells how to obtain eternal life through Jesus Christ. It has-

MARTY

(Interrupting)

Sex?

MARY

(Huffy)

Yes, it has sex -- the right way and the wrong way.

MARTY

Maybe you can read me the parts about the sex.

MARY

(Huffier)

You ... and Bobby really need to tune in to the Christ.

Marty puts his X-Box by the television.

MARY

While you two are numbing your brains, I'll be reading about a fierce battle against a gigantic, fiery-red dragon with seven heads and ten horns that attacked a woman and tried to devour her newborn son.

Mary exits to the kitchen.

Marty sits on the couch with Bobby.

MARTY

Maybe, Mary is right.

BOBBY

About tuning in to the Christ?

MARTY

Channel.

BOBBY

Okay.

Bobby picks up the remote and turns on the television.

(V.O.) A HYMN is heard.

Bobby and Marty take on bored couch potato appearances.

THE END

"HURTIN' HEART"

by

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INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY DAY

LINDA LUSTIUS, TAMMY TUMUCH and STACY STUCCUP chat with each other in the school hallway. They wear the finest fashions.

STUDENT EXTRAS meander the hallway.

TOMMY PETERS stands toward the end of the hallway; looking nervous and taking occasional glances at Linda. He wears inexpensive hand-me-downs. He tucks in his shirt, takes a courage-building breath and walks up to Linda.

As he approaches, the girls stop chatting.

TOMMY

(Nervously and timidly)
H...h...hi Linda, would you like
to go to th...the dance with
me?

LINDA

(Demeaningly)
Now, look at me, Tommy
Peters...

Student extras look on.

LINDA (CONT)

I wear clothes from Lord and
Taylor... You wear Walmart
hand-me-downs.

TAMMY AND STACY

(Girlishly laughing)
Hee, hee, hee, hee!

Tommy looks hurt.

LINDA (CONT)

I wouldn't be caught dead
being seen with you.

TAMMY AND STACY

(Girlishly laughing)
Hee, hee, hee, hee!

Tommy slowly walks away; dejected as others stare on.

INT. HOSPITAL ICU NIGHT

HEART MONITOR continuously sounds in the background.

ADULT LINDA LUSTIUS lies still on a gurney and wears an oxygen mask. Her eyes are open, but droopy. She also wears an ordinary hospital gown, and an IV. She is partially covered by a white sheet. A heart monitor is in the background (though the screen needs not be seen).

DR. THOMAS PETERS enters, stands by Linda and studies her chart.

DR. PETERS

Hello, Ms Linda Lustius. I am Dr. Thomas Peters: your attending cardiovascular surgeon. Remember me from school?

Dr. Peters checks the heart monitor.

DR. PETERS

It looks like you have a hurtin' heart.

LINDA'S POV DR. PETERS - BLURRED.

DR. PETERS (CONT]

How ironic. You gave me quite a hurtin' heart in front of everyone at school... You said that you wouldn't be caught dead being seen with me.

Dr. Peters picks up a filled hypodermic needle.

DR. PETERS (CONT)

A polite "no thank you" would have sufficed.

Dr. Peters slowly injects the needle into the IV.

DR. PETERS

What's that old saying..., "Do to others as they have done to you?"

FADE TO BLACK:

INSERT - BLACK SLIDE

THREE HEART MONITOR BLIPS followed by a FLAT LINE sound.

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "CORRECTION:"

FLAT LINE sound continues.

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "DO UNTO OTHERS"

FLAT LINE sound continues.

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM"

FLAT LINE sound continues.

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "DO UNTO YOU."

FLAT LINE sound continues until DEFIBRILLATOR SHOT is heard. Then, HEART BLIPS resume.

THE END

HEAVEN'S PORTAL®: MOMMY!

by

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Production Note: Can insert sound effect signifying DEATH during Title and opening credits.

INT. HEAVEN'S PORTAL NIGHT

SARAH, a young child, stands in a beam of light surrounded by nothing but black. She has yet to realize where she is.

SARAH

(Singing happily)
Jesus loves me, this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.

As Sarah begins to realize that something wrong has happened, her singing slows to a stumbling stop.

SARAH (CONT.)

Little ones... to him belong...
They are weak..., but he is...
strong.

Sarah stands in place, but slowly looks around.

SARAH

Mommy!
(Looking around
frantically and making a
fear face)
Mommy!
(Crying)
I want my Mommy!

ANGEL (VO)

(In comforting tone)
You're mommy is not here --
at least, not yet.

SARAH

Bring her here now!

ANGEL (VO)

She has more to do for Jesus
on earth. You are safe here
at Heaven's Portal.

SARAH

Heaven's what?

ANGEL (VO)

Heaven's Portal, the entrance
to that wonderful place that
your mommy taught you about.

SARAH

Oh..., will Mommy be coming?

ANGEL (VO)

She most certainly will be -
she's on the future
reservations list.

SARAH

Huh?

ANGEL (VO)

She is coming much later.
But, in the meantime, you can
join other of God's children
that will be happy you are
here.

SARAH

Do they like singing?

ANGEL (VO)

Yes, they sure do. Come
through the portal and sing
and I will show you.

Sarah rises towards the light.

SARAH

(Resumes singing)

Yes, Jesus loves me.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY DAY

MOMMY cries over a small coffin.

SARAH (VO)

(Completing her song)

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes,
Jesus loves me. The Bible
tells me so.

THE END

"THE BEGINNING METAPHOR"

by

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EXT. WILDERNESS DAY

HEATHER and three other youths (CHUCK, JACK, and MARIA) enter a clearing after an exhausting walk. They plop down on the ground in a semicircle to rest. They take drinks from their water bottles.

CHUCK

(Whining)

Heather, why didn't you tell us we were going to walk so far in the beginning of this hike through the wilderness?

HEATHER

In the beginning -

JACK

In the beginning, God created -
That fairytale is a crock of ... dog wash.

MARIA

Shush Jack, you don't have to act like your primeval relatives.

Jack makes ape like gestures and all laugh at him.

HEATHER

When Moses, or whoever, described the beginning, folks didn't have all of the scientific knowledge that we have today.

CHUCK

I can just picture Moses speaking in science talk.

EXT. SINAI WILDERNESS DAY

The youths are dressed as adults during the Exodus. Heather is dressed like their leader Moses, wears an obviously fake beard and holds a staff.

HEATHER

(In low voice)
In the beginning, the
universe consisted of nothing
but a few pockets of passing
gas.

JACK

What's gas?

CHUCK

Gas is like when you ate
beans last night.

MARIA

So that is what Jack is made
of.

JACK

(Shaking fist)
If you weren't a female, I'd
smack you.

HEATHER

Maybe we should skip over the
big bang theory of the
universe creation.

CHUCK

How was man created?

HEATHER

Well, have you ever noticed
how much Jack resembles an
ape?

MARIA

(Looking at Jack)
I see your point.

Jack rushes Heather and starts to throw a punch
at her/him.

Heather cringes at the incoming fist.

Chuck and Maria grab Jack's arms, pull him back
and sit him down.

JACK

I'm not related to no ape.

HEATHER

Maybe, we should skip over
the creation of man.

(Wipes brow)

Anyway, there's a missing
link to the theory.

MARIA

Oh Moses, how was woman
created?

JACK

By making her a pain in the
side of man.

CHUCK

(Whining)

Hey Moses, why didn't you
tell us we were going to walk
so far in the beginning of
this Exodus through the
wilderness?

MARIA

I think I have a headache.

JACK

Take two tablets and call me
in the morning.

HEATHER

That reminds me, I have to go
up to the mountain top ... to
attend to a burning issue.

EXT. CURRENT WILDERNESS DAY

The youths are dressed normally and are in the
same positions as in the first scene.

HEATHER

So, think of the creation
description as a metaphor
that teaches, in story, basic
truths about our relationship
to God the creator.

JACK

Well, perhaps there was a
guiding influence in the
creation of the universe.

HEATHER

Ready to continue to the
mountain top?

CHUCK

(Whining)

Okay, but I am not going to
carry these tablets.

Chuck moves to the side so the others can see two
inscribed stone tablets with the Ten
Commandments.

THE END

"A FAMILY GETTING BY"

by

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Production Note: Video will be most effective using slides of an impoverished family taken by a missionary with whom the local congregation can identify.

EXT. IMPOVERISHED REGION/INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME
DAY

[Insert] Slide or series of slides depicting a family barely surviving in an impoverished region.

Sound of FRONT DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING.

TERRY

(V.O. Distant shout
front door)

Hi Hon, where's my bowling
ball?

MARY

(V.O. Distant shout from
bedroom)

I put it next to the
refrigerator so you can find
it.

TERRY

(V.O. Distant shout
front door)

Very funny. I'm starved.

MARY

(V.O. Distant shout from
bedroom)

Help yourself to the fridge.
There should be something you
can nuke.

TERRY

(V.O. Distant shout
front door)

Why can't you cook up
something?

MARY

(V.O. Distant shout from
bedroom)

I'm going to the mall with
Maxine to buy some new

clothes for going out and to church. I don't have a thing to wear.

TERRY

(V.O. Distant shout
front door)

You know we don't have any money until payday.

MARY

(V.O. Distant shout from
bedroom)

Don't worry, I have plastic.

TERRY

(V.O. Distant shout
front door)

I'll be back from bowling late. Afterwards, the guys are going out for pizza and beer.

BABY CHUCKY

(V.O. Distant crying
from nursery)

Waaaa! Waaa! Waa!

MARY

(V.O. Distant shout from
bedroom)

Get a bottle out and heat it up for Chucky.

Sounds of a MAN'S FOOTSTEPS leading to kitchen and refrigerator.

Sound of REFRIGERATOR OPENING followed by sound of REFRIGERATOR CONTENTS FALLING to the floor.

TERRY

Dang!

Sounds of WOMAN'S FOOTSTEPS running to the kitchen.

MARY

I told you, we needed to buy a larger fridge. It can't hold all the food.

TERRY

But, I rather get that 42
inch HDTV...

MARY

Now pickup this mess you
created. I'm in a hurry.

Sounds of KICKING BOTTLES AWAY.

TERRY

My Mess? I'm in a hurry too.
Get Marcy to pick this up.
Where is she?

MARY

She's watching a DVD in her
room.

DOORBELL RINGS.

MARY

That's the baby sitter. Can
you give me some money for
her?

TERRY

Okay.

MARY

Oh! And I will need an extra
dollar for the special
missions offering at church
Sunday.

TERRY

Another special offering?
Don't they know, we're just
getting by?

DOORBELL RINGS.

THE END

HEAVEN'S PORTAL®: STUFF

by

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Production Note: Can insert sound effect signifying DEATH during Title and opening credits.

INT. HEAVEN'S PORTAL NIGHT

Terry (an adult) stands in a beam of light surrounded by nothing but black. Terry holds an oversized suitcase, an overstuffed bag and golf clubs.

TERRY

Hello..., is anyone here? I got all my important things packed and ready to enter Heaven's portal... Yooooou whoooo?

ANGEL (VO)

You have too much baggage.

TERRY

How can I survive without all my important stuff? How about letting me pay an overweight baggage fee?

ANGEL (VO)

You do not need your stuff. In Heaven, all of your needs are provided for.

Terry drops his bags and pulls out a SmartPhone from a pocket.

TERRY

Can I at least take my SmartPhone?

ANGEL (VO)

No earthly thing may enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

TERRY

How can anyone exist in Heaven without a SmartPhone to keep up with everyone?

ANGEL (VO)

You would be pleasantly

surprised... That is, if you are admitted.

TERRY

What do you mean?

ANGEL (VO)

I do not see your reservation.

TERRY

Oh, I thought that I'd get my ticket at the gate. What will it cost?

ANGEL (VO)

You cannot get your ticket now. It is too late.

TERRY

Sure I can, I'll find a scalper..., but to get tickets from those guys, you nearly have to sell your soul.

ANGEL (VO)

Oh, you can find The Buyer Of Souls on the lower level... Now if you are to be admitted, your excess baggage must still be addressed.

TERRY

You can have my baggage. There's a lot of valuable stuff in it.

ANGEL (VO)

I do not mean your earthly possessions. I mean your sins that weight down your soul.

TERRY

Huh?

ANGEL (VO)

You should have checked them in when you made your advanced commitment. Jesus would have relieved you of them.

TERRY

I didn't know that.

ANGEL (VO)

You could have gotten the info at one of the many convenient information centers... The ones marked with tall steeples and/or crosses.

TERRY

Oh, those. I went to a few, but decided they weren't for me.

ANGEL (VO)

Too bad. They could have helped you obtain a passport and assisted you in establishing citizenship in the Kingdom.

TERRY

But, it would have caused me to give up too much -- including my Sunday morning sleep.

ANGEL (VO)

Hmmm. What about those Sunday morning tee times at the golf course?

TERRY

If I can't get into Heaven, where do I go?

ANGEL (VO)

Do you really want me to tell you where to go?

TERRY

No, but--

ANGEL (VO)

Well, you cannot be sent back and you cannot stay in limbo. Go to the lower level and

follow the large crowd.
The bright light is extinguished.

THE END

"A SPIRITUAL LIFT"

by

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INT. KITCHEN DAY

LORI and LONI are sitting at the kitchen table and closing up their school books.

LORI

Thank you Loni, for helping me with my homework. You're a real friend.

LONI

I am always here anytime you need help.

LORI

How would you like come to our kids night sleep-over at church on Saturday?

LONI

Oh?

LORI

You'll have a good time.

(With increasing enthusiasm)

We start out with a pageant for all ages in the sanctuary upstairs. I play Mary. After that, us kids go downstairs to Fellowship Hall for pizza, ice cream sundaes and games to late in the evening. Then maybe, we'll get some sleep.

LONI

That sounds like great fun. I don't seem to get out much anymore. I'll be there.

The two give each other a friendship hug.

ANGLE ON wheelchair in which Loni sits.

DISOLVE TO:

INSERT - THEME SLIDE

White text on black background saying, "HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY CAN BE A SPIRITUAL LIFT."

THE END

SELLING SECRETS

by

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INT. OFFICE NIGHT

Lights are out in an office with a file cabinet containing secret documents. A shaky flash light shines on the cabinet. The hand of an INEXPERIENCED THIEF opens a drawer.

INTERNAL CHURCH CLASSROOM NIGHT

An EVANGELISM INSTRUCTOR stands at the front of a church classroom, giving lessons in evangelism. The white board says, "EVANGELISM 101." The students are out of camera view.

INSTRUCTOR

Hello, I am [insert name] and this is an introductory class on evangelism. The first point I want to make is that the Word of God is not to be kept a secret.

INT. OFFICE NIGHT

The thief with a shaky hand pulls out a file marked secret.

INSTRUCTOR (VO)

You should take the Word and pass it on.

The thief drops the file on the floor.

INSTRUCTOR (VO)

I know that it may be difficult for you sell the Word to someone else.

The thief gathers up the papers and puts them back into the folder.

INSTRUCTOR (VO)

But, it is important for our mission to change the ultimate outcome of those who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus - death and eternal damnation.

The thief conceals the secret file in his clothing.

INSTRUCTOR (VO)

When you are witnessing to another sinner, your strength and weakness is that you are a lot like that sinner and have something in common.

The thief cautiously leaves with his secret file.

INTERNAL CHURCH CLASSROOM NIGHT

The instructor writes on the board, "ROMANS 3:23."

INSTRUCTOR

"For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God."

The instructor writes on the board, "ROMANS 6:23."

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

And because of sin, you and the person to whom you are witnessing will die. As Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death...;"

The instructor draws two cliffs: one marked "Mortal Life" and the other marked "Eternal Life". A gap is in-between.

The instructor completes the drawing as he/she completes the verse by drawing a cross to bridge the gap.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

"... but the Gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, go out and share this good news with the unsaved. And, see you next week.

EXTERNAL CHURCH ALLEY NIGHT

From the street, the thief runs into an alley

along a church and holds a hand over the stolen document. He stumbles and falls to the ground. He pushes himself to his knees and hesitates in a near prayer like position with his head slumped down.

A group of TOUGH LOOKING MEN enters around a corner to the alley and walks intimidatingly towards the thief.

The thief looks at them with fear.

When they get close, they stop.

The LEADER takes one step closer and slowly points to the fear-filled thief.

LEADER

Hey man, I want to tell you something - you are going to die!

The thief shakes a moment and then sprints down the alley and into the road. A car comes along and hits the thief. The sounds of BRAKES are heard.

The instructor walks up behind the stunned leader and puts a hand on his shoulder.

INSTRUCTOR

Well Nate, I think we need to work on your technique. Now, call 911.

All but the leader run to assist with the accident. The leader makes the emergency call.

THE END

Production Note: The car accident can be safely done by: 1) Use a tripod to keep the camera in one fixed portion, 2) With no cars coming, have the thief run into the road and fall, 3) Have the thief move to a safe location and out of camera view, 4) Have the car move down the street and stop at point of collision, and 5) in postproduction, splice the thief and car footage

to create the accident and add brake sounds.

Also, the accident can be done off-screen with just sound effects.

"HARD BOILED TROPHY"

by

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EXT. EGG HUNT REGISTRATION TABLE DAY

Three youths (ERIC, MEGAN and MAT) stand in front of a table with first, second and third place trophies. A sign announces, "EASTER EGG HUNT CONTEST."

ERIC

I am the best egg hunter of all times.

MAT

You are full of it, Eric. I'm the best egg hunter of all times.

MEGAN

Yeh, I don't see you two with any trophies.

MAT

Well, I'm gonna have -
(Points at first place trophy)
that one.

Eric pushes Mat away.

ERIC

No you're not. I'm winning it.

MEGAN

Oh little boys, I don't think Easter is all about getting the most eggs or trophies.

MAT

You just say that because you are a girl, and you can't compete against us boys.

ERIC

(In Megan's face)
Yeh!

MEGAN

You two don't get it. It's about a sacrifice that results in the victory of all

times.

ERIC

Hah?

Mat makes a "Loco" gesture.

MAT

Girls are weird.

MEGAN

Then, go chase after your silly eggs. You're victory will elude you.

ERIC

You're right, Mat. They're weird.

MAT

Especially, Megan.

MEGAN

Mat, you have a cold hard heart. I'm amazed it beats.

Megan abruptly turns and struts away.

EXT. EGG HUNT FIELD DAY

A mass a CHILDREN, of varying ages and with bags, invade the egg field.

Mat and Eric blast through the mass; snatching all eggs in their paths.

KATIE, a four year old, stumbles and falls just out of reach of an egg. She reaches her hand out for it.

Mat runs past and snatches the egg as he passes.

Katie cries.

Mat and Eric grab up a few more eggs amongst the mass of other children, and run past JEREMY and TERRY (two other four year olds) who have empty bags.

EXT. FIELD EDGE DAY

Along the edge of the egg hunt area are some bushes. With their eggs and trophies, Mat and

Eric walk near the bushes. Mat holds up his first place trophy.

MAT

I am the best.

ERIC

Well, you won't be next year.

MAT

Oh, you think so. I'm better than you and will always be better than you.

The two stop near a bush.

ERIC

Go stuff it, Mat.

Eric walks off in another direction.

(O.S.) Sounds of Katie CRYING.

Mat looks around the bush.

MAT

(Conceitedly)

Cheer up. You're in the presence of the winner.

Katie holds open her empty bag.

KATIE

(Sniffling)

I got no eggs.

MAT

Well, someone has to be number one.

KATIE

Sniff, sniff ..., waa a a.

Katie puts her hands to her face as she cries.

MAT

(Appearing uncomfortable)

Ah..., I had to grab so many eggs because... because... err... to make sure...

(Pulls an egg from his

bag)
that those like you will get
some eggs.

Katie takes the egg, but looks unconvinced of
Mat's kindheartedness.

Mat kneels, pulls out a double handful of eggs
and hands them to Katie.

Katie makes an accepting smile, takes the eggs
and puts them in her bag.

Jeremy approaches with a sad face and an empty
bag.

MAT

You too...? Okay?

Mat grabs another double handful of eggs and
dumps them into Jeremy's bag as Jeremy opens it.

A smile comes on Jeremy's face.

Terry approaches with a sad face and an empty
bag.

MAT

Don't tell me.

Mat grabs another double handful of eggs and
dumps them into Terry's bag as Terry opens it.

A smile comes on Terry's face.

Mat turns his empty bag upside down and shakes
it. Then, he grabs his trophy.

MAT

At least I still have my
trophy.

KATIE

May I touch your trophy?

Mat holds his trophy out towards Katie. Katie
puts her hand on it.

KATIE

Cold..., hard.

Katie moves her hand to Mat's heart.

KATIE

Warm.

Jeremy puts his hand on Mat's heart.

JEREMY

Tender.

Terry put hand on Mat's heart and makes an expression of not knowing what to say.

TERRY

And..., it has a good beat.

INSERT traditional Christian Easter song with a drum lead-in, a strong beat and an electronic sound.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END

THE REAL SAINT NICHOLAS

by

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EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD DAY

SANTA IMPERSONATOR in an unkempt red suit staggers across the street with a bottle in a bag and takes occasional sips.

SANTA

(Slurred singing between sips)

Deck the Halls with boughs of holly... Fa la la..., Fa la...

A PRETTY WOMAN passes Santa in the opposite direction as she crosses the street.

Santa notices the woman in an aroused manner.

SANTA

(Suggestively)

Fa la la la la.

The woman ignores the Santa.

SANTA

(Shouting)

It's Christmas time. How about taking Santa home and giving him a little holiday cheer.

The woman walks away faster.

As he near the curb, Santa falls on his face. The bottle breaks.

A little CHILD steps up to Santa's head, looks down, wiggles her nose, makes a facial expression of smelling a stench, and then makes a stern expression.

CHILD

You are not the real Saint Nicholas.

SANTA

Sure I am. I am wearing a red suit. And I have a white beard.

Santa puts his hand on his beard, but it falls off. He quickly tries to put it back on. He looks sheepish.

CHILD

Mommy says the real Saint Nicholas is a holy man and was a bishop in the early church in Myra. He does not fall down drunk.

SANTA

I'm not drunk. I just fell to a prostrate position for prayer.

CHILD

Then, what is in your bag?

Santa holds up a dripping bag with the bottle broken.

SANTA

Oh, this was the sacramental wine -- for Communion. The congregation will be very disappointed. Can you give me some money so I can buy more sacramental wine?

She puts her hands on her hips and gives him an unconvinced look.

SANTA

But, think of the congregation.

The child still looks unconvinced. Santa moves to a sitting position on the curb.

SANTA (CONT.)

You still don't believe me, do you, kid?

The child shakes her head, "no."

SANTA

Where is this Myra place?

CHILD

Mommy says it's in Turkey.

SANTA

Turkey? That's too hot for this suit.

CHILD

Oh, that was before his North Pole gig... And before he was declared a saint by the Church.

SANTA

You know too much, kid.

CHILD

He served Jesus, helped children and the poor, and ministered to many. He was even put in jail for his deeds.

SANTA

(Smiling)

Oh, I was put in jail for my deeds.

CHILD

But, that does not make you a Saint. However, the real Saint Nicholas would want me to help you.

The child reaches into a pocket, pulls out a fast food restaurant gift certificate and hands it to Santa.

CHILD

Here is a Mickey Burger certificate. Merry Christmas.

The Santa takes the certificate and stares at it (close up). Out of camera view, the child leaves.

SANTA

Now, I really believe in Saint Nicholas.

Santa looks up to see the child. But no one is there. Then, he looks to the sky.

SANTA

Thank you, Lord, for the
little child.

THE END

"CHRISTMAS DOLL"

by

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EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD DAY

HEATHER, CHUCK AND JACK walk home from school with books in arms. Homes that they pass are elaborately decorated with secular symbols of Christmas.

CHUCK

These decorations are awesome. They say so much about what Christmas is about.

JACK

Yeah, Santa Claus bringing toys.

CHUCK

It's a bummer though when he brings clothes.

HEATHER

Clothes are good too.

JACK

Heather, you're weird.

CHUCK

No Jack, she's a girl.

JACK

Just the same.

The three stop at a house with no decorations.

CHUCK

Heather, why don't you have any decorations up yet?

HEATHER

We're putting them up this weekend. We made them special.

JACK

You will never out do my house. We had to have the electric company bring in a new feed to light all of our lights.

CHUCK

(To Jack)

Your Santa with the rocket-pack is da-bomb.

(To Heather)

Oh, I'm sure that your decorations will be nice too.

HEATHER

Come into the garage and I'll give you a preview.

INT. GARAGE DAY

A large nativity stable, character set and animal figures are placed in the garage. The manger contains a doll made to look like the Christ child.

A light comes on and the three youths enter the garage through the inside door.

HEATHER

Here it is.

CHUCK

Oh, I've seen something like this before. It doesn't seem to be very popular.

HEATHER

This scene represents the first Christmas - the birth of Jesus.

JACK

I thought putting this stuff out was unconstitutional.

HEATHER

Not yet - at least in front of homes.

Jack picks up the doll by its head and its wrappings fall off.

JACK

Your little dolly doesn't hold a candle to Santa Claus.

Heather grabs the doll from Jack.

HEATHER

(Huffy)

If it wasn't for baby Jesus,
there would be no Santa
Claus!

CHUCK

You're kidding; no Santa
Claus?

HEATHER

In the fourth century, Santa
Claus (or Saint Nicholas) was
orphaned as a teenager in
what is now called Turkey.

CHUCK

He was not from the North
Pole?

HEATHER

That came later.

JACK

(Mocking)

I guess now you will tell us
that that is why on Christmas
we have turkey.

HEATHER

No, but Saint Nick loved
Jesus and wanted to serve Him
in the Church.

JACK

That's just a bunch of her
religious stuff, Chuck. How
can anyone as cool as Santa
Claus sit through those
boring church services?

Heather glances annoyingly at Jack.

CHUCK

Let her talk.

HEATHER

Nicholas even became a bishop
and did many things to help

children and the poor.

[Insert] Picture of Bishop NICHOLAS in red bishop attire and surrounded by children.

CHUCK

A bishop is higher than a priest, isn't he?

Return to scene.

JACK

Boy, you're dense. Watch out or she will mess up your Christmas Eve by getting you to go to Church with her.

HEATHER

Even after his death, there were reports of Nicholas in various countries performing miracles in Jesus' name for adults as well as children.

[Insert] Picture of Nicholas saving sailors.

Return to scene. Chuck picks up the doll wrappings, gently takes the doll from Heather and raps it.

CHUCK

Hmmm. All of this because of a baby?

Chuck gives the Christmas Doll back to Heather.

HEATHER

Because of a baby, Saint Nicholas has gained eternal life and his spirit lives on.

JACK

Aaa, who cares what happened long ago, as long as he brings the stuff on my list.

HEATHER

(To Jack)

Sounds like you should get coal this year.

JACK

Very funny.

THE END

"CALVARYWOOD SHORT SPIRITUAL SCRIPTS II"

THE STARTER COLLECTION SEQUEL

FOR BEGINNER SPIRITUAL VIDEO PRODUCERS

by

Bruce Cripps

DRAFT

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Preface

BRUCE CRIPPS sits before his computer, bewildered about how the "Media" has used movies, television, videos and news to influence the thought patterns, morals and behaviors of the public to include Christians and potential Christians.

BRUCE

The media has certainly done may fine things (including tele-evangelism), but it has also done much to undermine the practice of Christian values - even by "Christians."

Bruce ponders a while more.

BRUCE (CONT.)

Attendance at so many churches is grossly waning. Has the media also caused this?

Bruce's thoughts fly in all directions.

BRUCE (CONT.)

They certainly have. - Or did they not? I'm sure they had a hand in it. But - what have Christians and their churches been doing about it?

Bruce recalls in his wonderful church experiences.

BRUCE (CONT.)

My worship experiences have done wonders for me, builds me up and sustains me. I love the usual church services: the singing of the traditional hymns; our usual

prayers to help others in need; and the 20 to 30 minute sermons that feed my soul. How can that not bring people to worship and into a walk with God? Oh well.

He gets on the internet, goes onto GodTube and looks onto a list of Christian videos.

BRUCE (CONT.)

At least the media has provided some wonderful tools to spread the Word and the Christian message, such as low cost video cameras and powerful, but easy to use, editing software.

Then, he brings up his Heaven's Portal Stuff video.

BRUCE (CONT.)

This was my first spiritual video. I had so much fun doing it, and it got so many internet hits from around the world.

I wish the church got behind the idea of doing videos back then. We had a nice group of kids in the Sunday school but now, it is essentially non-existent. Would doing the videos have helped keep the kids coming out? Who knows?

The decline of the youth in church saddens him.

BRUCE (CONT.)

If I lack support from my church in doing videos, should I continue writing Christian scripts?

He pauses in thought.

BRUCE (CONT.)

I am not giving up yet! This gift of writing Christian short scripts, that God has given to me, may still benefit other churches and Christians. I will continue to write scripts as God moves me and make them available for His service.

On his PC, Bruce gathers together a group of scripts he wrote since his last grouping of scripts.

BRUCE

I pray, my God, that others will use these scripts for your glory and to strengthen your Church here on earth.

THE END

OR IS IT A CONTINUATION?

AMAZON: BOOK OF LIFE

by

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INT. ROOM DAY

A child draw family picture of MOMMY, DADDY and KATIE hangs on the wall.

MOMMY is on-line shopping on retail web sites.

KATIE, a little girl, comes up to her and gently tugs on Mommy's clothes to get attention.

KATIE

Mommy, can you get on Amazon?

MOMMY

You mean the book site?

KATIE

Yes Mommy, I want to get the Book of Life.

MOMMY

Why do you want that for?

KATIE

I want to see if you, Daddy and I are in it.

Mommy brings up the Amazon site and searches for the Book of Life. Several appear on the screen.

MOMMY

Hmmm, I see several Books of Life. Do you know the author?

KATIE

What is an author?

MOMMY

Someone who writes books.

KATIE

I don't know who wrote the Book of Life, but it must have been someone my friend Brian knows.

MOMMY

Why do you say that?

KATIE

Brian says that his name is in the Book of Life, so he

will go to Heaven.

MOMMY

Oh, I think we have plenty of time to check on the book. Now, why don't you go to your room and play with your Maggie doll. I am busy shopping on-line.

Katie goes to her room.

A phone rings. Mommy checks the caller ID and then answers the phone.

MOMMY

Hi honey... Oh, you are not my husband. How did you get his cell phone? ... Accident?
(Long pause then crying)
Oh, My God!

Mommy bends over computer - crying uncontrollably. Daddy fades out of the child drawn picture.

MOMMY

(Reverberated and elongated)

Oh, my

[INSERT SLIDE]

Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:15)

THE END

Production Note: When creating the child's picture, first draw picture without Daddy, photograph it, and then add Daddy. With the video editor, let the one picture fade into the other to make Daddy disappear.

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THE TRANSPORT

by

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EXT. NEAR A CHURCH BUILDING DAY

PAUL hikes to a church with a SmartPhone in his hand showing the GPS directions to a church.

As Paul approaches the front entrance of the church, he freezes in place as he watches SPIRITUAL POLICE OFFICER #1 wearing a plain shirt uniform and an armband showing a "cross" with a "NO" symbol. The officer is armed with a whistle around his neck and a club dangling from his belt.

Officer #1 stretches a yellow Security Line tape across the doors so as not to conceal the notice posted on the door saying, "CLOSED FOR SEDICIOUS ACTS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT."

Officer #1 spots Paul and points a finger at Paul.

OFFICER #1

(Shouting)

You're not one of them...

(Motions head towards door)

Are you?

Paul fearfully fidgets.

PAUL

(Timidly)

No.

OFFICER #1

Yes, you are!

Officer #1 blows his whistle to alert other officers.

Paul dashes away to escape.

Officer #1 grabs his club and holds it in a cocked hitting position. He sprints a few feet as he meets up with identically uniformed OFFICERS #2 and #3. Officer #1 points at Paul running in a distance. All three with clubs in hand pursue their suspect.

Paul turns a corner which puts him out of sight.

EXT. AROUND CORNER DAY

After Paul turns the corner and jogs a hundred feet more near cover. Then, he breathlessly pauses to catch his breath.

Without Paul seeing her coming, PRISCILLA darts towards him, and like a football tackle, pushes him to the ground behind some cover.

On the ground, she puts a muzzling hand over his mouth and with her other hand, puts a shushing finger to her lips.

Paul complies and remains motionless.

Priscilla spots the SmartPhone in his hand, snatches it from him and turns it off.

The three spiritual police officers round the corner and stop. They visually pan the area, but do not see their suspect.

OFFICER #3

We cannot let any more get away. They are a danger to THE PEOPLE and our way of life.

OFFICER #2

Yeah, I heard one inciting a crowd downtown about some sovereign other than president.

OFFICER #1

I see what you mean, they are our enemies!

OFFICER #3

Spread out and keep searching.

The three officers continue searching: each in different directions.

EXT. AROUND CORNER NIGHT

Priscilla and Paul still hide behind their cover. Priscilla probes her head out and scans the

darkened area.

PRISCILLA

(Whispering)

We should be safe to move about, whoever you are. By the way, I am Priscilla.

PAUL

I'm Paul.

Paul reaches out to shake her hand, but she does not reciprocate.

PAUL

Well, so much for that church - do you know of another active church?

PRISCILLA

I have the GPS coordinates of one about 10 miles away.

PAUL

Good, give me the coordinates.

Paul commences to turn ON his SmartPhone, but Priscilla restrains him from doing so.

PRISCILLA

(Sternly)

Don't use that! They can track you and intercept the destination coordinates. You do not want them to close the church before you get there.

PAUL

Can I at least call my buddy to tell him I can't go with him tonight?

PRISCILLA

No!

PAUL

Okay. Okay. Okay.

PRISCILLA

Also, do not let anyone hear

you use the word "church". To be safe, use the codeword "Transport". For someday, the followers of Jesus, in His Church, will be transported to Heaven.

They cautiously move away from their cover.

PAUL

How can I get to the Transport without my SmartPhone's GPS APP?

PRISCILLA

I am going there and I have an old GPS unit that cannot be tracked.

Priscilla gets out her GPS unit and enters the Transport's coordinates. The GPS unit plots the course.

PAUL

That thing is so antiquated, it won't show the newer roads like

(Displaying his SmartPhone)

my -

PRISCILLA

People tracker?

(Pushing her GPS unit to his face)

The important thing is to know the ultimate destination and the general direction.

Priscilla points towards the direction of the new Transport.

PAUL

You sure are touchy.

PRISCILLA

I was the only one to escape the Transport back there. SOMEHOW, we got compromised.

Priscilla starts walking in direction of the new Transport.

Paul discreetly puts away his SmartPhone and runs to catch up to Priscilla.

EXT. MILE FROM TRANSPORT NIGHT

The two follow the GPS course through a very isolated area towards the next Transport. The GPS unit indicates one mile to destination.

PRISCILLA

So, you are new to the Transport.

PAUL

Yeah, after they found my mom's Bible -

Priscilla momentarily puts her index finger on his lips to stop him.

PRISCILLA

You mean "Transport Manual".

PAUL

Okay, they found Mom's Transport Manual and took her away. I found another Manual in the house and started reading it. But, I need help understanding it.

PRISCILLA

We should be at the Transport soon. There you will find others to help you understand the manual.

PAUL

Oh good. Before going further, I need to relieve myself.

Priscilla stops and nods her head in recognition.

Paul steps off to a hidden area to the side. Out of Priscilla's view, Paul texts his friend NICK on his SmartPhone; initially keying in, "CANNOT

GO TO PARTY." Then, he continues in a texting conversation for a while.

PRISCILLA

(Screaming O.S.)

Yeow! Let me go! Get your hands off -

(Chilling scream)

Aaaahhh!

CLUB THUDS are heard.

Paul cautiously takes position to see Priscilla's problem and tries not to be seen.

The three Spiritual Police Officers drag away a limp Priscilla.

Paul steps on a twig which makes a CRACK sound. Paul quickly hides himself.

Officer #1 looks towards the sound, hesitates, but then continues dragging Priscilla away.

Once the officers are out of sight, he cautiously tiptoes to the spot where Priscilla was waiting for him. He stoops down and uses his SmartPhone as a flashlight. He sees Priscilla's drag marks. He is on the verge of weeping. Then abruptly, he throws away his SmartPhone. Next, he gets on his knees, closes his eyes and silently prays.

PAUL

... And please forgive me.

Amen.

As Paul opens his eyes, he notices the feel of something under his knee. He looks down to his knee. He reaches under his knee and lifts up a device in power-save mode. He pushes a button which revives the unit with the GPS directions to the Transport.

PAUL

Thank you Lord.

Paul tentatively heads in the direction of the Transport.

EXT. TRANSPORT NIGHT

The GPS unit leads Paul to an isolated clearing

surrounded by trees and brush. Paul scouts the area: not seeing what he wants to see. Then, he double checks the GPS unit.

PAUL

Where is God's Church? There is no church building here.

Paul falls to his knees to a praying position and closes his eyes.

PAUL

Lord, you are right to hide your Church from me for the evil I have done to it...

PASTOR SCALE and a group of WORSHIPPERS with candles including NANCY quietly approach Paul from behind.

PASTOR

The TRANSPORT is not a building...

Paul is shocked out of his prayer and speechless.

PASTOR

...It is the people who follow Jesus. And Jesus forgives you.

The other worshippers surround Paul and the pastor places an accepting hand on Paul. Nancy grips the GPS unit.

NANCY

We have an intelligence report that that the owner of this...

(Turning the unit over to show Priscilla's name)

... has been transported. But her last words was a pray of forgiveness for you Paul.

Tears and a smile appear on Paul's face.

INSERT DIALOG TEXT

(Scrolling)
"In many parts of the world,
being a Christian could mean
persecution, imprisonment
and/or execution."

THE END

THE CHOICE

by

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INT. LIVINGROOM DAY

Charo intensely studies a "New Christian" guide while seated. She is very happy. A Bible is close by.

Excitedly, Juanita enters the home and living room slamming the door behind her. Juanita is very animated when she talks and uses lots of hand gestures.

JUANITA

Charo, I have great news!
This...

CHARO

(Joyfully interrupting)
I got great news too!
(Jumps to her feet)
I've accepted Jesus into my
heart! And this Sunday
morning, I am...

JUANITA

...going to...

CHARO

...be baptized!

JUANITA

Nooooo! This Sunday morning
is soccer league try outs.

CHARO

But Jesus had said,
"Whosoever believes and is
baptized will be saved..."

JUANITA

But, that was before soccer
existed. Jesus may want you
but so does coach Johnson.

CHARO

Coach Johnson? His teams
always win the championship.

JUANITA

He's seen you in gym. He

knows you are the best.
He..wants..you!

CHARO

Are not the games at church
time?

JUANITA

Don't you want to be the
superstar of the conference?

Charo is tempted.

JUANITA

The coach said that if I get
you to join the team, he
would put me on the team too.
(Elongated plea)
Please!!!

CHARO

(Thoughtful pause)
I would like to, but...

JUANITA

(Adlib in foreign
language tirade - muffle
in editing)

FADE TO BLACK:

INSERT - TEXT

Slide says, "What should the future soccer star
do?"

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "What should the parents do?"

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "What should the Pastor do?"

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "What should the church congregants
do?"

INSERT - TEXT SLIDE

Slide says, "Let the children come to me: do not
hinder them... Mark 10:14"

THE END

LUCY FEUR AND GABBY EL

by

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INT. HALLWAY EVENING

The location is a hallway of a dormitory, or an apartment building.

WENDELL walks down to his door. He gets his key out and as he is about to unlock his door, he is greeted from behind by TOM. Tom taps on Wendell's shoulder.

TOM

Hi Wendell, thanks for covering for me at class today.

WENDELL

You're welcome, but it does seem to becoming a habit.

TOM

Well, I'll make it up to you. I am having a party starting in just a short while at my place. Why don't you come?

WENDELL

Well, I have to get a report done...

TOM

But, this will be a party that will blow your mind. I'm even breaking out my stash of those funny cigarettes.

WENDELL

I don't know.

TOM

Also, our friend Jack Daniel will be there.

WENDELL

I think I would like to keep a clear mind.

TOM

Well, in that case, you may want to partake in one of the

gorgeous girls whose mind is not so clear.

(Pause)

Or are you trying to stay a virgin?

WENDELL

Aaaa, let me think about it.

TOM

Okay, you know where to come and don't miss the fun.

Tom goes a few doors down and into his place.

Wendell cracks his door open, and stops to think for a moment in a bit of a daze.

LUCY FEUR (pronounced close to Lucifer) approaches Wendell. Lucy is exceptionally attractive and wears an alluring red outfit. Her hair style is a little puffed up, but her little horns are showing. As she nears Wendell, she straightens her hair to conceal her little horns. She stops suggestively close to him.

Wendell is shaken from his daze and his eyes obviously acknowledge her presence.

LUCY

(Suggestively)

Hello Wendell, I am Lucy.

WENDELL

(Stuttering)

Lu, Lu, Lucy? Do I know you?

LUCY

No, but I do know of you. My last name is Feur.

WENDELL

(Stumbling over the last name)

Lucy Feur?

LUCY

It is easier if you say it quickly.

WENDELL

Lucifer?

LUCY

Close enough.

WENDELL

Name sounds familiar.

LUCY

I come from a very
influential family. Are you
going to Tom's party?

TOM

Well, are you?

LUCY

My presence will be there.

In the corner of her eye, she sees GABBY EL.
Gabby wears a white outfit.

LUCY

(Rolling her eyes)
Oh no, here comes angel boy.

WENDELL

Who?

Gabby then comes running up.

GABBY

Oh good, I am not too late.

WENDELL

No, you're not. The party is
down the hall.

GABBY

I am not here for the party,
Wendell. I am here to talk to
you before you go to the
party.

WENDELL

I don't know you and this is
too weird. I must be
breathing in some funny smoke
from Tom's place.

Gabby grabs Wendell's right hand and starts

shaking it.

GABBY

I am Gabby... Gabby El. And don't pay attention to Lucy. She's a bad influence.

WENDELL

I don't know about that. She seems pretty good to me.

GABBY

Sure, she hides her horns well.

Lucy quickly adjusts her hair to make sure that her horns are hidden.

LUCY

Now Gabby, you are not being at all nice to me. I just want Wendell to have a little fun before going to Hell next week.

WENDELL

Yeah, the start of exams.

GABBY

I don't think she is talking about final exams.

LUCY

(To Wendell)

Pay no attention to him. Think about all of those gorgeous girls at the party.

WENDELL

Yeah.

LUCY

After a wacky weed or two, you are sure to get lucky with one of them. You want to know what Heaven is like. Don't you?

Gabby tries to pull Wendell from Lucy.

GABBY

(To Wendell)

You won't be going to Heaven
that way.

Lucy grabs him back and pulls him face to face.
She suggestively twirls his hair.

LUCY

If you go to the party,
perhaps later, you can come
down to my place.

Wendell appears under her influence. A red tail
(with arrowhead point) droops from the back of
Lucy's dress and starts wagging.

GABBY

Don't go with her. And never
trust a gal who wags her big
tail.

While Wendell is still in a stupor, Lucy
discreetly and quickly tucks away her tail so it
cannot be seen.

LUCY

Now Gabby, it is impolite to
talk about a girl that way.
Come with me Wendell.

Lucy begins to walk Wendell towards the party.

Gabby points a finger toward the end of hall past
Tom's party room. He wiggles his magical finger.

CATHY enters the hallway from a door at that end.
She appears studious. She carries a notebook and
a calculus book. She walks up to Wendell before
he enters the party.

CATHY

Oh Wendell, I do not
understand double integrals
in polar coordinates. Can you
help me with them sometime
before the exam?

Wendell comes out of his stupor.

WENDELL

Ugh..., oh yeah... sure.

LUCY

Beat it, Bambi. You're too late.

CATHY

I mean, maybe after church tomorrow?

LUCY

(In suggestive tone)
After I'm through with him tonight, I don't think he will be up for church in the morning or any other time.

Gabby walks past the others. As he passes, he glances at Wendell.

Wendell's head turns towards Gabby and his eyes acknowledges Gabby's glance. Then, Wendell turns and gazes at Cathy. He smiles.

WENDELL

(In accepting tone)
Well...?

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

FAST FOOD GRACE

by

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INT.FAST FOOD RESTAURANT DAY

A FAMILY OF FOUR enters the dining area of a fast food restaurant.

The two children, TOMMY (about mid elementary age) and Sissy (about early elementary age) run to get a good table and seat. They fight over the same seat.

MOM breaks up the fight and assigns seats with Sissy getting her way (Adlibbing dialog). Sissy sticks her tongue out at Tommy.

TOMMY

Stick your tongue out at me again and you will be eating your Merry Meal toy.

SISSY

Mommy, he's threatening me again.

MOM

(Waving a correcting index finger at Tommy)
Now behave Tommy. Sissy is just a little girl.

Tommy pouts.

Mom sits down.

DAD comes to the table with a tray of food including two Merry Meals. He sets the tray on the table.

The two children impatiently grab their Merry Meals and tear into them to get at their meal toys. They immediately commence obnoxiously playing with the toys. Eventually, they start eating as they are playing.

ANOTHER FAMILY OF FIVE sits next to them such that the first family can all see the second. These children are well behaved.

The FATHER places their tray of food in the center of the table, but no one grabs for the food. The Father also sits down. As the Family bows their heads, the father says grace

(Adlibbing a softly spoken prayer of thanks).

SISSY

(Pointing to the other family)
What's the matter with them?

TOMMY

They are praying that they don't get E. coli from their food. (Burps)

SISSY

Huh?

MOM

Actually, they are giving thanks to God for their food.

TOMMY

You mean like Ra in the Mummy movies?

MOM

I mean the real God who created the universe and who gives eternal life to those who love Jesus and tries to obey his commandments.

In the background, the family of five calmly starts eating their meals.

TOMMY

God created the universe?
(Animatedly with hand gestures)
I thought it was created by some gases coming together and exploding.

Tommy blows wind. Sissy makes a gagging gesture. Dad sternly looks at his kids with disapproval.

MOM

Ahem... However it happened, God was in control.

SISSY

Can we still say grace now?

DAD

Well, better late than never.

Sissy puts her hands together and bows her head.
The other family members do likewise.

SISSY

Dear God, whoever you are,
thank you for the food we are
eating. And, may another
family take Tommy.

THE END

"UNDER THE INFLUENCE"

by

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INT. LIVINGROOM NIGHT

BOBBY and MR. WILSON (his DAD) stand arguing with each other.

BOBBY

You don't get its Dad. All of the kids do it.

Bobby plops down into a chair, crosses his arms and makes a pouty face.

MR. WILSON

I do not care about the other kids. I am not their father. But you are my son, living in my house. So, you will do as I say.

BOBBY

You are so unfair and controlling.

MR. WILSON

You are on probation. You better straighten up or I won't take you to the races on Saturday.

BOBBY

You're a mean father and you can go...

MR. WILSON

Don't say another word! Go to your room and do your homework!

Bobby runs to his room.

INT. BEDROOM NIGHT

In anger, Bobby slams the door, grabs a school book and throws it to the floor. Then, he flops onto his bed.

A moment later, a CELL PHONE MESSAGE ALERT is heard. Bobby quickly responds to check the message.

The cell phone message says, "U R LATE". Bobby

texts back, "B THERE 1 SEC"

He then escapes through a window.

EXT. SECLUDED PLACE NIGHT

Tom, Jen and Wendell (all about Bobby's age) wait for Bobby. Bobby comes running up.

BOBBY

(Panting)

Sorry I'm late, dudes. Dad hung me up. He gets to be too much at times, ya know.

JEN

No, I don't know. Your dad seems nice to me. My mom has a restraining order against my Dad.

BOBBY

Well, my dad was trying to restrain me from having any fun, but I gave him the slip.

JEN

Nonetheless, I wish I had your dad. At least he takes you to sporting events rather than beating up your mother.

TOM

At any rate Jen, you don't have to pay to watch the boxing matches.

JEN

You're sick, Tom.

TOM

I know. That's why you love me.

JEN

You're hallucinating again.

Tom laughs briefly.

TOM

Wendell, did you bring the stuff for the party.

Wendell holds up a bag.

WENDELL

Yeh, I got root beer and
chips.

TOM

(In disbelief)
You're kidding.

(Loudly)

I mean the good stuff that
makes you feel real good. Why
don't you go home and read
your Bible or something.

Wendell starts walking away, but Jen grabs him
back.

JEN

(To Tom)

Tom, what's getting into you?

TOM

We are old enough to have
real fun and—

A TOM'S CELL PHONE MESSAGE ALERT is heard. Tom
quickly checks his message.

TOM

Great, Karen's parents are
away and she found their
stash of the really good
stuff.

(Make celebratory
gesture)

It's party time.

BOBBY

Why are we standing here?
Let's go!

JEN

Wendell, I have some vanilla
ice cream that will make a
great root beer float. Why
don't you come over to my
place?

TOM

You are so inhibited Jen --

almost as much as Wendell.

BOBBY

We don't need them. Now Karen is always good for a fun time.

TOM

(To Bobby)

Yeah, you're right. Let's go.

Tom and Bobby walk off in their own direction.

NIGHT FUNERAL PALOR INT

In a section of the room that looks like a living room including pictures on the wall (looking more like a personal home rather than a funeral home), Jen and Wendell walk slowly as they are talking to each other. They are dressed neater than previously.

JEN

I was really shocked about Bobby.

WENDELL

You know, I should have talked to him about Jesus and receiving the gift of eternal life.

JEN

I should have done that also my-sss -

Jen bumps into the back of Mr. Wilson as he appears to be talking with SOMEONE ELSE.

JEN

Oops.

Mr. Wilson turns around to look at Jen.

JEN

I'm so sorry, Mr. Wilson.

MR. WILSON

(Sadly)

I'll be alright. But, there is someone else you need to talk to.

Mr. Wilson signals with his head that someone --
Tom who stands sadly before a coffin. Others
(extras) stand around in different groups and
chatting. The camera centers in on Tom.

THE END

PC PILATE
by
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INT. PALACE DAY (EARLY MORNING)

MC (a Rod Sterling type) introduces the skit.
Others stand hidden during the introduction.

MC

We are all faced with challenges and choices where we must stand up and take responsibility. Before we act, even if our act is not to act, thoughts go through our minds based upon our experiences and value systems. Almost 2000 years ago, A Roman leader had a decision to make whether to do the right thing or to be politically correct. What could have been going through the mind of this leader, Pontius Pilate in deciding whether to stand up for Jesus or yield to "going along with the crowd?"

[FADE IN]

Pilate stands in a palace chamber and appears to be in disturbing contemplation.

PILATE

Jesus..., his innocence is troubling me. If I do not sentence him to be crucified, there may be a riot and perchance, my leadership will be threatened. But, if I do as the crowd demands, then, an innocent man is put to death.

SOLDIER

Pilate, a note from your wife.

PILATE'S WIFE (O.S.)

(Filtered or riverbed)

Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.

LUCIFER

Pontius, my man. This is your friend Lucifer. Pay no attention to what a woman writes. What do they know?

PILATE

But--

LUCIFER

But what? You're in a no win situation and I have just the solution for you.

PILATE

Tell me.

LUCIFER

Just go with the flow and do what is PC.

PILATE

What is PC?

LUCIFER

Politically Correct. It keeps the crowd happy. (pause) Oh no, here comes angel boy.

ANGEL

Pilate, don't listen to him. Be a leader, do what is right and do not be afraid to do the unpopular thing.

LUCIFER

And risk being dethroned?

ANGEL

But, Jesus is innocent and righteous. Doesn't that mean something to you? You should do the righteous thing.

PILATE

Yes. I shall proclaim Him innocent.

LUCIFER

Now don't get too righteous, my man. Be PC. You can stand

for both sides of the issue.

ANGEL

Don't listen to his tempting
trickery.

PILATE

Tell me more, Lucifer.

LUCIFER

Avoid the conflict and push
the responsibility onto the
crowd.

PILATE

How can I do that?

LUCIFER

Go ahead and state that you
lean towards Jesus and his
innocence. But then, give the
crowd some options. Whatever
they select, it is **their**
responsibility and you just
wash your hands of it.

ANGEL

Dodging your responsibility,
Pilate, is not a good
personal quality.

PILATE

I will give your
recommendation due
consideration.

MC

Well, we all know the
outcome. But have you ever
wondered if Pontius Pilate
got a PC response on his own
judgment day before the Lord?
But then, do **you** get too PC
with others about standing up
for Jesus?

THE END

"SEXUALLY IRRELEVANT"

by

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EXT. HANGOUT CORNER NIGHT

Some groups of teenagers hang out at a corner: talking and acting like teenagers.

Some boys are making gestures as if they are talking about sports including HANK, TOMMY and JOHN.

Not far away, three teenage girls are engaged in girl talk about boys: HEATHER HOLY, TAMMY TUMUCH, and STACEY STUCCUP. Stacey is dressed provocatively.

STACEY

(Snobbishly)

Well Heather, I hear from some of the boys, that you really shut Clint down last Saturday.

HEATHER

Well, he wanted to go a bit too far.

TAMMY

That is why I had to pick her up and drive her home.

STACEY

(To Heather)

Well, you're getting a reputation going around.

HEATHER

Good. It's certainly different from yours.

STACEY

What do you mean by that?

HEATHER

I do not want to be known as the head "ho" of Holly High.

Tammy chuckles in an annoying fashion.

STACEY

(To Tammy and pointing a finger)

And you, I can do without.

Tammy stops chuckling and takes a step back.

The sports boys direct their attention to the girls.

Stacey then turns to Heather.

STACEY

And as for you, Heather,
you're the only one I know
who carries a pocket Bible
around. That is not going to
get you anywhere with the hot
hunks.

HANK

(Butting-in in peacock
fashion)
Did you say you want a hot
hunk, Stacey?

STACEY

No Hank, but Heather here can
use one to loosen her up and
show her what fun she is
missing.

HANK

(To Heather)
Oh thanks, Heather, for
helping me win my bet with
Clint.

Heather looks a bit sheepish.

TOMMY

Carrying a Bible around is
not bad. I have one on my
iPhone.

Tommy brings out his iPhone and brings up a
section of scripture.

STACEY

Well, it is totally sexually
irrelevant.

HEATHER

Actually, the Bible has a lot
say about sex.

TOMMY

If everyone followed the Bible teachings about sex, there would be fewer problems with sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS and with unwanted pregnancies.

HEATHER

Not to mention fetal terminations, unwanted children, reduced earnings potential, prematurely ending childhood, and being socially limited.

TOMMY

And as a guy, I don't want to pay child support for 18 years for a kid that I may hardly see.

More of the other teens gather around.

STACEY

If the world was controlled by you two, our sexual rights would be taken away and fun would be banned.

From a little back, John raises an empowering fist.

JOHN

(Shouting out)
Tell it to her, Stacy!

TAMMY

Let's change topics, did you hear that Chris Amore is back in circulation.

HEATHER

After going steady with Kathleen for three months?

STACEY

Tammy, both you and Kathleen are so naive. Chris was never really out of

circulation.

HEATHER

You mean, you and Chris...

STACEY

No, Tammy. There is enough fun around without honing in on someone else's territory. But now, --

(Giggle and a wiggle)
he is fair game.

HANK

How about me, Stacey?

STACEY

Sorry Hank, but you just do not fill out you pants like Chris.

A flashy car drives up and the window rolls down.
A very handsome CHRIS is in the driver's seat.

CHRIS

Hey Stacy, like to do a movie with me or whatever.

STACEY

Oh, the "whatever" sounds good to me. And, I know a "whatever" place where no one will find us.

HEATHER

Maybe I should have Kathleen give you a call.

STACEY

No way, Jose!

Stacey takes out her cell phone and turns it off.

STACEY (CONT)

I am turning my cell off.

Stacey gets into the car.

The car peels out and away. All the others stand staring at the disappearing car.

A DINGING TEXT MESSAGE NOTIFICATION is heard from

Tammy's phone.

HANK

Tammy, you're dinging.

Tammy, comes out of her stupor, gets out her cell phone and looks at the text message.

TAMMY

It's from Kathleen. It says,
"Stay away from Chris. I'm
pregnant and HIV positive."

All look stunned.

THE END

THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPE

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INT. CHRISTMAS SHOPPE ANYTIME

TARA, AMY and ROGER (three youths) are shopping for a gift tree ornament in the Christmas tree ornament section of a Christmas Shoppe. There are ornaments for almost anyone's tastes from very plain to very ornate, from single snowflakes to winter scenes, from cartoon characters to pop celebrities, and from many Santa images to a few manger scenes.

An inconspicuous middle aged SALES CLERK works the store.

Tara picks up a very ornate secular ornament.

TARA

Tom has helped me out so many times, I want to get him a gift ornament that fully expresses my appreciation for him.

AMY

Don't you mean your secret affection for him?

TARA

(Sheepishly)

No - ah - maybe, but I owe him much even though he may not have a special affection for me.

Amy picks up and shows an overly suggestive ornament (does not have to be fully shown).

AMY

How about this sexy one?

Tara appears embarrassed and red faced.

TARA

I don't think so. He is very religious, you know. And that might embarrass him.

Amy puts the ornament down and picks up a cartoon ornament. She holds it up in a childish fashion.

AMY

(Childishly cynical)
Then, maybe you should give
him this kiddy ornament.

Tara turns her back on Amy and moves to a small display of religious ornaments. She puts down the ornate ornament. She slowly reaches out, picks up and admires a nativity ornament.

Roger comes over to Tara and peers at the ornament she holds.

ROGER

I never understood how that
type of ornament related to
Christmas.

TARA

I have to find out about it
myself.

Amy joins the two and holds another ornament to her side.

AMY

Oh, that's one of those
religious ornaments...

Amy displays the Santa Claus ornament she is holding.

AMY

... but Christmas seems to be
more about this guy.

ROGER

If you really want to impress
Tom, get him a rock group
ornament like
(passionately)
The Killers.

Tara rolls her eyes.

The sales clerk walks up to the three.

SALES CLERK

Now that ornament shows WHO
Christmas is all about. My

son, Tom, can explain it to
you. And yes, he will like
it.

The three youths are surprised.

Tara pulls the ornament to her chest and smiles.

THE END

NO GOD TALK

by

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Production Notes: Each character may be played by any sex.

INT./EXT. IMMATURE CHRISTIAN'S PLACE ANYTIME

CASEY, a not fully mature Christian, advises Lee, a new Christian about Christian Great commission. Casey has his Bible open to Mark 16.

CASEY

Even though you are a new Christian, you should still try to share your faith, as Jesus has said, "Go into all world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."

LEE

But, I don't know what to say.

CASEY

(Pointing to Mark 16:16)
Impress upon them that,
"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."

Lee doubts Casey's advice.

LEE

But, it's not that easy. My friends are a rough group and hate God talk.

CASEY

Someone will listen to you. They may not believe immediately, however you planted a seed of faith.

LEE

But...

CASEY

I have to go now.

Casey takes out some witness verse cards and

offers them to Lee.

CASEY (CONT.)

Use these witness cards. God
will be with you.

Lee, wanting to witness, is dismayed, but takes
them with apprehension. Then, she looks at
Casey's back as he exits.

INT./EXT. YOUTH GATHERING PLACE ANYTIME

SHANNON, RORY and HOOD EXTRAS are hanging out and
loafing.

DAKOTA, the gang leader, approaches them in
"with-it" Fonzy-like fashion and SNAPS FINGERS.
The gang comes to a quick attention.

DAKOTA

Relax --

Lee bursts in with witnessing verse cards in
hand. Extras stand around Lee in increasing
intimidating fashion.

LEE

Hey guys, listen to this.
(Reading from card)
For God so loved the world,
that he gave his only Son,
that...

DAKOTA

(Interrupting in raised
voice)
Stuff it, Lee! We don't do
God talk!

LEE

But, it's important that...

SHANNON

(Interrupting)
Don't you hear? Change the
subject - NOW!

LEE

But...,

Dakota stands in Lee's face (which intimidates Lee) and interrupts.

DAKOTA

(Shouting)

Do I have to shut you up?

Dakota pushes Lee to the ground. [Makes pushing gesture at camera and then, change camera view to Lee on the ground.]

Dakota walks off followed by Shannon and the rest except for a trailing Rory.

Rory briefly stands over Lee and kicks Lee.

RORY

(Childishly chiding)

No God talk!

Rory struts off to the others as Lee begins getting up.

EXT. SOLITARY SPOT DAY

Lee approaches CHRIS, but does not see Rory alongside.

Chris shows Rory her spiritual video on a smartphone. The video is not yet heard or seen by the audience or Lee.

As Lee gets near, Chris and Rory pivot so Lee spots Rory.

Lee stops with instant anger and points at Rory.

LEE

(Shouting to Chris)

Don't talk to that mongrel!

Chris looks to Lee in surprise in the manner Lee spoke. Then Chris puts a shushing finger to lips.

CHRIS

(So Lee can hear)

Shhhh, I am showing Rory my spiritual video.

Rory and Chris continue to watch the video as Lee moseys over to also watch.

ON SMART PHONE

EXT. NEWS REPORT LOCATION DAY

Chris, as a reporter with microphone (with news Logo) in-hand, completes Christian news report with a sign-off.

CHRIS

...And those are the facts from the Christian News Channel. This is Chris Kraft signing-off.

FADE

BACK TO SCENE

RORY

That's neat. I guess need to think more about this Jesus thing.

Lee is dumbfounded by Rory's response.

Chris brings up John 3:16 on the smartphone and shows Rory.

CHRIS

Remember, "... God so loved the world, that he gave His only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

RORY

(To Chris)

See you tomorrow for more God talk?

Chris gives a "big thumbs up".

RORY (CONT.)

Now I owe Lee a big apology.

Rory turns to Lee.

RORY

Forgive me?

Lee makes an accepting gesture to Lee.

[INSERT SCROLLING TEXT]

Spiritual short videos are only one of many tools for witnessing. Explore and find the techniques that best work for you and those to whom you witness.

THE END

PURE HEART

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INT. SUNDAY SCHOOL DAY

CASSIDY, a very young child, as well as Tommy and the other children, absorbedly cuts out a red construction paper heart.

MRS. THOMPSON, the Sunday school teacher assists Cassidy as she continues to relate the project to scripture.

MRS. THOMPSON

(Speaking to the whole class)

And the Bible says, "Having PURIFIED YOUR SOULS by the obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, LOVE ONE ANOTHER EARNESTLY from a PURE HEART."

Cassidy completes her heart but is in deep thought.

Mrs. Thompson rises to pose a question to the class.

MRS. THOMPSON

Now class, what are we to do?

Tommy jumps up and excitedly raises his hand.

MRS. THOMPSON

Tommy.

TOMMY

(Blurting out the answer)

Love one another.

MRS THOMPSON

Very good Tommy.

Mrs. Thompson notices Cassidy staring at her heart as if something is wrong with her heart.

MRS THOMPSON

And Cassidy, with what are we to love?

Cassidy slowly looks up to Mrs. Thompson and answers with uncertainty.

CASSIDY

With ... a ... pure ...
heart?

MRS THOMPSON

That is right, very good.

The CLASS DISMISSAL WARNING is sounded.

MRS THOMPSON

Time to clean-up and put the
supplies up. Your parents
will be picking you up soon.

The children except Cassidy scramble to make the
room neat. The teach assists.

Cassidy changes her stare from her heart to a
large container of hand purifier/sanitizer.

PARENTS start coming to the Sunday school room
and Mrs. Thompson hands-offs each child to their
respective parent. Her attention is not on
Cassidy.

Cassidy grabs the purifier and puts an excessive
amount of purifier on her heart and rubs it in -
making the heart soggy.

CASSIDY'S MOTHER enters the door and spots
Cassidy with the soggy heart.

Cassidy takes the soggy heart and slaps it
against her chest on her church outfit to get it
to hold in place.

In alarm, the mother rushes over to her child and
places constraining hands on Cassidy's shoulders.

MOTHER

What are you doing that for?

Cassidy is slow to respond.

Mrs. Thompson takes the purifier away.

CASSIDY

I ... wanted ... a ... pure
... heart.

The mother holds back a laugh while wanting to be
supportive. Then, the mother hugs Cassidy -

sloppy heart between them, breast to breast.

Mrs. Thompson moves towards a high shelf.

Cassidy spots Mrs. Thompson out of the corner of her eye. She bolts from her mother and runs over to Mrs. Thompson as she raises the purifier to put it on the high shelf.

Cassidy now stands under the purifier between Mrs. Thompson and the shelf.

CASSIDY

Mrs. Thompson, can you now
purify my soul.

[FADE TO SLIDE]

[INSERT SLIDE]

The slide quotes 1 Peter 1:22:

...Having purified your souls
by the obedience to the truth
for a sincere brotherly love,
love one another earnestly
from a pure heart. (1 Peter
1:22 NIV)

THE END

HEAVEN'S PORTAL: TRANSGRESSIONS

by

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INT. PORTAL DAY

Sounds of an auto accident are heard during opening credits.

EX-GOVERNOR COOK and an irate DEACON MANNERED stand in a beam of light surrounded by nothing - oblivious they are dead.

DEACON

(Extremely upset)

Who did you have to payoff to get your driver's license Governor Cook, or rather, Governor Crook?

GOVERNOR

(Apologetically)

Sorry, I I I did not see the stop sign.

DEACON

(With his angry face in the Governor's face)

What! You drunk or something?

GOVERNOR

(Sheepishly)

I've been sober for almost a year now, Mister - what is your name?

DEACON

Deacon Mannered. And you are going to Hell for lying like that; not to mention all of your political graft and corruption.

GOVERNOR

Well Mister Mannered, I -

DEACON

Deacon not just Mister! I am a respected deacon of my church.

The ADMITTING ANGEL interrupts the heated exchange.

ANGEL (O.S.)

He is right.

DEACON

You bet I am right. And -

The two abruptly realize that someone is watching on. The Deacon exaggeratedly looks around for the voice.

DEACON

Who are you?

ANGEL

I am the admitting angel and he is right.

DEACON

(Indignantly)

That slime is right? About what? And what are you admitting angel of - Wacky Land?

ANGEL

Heaven, you are at Heaven's Portal. You two are dead - at least mortally. I decide which of you goes to Heaven.

DEACON

That should be an easy decision. He is the cause of our deaths, and after getting caught for fraud, he had to resign as governor in disgrace.

ANGEL

Well Governor, you were wrong.

GOVERNOR

(Humbly)

You are right. I have done many evil things. I do not deserve Heaven.

ANGEL

You seem to have no defense for yourself. You are wrong

-

DEACON

(Interrupting
enthusiastically)
Yes, I'm in! Sorry Gov., but
you deserve the fire and
brimstone.

ANGEL

(Miffed)
As I was about to say,
Deacon, the Governor was
wrong about the stop sign.
You had the sign.

DEACON

But I am still better than
him. I have done many good
things for the Church. And,
I never miss a church
service.

ANGEL

What is in your heart is more
important to Jesus than what
you did in the past.

DEACON

It is obvious to everyone I
have a pure heart.

COMPUTER KEYBOARD sounds are heard.

ANGEL

Well Governor, our database
on you does show a long list
of -

DEACON

(Interrupting)
Sins.

ANGEL

Yes, and a long list of
prayers to Jesus for
forgiveness. Plus, many
secret attempts to right past
wrongs.

DEACON

See, he even knows he is a sinner.

ANGEL

Okay, I have enough facts now. Governor, turn around. It is time for you to go.

An elevator appears. The governor slowly reaches to press the big red down arrow button.

ANGEL

Ahem, wrong arrow.

The governor looks surprised and perplexed. He pulls his finger back from the button before he pushed it.

The Deacon looks surprised and disturbed.

DEACON

What? This is all wrong. I'm the one that is supposed to go to heaven.

ANGEL

(To the Deacon)

I was going to admit both of you, but the BIG BOSS just texted me...

BIG BOSS

(O.S. Booming Voice)

I could not find forgiveness in your heart.

The Deacon looks dejected.

ANGEL

You can catch the elevator on the way down.

THE END

GOT IT

by

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[INSERT SCROLLING TEXT]

A group, considered
subversive and destabilizing
to society, operates in
secret to avoid capture, re-
orientation and
rehabilitation. If they
would voluntarily surrender
themselves, they would be
treated with compassion and
be given minimum
incarceration time.

INT./EXT. PRIVATE PLACE ANYTIME

IN a place with no one else around, a CONTRABAND
SOURCE conceals a package and approaches a
DISTRIBUTOR. They constantly look around to make
sure no one else comes. They speak in hushed
tones.

DISTRIBUTOR

Got it?

SOURCE

Got it.

The source inconspicuously passes the contraband
to the Distributor.

DISTRIBUTOR

Tell the others we got it.

The Source slips away.

[SERIES OF SHOTS]

The Source secretly informs the OTHERS and the
Others inform MORE OTHERS as they head to a
Secret Meeting Place. They conceal themselves in
their journey - dodging from those who might be
INFORMERS.

SOURCE, OTHERS AND MORE

OTHERS

(Informative hushed
communications)

Got it.

[END SERIES OF SHOTS]

INT./EXT. SECRET MEETING PLACE LATER

Individually, all gather in a secluded place where they might be safe to gather. They form a circle around the Distributor.

The Distributor dramatically opens the contraband package: revealing something not illegal.

OTHERS

Huh?

(Murmuring)

The Distributor then opens a concealed compartment and reveals a damaged copied sheet with ACTS 9.

OTHERS

Ah.

The Distributor authoritatively reads from the sheet.

DISTRIBUTOR

But, Saul, still breathing out threat and murder against the Lord's disciples...

AN OUTER OTHER

(Screaming a warning)

They're coming!

The modern day disciples scatter.

[FADE TO TEXT]

[INSERT SCROLLING TEXT]

(With sounds of a
VIOLENT RAID)

As in the time of early Christians, in many nations today, Christians are not free to worship.

Pray for the Persecuted Church.

Got it?

THE END

THE REAL SAINT NICHOLAS

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EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD DAY

SANTA IMPERSONATOR in an unkempt red suit staggers across the street with a bottle in a bag and takes occasional sips.

SANTA

(Slurred singing between sips)

Deck the Halls with boughs of holly... Fa la la..., Fa la...

A PRETTY WOMAN passes Santa in the opposite direction as she crosses the street.

Santa notices the woman in an aroused manner.

SANTA

(Suggestively)

Fa la la la la.

The woman ignores the Santa.

SANTA

(Shouting)

It's Christmas time. How about taking Santa home and giving him a little holiday cheer.

The woman walks away faster.

As he near the curb, Santa falls on his face. The bottle breaks.

A little CHILD steps up to Santa's head, looks down, wiggles her nose, makes a facial expression of smelling a stench, and then makes a stern expression.

CHILD

You are not the real Saint Nicholas.

SANTA

Sure I am. I am wearing a red suit. And I have a white beard.

Santa puts his hand on his beard, but it falls off. He quickly tries to put it back on. He looks sheepish.

CHILD

Mommy says the real Saint Nicholas is a holy man and was a bishop in the early church in Myra. He does not fall down drunk.

SANTA

I'm not drunk. I just fell to a prostrate position for prayer.

CHILD

Then, what is in your bag?

Santa holds up a dripping bag with the bottle broken.

SANTA

Oh, this was the sacramental wine -- for Communion. The congregation will be very disappointed. Can you give me some money so I can buy more sacramental wine?

She puts her hands on her hips and gives him an unconvinced look.

SANTA

But, think of the congregation.

The child still looks unconvinced. Santa moves to a sitting position on the curb.

SANTA (CONT.)

You still don't believe me, do you, kid?

The child shakes her head, "no."

SANTA

Where is this Myra place?

CHILD

Mommy says it's in Turkey.

SANTA

Turkey? That's too hot for this suit.

CHILD

Oh, that was before his North Pole gig... And before he was declared a saint by the Church.

SANTA

You know too much, kid.

CHILD

He served Jesus, helped children and the poor, and ministered to many. He was even put in jail for his deeds.

SANTA

(Smiling)

Oh, I was put in jail for my deeds.

CHILD

But, that does not make you a Saint. However, the real Saint Nicholas would want me to help you.

The child reaches into a pocket, pulls out a fast food restaurant gift certificate and hands it to Santa.

CHILD

Here is a Mickey Burger certificate. Merry Christmas.

The Santa takes the certificate and stares at it (close up). Out of camera view, the child leaves.

SANTA

Now, I really believe in Saint Nicholas.

Santa looks up to see the child. But no one is there. Then, he looks to the sky.

SANTA

Thank you, Lord, for the
little child.

THE END