

# **“Innovation in the Development of Online Educational Content”**

**Conference VII: December 9, 2017**

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<https://aqueductproject.org/conference-room/>

## **SUMMARY:**

Andrew Beaty (dialogue chair) opened by reflecting on his experience as a guest lecturer at a seminary in Amsterdam, describing the challenges faced by the student who had traveled internationally to earn degrees (1–2). Beaty commented on the significant advancements in telecommunication over the past decade and asked how technology can be leveraged in order to promote global theological education (3). Following personal introductions, Beaty asked the panel what a sustainable model of theological education would be for the twenty-first century (56–57).

Early in the discussion, it was observed that a transition from campus-based to online education is currently underway (67). In part, this is because online education has moved from being a recruiting tool to an end in and of itself (77). The diminishment of residential education is especially felt in majority-world countries, where running a Western-style seminary is often impractical (81–82). The opinion was voiced a sustainable educational model must be sought—a model that can quickly and efficiently equip pastors who are already active in churches (82–83). The remainder of the discussion largely focused on the benefits and challenges of online training models.

Through the course of the conversation, it was noted that online training faces at least four particular challenges. First, many nations do not have adequate digital infrastructure to sustain current online models (84, 86). Second, online content must be adapted to be suitable to train leaders in oral cultures (84, 86, 126, 131). Third, the educational background of pastors in the global context differ widely, ranging from doctoral degrees to no formal education (88, 111, 125, 128, 130). Fourth, online training often lacks a helpful, even necessary, personal element (102).

Of these four challenges, the second and fourth received the most direct attention during the remainder of the dialogue. Cultural relevance would have to be addressed in a deep way in order to produce a sustainable model of pastoral training (58), because educational material is currently designed to address only the specific needs of individual regions of the world (60, 134–135). Beyond simply importing pastoral training, initiatives should encourage indigenous church leaders to develop training models for their own communities (59, 61, 69). This would be especially useful in overcoming “imperialistic” (79) models of pastoral training. Training models need to account for cultural barriers and allow for the development of a genuinely global theology (80).

Additionally, the need for at least some amount of personal interaction in online training programs received attention. One-on-one interaction is beneficial because it allows questions to be addressed and enables cultural translation of educational material (102, 108). It was agreed that one-on-one interaction is also beneficial because the method allows for discipleship rather than merely the mastery of material (95, 114–115). Residential programs allow for the modeling of living principles and life-on-life discipleship (118). It was recommended that

educational initiatives aim to train pastors in the equipping and training of new leaders in their congregations (125–126).

Through the course of the discussion, three additional elements were addressed. The first was the need for organizations to work together (69, 72, 77, 96). This would both increase sustainability (77), and help overcome cultural barriers (79–80). The second was the need to address accreditation concerns (95). It was recommended that it would be beneficial if individual courses could receive some form of recognition, which could then be used to work towards a formal degree (99). Finally, the group considered the potential for adult educational gaming (132, 140). It may be that educational gaming can be facilitated with special effectiveness via augmented reality or virtual reality (143).

Beaty concluded the discussion by expressing gratitude for the opportunity to hear what God has been doing in the world and by encouraging the participants to maintain future interaction (145).

## TRANSCRIPT:

[1] **Andrew Beaty:** Well, it's exciting to see you. I've been looking forward to this opportunity for a number of months and I'm glad that we are finally able to gather. For me, this journey has been a long one. About a decade ago I had the opportunity to go and be a guest lecturer at a seminary in Amsterdam. I had students that were there from Cameroon, Miramar, Jordan, Tanzania, and from literally around the world. Many of these students came to Amsterdam for three years to work on their Master of Divinity.

[2] They left their families, they left their kids, they left five churches they were pastoring, and they were gone to the West for three or four years, never to return—maybe at some point in time—calling back home once a month, because of how expensive it was to talk to one another across the phone. And I thought, “Brothers and sisters, there has to be a better way that we can do this so that we do not pull people out of the countries where they're at, and that we can allow them to continue to serve their families and their churches and their denominations or networks.” And it's been something that the Lord has been working on in my heart now for a number of years, and then, as I started working my doctoral studies, I really jumped into this perspective more just to try to say, “How can we do this better?”

[3] And, over the last decade, as you all know, technology has continued to improve. The opportunities to do things in other parts of the world have continued to improve, and the technology is now much better than what it was ten years ago or five years ago or twelve months ago. And so, how do we continue to leverage some of those technological advances so we can do that. I think one of the hard parts is, as we're getting together today to talk about this, there haven't necessarily been a lot of forums, where we've gotten together to interact on these things. So, I think the more of these opportunities that we have to say, “Hey, here's something that I'm seeing that's happening in my ministry in the sphere that God has put us into.” And we can sharpen one other and say, “What's going on over in your world that we can engage with together?” That will make us better at all this.

[4] Hopefully, for most of us, we're in this because we love Jesus and we love God's people. And if there are things that I can pick up and share from what somebody else is doing, that hopefully...oh man, this is a wonderful win for the gospel because we're able to impact the Kingdom in so many better ways!

[5] I thought maybe we'd just go around. There's a few of us here today, so if, maybe, we could take just a couple minutes to go around and introduce ourselves, and maybe a little bit of what we're doing—that will get a little bit of the dialogue started. And then, we will jump in for the next section of this in a little bit more. So, I'm going to go around on my little window that I have [in the Zoom teleconference interface]—probably now twenty different people lined up here. Thel, why don't you tell us a little bit about what you're doing and what brought you here today?

**[6] Thel Rountree:** Sure, my name is Thel Rountree, and I'm the International Director of Online Learning for Development Associates International (DAI), based in Colorado Springs. But, I'm here in Orange [County], California and we are currently running the DAI Institute [here] where we're providing a lion's share of the content that Development Associates has produced over the last twenty years online for free. It's training on servant leadership, fundraising, and mentoring. I'm currently working on a course on culture, ethnicity, and diversity, and we provide all of this content available for free for anyone in the world. Currently we've got students from over 140 countries taking our courses. And, in the past eighteen months, since we've gone live, we've had just short of 12,000 students signed up for our content.

**[7] Andrew Beaty:** That's great. All right, Jim, what are you doing there in Spokane?

**[8] Jim Rosenquist:** Well, I'm an independent businessman. I've been making my living on the internet since 1999 and have worked with Jonathan on the Aqueduct Project fairly recently. I am a recent graduate of RTS (Reformed Theological Seminary) Global, so I very much have a passion for online education and where it's going. I'm just interested to hear what all of you are doing and, then, how I can possibly help.

**[9] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** It's really good to see you again, Jim.

**[10] Jim Rosenquist:** Good to see you, brother.

**[11] Andrew Beaty:** Andrew Lamb in Jacksonville, would you share a little bit about what you're up to?

**[12] Andrew Lamb:** Yes, I'm with Third Millennium Ministries. You can find our stuff at [www.thirdmill.org](http://www.thirdmill.org). This is a ministry that Richard Pratt, who's online with us, started along with some other folks. We offer up to a master's level program in Bible and theology. We do it in 21 or 22 different languages on every technological platform we can get to, and all for free. So, biblical education for the world for free. And we have... well, I'll let Richard give some of the numbers when he introduces himself.

**[13] Andrew Beaty:** Okay, and Greg Perry, do you want to follow up a little bit?

**[14] Greg Perry:** Hi, everyone, my name is Greg Perry. I'm one of the new people here at Third Millennium. After 14 years at Covenant Seminary, I just joined the leadership team here at Third Millennium in Orlando as Vice President of Strategic Projects, mainly working on our relationships with other institutions, but also working on the project of a new study Bible in a special relationship with Wycliffe Associates. They'll be translating the Bible into all the gateway languages, and that will be coordinated with our content. Thanks for the opportunity to listen in today.

**[15] Andrew Beaty:** Good. Susan, tell us a little bit about what's going on at Biola these days.

**[16] Susan Ishii:** Oh, I would love to. I'm the Chief Educational Technology Officer here at Biola. I work with the digital learning team and all of our faculty across the campus, and we have a growing number of degree and certificate programs. To date, we're at roughly 19 undergraduate, graduate, and certificate outcomes. We actually have another 25 in the works right now that should be released in the next—I would say—18 to 24 months.

**[17]** But, what I'm most excited about is that we are venturing out into a broader spectrum that doesn't limit us to just degree or certificate outcomes. We've developed a proprietary platform to distribute course- and seminar-based education that ranges in a variety of topics, and that was something that we had launched earlier this year. In addition to that, we're also venturing into the streaming television area and developing the Biola TV channel that would stream 24/7 educational content wherever anyone has access to the internet. I'm thrilled to be joining all of you today and to be taking in all of the wonderful things that everyone is working on so that we can continue to enhance our work.

**[18] Andrew Beaty:** Great. Ed?

**[19] Ed McCallum:** Yes, Ed McCallum. I'm in Phoenix, Arizona. I just left a position at the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and our office in Orlando last July started with their World Outreach Department working with their International Theological Education Network. Our objective is to see if we can see what the Lord will do in establishing ten sites around the world, training people to train their own to reach the unreached people groups. Obviously, online education is something that we will be considering in the future. Frankly, I know a little bit about it from a distance, but I need to get a whole lot more familiar with it.

**[20] Andrew Beaty:** Well, then you're in the right crowd today.

**[21] Ed McCallum:** That's why I joined. I appreciate hearing about it, and I'm looking forward to learning a lot.

**[22] Andrew Beaty:** Great, and Andrew Sears?

**[23] Andrew Sears:** Hold on, can you hear me?

**[24] Andrew Beaty:** Yes.

**[25] Andrew Sears:** Okay, great. I'm the president of City Vision University and have also been a part of a couple initiatives. One is called the Global Christian College Credit Consortium, where one of the big things we're trying to do is to take some of the non-traditional training content, like Third Millennium, and grant credit to that, and use that as a degree path. We've launched a couple degree paths where the total cost of an accredited U.S. degree is \$5,000 for all four years in total.

**[26] Andrew Beaty:** Can I get my daughter to transfer into one of those programs?

**[27] Andrew Sears:** Yeah, that would be nice, right? Really, that's the model we're looking at. How do you bridge this whole MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) world into accredited online education? And we've been doing some experiments in Kenya and other places for dropping the cost of accredited education dramatically. We also have an initiative that several of us—and, I think there are several people on the call that are part of this—it's called the Christian Higher Education Innovation Alliance. It has about eighty people who are Christian innovators, and we're just sharing resources with each other. It's at [cheia.org](http://cheia.org) if you all want to check that out. Thank you.

**[28] Andrew Beatty:** Jonathan Armstrong, I know many people know you, but do you want to tell us a little bit about your involvement here?

**[29] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Sure. I wear two hats: I've been recently transitioning to Moody Distance Learning (MDL) where I will be a colleague of Andrew Beatty. But, I also am the president of Aqueduct Project, and I'm delighted that you're all here. Thank you so much for sharing your insights.

**[30] Andrew Beatty:** Great, thank you. Bill Merrifield?

**[31] Bill Merrifield:** Hi! I've lived in Lebanon for fifteen years. I work at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary, and I am overseeing the distributed learning program at the seminary. We have a one-year online Arabic language certificate of ministry. We're currently going through a transition looking at how to create blended hybrid programs for a second- and third-year curriculum for students in the Arab world.

**[32] Andrew Beatty:** Great, thank you. Let's see. Ali, would you share a little bit?

**[33] Ali Khalil:** My name is Ali Khalil. I am in charge of the Global Proclamation Commission. I apologize that I did not open my web cam yet. As soon as you prompted me, the electricity went off, so all you see is black. That's the life in Lebanon. I'm in charge of the Global Proclamation Commission for Trainers of Pastors. Mainly, we try to connect trainers of pastors together and we try to gather and discover resources worldwide, and curate all of these resources together for people to have, free of charge. What we're doing is collecting what you guys are actually working on, and curating that into one platform so people would be able to have access to this in an easier manner as well. So, students would be able to search and pick some learning path as well. I'll let Jason Tan elaborate a little bit more about this initiative. That's it for me.

**[34] Andrew Beatty:** Okay, then we will go to Jason next.

**[35] Jason Tan:** I am Jason Tan. I'm based in the Philippines, but I work with Ali on the Global Proclamation (GPro) Commission. My main job is to look for resources, pastoral training resources, as well as whole courses that are free and make it available for pastors with limited exposure to formal theological training. Right now, we are able to curate more than 4,000

resources on our website, and we hope to add more to that, especially non-English resources, for pastors around the world. Right now, we have, I believe, more than 3,000 people who are part of this community within the GPro Commission.

**[36] Andrew Beaty:** Good, thank you. All right, Samuel. Can you share a little bit about what God's doing in your world? Oh, your mute is on.

**[37] Marcia Southard:** Sorry, my name is Marcia, and my husband Jim and I both work at Third Mill, and we knew about this opportunity to listen in and hear about all the great things that are going on.

**[38] Andrew Beaty:** Thank you, and we're glad you're here even if you're not Samuel Crawford!

**[39] Marcia Southard:** We are related.

**[40] Andrew Beaty:** There you go. Matthew Derek, do you want to hop in and say "hi" as well?

**[41] Matthew Dereck:** Sure. I'm Matthew, and I'm the Executive Administrator of the Aqueduct Project. I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you all for being here. We're really looking forward to this conversation.

**[42] Andrew Beaty:** Great. John Taylor?

**[43] John Taylor:** I'm here in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, previously with the Church Ministries Institute in Ukraine. We've launched a distance online program in partnership with Horizon Education Network, and I'm now in our international headquarters as Vice President of Training and Resources at ABWE (Association of Baptists for World Evangelism). I'll let Al and Tim talk a little bit more about our work.

**[44] Andrew Beaty:** Let's jump back to Grand Rapids and check in with the Horizon office there. Do you guys want to introduce yourselves and share?

**[45] Allan Cuthbert:** Sure. My name is Allan Cuthbert. I'm the president and CEO of Horizon Education Network. We were formerly known as Horizon International Schools. Our initial purpose was the development of curriculum in various languages for our schools around the world, and we backed off from that to work in a global way to come alongside theological schools to help them build sustainable models for theological education around the world.

**[46]** We currently work in 5 different languages. We have 26 schools currently—we'll have about 30 by the end of this year—both to help them in the administration area, learning how to administrate schools. We also work in faculty, professional development along with those schools, helping them in providing full, online (but also hybrid) models of curriculum that some of them develop themselves. We provide the platform on Moodle and service that for these schools around the world. We currently made an agreement with Overseas Council; we'll have

a memorandum of understanding in the next 2 years to work in training and working with 80 theological schools out of 55 different countries to do training for online learning and helping them work on development of online courses.

**[47]** We have several different courses that are training nationals to write their own online courses, and that is our goal: to have a network—that’s what our name is all about—network these schools together, help them share the resources that they’re developing from one school to another, share faculty, and work together for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

**[48] Andrew Beaty:** Great. Thank you.

**[49] Timothy Bahula:** I’m Tim and the curriculum designer here at Horizon. I oversee our course development teams and keep the projects we’re working on on task. I also do technological innovation in trying to figure out how we use available technology to improve our courses and student outcomes for those that are taking our courses.

**[50] Robert Hayden:** I’m Rob, and I work in the area of Educational Development here at Horizon. I’m just sitting in today.

**[51] Andrew Beaty:** Great to have all of you guys here with us. It looks like we have Otto Kladensky. We’re just going around introducing ourselves, saying a little bit about what God is doing in our ministry here or why we’re interested in this conversation today.

**[52]** ... While we wait for Otto to get online there, Richard Pratt, several people have said they worked alongside of you at Third Mill, and Third Mill has been working on this for a bit longer, maybe, than some of the rest of us. I’d love for you to share about what God is doing at Third Mill and some of the things that you’re learning. Obviously, others here in this group today are saying, “I want to take some of what you’re doing and curate it and use it in a different way.” Give us a little more in-depth look at what’s going on with Third Mill.

**[53] Richard Pratt:** Good morning, everyone, or good evening, everyone, or good afternoon, to some of you. I’m in Orlando, Florida, and it’s early in the morning here, but I’m very happy to be here, delighted to see faces of people that I have not met but I’ve talked with—and I’ve corresponded with a number of you. I’m delighted to be here with you.

**[54]** I do serve as the president of Third Millennium Ministries, and the goal of Third Millennium Ministries, now for twenty years—we are celebrating this year our 20th anniversary—thanks be to God. The goal of Third Millennium was, from the very beginning, to provide the equivalent of an MA program in Biblical and Theological Studies. That was the goal from the beginning. Our goal was also to do that in every major, or as Wycliffe calls them, “gateway languages,” of the world—every single one of them. And to do that in a way that, technologically, could reach every single person in the world, and to make it available to people as they wanted to use it in various ways, and to tailor it to their needs and their desires, because we certainly don't think

we have the corner on theological content. And, as international as our lessons are, they are still obviously oriented toward the people that are running the show, which is our team here.

**[55]** But we're very open and do have people participating from all over the world in a variety of languages and a variety of denominations. Our goal from the beginning, twenty years ago, was to do all of this for free, at no cost to the end-user. Thanks be to God, we've been able to maintain and move forward on those goals, and God is blessing in unbelievable ways, to tell you the truth. I'm just delighted to be with you because we are always on a learning curve here, and we always considered it a very steep learning curve. That's one of the reasons why you have at least three people from Third Mill observing today—because I can't remember everything you're going to say, and we don't want to forget a single thing you say. And so, they're here taking notes and doing all kinds of things just to try to make sure that we nurture these connections and affirm to you that we really do see this as a global partnership with many, many, many others. We look forward to hearing what you have to say today.

**[56] Andrew Beaty:** Thank you. One of the things that I've heard come up in a couple of your introductions is the whole area of sustainability. I think that is one of the issues that we've seen. The model that we use has changed over the last fifty to one-hundred years. It used to be that European and American missionaries would go to the majority world and set up seminaries or Bible colleges—and they would need to have heavy investment from the West to do that. That sustainable model is not quite as sustainable as we once thought it was.

**[57]** So, what are some of the things that your ministries are seeing that are able to help sustainability so that you can keep producing the content or so that you can continue sharing that content with the people that you're serving? Go ahead. Jump in, unmute yourself, and share! Everybody is an equal partner here to share what you have been seeing in your area.

**[58] Allan Cuthbert:** I would like to share. This is Allan Cuthbert from Horizon. Most of our staff have served overseas for many years. I have lived in Brazil for 30 years of my life. I was raised there, worked 16 years in theological education, and one of the passions that has been from all of our team working in different places of the world has been this issue of sustainability, but also the influence of Western American theological thought and models. Our concern is coming alongside our schools, and, we've heard that from several of our schools, the need to help them develop culturally appropriate models addressing issues that are relevant within their culture.

**[59]** Recently, we were sitting with several of our Nigerian partners, as well as those from Brazil; our Brazilian schools are training African leaders, and we feel that's a dynamic opportunity for them. Those schools are now reaching into Angola and other places where they feel that, culturally, they're able to address their needs appropriately. We were initially going to get accreditation in the United States and offer classes out of here. We've realized that there are many countries in the world that are not recognizing our Western degrees. Brazil—we have people with PhDs in Brazil—does not recognize their degrees. They have to go back and re-study, and get recognition for their degrees. We've discovered the same thing in many countries in the world. Our goal was to come alongside existing theological schools and ask,

“How can we help you develop quality education? How can we help you get recognition within your country? How can we help you build your school toward a sustainable model?”

**[60]** We also partner with another group called MMD (More than a Mile Deep) in Africa, if you’ve ever heard of them. They are an all-African group, a tremendous group, doing some innovative thinking in the development of curriculum for African contexts. That has been a thrill for us to help them understand how they can write and develop curriculum that addresses African needs, Asian needs, and needs that really meet the need of those pastors.

**[61]** We also do curriculum design with a lot of our schools. We initially go in to help them consider, “Who are you trying to train? How do we need to train? What are the best models for your context?” We found that to be extremely valuable. Some of them began to realize how their curriculum had been impacted by Western American missionaries and groups from North America, and then to realize that there are areas that they were not addressing—that their pastors needed training in. Those are the areas that we have really gone after. It is a slow process, but we feel that it is a process that leads to a better outcomes for the training of national pastors around the world.

**[62] Andrew Beaty:** Great, thank you. Others of you, how are you seeing sustainability impacted, or how are you seeing a new method for the long-term sustainability of theological education?

**[63] Thel Rountree:** I’m just going to chime in real quick for Development Associates here. We have an MA program in Organizational Leadership, and what we’ve been doing for the last fifteen years or so is partnering with universities, locally, in their countries. We’ve been providing the curriculum and, in many cases, in previous years, actually, the instructors as well. And then, once the universities have vetted our curriculum, we partner with them for the degree. That’s allowed for a lot of long-term relationships in Africa and Asia for us.

**[64] Andrew Beaty:** So, then, for the content that you’ve developed, you have partnered so that the students actually get their degree from a school in Africa or Asia?

**[65] Thel Rountree:** Yes, exactly.

**[66] Andrew Beaty:** Good. Other thoughts on sustainability?

**[67] Andrew Sears:** This is Andrew with City Vision. For my doctoral dissertation, which I completed about three or four years ago, one of the things that I looked at is, “What’s happening in the overall industry?” The transition between campus-based education and online education: you’re seeing about a ten-fold consolidation happening, and, if that trend continues, that has big ramifications. I think, increasingly, what we need to be thinking about is, “How do we develop alliances and gather resources?” I think the best model that I’ve seen of what the future of general higher education is Arizona State.

**[68]** But I think that—not that I support their theology—the Mormons also have a very interesting initiative. I can't remember the name of it, but they have about twenty-thousand students enrolled in kind of like a MOOC—a micro-campus based MOOC. And then they're using that—and most of those are in developing countries—as a channel into Brigham Young. I think it's the Idaho campus. One of the other trends that I made note of was the growth in this space, overall, if you measure what can be measured. About two-thirds of the growth in this space has been taken up by Liberty and Grand Canyon, showing that mega-universities are emerging.

**[69]** So, the question is, if you're not a mega-university or a mega-trainer, how do you play in this space? And I think that part of what needs to happen is developing alliances with groups like this—that's part of why we're connecting—groups that might be trying to reach hundreds of thousands of people. How do we develop these alliances? I would just add that. I would agree with what Development Associates and Horizon have said in terms of the indigenous leadership, but I think that what's happening is that this whole space, overall—and I realize that theological and pastor training is different than Christian higher education—but we're in a larger market that is experiencing similar forces. So, I think that, as we think about sustainability, we need to be aware of those macro forces.

**[70] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Andrew, could I ask you to expand just very briefly. Arizona State University you cited as a leader and also Brigham Young University. Can you outline how their structures are innovative? Thanks.

**[71] Andrew Sears:** Well, I think it is the integration between these, essentially, the MOOCs. You have different tiers and—if I could share my screen. I'll show you what Arizona State uses as a diagram. Can you all see my screen now? What they have is concentric circles, and the largest circle is essentially what Biola is doing with their TV. But, then, the next circle is the idea of MOOCs, and then the third circle is online education. And then you have campus-based education. What's happening is this first circle is millions of people, and then the second circle is hundreds of thousands. I think that the significant innovation is that these things support each other.

**[72]** Whenever I look in the Protestant world, we're all separate and not working collaboratively as much as we should, like the Catholics can do. How can we get Third Millennium deeply integrated with Biola or City Vision or other things? It's that integration between these institutions—or Development Associates International—so that the advantages of one model can actually bleed into the advantage of the other.

**[73]** For these organizations that are monolithic, like the Mormon Church, they just make centralized decisions and it all works together because they make it work together. But in the Protestant world, we don't have that luxury. I think that that's the innovation. It's that they have these giant systems that then support the other systems. Does that answer your question, Jonathan?

**[74] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Thank you. Yes.

**[75] Richard Pratt:** Andrew, this is Richard Pratt. May I chime in on this?

**[76] Andrew Beaty:** Yes, this Andrew says “yes.”

**[77] Richard Pratt:** You know, in the American presidential debates, if one of the debaters mentions one of the other candidates then they get to speak. So, I was just mentioned, so I will. I could not agree with Andrew more about this, especially focusing on this idea of the need—and I mean the need—to cooperate and to share, especially among Protestants who tend to divide over the slightest difference, and to come up with curricula that can be shared among various ministries. When we first started, distance education was in its nascent period, I guess you could say, and it was also primarily used as a recruiting tool for theological institutions. You can get people to come in, take a course or two, but, eventually, the real goal is to get them on campus. What that tended to do, then, of course, was to narrow the focus of the curriculum to something that was specifically appropriate for that institution. Among Protestants that can be rather well defined, if we can say it nicely.

**[78]** Here at Third Mill, we do work very hard. It’s interesting, that Arizona picture that you just shared, Andrew, with the concentric circles. We have what we call our “funnel.” It’s like taking your concentric circles and stretching them vertically. We had, basically, the same categories that you just illustrated there. Only we see ourselves trying to push people down the funnel to more and more centralized, supervised learning, and to do that in a distributed way, in other words, in a local learning community—living local learning communities.

**[79]** This idea of proprietary restrictions, in my opinion, is one counterintuitive, to be sure, given the Great Commission, but is also actually hurting us and throwing us back into the world of schools competing with each other rather than working toward this great goal of the gospel reaching the entire world, which seems to me to be the crux of the matter for us. And how to do that when you’re based in one country, as all of us basically are, and without becoming, shall we say, imperialistic in our theological efforts and crushing other groups and other distinctives of cultures, that’s a big challenge.

**[80]** We work very hard at not doing that by incorporating people from other nations, other ethnicities—other than my own, I should say, because we have multiple ethnicities here in the office, but other than my own—and denominations and the like to create a rather generic, what we call a “Centrist Evangelical.” If you squeeze me more I can define it better. But, it is not so well defined that people of a variety of traditions and denominations and the like—and cultures—find it difficult to use. This idea of cooperating with each other... if there were one word that I would want to say, it’s what Andrew just said: we need to begin to build coalitions among ourselves that enable us to fulfill the call that Christ has given us as educators, it seems to me, rather than the goals of our institutions.

**[81] Jason Tan:** I'll add to that, please. This is Jason from the Philippines. I think what we're missing right now in this discussion are people from third-world countries. Right now the majority of all pastors are based in the U.S., and I was hoping we could have more people coming from Asia and Africa and Latin America and hearing from them and what their needs are. We're just talking about the sustainability of our own institutions in the U.S., but that's hardly addressing the need if nobody is talking about the needs of the majority-world countries, then this meeting is really useless.

**[82]** What I'm talking about, really, is that as far as majority-world countries are concerned, the majority of students are coming from non-formal education, not the formal. Even here in the Philippines, there is a problem: a lot of formal institutions are getting fewer and fewer people coming in and taking programs because it's becoming more expensive. Seminaries are having difficulties sustaining their programs because there are fewer students, and they require more funding to run Western-style and Western-patterned seminaries. What we really need is to bring training to non-formal people, people who are already engaged [in ministry]. They don't have any formal theological education, but they're already pastoring churches. In the Philippines, the estimate right now, according to the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches, is that about 80% of all pastors have no formal theological education.

**[83]** How do we get education to them in a faster way? Sending them to seminaries, even if it's just through the internet, still requires a lot of time, and we don't have enough time to train all of these people for three or four years to finish a degree. What we need is a program where they can be trained, probably in the next six months, because they're already pastoring churches. For us, this is where I'm seeing the real problem. If we really want to build the global church, we need to find a way where we can develop or create a program that will push theological education and make it available to as many people in a shorter span of time, and that is also, at the same time, effective.

**[84] William Merrifield:** If I could piggyback on that just really quickly here. One of a number of the challenges we're facing as we deal with students in the Arab world is sustainability. We're dealing with oral cultures, and we're dealing with cultures that don't have technical skills, even basic technical skills. Then we're also dealing with really poor infrastructures. As we try to think through what it means to do online education or even a distributed type of education, I see a big gap between what's possible as I deal with things in the Western world versus the kind of challenges we're facing in the Arab world. I'm very interested to know the hidden curriculums that are there when we're dealing with these types of issues. How people are addressing those?

**[85] Andrew Beaty:** The people you're working with, are they able to access things like the Third Mill videos, or is the internet structure so difficult that even those pieces are hard for them to do?

**[86] William Merrifield:** Videos are hit and miss. For instance, in our approach, we use limited videos. We try to use Articulate 360 Software to do some learning activities or media elements,

but in terms of just watching a video as a way to get content, it depends on the different infrastructure. It's not something that we can rely on as a primary way of delivering content. We're trying to think through how we can deliver content in a way that isn't dependent or is less dependent on reliable infrastructure. The other side of it is people from an oral culture. How can we enable them to create an online community in ways that don't require so many text generated types of forum discussions, or wikis, or things of that nature?

**[87] Richard Pratt:** Andrew, I was mentioned again, so I'll make a quick comment, if I may. One of the commitments that we have had at Third Mill from the very beginning is the importance—in fact, the absolute necessity—of making curricula that is deliverable at every level of technology—every single level, every one imaginable, and every one we can anticipate for the future—because it is different in different parts of the world, and it is always changing in every part of the world. We simply cannot exclude people from, in the case of theological education, sound training for leading the church simply because they are not able to tie in to our favorite technological media. This is just something that we were committed to in the beginning, and it's very, very important, along with the idea that Tan brought up that we have to somehow break the bonds—and I consider it bonds, frankly—of the formal educational requirements prior to theological or pastoral training. This is what we focus on: pastoral education.

**[88]** The Fuller Center will tell you that—at least, years ago they did—that the average pastor in the world today has seven years of education. Well, that's our target. In my opinion, we have got to create curricula that can be used by people, simultaneously, who are at a Ph.D. level and at a seventh grade education level. Those are the challenges we have to face—the technological ones and the formal educational challenges.

**[89] Andrew Beaty:** Great. Otto, why don't you jump in here?

**[90] Otto Kladensky:** Thank you. Good morning, my name is Otto Kladensky. I live in Costa Rica, I serve with TOPIC—Trainers of Pastors International Coalition. For that reason, I am related to the GPro Commission and other organizations that do pastoral training. I think there are wonderful things that are being said, and I appreciate that Andrew is recording this and will eventually put it in writing, because this shouldn't be lost. I really thank you for the effort of doing that. I would also like to appreciate and get to know the Third Millennium personnel. I met some of them in Thailand last year—and nice to meet you, Richard. I think the work you are doing is wonderful, and I'm wondering if it's possible that you catalog all your materials through the Dewey Decimal System, because that would help very, very much to see where to put in and how to access all of those wonderful materials that you're providing.

**[91]** Now, regarding how to do sustainable things in the third world, let me give you four examples. Many of the seminaries—obviously, I can give you specific examples here in Costa Rica and throughout Latin America—many of the seminaries sustain themselves by having missionaries on their staff because the missionary comes with his bread and butter, and, therefore, the price per student is lower. Nevertheless, it's the missionary. Yes, some

missionaries do attend the local churches and learn the language and have really contextualized lives while other missionaries teach in the seminaries but attend the International Baptist Mission Church that speaks in English. Ouch! In other words, maybe it is because their wife doesn't want to mingle with the locals, but that does happen.

**[92]** Then we have a second model. I call it the McDonald's model. Organizations like Harvest Seminary and others who charge the equivalent of the most expensive McDonald's combo for their course, trying to make it accessible to people. How do they do that? How can they sustain that ministry? It's because they harness local pastors that have a formal education that give it, let's say, the depth of the content. The flipside of that is that most of the pastors who have a formal education are maybe wonderful pastors or maybe wonderful preachers but are lousy teachers because they've never learned how to teach. I am the fruit of a formal education, but I was never taught how to teach until many years later when I stumbled upon "Walk Thru the Bible," and I praise the Lord for them. Obviously, I've grown from that.

**[93]** Then, the third model is "sell the book." Here in Latin America it is called SAN or FLIT. I think in Asia it is called TEE (Theological Education by Extension). Basically, they sell the book, and they have a two-hour per week session where the student fills in the blanks, does the quiz from the book, attends a session, does a quiz, and, at the end of the book, the student also does a test. It's a wonderful method, precisely geared to those who have the seventh-year education only and, maybe, hasn't finished high school. So, "sell the book" would be the third model.

**[94]** Now, there's a fourth model, which I would call "composite," which organizations like Global Actions have with their GLOMOS (Global Module Studies) program in several countries. Basically, they ask the student to participate by paying a very minimal sum, just to make it that they invest something. Again, they bring local pastors—English-speaking ministers who will pay their own ticket to go to these countries to teach. That reduces the time from three days to a day and a half because they have to be translated. Again, they may be wonderful preachers but lousy teachers. They've never received a class on how to teach, especially transculturally, and they give examples of American football and how the quarterback works, and we in Latin America—and obviously in Asia and Africa—do not enjoy American football. As a matter of fact, why is it called football if they use their hands? I don't know.

**[95]** The idea is this: these will be the four basic models that are sustainable here in Latin American, and I don't know about Asia or Africa. What I have heard from Asia and Africa is that there's a lot of pastoring of pastors. In other words, discipleship is the model. I know that the World Evangelical Alliance has adopted a model from a TOPIC (Trainers of Pastors International Coalition) colleague from Brazil, born in Bolivia—David Cornfield. The idea is that sustainability happens because it is a one-on-one situation. It's not—well, again, the situation of accreditation comes there. If we can spell out how much material, and how much time, does a pastor-teaching-pastors program require, and we can transfer that into a one-hour credit on a certificate or one-hour credit on a diploma, this could be like adding into the piggy bank, and eventually the person can get something on the wall that means something to the world. I

don't know how Jesus looks at this, but, definitely, accreditation is one of the things people want, even though they don't say they want it, but eventually organizations that are on this screen really look for it.

**[96]** I think we should help our brethren from the non-formal situations to define what [should be]. I'll shut up with one word that was mentioned—the word is “coalition.” I think that Trainers of Pastors International Coalition has failed in making a coalition because everybody is on their own. Nevertheless, the idea that cooperation—maybe we should change it into cooperation or community or something like that—would be much better. Hopefully, the digital platforms and the new ways of communicating—as GPro Commission, for example, now has a call center. We're trying to connect people on the phone because, even though we're in the 21st century, people don't read emails. Unless there are questions, this is my two-cents worth. Over.

**[97] Andrew Beaty:** Okay, Ali, why don't you jump in? You had some things you wanted to share as well.

**[98] Ali Khalil:** Thanks. I just wanted to say a few things about the conversation that Bill and Jason are actually sharing—maybe a little bit about Otto as well. Currently, I'm undertaking the blended format of theological education that's happening at the theological seminary... [corrupted audio]... This resource got around six-hundred downloads, or even more, in one week, whereas other resources that are intended to be for pastoral trainers got around like fifty or fifty-two downloads within that particular same week. I'm just talking about the level. We have around 3,000 people in our database who are supposed to be pastoral trainers, or even pastoral leaders, needing to learn more. The point that I'm trying to make is that we always intend to push people to learn more; however, people are seeking simplicity in that education.

**[99]** And that goes to the point that, ultimately, this is what sharing is about... [corrupted audio]... adding some small points, and then all of this would add up to a degree or a continuous education. That would be very helpful. It's great that you're trying things through technology. You get Moodle as an open platform. Some great ideas are happening, but I don't know to what extent we're able to hear and listen to the actual needs of people. Such as... [corrupted audio]... of what others need to grow. Obviously, we have to listen to what the actual needs are on the ground. It would be good for us to really listen and see how we can create models based on the technology that exists there. Thank you, Andrew.

**[100] Andrew Beaty:** Ali, when you're talking about some of those basic things across the different groups of people that you're working with, are there 5 or 6 key elements that would point to how we start at the basics for pastoral training? What are the key things they need, whether systematic theology, an overview of the Old and New Testaments, etc.? Are there things that you're hearing from your constituents that this group should really be thinking about shifting energy and effort towards?

**[101] Ali Khalil:** I think maybe not at this stage. We're trying to build towards that and listen more. We have a good network of people that we... [audio ends].

**[102] Jason Tan:** Let me answer for Ali. Is that okay? This is Jason Tan, again, from the Philippines. Based on our survey from pastoral trainers in the Philippines, they find it really difficult to teach theology. Of all trainings for non-formal theological education, theology is something they're afraid to touch. What they said, at least from the feedback that we're getting, is that they need a program where they can show, for example, a video for thirty minutes, and then, with a guide—say a PDF guide—they can answer as they follow the video, and then a trainer can help the trainees go to a video and do discussions for themselves, then apply this theological material to their own context. These are some of the issues they had when we actually tried Third Mill for some people.

**[103]** For example, one—many of our people—couldn't understand the accents of the teachers, because the lessons are being taught by Americans—many of our people can't understand some of the words because of the deep accent. If we put scripts in those videos, then that might help. Second, the illustrations, as Otto was pointing out. It's difficult for them to understand because it's too American or foreign for them. And then the third is the questions. Say they have a question about the topic, nobody... [audio ends].

**[104] Ali Khalil:** I believe you are enjoying the corrupted internet connection of the third-world!

**[105] Andrew Beaty:** Jason, are you with us? Ali?

**[106] Jason Tan:** Yes, I'm here now.

**[107] Ali Khalil:** Go ahead.

**[108] Jason Tan:** All right. The last point is just the questions. They have difficulty. If they have questions, of course, the video can't respond to that, so it's better if the videos or the training materials we have are designed for people who can facilitate the learning for the students.

**[109] Andrew Beaty:** Andrew Sears, was that part of the idea you mentioned? You used the phrase, "micro-campus MOOC." Is that the kind of idea, maybe, Jason is mentioning? If there were a coordinator who could work with the Third Mill videos in a small group in Manila or Mindanao who would be there and be available to walk through some of the material. Is that kind of what you were saying that the Mormons were able to do?

**[110] Andrew Sears:** Yeah, so it's a Mormon church initiative—let me just see if I can pull it up. It was actually called the BYU-Idaho Global Pathways Program, and they run it in—I don't know—maybe hundreds or thousands of local congregations. But, what's interesting is, and the challenge is, that your local pastors may not have the capacity that you would have at a university to do training, but by connecting in with the internet and other materials, they're able to get people much better trained.

**[111]** As I see it, what's happening is that there are different dimensions of the delivery. There's this concept of theological education by extension, and that's been very successful—the model where you're going to, essentially, have a workbook and do it through correspondence or something like that. That's evolving; that's still going to be good in a lot of areas—and I think it'll be the best in a lot of areas—but there's also a lot of areas where you can do something similar, where, instead of just having a book, you're able to provide more complete courseware. I think that the challenge that I've seen—whenever I have tried to take some of the existing courseware that is out there or other materials. People have talked about some of the challenges that are there—whether it's languages or examples—but I think the biggest challenge is really this: you've got people who are at a seventh-grade education and you're trying to train them for master's level material, and you can't really do both. You've got to figure out where you're going to start. I think that's one of the bigger challenges.

**[112]** I'm going to share one more diagram because I'm kind of a diagram type person—I think that the future of education is going to be kind of like this diagram—this is a similar funnel. This is essentially flipping the Arizona State [model] but showing it as a pyramid, where you're going to have courseware, and that can include books that hundreds of millions of people are going to go through. Then you're going to have alternative credit where you're going to get ten to fifty million people. Then you're going to get degrees, and a lot of that will be online. Then you'll have a campus.

**[113]** Whenever I talk about what we need to do, it's that we need to get the integration between all these components working as well as possible, whether this courseware is just a book that is theological education by extension or whether it's—I think Third Millennium has kind of reinvented that. The links between programs is where things are breaking down right now; these are some of my thoughts. Does that answer your question?

**[114] William Merrifield:** If I can bring one other question into the mix here, because it seems like much of our conversation is around the cognitive domain. I'd be very interested, because, I think, especially in theological education, the affective and behavioral domains we see in our students are in need of developing at least as much as the cognitive domain, if not more so. The students are coming from often very broken situations. I'd be very interested to know how the affective and behavioral domains are being addressed in these types of approaches, instead of only talking about theological education in terms of the cognitive domain.

**[115] Richard Pratt:** May I comment on that please, Andrew? Bill, thank you very, very much. Hooray! That's magnificent because, I think, in our educational theories we do talk about behavior and affect, but when it comes to developing curricula, we don't focus on it, and it is absolutely essential. If I may add, this is not only the case for places outside the West but also in the West. One of the reasons we have this problem is because we've located ourselves too much on the cognitive in our traditional, residential, theological schools, and we do not touch the lives of the students. It takes a very special kind of teacher to even be concerned about this, much less succeed. We don't do very well at this, but we certainly try. To be explicit about the

integration of cognitive, affect, and behavior—this is radically important for reaching the world with the gospel, it seems to me.

**[116] Andrew Beaty:** Bill, did you have specific kinds of things that you were thinking of that need to be addressed in the affective area as well as the cognitive? Are there particular things that you think pastors really need to—on the affective level—really need to have?

**[117] William Merrifield:** We have a residential program, and we've developed the online certificate, and now we're looking at blended models. One of the things that we're wrestling with is that we see that those who come to a residential program gain as much from being a part of our residential community in issues like marital relations, raising children, perspectives on servant leadership.

**[118]** The thing we struggle with is that, a lot of times, it's through the modeling and through the life together that students are able to learn in these areas. How can we duplicate that or how can we create an environment online or in a blended setting that can, at least, give us some richness in those areas of simple interpersonal dynamics—how we view the other, how we view ourselves, how we view our spouse in a way that's much more than just cognitive? Talking about, for example, the Good Samaritan and then expecting that it's going to be transferred into a real, deep way towards engagement in Sudan where there's really deep and challenging situations, if that's more specific.

**[119] Andrew Beaty:** Great, thank you. One of the other things that has come up a couple of times here today has been the discussion about how we deal with the oral cultures or those who are, maybe, not academically prepared for graduate level seminary? Jonathan, would you take a couple minutes to share about the partnership that Moody has entered into with people in Ghana and how we're looking at new technology for oral-culture learners there?

**[120] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Absolutely. Moody Bible Institute has a new initiative—and, as soon as I'm done, I'd be very interested to know what Third Mill has and what Biola has in this area, too. I know both Richard and Susan have things that would be appropriate in this same line.

**[121]** Moody has started a program called Moody School of the Bible. It's a take-off from our old Radio School of the Bible that we used to have. We are in Accra, Ghana, in partnership with Theovision International, which is a Ghanaian-based ministry with which we have connections, and we started a Moody School of the Bible that operates on solar-powered audio devices. There were 250 pastors that came together in this program. They studied together through a year of curriculum. The courses were audio courses that were translated into the local languages and loaded onto solar-powered devices. The pastors would listen to the device—the audio recordings—and they would call in to a call center periodically (I forget if it was once a month or something), and take assessments by calling in and responding to multiple-choice questions on their phones. And then, if they passed the tests, they would be able to download new courses for their program.

**[122]** I was able to witness the graduation ceremony. It was a hugely jubilant occasion, as you'd imagine, with 250 pastors and their families gathered. The testimonials that I heard were quite incredible. There was a blind man who said this was the first time that he had a chance to study anything in a formal context. Other students that I spoke to said that they had only had the opportunity to receive education in a formal sense up to the fifth grade. So, we were really excited to be able to try to escape from exclusively literate forms of education.

**[123]** Dr. Pratt or Susan Ishii, I'd be very interested to know, too, how, as you look to the future, what it is that you might be doing with Biola TV or other initiatives at Third Mill?

**[124] Susan Ishii:** Sure, I'll jump in there and—just to clarify—we actually have two separate initiatives taking place. One is Biola Learn—that's our lifelong education and resource network, which is developed for a web-based platform. Then there is Biola TV, which is something that is in partnership with Amazon Fire at this point, but we're going to be expanding into Roku and probably other streaming providers as well. I'm taking a quick step back on the sustainability because this is intended to help address or support the sustainability factor of things because, when you consider what goes into the development of these digital curriculums and assets, to do it well and to do it in a manner that is meaningful for the broadest audience possible means that you need to be able to distribute it in as many platforms and formats as possible. So, when we're developing our degree outcomes, we're at the same time looking to see what are 10 different avenues in which we can distribute this and 10 different formats as well. Learn and Biola TV are definitely two separate areas as well.

**[125]** One of the more recent applications of this we've been working on is with Dr. Elias Eyasu, who is the president of the Ethiopian Kale Hewyet Church (EKHC). It's amazing what's happening there. The church plantings that are taking place number in the thousands. The issue that they're running into is being able to keep up with the level of pastoral training that needs to take place. One of the key aspects of our approach and our work with them is essentially to effectively train the trainers. Our push is to train as many individuals in the level of pastoral education so that they can, in turn, go out and train and educate others.

**[126]** So, starting with that, it's very much that top level and the drip downwards that needs to take place. We're doing our best to equip them with a variety of different tools and assets, and, in many cases, some of it is the analog method as well. By equipping them with the lowest level common denominator, in which they can use, they can in turn be as responsive as possible to that given area or that locale's needs. It ranges all the way up as well. We're very early in this work with EKHC, but we're really hopeful that God is going to bless this and move this forward.

**[127] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Richard Pratt, I'd be very interested personally to know if you'd be willing to share about some of the future thinking of Third Mill along these lines.

**[128] Richard Pratt:** Sure, I'll be glad to. Let me just say it thrills me to death when I hear Susan, because I love Biola so much, and some of your faculty have participated with us, and I have the Indonesian connection, the Jakarta connection, that you guys have, too. And so, it thrills me to

death when I hear people say we've got to design curriculum so that it can be distributed at every level of technology imaginable. I mean, that really is very, very true. We work hard to do that as well. I do believe that if you're on the early end of this, designing curriculum for that goal, for those kinds of broad distributional levels, is extremely important. Extremely important technologically, but, also, shall we say, in terms of the demographic as well. Designing it from the beginning so that we're not just trying to educate people who have enough formal education that a text-based curriculum would work.

**[129]** What we do at Third Mill is to try to overcome the technology. I've already told you that the same curriculum can be used from paper all the way up to television satellite broadcast. Okay, so that's the range and everything in between from apps to whatever—to USB drives, to micro SD cards, to audio-only. The curriculum has to be designed so it can be used, if all the person has is audio, only audio, and they're not going to miss anything. That is a design matter that, in my opinion, needs to be addressed right up front. Otherwise, we are cutting out leaders of the body of Christ who should not be cut out.

**[130]** But then the other thing I would say, in terms of the demographic, and especially in terms of their educational level and that kind of thing—we are talking about, perhaps not illiteracy or purely oral cultures, but certainly low literacy. I mean, the number of low literacy Christian leaders is unbelievable. If we do not design our curricula so that they can be handled by people of low literacy, then we are making a huge mistake. Given the fact, as I always try to tell people—Peter was the preacher at Pentecost and not the Apostle Paul, thank you very much! Peter, who did not know enough Greek to write his own epistles! How's that? So, I just think it's really important for us to think in terms of how to design a curriculum that can be used in all these various ways.

**[131]** If I could just say one thing that we do at Third Mill, we've worked hard at this—I don't know how much success we've had, but we worked hard at it—and that is not to make video presentations that are face driven. Can I use that expression? Do you understand what I mean? Like a video of a professor standing behind a podium—bore me to death, make me want to shoot myself to look at this for more than ten minutes—but, rather, to have graphic-driven video. 80–85% of a Third Mill lesson will be animations, motion graphics, various charts and maps and things like that. A little more like—for those of you who are familiar with it—a History Channel documentary, rather than a talking head. We have had experience to say that that works well with low literacy audiences. They can get those images. In fact, when they respond on tests that their teachers tell us about, they respond with the graphics. They don't respond with the words. They draw the picture and write a few words explaining it.

**[132]** So that's what we've tried to do. But you asked me about the future. In my personal opinion—I haven't convinced my board of this yet, okay? So it's just my opinion—the future of theological education needs to bend sharply toward adult educational gaming. I didn't see anyone's head explode.

**[133] Thel Rountree:** I couldn't agree with you more. I think that gaming and immersive experiences are going to be the future of where training is going to head in terms of online. You said something earlier, and I want to piggyback onto something that Jason said. That is that we have offices and ministry centers on the ground in 34 countries around the world, so it's important to get the localization right and to get the integration of the culture right in terms of the content and the courses. One of the things that DAI does with every single course we do is—because so many cultures are oral based—we do lots of storytelling. We do lots of case studies where, not only do we tell a story, but we film it in those countries in their languages. In our servant leadership course, for example, we have a whole scenario that runs through the course that was filmed in Arabic in Egypt. We use English subtitles or whatever else we need with it in order to get the content across.

**[134]** I'm filming—currently working on filming—a scenario on women in leadership in India. It's important to get the culture right and something Jason said earlier, too, that I really, really think is something to think about hard and focus on is the fact that the average student out there has very little education—very little formal education. You need to meet them where they are and be able to get them the content that can serve them because we're working with pastors in churches who are desperate for content.

**[135]** Let's say, there's some place in sub-Saharan Africa. They travel to a major city for a few days, they get excited about a conference or a seminar, they go back to their village, and they're drowning. They're absolutely just underwater because they have no resources. They have no support, they have nothing. It's a challenge to be able to try and meet those folks where they are with, as you well said, Richard, with every kind of media that is possible. I was walking out in the countryside in Cambodia and saw someone taking care of his field while listening on headphones, and I'm thinking, "What's he doing? Is he having a cell phone call?" No, he was listening to the Bible, and it was because there is no cell connection out there! There is no technology out there in the middle of the countryside. We have to figure out ways of being able to get the content to the people, however we can.

**[136] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Dr. Pratt and Thel, can you reflect further? I heard the phrase, Richard, that you used, "adult educational gaming," as your vision of the future of theological education. How does that relate to virtual reality? I'm extremely interested in how VR can be used for theological education.

**[137] Richard Pratt:** That's very interesting. I was just at the University of Mississippi recently in their school of new media, and this is what they were all into: gaming and VR—augmented reality, actually. It's high-tech. That's the problem with it. But simple gaming is not very high-tech. It can be used on a mobile device, and you got it, and you can use voice recognition.

**[138]** The educational philosophy at Third Mill, if I could just couch it this way, quickly, is to say that we believe that getting the content across to people is the easy part, and that it really does not require much human engagement to get the basic content there. Some, yes, but not a whole lot if you're doing a good job at the mediated curriculum. The hard part—and what you

need human beings for—is what we used to call application, or whatever you want to call it: life, affect, behavior—those kinds of things.

**[139]** So, what we try to do is make it possible for local learning communities to not spend their time on content delivery, if they want to—whatever they want, of course. But for them to spend all their classroom time, all their human content time—contact time—in delivering content... Of course, traditional professors tend to want to do that, but, assuming they don't want to do that, then what we want to do is to make it possible for them, easily, to get the basic content to their students so that they can spend their human time in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, working on behavioral and affect and relational and those kinds of things—the kinds of issues that are really difficult to deal with and are very hard.

**[140]** So, we see adult educational gaming as an easy way to give people access and—there's good science on this now—very effective for data acquisition and retention. But it has to be the right kind of gaming, and it can be done, for example, online. Forget online! It's got to be mobile driven, it's got to be voice recognition driven, those kinds of things. Not sitting there typing on your phone to try to answer a question! The technology for this is certainly developing, and we're working hard to do the research and development on it so that we can move in that direction.

**[141] The Rountree:** Yeah, I agree that gaming is really important to look at. I come out of the Fortune 500 world so, you know, in the corporate world, gamification has been around for a lot of years, and we've been using it for a lot of years. Additionally, I just spent a week over at the DevLearn conference, and one of the interesting topics that really impressed me was the advances in augmented reality. I agree with what you said, Richard, that virtual reality is hardware dependent; it's cumbersome, it's expensive, and I don't see it changing in the near future or the long term, quite honestly—unless somebody comes up with a Star Trek holodeck or something like that.

**[142]** But augmented reality, on the other hand, is something that is very inexpensive, very low-tech in some ways. For example, we're starting to work with a tool from a company up in Canada called Normal that basically allows me to print or send a PDF file to somebody who can print it then locally there at their ministry center—a QR code on a page along with some workbook exercises. When the student aims their phone at the QR code, a little animated character pops up on there and interacts and talks with them and gives them part of the lesson.

**[143]** DAI is not only looking at this for adult education, but we're looking at taking our servant leadership course, and currently we've been piloting it in a couple places around the world for 15–18 year-olds because, if we're going to grow servant leaders, we really need to grow them from that age on. And it's important to catch them at that point. And so, to be able to use those technologies with those kinds of audiences, this is really where I think the future is heading—at least in terms of the AR/VR thing.

**[144] Jonathan J. Armstrong:** Thank you.

**[145] Andrew Beaty:** Good. Well, thank you everybody for coming in today. We've covered a lot of different things, and I think we're all looking forward to the transcripts that we'll get in a short period of time. One of the other things that I hope today has done is that it allowed us to get a chance to hear what else God is doing. We've talked several times about the need for us to work together better and have more of these interactions. I hope today is a spark. Maybe you've gotten to meet somebody new who you'd be able to shoot an email and say, "Hey, something that we talked about at that conference really piqued my interest, and I would like to find out more about that or how can we partner more in some of these areas."

**[146]** I hope this has been a good starting point—not that this is the end by any means at all. Maybe we'll even have the opportunity to do another one of these again to focus on the topic where we're able to dig into it a little bit more. My encouragement, my challenge, my expectation is that we keep working at this so that we're able to do this better, and that, again, as Richard has talked about, the learning curve continues to be steep. I don't think there's a plateau in the near future for us. We have to keep working on these pieces together and continue to learn from one another. [Andrew Beaty closed in prayer.]

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