

BOOK

Analog Church: Why We Need People, Places, and Things in the Digital Age

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SYNOPSIS [From the publisher]

“In recent decades the digital world has taken over our society at nearly every level, and the church has increasingly followed suit—often in ways we're not fully aware of. But as even the culture at large begins to reckon with the limits of a digital world, it's time for the church to take stock. Are online churches, video venues, and brighter lights truly the future? What about the digital age's effect on discipleship, community, and the Bible?”

“As a pastor in Silicon Valley, Jay Kim has experienced the digital church in all its splendor. In *Analog Church*, he grapples with the ramifications of a digital church, from our worship and experience of Christian community to the way we engage Scripture and sacrament. Could it be that in our efforts to stay relevant in our digital age, we've begun to give away the very thing that our age most desperately needs: transcendence?”

“We’re all struggling to say the same old things in new and different ways. And so we must praise the new and different ways.” DOBBY GIBSON

“Jake — an unchurched twenty-something — concluded, ‘I don’t think church should be like that’ . . . Jake is searching for transcendence. He’s reluctantly stepping foot in a church in the hope that there might be something there that he can’t find anywhere else. Without even knowing it consciously, Jake is looking for something timeless.”

“We’re changing the church experience from an extended meal at a dining table into a truncated series of tweets, and we’re losing our aptitude for nuance, generosity, and engagement.”

“The most transformative experiences people were having in our communities, we slowly realized, had nothing to do with the lights, sound, and spectacle. Transformation was happening in much more tactile ways — through personal relationships and the profound simplicity of studying Scripture, praying, and sharing meals together.”

“In her sobering book *Alone Together*, Sherry Turkle says this: “Digital connections . . . may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other.”

“I believe the answer is to go analog. People are hungry for human experiences and the church is perfectly positioned to offer exactly that. In fact, the church is fundamentally designed and intended for this work — to create spaces and opportunities for people from all walks of life to experience true human

flourishing, in real time and real space. Unlike anything else in our culture today, the church can invite people to gather in the flesh and to experience the hope that Jesus Christ offers.”

“Since its earliest days, the Christian church has been marked by its invitation to transcendence, not relevance.”

“In the digital age, one of the most upside down things the church can offer is the invitation to be analog, to come out of hiding from behind our digital walls, to bridge our technological divides, and to be human with one another in the truest sense – gathering together to be changed and transformed in real time, in real space, in real ways.”

“Moments of more may leave us with lives of less.” SHERRY TURKLE

“This is our digital world. Even the most important decisions, like the people we choose to enter into meaningful relationships with – maybe even a lifelong commitment – are made with shocking speed. Anything less is considered archaic. And this doesn’t just apply to dating; the digital age has affected, and in some cases infected, all spheres of life, including the most vital part of the Christian life: discipleship.”

“ [Dallas] Willard wrote that discipleship is a process of steadily learning how to live the Jesus way. Steady – consistent, unwavering, focused movement in one direction.”

“We’ve forgotten the value – even necessity – of steadiness.”

“The digital age’s technological advancements boast three major contributions to the improvement of human experience, which in turn have become its undeniable values: 1. Speed. We have access to what we want when we want, as quickly as our fingers can type and scroll. 2. Choices. We have access to an endless array of options when it comes to just about anything. 3. Individualism. Everything, from online profiles to gadgets, is endlessly customizable, allowing us to emphasize our preferences and personalities.”

“The speed of the digital age has made us impatient. The choices of the digital age have made us shallow. The individualism of the digital age has made us isolated.”

“The digital age has made our lives better in some ways, but it certainly has not made us better. It can’t. As Crouch puts it, “Technology is a brilliant expression of human capacity. But anything that offers easy everywhere does nothing (well, almost nothing) to actually form human capacities.”

“Because we lack steadiness, patience, and long-term perspective, we’re dangerously susceptible to the allure of quick-fix, dopamine-inducing digital experiences.”

“The digital age entices and invites us into this never-ending stream of “frenetic shallowness.” Scroll, look, like, comment, judge, envy, repeat. It’s fast, it’s quick, it’s easy, and it’s often thoughtless and careless. It’s shallow and directly counterintuitive to the deep work of discipleship.”

“C. S. Lewis’s words ring truer than ever: ‘We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.’ The shallowing effect of the digital age isn’t just about how we behave; it’s about who we’re becoming.”

“As the speed and choices of the digital age send us hurling toward impatience and shallowness, they culminate in its most damaging consequence: isolation.”

“Social media is fueled by voyeurism – that broken inclination within each of us to peek behind the curtain of other people’s lives.”

“True human connection is fueled by empathy – the God-given ability to step into another’s shoes and open ourselves up to another’s story, not to compare and contrast, but to be overwhelmed by compassion, to “rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15). This requires patience, depth, and the risk of stepping into real community with real people and their real lives in real time and in real space.”

“But the digital age is about speed, choices, and individuality. Fixed locations and physical mediums are seen as impediments to such values. We don’t hold it in our hands, we don’t read it aloud to one another, we rarely even gather at set times to watch things together anymore. The digital age is about getting what we want, when we want, how we want, and as much (or as little) as we want. And its ill effects are either going unnoticed or are being intentionally ignored by the church, and this is catalyzing a dangerous shift in our ecclesiology.”

“The Christian church has always been marked by her ability to create and invite people into transcendent spaces and experiences. The church has always been most dynamic and effective when she has stood in stark contrast to the dominant culture of the day – zigging when the world is zagging.”

“This is the opportunity and the challenge before us today as we serve and lead our church communities – to help people lift their collective gaze away from the abyss of their digital devices and spaces, to see Jesus out on the water, inviting them to step out in faith . . .”