Q&A: How many websites does the Aussie church need […having…] replaced genuine inspiration?

Anonymous asks: *How many websites does the Aussie church need to keep everyone happy with the latest technology that has more-or-less replaced genuine inspiration?*

Thanks for the question. It's one of those ones where I have to decipher what the premise of it is! Let me respond to a false dichotomy between web-presence and "genuine inspiration." Yes, surely there are many many tacky web site out there. Yes, surely there are many churches that invest more in their uber flashy professional-grade web presence than they do with real ministry. But this is no new thing. In the past all churches had an entry in the white pages just like every church should now have a web page somewhere that at least communicates phone number, time and place. But some also had ads in the yellow pages. Most had ads in the Saturday paper. Some had large billboards and flashy neon. Some even put ads on buses and took out radio and TV ads. There is nothing new under the sun.

So its a false dichotomy – having a website doesn't mean giving up on "genuine inspiration." Neither does making sermons available and engaging with the church community through social media. These are tools for communication and our job is communication.

The real problem, which is also not new under the son, is when the tools of communication (be they Gutenberg-pressed tracts to Jack Chick cartoons to animated vegetables) overwhelm the reality of what is actually being communicated.

All churches are called to faith, to trust God to enable their purpose and mission. That faith is often costly and difficult. When churches refuse to count the cost or face the difficult they often end up faking it. The sovereign presence of the Spirit is replaced with a light show. The reverence and transcendance of the glory of God is replaced with controlled, dry, performance. Genuine communication is replaced with glitzy websites. We grow by tickling ears, and, yes, by keeping everybody happy.

In the end, then, the problem is not the number of websites, the problem is an authenticity of faith. I'd rather be counting that than the number of superfluous URLs.