Session Summary
A "pretty close" idea-by-idea record of the recorded crowdwriting discussion.
View the video for elaborations.

Setting
- Colony is on Mars 2017 plans
- Nature of the colony:
- In difficulty: supplies low, something broken, resources scarce
- They want to learn about Earth humans, send kids to Earth day care center, day care provider alone knows where kids come from, sends them into Christian homes; stories follow kids
- Primitive, sod houses or caves (can't bring Earth building materials) (metaphor: missionary going to dark, cold place to bring warmth, light) – but there long enough to have developed own peculiar culture, rituals –
- Like catacombs, bleak, this life terrible (post-Christian), missionary has hope
- A penal colony, a "Guantanamo Bay" for terrorists
- One way trip, never come back;
- Colony so different from Earth, missionary wonders if "Christ and salvation" applies there at all
- What if time is present: raises questions like, when did colony start? Why? How did they get there? Why didn't we already know about it? What's been going on that we haven't been told about –
- perhaps a "eugenics" site, attempting to prove evolution happens, lots of conflict over why it isn't
- Find ideas in history of utopian experiments and why they failed
- No books, but individual Bible pages turn up, arouse curiosity, search for answers
- Planet has long days, short nights, hard to rest, affects thinking

Characters
- Protagonist is only one who knows about colony, their only Earth contact, must convince Earth people about it
- Protagonist is struggling Christian; missionary's role is to help that person as a mentor
- Protagonist is missionary's wife, who first learns of colony, feels call to serve it but has doubts about mission, taking children, etc. We identify better with this than with missionary (there are more Christian strugglers in audience than Christian champions)
- Strong antagonist is needed, to prevent story from sounding like propaganda
- P is former stripper with sleazy backstory (most of audience can identify)
- P is an anti-hero?
- A TEAM of protagonists, more story opportunities following each
- Not a married couple – too settled at the start, we need to grow relationships
- P is a poorly motivated "loser" pastor, who becomes antagonist because of developing relationship
- Focus each episode on the perspective of a different character (like Lost)

- Antagonist is sure of himself, protagonist not quite (like "Skeleton in God's Closet")
- Make sure the Christian family is a model, showing mutual respect – doing the right thing often leads to conflict – episodes can explore individual family member flaws – do this only in flashbacks only, to maintain interest, "good families" are dull
- In long series, protagonist/antagonist switch, then switch back again – change viewer's perspective on situation, better involves minor characters – antagonist might be shadow of protagonist, sharing same traits, using them in opposite ways
- If missionary has lots of kids, stories could appeal to range of viewer ages
- A dysfunctional missionary family
- Missionary is a child, the only way they can get the message in, but kid doesn't fully understand the mission – and/or delivers pithy/oracular statements
- Missionary is Chinese, or African
- Children as secondary characters provide motivation, plot lines
- An unrelenting antagonist? Is there a villain?

Plot
- Center it on person to person interaction
- Missionary is hunted – experiences fear, daring, risk
- The powerful emotion re: one way journey: never to return (like mission work 200 years ago) Series title: "One Way Colony"
- Missionary is forced to leave Earth (with family?)
- Someone in colony finds a Bible, wants to find out more, contacts Earth missionary
- Like Noah, missionary gets message to build space ship and go there, founds colony
- Make it a "reality show" (would help fund it) – explore how each character deals with "never coming back" as well as "disconnection from Earth" – much of theological imagery is connected with Earth, does it apply there?
- Need a "happy ending"? not necessarily, rather a "satisfying" one
- Conflict: Christian vs. non-christian? Or Christian vs. own doubt, struggle about own faith
- Conflict: colony government wants technology eutopia, must thwart the missionary
- Fragments create mystery: fragments of pages of Bible, or fragments of corpus from crucifix – kid smuggles fragments into colony sewn into clothes
- Focus on Christ crucified, not family values
- Story of failure of a Christian group/pastor because of bad theology
- An unrelenting villain? A powerful opposing force? What spins plot in the "no turning back" direction?
- Power relationships always interesting. Struggle over a rare resource (*unobtainium*?)
- Planet's attempt to merge all religions into one, found not to work since there is one Truth

Episodes
- "A plot" vs. "B plot" ideas
- Some connection between missionary and person at colony: love? a relative? a long lost someone?
- Two kids who disrupt colony, come to attention of the ruler

- "Crash" style, bunch of struggling Christians connected to each other but don't (yet) know it
- The antagonistic force is an idol – various kinds of idols explored in B plots
- Colony is penal, residents there as punishment, possible redemption story – missionary chooses to go with prisoners to support them
- Colony is fantastic: all your physical needs are provided, attracts lazy people who like that, missionary is broken-down guy sent there too
- All the world is shredding religion, people in colony are refugees of all kinds of religious faiths; we follow Christian refugees engaging in dialogue with other kinds of believers
- Over generations, couriers bring pieces of corpus of Christ on cross, nobody knows what it is or means, final piece brought by "last courier" (kid) that triggers resolution
- Each "piece" episode incorporates a Bible history incident/ reference
- some may idolize the crucifix
- Episodes generated by list of obstacles to people receiving the Gospel (use Paustian's book on apologetics), or by list of the major sins of this age.
- Example: "bad things happen (to good people)" – missionary arrives at colony, that day a horrible cave-in, his arrival is blamed. Message: there are no "good people," nobody lives up to God's code except Christ who did it for us.
- Episodes follow chronology: 1. Missionary introduced 2. Missionary learns of colony 3. Missionary must convince people it is real 4. Missionary struggles to decide to go there 5. Missionary finds the means to go there 6. Departure from loved ones 7. Several episodes during transit 8. Arrival and reception on planet 9. Etc. – how to work into such a story line (a) entertainment value (interest/ excitement/ conflict/ emotion) and (b) the Gospel (meaning/ insight/ God's plan of salvation). The presence of the Triune God is strong in every episode.
- Episodes that show "it matters what you believe"
- Plot categories: revenge, rivalry, underdog, rescue, escape,
- temptation (missionary has strong feelings for a woman, who is head of security, her duty to prosecute him, tempted to let him go, he's tempted to assume she will) – Moral atmosphere and sensitivities differ on distant planet
- Use "real life" as plot ideas, read the newspaper: what is "terrorism" in distant colony? Is missionary a suspect (he's "fundamentalist")? Previous missionaries have been executed. How does missionary dispel distrust? Separate himself from those Christians that ARE terrorists? Some members of the community start to support him.
- Missionary in prison, set an execution date to create story arc – start a suspense clock ticking – he's narrating his story from the cell
- The entire planet is doomed to extermination – missionary goes knowing he too will be killed – metaphor for Earth itself – missionary has terminal disease, wants to make remaining days meaningful – planet is rationing air, every day by lottery a housing unit is chosen to be cut off, everyone knows they could die any night
- Use Bible as source of ideas. Viewers watch, then are driven to the "bonus footage" to learn more
- Don't fear pushing protagonist into painful territory, don't be too sympathetic (create the "dark moment")

Questions:
- Shooting for a "G" rating? Cuts out much of audience.
- Do you plan a story from end backwards?
- ***How to make the story "Christian"?*** message doesn't have to be obvious ("on the nose") since today's audience can pick up subtleties – maybe they only FEEL them. You have to entertain first. A Christian writer's values will show through. But modeling good behavior alone risks giving the impression that Christianity is about good behavior. It's not. Christianity is about what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. So to fulfill the potential of a "Christian series," we have to be talking about Jesus.

Next steps:
- Create a TREATMENT for an episode, then turn it into a script, then into a production.
- Hour episode: 45-50 minutes
- Half-hour episode: 25 minutes
- An individual Webisode can be as short as 6-8 minutes.

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