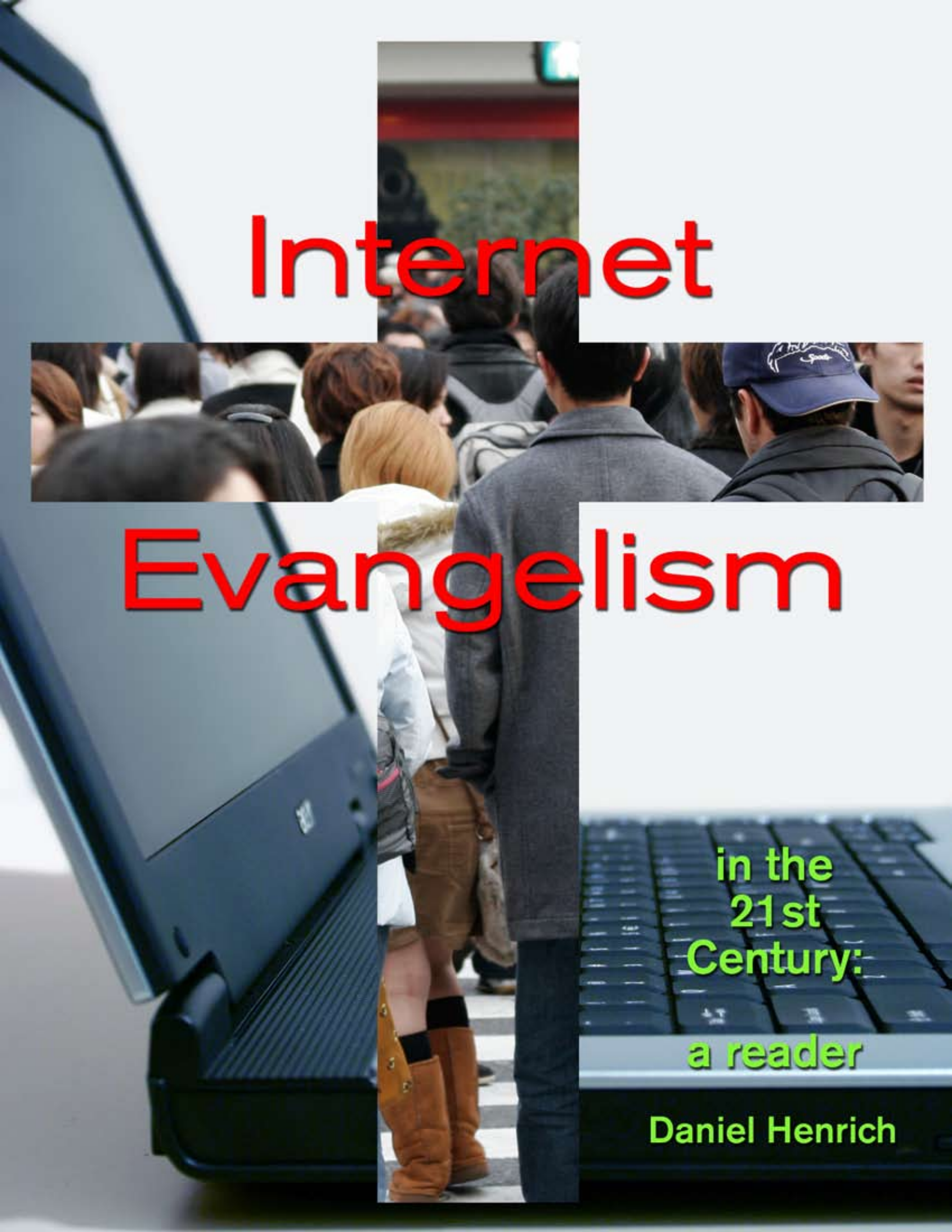

Internet Evangelism

in the 21st Century:

a reader

Daniel Henrich

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Preface

The "Internet Evangelism for the 21st Century" Conference was held in 2005 at Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia. Over 150 attended, 100 from outside the LU community.

This volume contains the transcripts of the 21 workshops by well-known practitioners of Internet Evangelism. As the conference organizer, I had met many of them in cyberspace and through the process got to know them in person.

Each of the sections will provide valuable information on how the internet can be used to reach the lost with the Gospel. You can still stream each of the workshops by going to http://ie-21stCentury.com, and you can download the PPTs and handouts that are found in the last 60 pages of this volume.

There were a number of people who were instrumental in getting the conference itself going. First is my wife, Christine, who was in the middle of her MA in Communication; next is friend and colleague, Dr Terri Cornwell; the Liberty Advertising and Public Relations students, and last but not least, the support of Dr. Jerry Falwell who passed away in 2007.

Special thanks to Mary Ann Edman for the design and layout of this volume. The transcriptions from the videos were done by Castingwords.com.

There are many sites dealing with Internet Evangelism but Tony Whitaker's http://ied.gospelcom.net/ is the most comprehensive.

Dan Henrich Bio: Henrich taught advertising and public relations at Liberty University for nine years. He is also a mediastrategy consultant with Handclasp International, an educational and charitable organization (http://Handclasp-International.org). He has served in a number of countries in Africa and currently concentrates in SE Asia. His most recent project includes an entertainment-education radio soap in Thailand called "Never Too Late." He manages a number of resources sites, including www.mediastrategy.org <http://www.mediastrategy.org> , and http://pacrimmedia.wordpress.com/. His consulting website is www.HenrichConsult.org.

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Internet Evangelism Devotional
by Sterling Huston

Several years ago, Carl Wilenda, of the famous high wire act family, was performing in Puerto Rico at a Holiday Inn. They had strung a wire across the L-shaped Inn fourteen stories above the courtyard. Wilenda, operating without a net, walked out onto the wire, holding his balance beam. Part way across, a sudden gust of wind caught him by surprise. He lost his balance, reached for the wire, and missed. The same force of gravity that was holding his feet firmly to the wire, creating inertia and stability in that balance beam, was now plunging him, at an accelerating pace, fourteen stories below to his death.

This is a tragic illustration of how the laws of creation can cut both ways. This is true of many things God has given us. The fire that heats our homes and cooks our food can take life and limb, causing devastation. The water that washes our bodies and quenches our thirst can, in a flood, destroy all that is meaningful to us. The laws and principles God has put in the universe can bring both help and hurt, both blessing and curse, depending on how we use them. There are some God-given principles in our universe that were readily understood by the natural man; for example, the law of gravity we have just talked about. Or the law of the harvest: what you sow, you reap. But there are others that are only understood by the spiritual mind. The words of Jesus: "Give and it shall be given unto you"; "If you want to be greatest, you must be servant of all"; "If you want to save your life, you must lose it"—do not make sense except for those who are in God's family.

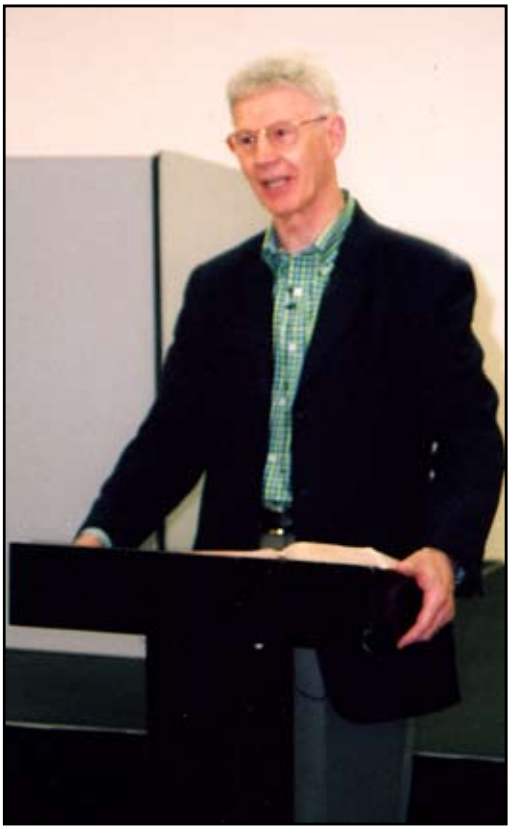
One of the these laws or principles I call the "law of opportunity." Jesus spoke about this in Scripture in the parable of the talents in Matthew 25. A man was going on journey, so he called together his servants. He gave to one five talents, he gave to another two talents, and he gave to another one talent. Scripture has very comforting words here because it says, "Each according to his ability." How thankful I am that God entrusts us with no more responsibility than He knows we are able to carry!

Scripture says that after a time away, "the master came back to settle accounts." We understand there is a day of accounting for the believer as well as for the unbeliever. One day there will

be an audit of our use of our opportunities. The man with five talents, Scripture tells us, had gone out, invested them, and made five more. So he told the good news to his master, and in verse 21 the master says, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share in your master's happiness."

The man with two talents brought his report. He had doubled the investment as well. He received exactly the same commendation. But the man with one talent said, "Master, I knew you were a hard man. You gathered where you hadn't sown. And I was afraid, I was fearful, so I went out and buried this talent. Now, here it is."

Burying is not preservation, it's mortification. Burial is not for the living but for the dead. If you bury any living thing, it soon will die and decay. So, his master had some very strong words for him. He called him a wicked and lazy servant. And he said, "Take that one talent and give it to the man with ten talents." You see, if we fail to use and improve on what has been entrusted to us, it will be taken away.



It is summed up well in these strong, puzzling, challenging words in verse 29: "For everyone who has will be given more and he will have an abundance. Whoever who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him." This is clearer in the *Living Bible* paraphrase: "For the man who uses well what he is given shall be given more and he shall have abundance. But from the man who is unfaithful, even what little responsibility he has shall be taken from him." This is an inescapable truth of creation. Reduced to a few words it says, "use it and it will multiply, but if you fail to use it, you lose it." Or, in short, "use it or lose it."

Now this is true in the physical realm. The whitefish has eyes but swims at such depths in the water that it is in total darkness. Though it has the biological shape and form of eyes, it cannot see because, "either you use it, or you lose it." It was more than forty years ago that I left engineering at Eastman Kodak Company in Rochester, New York. If I had to go back to quadratic equations and multilinear regressions today, I would have to learn them all over again, because you either use it, or you lose it. Whatever our talent or training or treasure, if we use it, it will multiply, but if we fail to use it, we will lose it.

This is especially relevant in the realm of time, for time is the dimension of life in which we all live. Time can't be relived, it can't be stored; it is either invested or it is spent. We all have equally the same amount of time, that is, 60 seconds in every minute, 60 minutes in every hour, 24 hours in every day. The difference between one person and another is essentially in the use of their time. We often say if you want to get something done, give it to a busy person, because he or she has a way of multiplying time. Paul reminded us, "We are to redeem the time." As one translation puts it, "Conduct yourself as wise people that

make the best possible use of their time." We're challenged to use our time and our opportunities, no matter how limited our abilities or how small our beginnings.

The post-Christmas tsunami in the Indian Ocean in 2004 brought devastation and disruption to Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation in the world. Today they are in need and vulnerable. I rejoice at those who are going over there to share and show the love of Christ. But that window won't be open long, so we either use it or we lose it.

This is also true of the opportunities God gives us with technology in the church. The Lord has opened up technology as a useful instrument for his divine purposes, particularly the Internet. The Internet, as you are well aware, is the fastest-growing media form in the history of our world.

Back in 1997 when we first convened a consultation on the Internet and evangelism at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, Illinois, we were rejoicing that there were a few million people online. Today, estimates are at least one billion people online around the world. If projections come true, 1.2 or 1.3 billion people will be accessing the 'Net around the world next year. 185 million U.S. citizens go online. One of the good bits of news by Dr. Lee Rainy, who conducted the "Pew Internet Survey of Religion in American Life," is that nearly two-thirds of those people, nearly 64 percent, have used the Internet to gather spiritual and religious information. The most populous nation in the world, China, has 100 million people online today. Chinese is the second largest language—second only to English—on the 'Net. Japan is the third largest nation in Internet usage, with 78 million people online. We are seeing the greatest growth of the 'Net where there is the greatest unreached population of the world—Asia. So the 'Net opens new and wonderful doors for us.

The Internet communicates to our culture, to new generations.

We are all aware of some of the advantages of the 'Net. First of all, its reach: it literally touches every nation of the world, particularly leadership and academia. It allows us to take the Gospel to closed nations, to communicate with people who could never talk about or explore this otherwise. It opens all kinds of new possibilities. A young woman with a heart for evangelism went online in Detroit, Michigan, a couple of years ago. She began communicating with a woman from mainland China who just wanted to learn to speak English. She shared her witness and then arranged to download a Bible for her in her language so that she could read the Scriptures for herself, a possibility that wasn't even available ten years before. *USA Today* reports a church in the Midwest was surprised to receive an e-mail from a person in Finland who had gone on its website and had come to know Jesus Christ. Its reach is incredible.

The Internet is also very economical. It's essentially the same cost to serve one or one million, possibly requiring a little larger pipe and larger server. The hard work is putting in the content. It's available "24/7/365" for the same expense for witnessing.

The Internet communicates to our culture, to new generations. We understand that the "millennial" and "mosaic" generations and the "Gen-Xer's" prefer to be communicated with through the 'Net. In an earlier presentation we saw that as the Bible, the truth of God's Word, was translated into more and more languages, the growth of the church kept increasing. We need to put the Gospel in a language and format that communicates with new generations; in a way so that they respond, in

Internet-relevant presentations.

The truth of the Gospel never changes, but the methods of delivering that truth must change to meet our culture. We have a great opportunity particularly with children and with young adults. The National Center for Education says 90 percent of U.S. children and adolescents ages five through 17 have access to a computer and use one. 60 percent are online. And among those 15 to 17, 75 percent of them are online. Among college students, 98 percent have access to the 'Net. This is where we will find them. This is where we need to meet them.

The Internet is contemporary. There are many Christians who do not use tracts these days, as valuable, helpful, and attractive as properly written Christian literature can be. But in conversations about spiritual matters, they would readily pull out a little attractive card with a website on it and say, "Here's a website you might like to visit. There are some answers for you here." It is a contemporary means that is well-received for witnessing.

This is the challenge before the church: to have our presence there and available in a ubiquitous way to those who are using the 'Net today.

Perhaps the strongest and most important asset of the 'Net is anonymity. It allows people to be much more vulnerable in their exploration of spiritual truth. They'll open themselves up to things, and to an unknown person on the other end, in a way they would not do face-to-face. In a newsletter mailing from *All About God,* Greg Outlaw gave some children's testimonies. A 13-year-old e-mailed, "I feel unsafe. I am depressed a lot"—things she would not say to her parents but she would say to an anonymous person at the other end of the 'Net.

Not everyone, however, views the Internet as an opportunity. I was in the board meeting of a major Christian organization a couple of years ago during a presentation on using the Internet for ministry. At the end of that presentation, a board member said, "I'm opposed to using the Internet. There's a lot of darkness there."

We understand that technology is amoral. It's how it's used that makes it either moral or immoral. We need to put some light where there is darkness. This is the challenge before the church: to have our presence there and available in a ubiquitous way to those who are using the 'Net today. Because we either use it or we lose it.

Sadly, many local churches and many parachurch ministries are not keeping pace with Internet growth for ministry and evangelism. They're using it primarily to speak to an internal audience, not for evangelism or outreach. An associate of mine did a survey of major church websites, and found that most of them did not have a presentation of the Gospel on there; or if they did, it was very unrelated to the culture they were trying to reach. The website of a flagship church in a major evangelical denomination—a church which has a sanctuary of six thousand people they fill several times on Sunday morning—had a few Scripture verses strung together, with no dialogue in between. It was something that hardly communicated with those inside the church, let alone met the Internet culture on the outside.

Dr. Thomas Wright, who wrote the program for online training for Internet evangelism for our Internet Evangelism Coalition, has written a *Decision Magazine* article on using the Internet. He tells about Linda, who was searching for God. She went on several sites and could not find Him.

Finally, she found one that explained the Gospel. Afterward Linda said, "We ought to tell lost people how to be found on these sites."

I visited the headquarters of a historic denomination in this country a couple of years ago. In the lobby they had their website up on a monitor. I explored all the options on that monitor. In not one place did it explain how to become a Christian. Two years ago I was in the headquarters of a well-known parachurch organization. I asked my host, "Is the Gospel on your home page?" He replied, "I don't know. Let's look and see." We searched all over and nowhere was the Gospel to be found. Other ministries often have the answer to that question, "How do I come to know God? How do I become a Christian?" three or more clicks away. That's too many if we really are focused on reaching people through the 'Net. You see, all of life is full of priorities and if our priority is to reach others with the Gospel—the Gospel should be on our home page.

Proverbs 29:18 says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." It's true—where there is no vision for using the Internet for outreach and evangelism, people are perishing. Tragically, a great segment of the church faces the danger of becoming irrelevant to whole, new generations because it is reluctant to embrace the 'Net for ministry. By the time Internet usage becomes routine for many congregations and ministries, we will have moved to new and more powerful media forms, and the opportunity will be lost. Because you either use it or you lose it. Our role is not to condemn or criticize, but to enlighten, encourage, and equip with resources that work.

The two primary objectives of the Internet Evangelism Coalition are to stimulate vision for using the Internet for ministry; and to provide resources and training to work effectively in using the 'Net. This is the reason that April 24 has been designated as Internet Evangelism Day worldwide. We want to raise vision and visibility for using the Web to evangelize. Jesus reminded us that we need to work while it is yet day, "for the night cometh when no man can work." Peter informed us that Jesus is delaying his return for one reason: so that more can come to repentance. That delay is an opportunity. We must use it or lose it.

Billy Graham was asked by a reporter, "What is the greatest surprise of your life?" He responded, "The brevity of life." He was also asked how he wanted to be remembered. He said, "I want to be remembered as faithful: faithful to my Lord, faithful to my calling, faithful to my wife, and my family." Looking back over 39 years with the Billy Graham Association—which seem to have sped by as Billy Graham himself has suggested—I see with greater clarity and conviction than ever before the truth in that little couplet, "Only one life will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." John Wesley's words continue to challenge me as I look for the opportunities God will yet give me in my life. I trust they will challenge you as well: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

If we use our opportunities, our time, and our gifts, God will multiply them. If we fail to use them, we lose in this life, and in eternity. Because you either use it or you lose it. Ultimately, however, if we obey this principle we have that great hope and expectation that Jesus' words—which every believer longs to hear—will be ours, too: "Well done good and faithful servant, come and share your master's happiness." Those are the words I most long to hear.

Sterling Huston is Director of the North American Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization.

The Digital Divide
by David Bruce

Let me tell you how "Hollywood Jesus" got started. Kind of an oxymoron, "Hollywood Jesus." I was at a Billy Graham meeting in 1997, in San Jose, and he challenged the Christians who were gathered there in one of his big meetings to use the internet for good. I had never been on the internet. I had never even sent an e-mail. I was sort of convinced that maybe being on the internet was not a good idea. I had heard all these stories, and I was pastor of a church. But I thought, "Why not do it evangelistically?" It seemed to me in 1997 that was going to be the direction of the world—the internet.

I also knew it was a visual culture. So I want down to Barnes and Noble and I bought a couple of books on how to make graphic images on the internet. Mind you, I still had not been on the internet. At the time, I was reading John Richardson's book called *Eternity in Their Heart.* For those of you who don't know John Richardson, he's a missionologist, and he's sort of my patron saint. What he says in *Eternity in Their Heart,* is that when missionaries go out to native cultures, one of the things they can do is listen to the native stories, and then look for redemptive analogies within the native stories; and use those as vehicles to talk about Jesus. However, you know where I'm going to go with this.

So I thought, "Why don't I be a native missionary, since I don't know any other culture, and I'll be a missionary for my own culture, and I'll use our native stories." This was a really radical idea at the time, because most Christians' use of movies at that time was—this is true—actually go in, sit down, and start counting all the "f" words, making copious notes about violence and who gets naked and what parts of their bodies do they show. It was amazing stuff Christians were into at that time. What does that do to your head when you do that? Doesn't anybody think reductively? Doesn't anybody think about Jesus? When you look at the culture, look for opportunities.

I thought I would just dedicate the website to a new, radical way of thinking. That was simply to put on the mind of Christ and think redemptively, and focus on people that need to know Jesus Christ using their story.

So, here we go. The first review I put up was *Superman.* How many of you saw the 1978 Christopher Reeves' *Superman?* Yeah, most people haven't. Spends forever in video stores and then goes away. *Superman,* the movie, begins with, in Heaven. Does anybody know the name of the planet that they're on?

Woman: Krypton.

David Bruce: Krypton, yes. And "Krypton" is Hebrew for... [pause] Ah, see, when you begin to think there might be things in this thing, it's just wonderful. Well, another question. The "S" on Superman—what does it stand for?

Man: Super?

David Bruce: Superman, but it's also the last name. The two Jewish creators who created Superman, both their last names started with "S." And Superman was started as a response to the Holocaust. They wanted to present a "super" Jew to the world. So they did. "Krypton" in Hebrew is "justice." When the movie starts—now the movie is, of course, taken by Mario Puzo, and Mario Puzo had just written what movie, very famous in American culture?

Man: *The Godfather.*

David Bruce: *Godfather,* right. So when he puts the Jewish tale of Superman in a Hollywood script, he being Catholic, puts a lot of Christian stuff into it. Then what happens is Superman having his Jewish roots then becomes Christian in his retelling on the big screen. For example, when the movie opens, there are three in Heaven, right? There's Marlon Brando who's like the head guy. His name is?

Man: Jor-El.

David Bruce: Jor-El. And they're sending their son to Earth and his name is Kal-El. And "el" in Hebrew means...

Man: God.

David Bruce: God. Oh, this is good! So these three in Heaven, the father, the mother/Holy Spirit are sending their son to Earth. [laughter]

Man: I don't get it.

David Bruce: It's like the three in Heaven, Trinity. It's amazing. If you were a missionary and you came to this culture, and you hadn't been trained to compartmentalize your faith, like, "this is my church life, and this is my world life"; if you just put the two together, it's amazing the kinds of integration that begin to happen in your head. So, Superman comes to earth. You see that little satellite thing that comes to Earth. It looks like a nativity star you put on your Christmas tree. And he comes down, and then there's two older people, who are driving down the road. They're too old. Does anyone remember what their names are?

Man: John and Martha Kent.

David Bruce: Yeah, John and Martha. Martha starts with "M" and John starts with... come on, give it to me. . .

Voice: Joseph and Mary.

David Bruce: Yes, Joseph and Mary. Now, when Superman hits the Earth, he forms a womb. It's amazing, virgin birth—see? Then, Superman walks out of this womb-shaped cavern caused by the satellite's impact on a red cloth. There could be nothing more symbolic of the virgin birth in all of Hollywood. Nothing. Nothing comes close to it. Then he's raised—does anybody remember what

he does before he goes into his "ministry?" He goes to the...

Man: Becomes a reporter.

David Bruce: Yes, he becomes a reporter. Before that, he goes to the Fortress of Solitude, which would be equivalent in the gospels to the . . .

Man: Wilderness experience.

David Bruce: The wilderness experience. And Mary communes with his father. Then he finally dons the Superman suit. Very tremendous, he looks around, saves kitty cat and Lois Lane from falling helicopters and all this kind of stuff. Now, he has an enemy, and his enemy is . . .

Man: Lex Luther.

David Bruce: Lex Luther! Sounds like . . .

Man: Lucifer.

David Bruce: Lucifer! And where does Lex Luther live? Yes, down, down, yes. And what's that symbolic of?

Voice: Hell.

David Bruce: Now he has a female person that works with him, and her name is . . .

Man: Nobody can remember it.

David Bruce: Eve Tessmacher. [laughter] Eve Tessmacher. Incredible! Now, she is the equivalent in the story to Mary Magdalene. Now, how many of you might be Baptist? An important element among the Baptists is what?

Voice: Baptism.

David Bruce: Baptism, right. Baptism is symbolic of . . .

Voice: Death and burial.

David Bruce: Yes, death, burial, and resurrection. Isn't it more wonderful to think redemptively when you see a native story than to think in the flesh? Let me say that again. Isn't is much more wonderful to think redemptively than to think in the flesh when you look at native stories? Say yes!

Voice: Yes.

David Bruce: Maybe you're not convinced, but I think it is. Put this mind on that was also in Christ Jesus. Some people wear crosses around the neck. Lex Luther takes Kryptonite, puts it on a chain, and puts it around Superman's neck, then pushes him in the pool, and he goes under the water to die. That is a symbol of the cross, death, and burial. Who was at the tomb when Jesus was in it in John's account?

Voice: Mary Magdalene.

David Bruce: Mary Magdalene! Eve Tessmacher helped Superman out of the watery grave, on the condition that he go save her mother. That part's not in the Bible. [laughter]

They needed a motivation. How many have you have read the *Apostles' Creed?* What happens to Jesus in the *Apostles' Creed* when He's dead and buried?

Voice: Goes down to Hades.

David Bruce: Yes, right. In the movie he looked down the San Andreas fault because there had been this huge earthquake. That's where the bomb went off, and he pushes up the earth. Do you know in the book of Matthew it talks about earthquakes at the time when Jesus Christ died on the cross? Have you read that the dead came back and walked? Can you imagine all this in a Hollywood movie? I mean, it just sends chills up my spine. If I were a missionary and I went to any culture and they had this kind of stuff all around me, I'd be bouncing up and down for joy! Not boycotting, I would be jumping for joy!

Lois Lane has fallen into an earthquake hole, and the car has been crushed and she's died. Dead come back to life. He spins around the Earth, reversing this direction of the earth, BC/AD. Everything goes in reverse, and Lois Lane comes out of the things, comes back to life, and has her, sort of, resurrection. Amazing thing. And then, at the end of the movie, Superman says goodbye to his disciples—all two of them—Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen, and ascends back into Heaven. There you go. The whole Gospel story. It's amazing, isn't it? We have got to change our culture and we've got to do it quick. We are going downhill, and it's really bad, what's happening out there right now. Really bad. We've got too much kidding around. We can do it, and I'll tell you why we can do it, and I'll tell you why we have to do it.

Tell me the story about *E.T.* This will only take five minutes, then I won't do anymore. *E.T.* Tell me the story. *E.T.* comes from . . .

Man: Outer space.

David Bruce: Outer space! First night on the ground he spend it in a . . .

Voice: Tool shed.

David Bruce: Tool shed, and the tool shed is like the . . .

Voice: Manger.

David Bruce: Manger. Yeah, the cave.

Voice: Stable.

David Bruce: It's like the stable, thank you, yes! Yes, like the stable. And "Reese's Pieces" would be equivalent to . . .

Voice: From Heaven. [laughter]

David Bruce: I was going to say gold, frankincense, and myrrh, but yes, O.K. And then the kid disciples. And does *E.T.* have a death scene? Yes! And how do we know E.T.'s dead? It's a flower. Not exactly an Easter lily, but same, kind of different. And then all of a sudden the little boy knows that there has been a

resurrection because—new life in the flower. The resurrection of Jesus Christ ALWAYS brings new life.

If we will enter into His death and burial we will experience new life. In abundance. Then, at the end of the film, what happens? He goes, in a sense, back to "Heaven." All these stories were told at a time in our culture when it was impossible to present a story of Jesus Christ with the ascension. Consider *Godspell,* or *Jesus Christ, Superstar.* All the films in the popular arena that we had couldn't talk about Jesus Christ, but we could in our faithfulness, I think. Isn't that interesting how our culture is? It's O.K., because if you're a Christian, you can pull that out for people. Great after-movie conversation for somebody who needs to know Christ.

That's the website, that's the path I took. Digital Divide. Oh, wait, I have to tell you this one thing. The woman who wrote *E.T.* —oh, you can go on Mario Puzo's website, it's in Italian, and he will cite "HollywoodJesus" as the official spiritual interpretation of his work. I took that as a great compliment. I could tell you about Kevin Smith in *Dogma.* He put the whole Hollywood review of his film on there. He was looking for friends [laughter] for *Dogma.* But the woman who wrote *E.T.,* after she got into writing it realized—she was a former Methodist was she?—she realized that the story was running very much along the lines of the life of Christ. And she said, when she and her friends realized that's what they were doing—many in Hollywood have a Judeo-Christian background, they don't know why they're writing the elements in their movies. It's just part of the culture.

Usually what people talk about when they mention the Digital Divide, is the difference between the people who have technology and those who don't.

That's why it's so rich for us, in terms of evangelism. She said, as soon they realized what they were doing, then they had fun. And you can read her comments in "HollywoodJesus." She said, "Then we started putting all these things about Jesus Christ in the movie *E.T.*" Stephen Spielberg is Jewish, and when he was making the film, it was told to him that really what he was doing was retelling the story of Jesus Christ. You all want to know what he said when he discovered that's what he was doing? He said, "Don't talk to me about it, I'm Jewish." Bottom line, he knew what he was doing.

O.K., Digital Divide. Switching to the lecture mode now. I want to talk about three different things in terms of digital divide. Usually what people talk about when they mention the Digital Divide, is the difference between the people who have technology and those who don't. I want to break it off into two more categories beyond that. I want to start maybe with the poor and rich countries. The economists had a whole section on the real Digital Divide. They were saying that these poor countries just could not get on the internet. They cited several problems. First was health; second was literacy; another was power—that is electrical power; and fourth, money. I'm very happy with the people trying to bring the Gospel to illiterate countries on the internet, but it isn't exactly a harvest field, yet. Their work will be the underpinnings of what evolves later on. The best use of the internet right now, is to reach those who are on the internet. And give a God Bless to those who are making such technology available to those in small countries.

When you have health issues, you are not interested in the internet. It's a matter of survival: where's your next meal coming from? What about sanitation? Plagues. AIDS crisis. Literacy—if you can't read, internet does you little good. Electrical power. So even if you have electrical power, do you have money for a computer? How many people testify that your computer habit has cost you some big bucks?

The most immediate answer to the Digital Divide that exists in the Third World, is, number one, government cooperation. What that means is to allow private enterprise to set up such things as cell phones. Cell phones is the best technology that we can put in countries like that because it doesn't require an infrastructure. So hopefully, cell phone technology will advance, and then through that I think we can bring in internet technology. What is interesting, though, about the Third World, is this. Have you seen this chart? Amazing thing. In the year 1900—this is from the US Center for World Missions under Ralph Winter. On the Day of Pentecost, the church starts, right? I know there's some debate on when this church started, but I'm going to say it started on the day of Pentecost. Give me an Amen?

Voice: Amen.

David Bruce: Okay. One thousand - I'm not supposed to round, because this creates a conflict on the screen, but that's too bad, so sad. [laughter from voices] One thousand, nine hundred years, Christians reached two and a half percent of the world's population for Christ. Brought them to Christ. Two and a half percent of the world's population at the end of one thousand, nine hundred years were in a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church. How many of you think that's good? One thousand nine hundred years to bring 2.5% of the world's population to Christ. Say it stinks! It does! We have the worst examples of what Christianity was during that time. Say Amen.

What's now taking place is native-based missions.

O.K., then from 1900 to the year 1970 we had the greatest church growth we ever had. It went from 2.5% to 5%. We doubled it, in 70 years. Incredible. And, one of those reasons that I've put up there is that WWII generation that went to war, and came back—when they came back, they wanted to reach the world that they'd been to for Christ. Things that happened after WWII, for example. Southern Baptists were mostly in the southern states, and after the war they were dispersed all across the United States. Huge missionary movement after WWII, they have come back.

What's now taking place is native-based missions. From 1970 to 2000, we've gone to 11.5% of the world's population belonging to a Bible-believing, Christ-centered church. Give a hand! That means that one person out of nine, worldwide, is in love with Jesus. This is great stuff. Now I'm not talking about Orthodox, and I'm not talking about Roman Catholic. I'm talking about Bible-centered, Christ-centered, evangelistic type churches. Wonderful! Absolutely wonderful. Most of this growth, by the way, is in countries where we don't have the technology that we have here.

Now this is an interesting one. When did Martin Luther do the translation of the Bible in Common Language? 1500. Isn't this interesting? The relationship between church growth and translation of God's Word into the language of the people? See a relationship there? I would say that if we are going to use the internet to reach the world for Christ, we shouldn't speak in "Chris-

tianese." But we should speak in the language of the people. I'll give you my twist on Pentecost. How many of you know the day of Pentecost? What happened on the day of Pentecost?

Voice: Many were saved.

David Bruce: Many were saved. O.K., just before the many were saved, what happened on the day of Pentecost? You're going to have to use the "T" word, as much as you may not like to use it, go ahead say it.

Voice: Tongues.

David Bruce: Tongues! Yes. What language did Jesus speak? Say, "Aramaic." Aramaic. Everybody knows that since Mel Gibson, right? Aramaic. Great resurrector of dead languages, proving that they still are relevant in today's culture. Jesus speaks Aramaic. Now tell me, if you were a disciple of Jesus, and you had any inclination that Jesus was the Son of God, what would you be doing?

Voice: I guess I'd be taking notes.

David Bruce: Yes! Now, if Jesus said something, wouldn't you think, wow, that's totally it. Wouldn't you? Come on, wouldn't you? And would the language He was speaking be important to you? Say yes, come on. Gives nuances to everything, wouldn't it? Yes! How many actual words do we have in the Holy Bible that Jesus spoke in Aramaic?

Voice: Thirty-two.

David Bruce: Oh yeah, that was good. Who said that? You said 32?

Voice: Just guessing.

David Bruce: Oh, maybe he's wrong, but, I say wow! Where is it? Again, go ahead?

Voice: The Crucifixion.

David Bruce: Yes. And He quotes which Psalm?

Voice: Psalm 22.

David Bruce: Exactly. It's the only thing we've got. Isn't that amazing? Well, why didn't the disciples think that the exact words of Jesus were the way to go? I would've thought that. Voice: Nobody else spoke it.

David Bruce: Now, what does that say about God? That's something we have. I tell you, us Protestant evangelicals, we spend a lot of time in that old Greek. We nuance it and everything else. And it makes you wonder if maybe that is a direction we really need to be focusing on. O.K., on the day of Pentecost, these disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the very Word, the very Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit fell on them, and they began to communicate to the audience not in the language of the speaker, but in the language of the listener. That's what's important to God and that's the statement God made on the day of Pentecost. That's why you can take a look at Bible translation, and the growth of the church. When we get the Word of God in the language of the people, the church grows.

Movie: [music]

Narrator: Christian faith is growing explosively in Asia, South America, and Africa. We're living through the greatest age of Christian conversion in history. Some experts predict, that in Africa alone there will be 600 million Christians in just 25 years.

Voice: The hour of God has come for our continent, it's our duty now to fulfill Jesus.

[end movie]

David Bruce: I like rock 'n roll, and I like rock 'n roll loud. O.K., what did you just learn?

The area they were showing there—there's really no internet access. But this is wonderful, where the technology doesn't seem to be as developed, God has a tremendous move going on with native people. They are receiving Jesus Christ, and the church is growing exponentially. It's wonderful. We are living in the greatest church age ever. Ever!

[movie begins again]

Man: I feel and I see and I touch on daily basis, the reality of the growth of the church in Africa. Narrator: Timothy Olinade, head of a Nigerian missionary organization, says economic and social conditions are propelling Christianity's growth.

Man: For the last 30 years, Africa has witness tremendous upheavals. From civil war, to catastrophic events, to crises of different natures. And usually at the end of every crisis, people seek out God to have something different from what you've been doing before.

Girl singing: Everybody praise the Lord now...

Man: Another thing why, the church...

[another movie segment]

[Bruce asking for technical assistance, toying with video]

David Bruce: We'll put it on the web. The point was, there is some technology that is being used in those countries. And you saw what that was, yes? What was it? The *Jesus* film. We can take technology in—how many of you know that the *Jesus* film is the most watched film in the history of the world? No other film even comes remotely close to it. And God has used that to bring thousands upon thousands, hundreds of thousands of people to Christ. God is moving in the land which we cannot reach digitally very well. I want to talk about the developed nations—the digital divide in the nations that have the internet. What's the predominant language on the internet?

Man: English!

David Bruce: English! Followed by Chinese, Spanish, Japanese, German, French. If you want to communicate on the internet right now, the prime language is English. This is a chart showing the growth of the internet - it's just exponential growth. The internet has become part of our lives. When you download this, this is the internet used during the Super Bowl Sunday.

What this demonstrates is the interaction between all of our digital kinds of equipment and interests. We live in such a fluid age, but it's all connected digitally. First I talked about the poor and

the rich countries. I said that in the Third World, it's not a win situation right now, in terms of the internet. What I said about the developed nations is, that it's all over the place—it interacts with life. Now what I want to talk about is the real digital divide, and that is the digital divide between the church and the world. Here is where I want to make my strongest statement. Who are Christian websites directed to? It's 99.1% of the problem. It's called the "Christian subculture."

Man: What do we do?

David Bruce: Blow it up.

Man: Blow it up?

The "Christian subculture" is not winning people to Christ.

David Bruce: Blow it up. The "Christian subculture" is not winning people to Christ. It's providing the choir with great resources, but the Kingdom of God does not grow if we're spending all of our time talking to the choir. The Kingdom of God grows when we follow the patterns in the Bible, proclaiming Christ to the whole world, yes?

Man: Yes.

David Bruce: By the way, who is the most powerful group in the world today? Who is? Don't you think it's the ACLU?

Man: The courts.

David Bruce: Haven't they taken away so many of your rights? How about this one—how about on the day that Jesus Christ ascends into heaven, He gathers all the attorneys around Him, yes? And He says, "Go into all the world, and legislate change!" Oh, no, He said that to the politicians. Do you think it was the left with the right He gathered around Him? Who did Jesus gather around Him? Yes, the disciples! What did He say, who had all the authority? He did! And then He said what? "Go into some parts of the world and . . ."

Man: No.

David Bruce: What?

Man: All.

David Bruce: All. Good, all! All. And do what?

Man: Make disciples.

David Bruce: Yes! The church is the only group that's been commissioned by God, to change it. We're it. We are the most powerful force in the world today. We just forgot! We've been telling it in the Christian subculture because we feel so good there. It's time to change this. Give me an Amen.

Audience: Amen!

David Bruce: Yes. And we've got to change it! Do you know what's at stake? If we don't change it, I've got to tell you, the U.S. of A. is going to be looking like Europe, very soon. What's been happening here in this country? What I'm getting at right now is even though the church is growing explosively worldwide, guess what? We're not. In most recent time, the traditional churches have been losing members. You all know the traditional churches don't you. Name 'em for me.

[Audience throw in some answers]

David Bruce: Yes, a lot of them have "United" in front of them. United Methodist, United Presbyterian, United Church of Christ; but really as some of those churches have been following less relative in terms of the Gospel, there's been a church move, a church shift, a shift of membership that has been going on. How many of you were around in the 90's and saw that church shift? Where did it go?

Man: Saddleback.

David Bruce: Saddleback—Yeah!

Man: Seeker-sensitive church.

David Bruce: Seeker-sensitive church. Yes, we have a big migration over to these big Willow Creek, Saddleback, Calvary Chapel. Even then you had all these churches that just sprang up all over in the 90s. All run by baby-boomers. Did you know that 50% of the church today is baby-boomer? Makes me feel good about my generation. But did you know that only 9% of Gen-X is sticking?

You know, "Worship His Majesty" by Jack Hayford may sound like a contemporary piece of music to a baby-boomer but I got news for you—it's a moldy-oldie. Gen-X listens to it and they think, "What is this old music?" Is the church speaking the language of the next generation? It's been its biggest growing problem. I would contend that the Bible mandate to pass the faith unto your children is not exactly happening. If you're going to pass it on to your children you need to speak the language of your children, so that they can understand.

I would contend that the Bible mandate to pass the faith unto your children is not exactly happening.

Mega churches seemed like church growth—next point—but was it church growth? No, it was just changing over. If you went to a mega church and you were to ask people—well, number one: go to a mega church and stand in the lobby. Guess what isn't going to happen when people walk out? Unless you're shaking hands your hand won't be shook. It's a crowd of strangers. And if you can ask, "Why do you go to this church?" someone's going to say to you, "I had some best friends they came here. They invited me. I've found the Lord Jesus Christ, I got baptized; this is where I found God." You ask another person; he says, "Yes, I used to go to the Methodist church where my parents go but you know it just didn't speak to me so now I'm coming here." You ask another one, he says, "Yes, it just had a great youth group and the church I was at didn't have one so I'm coming here."

So what you're going to hear is church transfer and some conversion, but unfortunately the conversion that's happening in America is not keeping pace with the death rate. What does this mean? It means that four months ago the Protestant church in America, for the first time in American history, dropped below 50% of the population of the United States of America. The first time in all of history under our watch.

Why is this? More comfortable. I propose something really radical. I propose that we return to the mandate in Matthew 28:19 as being the most important paradigm that we have, right now, for the church. What makes this conference important, and so vital, Is that what's at stake is the kingdom of God in America—North America. We need to make the Gospel relevant to our audience. Because however we are doing it now, despite some gain, and some very incredible conversions that people are having because they've given their lives over to God for a relationship in Christ, largely, that's not what's happening. We need to change it. That's why the internet is so vitally important.

How many of you know that people don't congregate very much outside anymore. You ever see a sidewalk of a big city in the 1940s, 1930s, and you look at that same sidewalk today—very few people. We're not social people anymore. People go to work in their cars, they get out of the car, they go up to wherever it is they work, they come down, they get in the car, they drive home all by themselves, they don't carpool, and they enter into a garage which is connected to a house. They go into the house and they never even see their neighbors! Americans don't even know who their neighbors are anymore! Yes, I may be exaggerating but I'm close aren't I? We need to make faith for people.

Man: What models have you seen that are working?

David Bruce: Oh. I'd like to get into this a little later. It's called the "Revolutionary Model," which will be a big issue with the release of the latest book from George Barna who looks at all this phenomena. But maybe I'll touch on it.

Man: What models have worked?

David Bruce: What models have worked. Maybe I'll touch on that; I think I will. I'll post on that point— what models have worked.

[a video starts playing in the background] [some inaudible words in video]

Man 1 in Video: This joker wants to race?

Man 3 in video [screams]

Man 2 in Video: that's ridiculous.

David Bruce: You know this one, don't you?

Man 1 in Video: He wants something.

Man 2 in Video: He's probably drunk.

Man 3 in Video: [shouts] You're going the wrong way!

Man 1 in Video: What?

Man 3 in Video: [shouts] You're going the wrong way!

Man 1 in Video: He says we're going the wrong way.

Man 4 in Video: Oh he's drunk. How would he know where we're going?

Man 1 in Video: Yea how would he know. Thank You, thanks a lot. Terrific. Thank You.

[car honks]

Man 2 in Video: what a moron.

Man 3 in Video: Get going! It's the wrong direction! You're going to kill somebody!

Man 3 in Video: You're going the wrong way!

[some commotion in video]

Man 3 in Video: You're going the wrong way!

[a car honks]

Man 2 in Video: What?

[a man starts screaming in the video] [maniacal laughter] [silence]

[video stops playing]

[audience laughs]

David Bruce: Point is we are going in the wrong direction. When you're going in the wrong direction what do you got to do? Turn it around! Which, by the way, we can do. Realizing you're going in the wrong direction, and then turning around and going in the other direction, is repentance. In the best definition of the word, the church needs to repent.

Reasons why evangelism websites—that is, websites that speak to the culture rather than to itself—are not there, and I've heard this, people: "funding," "no money." I would testify to the fact that you lived in poverty if you decided to go full time on the internet with a evangelistic site. I will testify to that. Time, it takes time. And you've got to be part of the call, the vision. You've got to have the vision for it, and more. I hesitated to put this on, but you know I really do believe—and I don't know why it is and I think it would be a whole interesting discussion—Why does the American Church have a death wish? I can't think of any other reason why it would not. Why aren't evangelists evangelical? Why is it that we seem to want to die, and not survive, or even increase?

I think I do want to talk a bit about the revolution that's going on. It just simply has to do with when a revolutionary (and many of you are) gets a call to do something with his life for Christ, that enriches the Kingdom with souls. What you discover quickly is that there isn't a paradigm in your local church, within your church structure, that fits what you've been empowered to do, called by God to do, what's on your mind to do, what your hands are finding to do, that you want to do with all your might. You discover that it isn't working in the church. You don't give that an awful lot of thought, but what you find yourself doing—which is what most of you are, that's the reason why most of you are here—it's because you sense that the call of God to go out and do this thing. That's what we are becoming.

George Barna identified in this last five years that 10 million evangelicals have left the church. 10 million. Not just any evangelical, but evangelical lay leaders have left the church. A month ago when Christianity Today picked up the story, they talked about people who used to go

to church but are no longer going to church. But they missed George Barna's point. What George Barna has discovered is that people aren't just dropping out of church because they're not interested in going to church anymore; they're dropping out of church to do their own ministry. People like myself, "Hollywood Jesus." When I had the idea of "Hollywood Jesus," I went to my denomination and I said, "Look at this: we can use native stories to reach the culture for Christ! Just like a missionary! You know, use missionary strategy right here in the U.S. of A." And they said to me, "Well, that's good, David, go ahead, do it, good, but no connection." Today, their website, is 300,000th on the internet. That is the 300,000th most visited website. You can go to alexa.com and put any web address in there and it will tell you its rating on the internet; it's owned by amazon.com. It's Alexa—alexa.com and you can put in your denomination's website, you can put in any church website, and you can see just how effective they are.

People aren't just dropping out of church because they're not interested in going to church anymore; they're dropping out of church to do their own ministry.

"Hollywood Jesus" as I am speaking to you right now is 35,000th on the internet. 35,000th most visited website on the internet. I mean that's great, but I did it out of a call and a concern to reach my culture. And that's just something, for some reason, that isn't working too well in churches. I guess because of time and money, they don't have a paradigm force, they're not used to it, it's not part of their larger picture. Usually in a church you are a Christian educator—where are the majors in our seminars? You all are the rare ones, because you're here. You all are the direction of the church. You all, because you are here thinking about evangelism, are thinking "outside the box." The people that are gathered here, you have something going on inside of you; others have it, but you're responding to it.

That's why this conference and you are so important. Whatever it is God has called you to do, I hope that in this conference you will discover the encouragement, the support, and the tenacity to carry it out. I do. We need to return to the mandate of Matthew 28:19. Model God's love for the world, John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave . . ." That's right—a good place to give yourself to—the world that needs to know Christ, and build on the best traditions.

I think Luther, Wesley, and Graham are wonderful representations of what the church can be. Luther went to the pub, heard tunes, changed the lyrics, and sang them in the church and you know what those are—you know those stories, don't you—and those are the hymns that people wanted to hang onto. There's nothing wrong with them, you know; just, why can't we follow what he did? You know, that idea. As a matter of fact, you know he brought this controversial musical instrument into the church—a very worldly instrument. You all know what that was, don't you? I mean he brought it in and sat it down there and said, "We're going to play our music on this!" and they said, "You can't do that! That's a very worldly instrument! They used that down at the bars! Nobody's going to feel religious with an organ!" We've hung onto the organ ever since! Church and the parlors - funeral parlors - are the only ones that ever use it.

Not that there aren't great organists or not that we can't do anything great with it, with what we have, but we just need to move on to follow the examples of Luther or Wesley, who gave

us kind of an approach to Bible study, bringing people into the Word and going out into the hinter-land; and Graham, actually having mass rallies that everybody's invited to, and making the real effort to mobilize churches to bring loved ones to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You just need a fresh vision, a collaboration in sharing, and in a workshop I would like to talk about the collaboration that's possible. I think the best way to do this is to end the Christian use of copyright. I would like to propose a different system of protecting what we write from people who would change it maliciously and yet being able to share that with others. One of the hard things in a website is content. And so I would like to propose a Creative Common approach, but in a workshop later on.

I'm going to play a song. Most of you have heard this song, I hope, but listen to the words. Unfortunately the words won't come up on the screen because my motion isn't working. But then again in our culture. Listen to this, this is a song that was on the pop charts for a long old time, and just listen to it. The words are easy to understand. Those of you who haven't been listening to pop music may be new to this.

[music begins playing]

[song] Train: "Calling All Angels"

[music ends]

David Bruce: If you were some other missionary in some other culture and you went in and you started talking to the natives and you said, "What do you guys do?"

"Oh, we're calling out to the angels."

"Oh, why are you calling out to the angels?"

"Well you know this crummy world—it's all falling apart and we need some hope! We're calling out to the angels because we want to know what's real!"

Isn't that what the lyrics said? Jesus said the fields are white unto harvest, but hold this back. Thank you.

[audience applauds]

David Bruce: Stand! Stand, stand, stand, stand, stand. Everybody hold hands. Hold hands with somebody next to you. Hold hands. Hold hands. There you go. Now, turn to the person next to you and say, "I love you!"

[audience says "I love you" to each other]

David Bruce: Could you say that with some passion? Welcome to the only place left in our culture! Somebody can say "Stand up! Hold hands! and tell the person next to you ya love 'em!" That's your power! [stops shouting]

Don't let go your hands yet. The 100 most popular movies of all time—you know what they all have in common? Not sex, not violence. The top 100 pop songs, you know what they all have in common? The top 100 country and western songs, the top 100 novels? All of them have to do with relationship. People are hungry for a relationship that works and we can bring them a rela-

tionship with God through Jesus Christ, and with the church. This is the best thing that the church has, and this is what makes it so vital. You are the most powerful force in the world today. May the Lord Jesus Christ empower you to do that which God has called you to do. Do it with all your mind. Fight circumstances. Despite what others might think, you have a call. Receive this blessing, and do it, with all your might. Amen.

[audience says "Amen"] [audience applauds]

David Bruce is Webmaster of www.hollywoodjesus.com, the highly popular Internet site for movies and culture. A former pastor, he believes youth workers and teenagers should practice the same willingness to move out, observe culture, and then engage people with the Gospel by using what they've observed and already know.

How is Evangelism Changing in the 21st Century?

by Allan Beeber

My background is really not normally what you think would bring someone into evangelism. My actual undergraduate background was honors chemistry and then I got into plastics, polymer science. I was at University of Massachusetts in 1973 that a guy from MIT shared the "force virtuoso" with me and I said, "Uhhh, I'm not sure if I'm a Christian. OK, I'll pray. Jesus, if this is real, come into my life."

I didn't feel any different. I went down to the Campus Crusade meeting; there were some smiling faces there. The girl whom I had been dating had been praying for me—she had everybody praying for me. So everybody was happy and I felt, "huh." But, God heard my prayer and over the next couple of weeks for the first time, I began to get a real desire to read the Word of God. And, for the first time, this stuff made sense and I didn't just fall asleep. I started reading more and more and it was like God had turned the light bulb on in my mind. I started growing and the Campus Crusade guys said, "You know, why don't you join us in this discipleship group." So I said, "Sure." And then a year later, "Why don't you leave to go down to graduate school." And I said, "OK, I know some Christians." So we started a group and we started inviting non-Christians and they started coming to Christ. We became known as the "God Squad" at the University of Massachusetts.

While I was in France for my doctorate, God pulled me into full-time Christian work. I was kicking and screaming but, basically, what happened was that God was calling me from a great job. He said, "Not only do you have to give that up, I want you to on full-time staff for Campus Crusade." I said, "No, no, no, no. Don't you want some missionaries supported by me? I promise I'll go to a good church. I'll really give money, I promise, all the time." And you know, He had this silence. You know, I could almost picture the Father in Heaven, on the throne, just kind of sitting there like, "When Allan is ready to talk, we'll have a conversation. But until Allan really wants my will, I'm not going to say a thing because Allan's telling me what he wants me to rubber stamp for his life." And I got really scared because I did not want to trust God for my room and board; I did not want to go into missions.

I went through the history of the resurrection, because I am analytical. There sure seems to be enough support. And I thought, "OK, I have just got to trust that all of these people who wrote about Jesus and went to their death—it's not a story. I'm not just going to have to make a decision; I'm going to have to step out in faith in a God whom I cannot see. I have to trust this God who indicated that he loved me by sending his Son to die for me and I've just got to do this.

So, in 1976 I said, "God, I am scared to death and if I'm doing the wrong thing, please redirect me. I'm going to trust you even though I don't see you, even though there are times You feel a million miles away, I'm going to trust you." And, about six days later he gave me an incredible peace that I was in his will. My research took off; I finished the thesis in record time, much to my department's chagrin and came on staff with the Campus Crusade. I was the director at MIT for seven years. I met my wife, Tricia, at Boston College. She was on staff with the Crusade. We got married in 1980, we have three children.

What I'm going to speak on today is how evangelism has changed in the 21st century. We're going to discuss some of the innovative ways that believers are doing evangelism around the world.

Through the use of many CDs, *Jesus* DVDs, and streaming media, the evangelism world is offering a host of new options. There's a great need to blend in promotional communication marketing to go through internal and external audiences. One basic point we need to agree on: we must always seek to accurately communicate the timeless truth of Christ's Gospel message. Let's not get hung up on the delivery method, whether it's paper, audio cassette, CD, DVD, internet, cell phones, whatever. The issue is to get the message out in a form that seekers are currently accessing.

Paul wrote to audiences he had never met. Long distance communications—the issue was only the technology.

Almost 35 years ago, a businessman, Dr. Bill Bright, who did evangelism, always went over a certain set of principles and laws. He said, "You know, this is effective, I think I'll write it down." He wrote down what became known as the *Four Spiritual Laws.* Literally our staff had to memorize a 20-minute presentation before that; then he condensed them into a booklet. Over two billion copies of this thing have been printed. Back in the 60s, this was breaking ground. This was big time, suddenly church people were able to share their faith clearly, and lead another friend to Christ. This was a big deal. But they are becoming passé as culture embraces a new digital world.

In the late 70s, a Hollywood director walked into Bill's office. He wanted to produce a film on both the Old and New Testament that was accurate to the Scriptures. Realizing the possibilities, Bill called a guy into his office named Paul. Paul was the US Director for Campus Crusade for Christ. This was in a big position. Bill said, "I want you to go and listen to this guy. He's got some incredible ideas." Paul wouldn't go. Bill had to tell him he was going to this meeting. So Paul went and listened and, suddenly, the bells began to chime. Paul said, "If we can make a good film, we can translate this. We can get it to all the non-literates in the world." The rest is history. In 810 languages, it's been seen by well over 3.5 billion people.

Again, nobody was singing about the Gospel that was culturally relevant to college students. A small group of students got together, I think in Wisconsin. Bob Horner and a couple oth-

ers knew how to play guitar. They put some songs together. They're having an impact. They said, "Let's take this on the road." They went through a couple of colleges; people liked it. The New Folk were born. It was the first evangelistic Christian singing group, contemporary, in the United States. Again, being open to new ideas. And again, most of the Campus Crusaders turned it down.

There aren't enough human resources in the world to start or to send groups of staff or pastors to every conceivable plan of church starter or planting type opportunity there. Back in the early 1980s, Campus Crusade had plateaued. We ran about 130 staff campuses and about 160 to 180 expansion campuses, and we were the largest group out there, but we were not growing. A guy named Steve Douglas, the vice president, who is now the president of Campus Crusade, worked on some evangelism projects. He said, "Allan, can you figure out a way to start ministries by phone, mail, etc.?" I laughed, and said, "Why are you asking?" He said, "I think it's sufficiently non-traditional."

"Is that a compliment?"

"Yeah, that's a compliment. I think you can think outside-the-box and I want you to try this."

"What would be successful to you?"

"Well, if you could see five or ten campuses started in the next six to eight months, I'd be really thrilled."

I thought to myself, "I'd be thrilled if I see two or four started." Why? Because my paradigm had been that the only way to do effective ministry is if you're face-to-face with another individual. And I remember distressing over that.

OK, Bible question: What are the two books that Paul wrote to people/audiences he had never been to? Romans and Colossians. Paul wrote to audiences he had never met. Long distance communications—the issue was only the technology. I thought, "Nothing new under the sun; I guess that's Ecclesiastes." And I just started off.

Now, the funny thing was, Steve and I were going to try two different parts of the country. We began to get contacts from Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire. These contacts just started coming in. More and more contacts. We

began to simply say, "We can't send staff to your campus, but I will go to you every week by phone, I'll send you free materials and I'm here if you need me. In fact, here is my home phone number if you have any questions." I would show them how to start a group on campus, how to do invitations for the first group meeting, how to lead prayer meetings, how to share their faith. I did all of this by long distance. In eight months, we had 25 campuses come over.

There are ways to start churches; there are ways to do a number of things that we have not thought about before. We have also thought about how we could use digital opportunities to share the Gospel. I was the person tasked to put up Campus Crusade's first website. This is who we are, here are our ministries. I was looking at it one day and the Holy Spirit just kind of went, "Allan? Yo! There's nothing here about Jesus." I said, "Sorry. . ."

I want you to be thinking of smarter ways to do evangelism. You can use technology, but you also need to use your brain.

No problem. I simply didn't know what to do, so I put up *The Four Laws*. The webmaster began getting e-mails, one or two a day: "I just prayed the prayer, now what do I do?" I'm thinking, "Wait a minute, I should know that this is possible, but they're actually trusting Christ without any human interaction." It blew me away.

Well, maybe different languages would help. So we started adding different languages to it. As time went on, we added about 150, give or take a few. We had a number of different countries translate that site. Someone called me up and said, "You know that when you type in "Jesus" through Yahoo and Google, your site is number one?" I said, "You're joking."

We also took that and we put it on a CD. It has apologetics, it has links to the Bible, it has flash presentations from the Gospel and you don't have to be online to use this thing. But if you want to ask a question, we have response forms on the back. If you're online it will go to the webmaster. It's a whole different way to do evangelism.

We did a site in conjunction with Mel Gibson's group on *The Passion of the Christ*. We had about 350,000 people just hit the site. But we also have little business cards; when I go out to a restaurant, I'll look at the name of the waitress or waiter and I'll say, "Thank you, Joe, thank you, Sally. Great service! You might want to check out this website about a great servant." I sign my name.

People say to me, "Well, OK, yeah, the internet is a big deal in the United States and maybe parts of Europe, but what about other parts of the world?" I say, "Good question. Number one, you're right. Many of the people in third-world countries do not have internet access. But the leadership in those countries, in academia, military, government, business—they all have the internet, and they're surfing. So, I might not have most of the country able to get on the internet. But the people I most want to reach in the first stages are the leaders. So, in a sense, it's a good question, but there's a better answer. The answer is, you target leaders, you find those who are either Christians or who need to know the message; they come to Christ, and you disciple them. Either put them in contact with your staff or you disciple them on the Web.

We developed this site called meantformore.com, specifically designed for teenagers. We have trained staff, and the student venture has spoken and has asked for these things. What we wanted to do was to create a site that answered common questions and helped meet the needs and

the struggles that teenagers have. But almost every evangelistic website out there (there are only a few for which this isn't true) has a dark little secret that most people do not know. The secret is that a lot of people are sending questions in or indicating decisions for Christ and they're going in to the webmaster's mailbox. And the guy—the webmaster—doesn't know what to do. So they just delete megabytes of e-mails, because nobody thought through their business plan well enough to think through, "What do we do with their responses?" Are you tracking them? This is a big problem with Christians involved with internet ministry. They have not thought through their entire business plan; they have not through their entire correspondence system.

This is what a high school student e-mailed one of our folks. "Thanks for replying to me, no one really has before. I've had these questions since December and I have been sending these to people because they say they will respond, but they usually never do." We want to change that, so we created a system that any ministry can use.

When I was doing student life, it was incredible. I would be talking to these guys whom I discipled; for instance, I'd be talking with a guy in Colorado. I told him, "I'll hold you accountable about your relationship with your girlfriend. Are you staying out of bed?"

"Oh, no, thanks for asking. That's so good, I appreciate you asking, yeah, I have, it's hard, it's hard."

So I'd say, "OK, let's pray about it." Well, at MIT, while I was sitting in front of a guy, I found it kind of hard to say, "Are you staying out of bed?" It was so much easier on the phone. It's even easier on the internet to hold a guy accountable. Now there are problems there; I know it's not perfect, but it's amazing how much people will open up there.

American Tract Society is doing some good things with their Digitracts. These are online presentations of the Gospel which are very simple, but tend to be along certain themes; let's say they might want to do one on 9/11 or maybe the Tsunami. I've talked about the Google Ad Words. Here's the interesting thing. You can get more effective return on investment on the internet by using targeted advertisements. We purchased space on the right hand side of the Google page and developed a catchy title or question that links to the URL of our evangelistic site or page. Then we produced **X** amount of requests per dollar.

Paul was not foolish in doing evangelism. The first thing he would do was go to the democratic center of where spirituality was in the cities: the synagogue. That's why he went there, the people who had the most interest in the spiritual things would be the Jews and the proselytizers. But he would do that because he was demographically sensitive and he would do his evangelism "smart." I want you to be thinking of smarter ways to do evangelism. You can use technology, but you also need to use your brain. You need to say, "Is there a better strategy?"

Questions? Comments? Ideas? Yes!

Audience Member: You talked about some of the costs, like the costs per click, cost per CD. What are some of the costs you've been able to get to?

Allan Beeber: Retail, the CDs, mini CDs go for three bucks. But I can get them in wholesale, large quantities, for a dollar. But again, you get 30 languages. Cool. In terms of other things, the online system, we're basically giving it away for small ministries right now and the only thing we ask, if the group gets large enough, that they pay our server and admin costs.

Audience Member: What about the ad words?

Allan Beeber: Oh, the ad words. Well, since we do a good volume with Google, here's the interesting thing. It depends on the word that you choose. So when we did *The Passion of the Christ* promotion, if I choose the words "Passion of Christ," I might be paying 25 cents per click, but if I choose the word "Christ," it may only be nine cents. And if I choose the word "Passion," because that word could mean all sorts of things, it might be 31 cents a click. Then there's different permutations on that. That's a very good question.

Audience Member: But it's in the range of nine to 30 cents per click?

Allan Beeber: Yes, and it depends. For example, the word "Christmas," you know, maybe during Christmas may be more expensive. During February, the word Christmas might be three cents. But it may be 45 cents if you want it on the top of the list, on the first page. So you're not only paying for how many clicks, but you want to pay for position, and that's one thing we've really worked on because we want to make sure we're giving donors basically the best return on "investment." So we've learned how to use this system much more effectively and we can reach into parts of the world now that are closed.

Here's an example. When I opened my e-mail I got this message: "Welcome Allan, You have 19 contacts." One was from Indonesia. In response to "Tell us about your spiritual journey," he said, "I just prayed to receive Christ as my savior for the first time." Pray with focused thinking. I can reply to that, or I can say, "Let's see what else is here." Another contact said, "I have not prayed to receive Christ, I'd like to investigate more." What is the most acceptable answer?

If they don't put a comment, that's fine. I'll just say, "Hey, is there any way I can be of help?" Sometimes they reply, sometimes they don't, but I can go around the world. This person said, "I'm trying to figure out how best to serve God. God bless you all, thanks for such a wonderful site. I believe I've been saved since I was 15 years old, I asked God to come into my heart." That's probably a believer.

What I wanted to show you is the power of this system. It's incredibly powerful. It helps you in any case, especially if you're not used to it. It gives you the chance to get confident and talk

to people around the world, or just to talk with people around Virginia. We can set up the rules any way you want. For example, if the church said, "We've got 20 people who wanted to do this, I can set up its own community. They can do evangelism on their site, and all the contacts go to your desk. Or, if the University says, "You know, we've always had an evangelistic program, but we've never done Internet evangelism." Great, we can set you up. It could be your community, and part of your course work would be to do evangelism once a semester. You'd get a contact per day, or maybe two or three. It's not that hard.

My hope is, as we work with different groups—denominations as well as groups like Evangelism Explosion, and the Billy Graham Association, then we can send them to your churches. We want to make sure that believers and sincere seekers find good churches, or Alpha Groups. I was talking to two people from Alpha who were interested in helping us connect so that we can get that. We just want to distribute contacts to anyone in the world who's on the ground. If they're not on the ground, we're going to take care of them through the internet. If we can get them into the grapevine, into a church, we want to do that.

Audience Member: You said we can set you up. You mean like through your current website so that referrals would go to them?

Allan Beeber: Right, right. We're working with large groups right now. We can't do a lot, but we've taken on major groups like Evangelism Explosion, American Tract Society, Student Venture, groups like that.

Audience Member: And how does a church get involved if you'd like to get referrals?

Allan Beeber: You need a key person from the church who would be willing to say, "I'll be the community leader for my church." We would ask them to sign a form that anybody they bring on would have been checked through to make sure they're truly a Christian and that they are balanced and mature in their Christian walk, so that legally, if there were a problem, it won't come back on us. They'd have to sign some disclaimer. I have cards and I'll leave them out here if anyone wants to contact me.

Rev. Allan Beeber serves on the Executive Committee of the Internet Evangelism Coalition, chaired by Sterling Huston, director of the North American Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization. He continues developing *The Evangelism Toolbox* at www.evangelismtoolbox.com, which lists many of the best evangelistic materials in the world from various organizations with appropriate links. It is usually rated in the top five of Google.com. He worked with the Billy Graham Association to create a CD-ROM version that was distributed to the 10,000 itinerant evangelists at *Amsterdam 2000*.

Communicating Christ Effectively to Secular Audiences

by Rusty Wright

I have had a chance to be at many universities around my country and other countries of the world, but I have not spoken at that many Christian institutions. Most of my work has been at secular institutions. So this may be the third or fourth Christian college at which I have spoken. I may have spoken at one or two others, but I hope you'll be able to filter what I'm saying. I do train Christians a lot, and in thinking about the whole area of communication it's very important that what you communicate as a public speaker, or if you're writing for the internet, or creating a web-site, that you use words and concepts your audience will understand, that are familiar to them. You want to scratch where people itch. Missionaries sometimes have difficulty with this.

There's a classic example of a missionary in Indonesia who felt a great burden to teach about prayer in the church where he was working. He was going to start out with a very dramatic illustration. Now the word for pray, in Indonesian, is *doa. D-O-A.* There's a similar word, *dosa,* which means sin. This missionary had the misfortune of mixing up these two words. So, as he was teaching the people in the church, speaking in Indonesian, thinking that he was talking about prayer, this is the English translation of what he was really saying: "This morning, I want to teach you about sin. I want to teach you how to sin more. The Bible teaches that we should sin morning, noon, and night. We should learn how to sin as individuals, as families, and as a whole church." About that time his two small sons who were on the front row stood up and were waving their hands and saying, "Daddy, no. It's not *dosa.* It's *doa.* It's *doa.*"

I hope that I can do a better job than that of communicating with you. I remember once I was with some short-term missionaries who were showing the *Jesus* film in a pueblo, in one of the poor districts in Masama, Mexico. In my then-fledgling Spanish (I'm better at it now), after the movie was over, I was talking with people who had believed in Christ, and I told them in Spanish, "Because you have believed in Jesus, all your fish are completely forgiven." The Spanish word for fish is *pescado,* the Spanish word for sin is *pesado,* a one letter difference.

So I hope I'll be able to communicate more effectively with you today. I got married about

five years ago. My wife and I live near Santa Cruz, California now, about an hour and a half south of San Francisco. I remember the day before our wedding (we got married on a Sunday) was the hottest day of the century. I think it's still the hottest day of the millennium, actually, at this point. May 21, 2000, the Saturday before, I wanted to get some roses for our honeymoon. We were going to spend the first two nights at a little bed and breakfast near Santa Cruz. In our area we have Costco (it's like Sam's Club), which has good stuff at reasonable prices, particularly, good roses because lots of roses are grown just south of Santa Cruz in Watsonville.

So on that Saturday, without telling my fiancee Meg, I went early to Costco to get some roses. I picked some out, and went to the cashier and paid for them. I had to walk over to the exit, past the customer relations desk. As I was about thirty feet away from the customer relations desk, I looked up, and there was Meg, talking to someone. I didn't know she was going to be there, she didn't know I was going to be there, and so I panicked. I thought, "Well, what do you do?" So the first thing I did was put the flowers behind my back, because this was supposed to be a surprise. And then, as I walked closer, I thought, "Okay, well in case she saw me, I'll just sneak up behind her and plant a little kiss on her cheek and say, will you marry me?" I thought that would be real sweet on the day before we were to get married. So I started walking confidently, Then when I was about ten feet away, she looked up and smiled, and I realized that it wasn't Meg. She had about the same height, same color hair. Meg's a lot more beautiful, but I'm a little bit nearsighted. In a brilliant display of quick timing and intelligence, I made a beeline to the door and walked out. Now, I assure you, in that situation my motives were proper, even though I almost planted a kiss on the cheek of the wrong woman and asked her to marry me. My motives were proper, but my analysis of the situation was flawed.

They share Christ with excellent motives. But often their analysis of their audience, the situation, or what's involved in helping people understand the Gospel, is flawed.

That concept is what I want to try to drive home during this session. There are many, many believers who love Jesus Christ, who want to help populate heaven, who want to spread the Gospel, and they share Christ with excellent motives. But often their analysis of their audience, the situation, or what's involved in helping people understand the Gospel, is flawed. That's what I'd like to focus on today. And I'd like to do this by telling stories. We're going to talk about principles, and I want to use lots of illustrations. It's the way Jesus communicated, and one of the best ways I know to learn. It's one of the ways I learn, certainly.

When I was a junior at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, I was majoring in psychology. I became a believer my freshman year at Duke through some friends in Campus Crusade for Christ who helped introduce me to Christ. I found as I grew in my faith that I had a peace of mind I'd not had before. I wanted to see how principles of secular psychology might relate to this, so I wrote a paper on "A Biblical Therapy for Anxiety."

After I got the paper back from my professor, I sent a copy of it to the author of our textbook, a very prominent clinical psychologist at UCLA, Dr. James Coleman. He surprised me by writing back about a month later. He said he had read my paper, he was going to read it to his graduate students later that day, he really liked it, and he asked permission to quote from it in the

revision to his textbook. I picked up my jaw off the floor and said, "By all means." Actually, the first thing I did was photocopy his letter and sent it home to my folks in Miami so they'd know their son hadn't gone off the deep end in this religious organization; they were beginning to wonder.

That summer, I had a chance to visit Dr. Coleman at his home in Malibu, and I remember driving up to his beautiful home in the Malibu Hills. I was thinking through all the apologetics I'd learned, evidence for the deity of Christ, the resurrection, New Testament, all that stuff, because this guy was brilliant. His books were used everywhere. I knew he was going to have questions like this. Surprisingly, he didn't have any questions about things like that. We just sat out in his backyard, and I could see that he was rather nervous, anxious, and overworked from all the work he'd been doing on his textbook revision. As we talked about spiritual things, he said, "You know, I don't have this peace of mind that you have, and I don't have this relationship with God."

Well, being a trusting Campus Crusader, I had been taught to use this little four-point outline of the teachings of Jesus. So I pulled this little booklet out of my pocket and began to read it to him. Now you have to understand, I'm just in my third year in university, and he's a PhD in psychology. I'm reading this tract to him, this pamphlet, and he's glued to it. After a few questions, I got to Revelation 3:20, where Jesus says, "I stand at the door of your heart and I'm knocking." Dr. Coleman said, "Boy, that's powerful." After a few more questions, he bowed his head and invited Jesus Christ to be his savior. He said afterwards, "You know, I've heard this message many times. My dad was even a minister. I've just never understood how to open the door in my life to God."

He took some literature to share with his students, and I kept in touch with him. About a month later I talked with him on the phone. He said, "You know, now, as I look out over the ocean, and see the setting sun, I really believe I'm a part of that," meaning he was seeing how he fit into God's universe. He said, "Before I didn't, but now I do."

Now I give that illustration not to boast or brag or anything like that. The message was God's, and I was just being a faithful messenger, Actually, I didn't want to go see him that day. It was my last day in California, I'd called him earlier during the month I was there, and he couldn't meet me, but he had said, "Call me before you leave." I was with a couple of Duke students. We dropped off one at a wedding; and the other, Betty Jameson, and I were trying to figure out what to do. We had a choice between going to the beach and going to see Dr. Coleman, and I wanted to go to the beach. Betty said, "Don't you think we ought to go see Dr. Coleman?" So we did.

As I traveled around, I began to get invitations to speak. It's one of the things that launched me on the lecture circuit. I began to go to psychology professors and tell them I was a case in their abnormal psychology textbook. I would ask if they would be willing to let me speak, because the next edition of this textbook contained a short portion about Christianity and psychotherapy, and it had part of my story about coming to faith.

Now Dr. Coleman is a case of a man from a secular environment. His dad was a minister, but he was not "into" religion personally at that point. He was approached through a subject in which he was personally and professionally interested. And he was able to come to Jesus Christ.

In Bulgaria, in Eastern Europe, I was on a popular television program with four million viewers. The program mixed music videos and interviews. It's like a combination between Oprah and MTV. The host was asking questions about love and relationships and success. At one point he said, "You know, our young people in Bulgaria are losing hope. Communism has fallen, they don't know their purpose in life, and many of them are committing suicide. Do you have anything that could give hope to our youth?" Now Paul said to pray for open doors for the Gospel. I'm not the world's most intelligent person, but I perceived that this was an open door. So I was able, just by God's grace, to explain to four million Bulgarians the difference that Jesus Christ can make in life. This was using state-owned television studios that for years had served up Marxist propaganda. There is tremendous interest in spiritual things in the secular world, among secular people, if they're approached right; if we have not only the right motives but also the proper analysis of the situation.

Why should we adapt our communication? First of all, it's implicit in the Great Commission.

One more story and then I'll get into some principles: I spent about thirty years in Campus Crusade-related ministries. Back in the nineties, one of the evangelistic articles I wrote was "Safe Sex?" It basically argues that condom sense is not common sense. It goes through medical and psychological arguments for God's perspective, and it's got the Gospel in it. It also has the four spiritual laws on the back of it. It was circulated around "Campus Crusade-land," and one of the people who ended up getting it was a Jewish executive with my university fraternity, Lambda Chi Alpha. He read it and liked it, and because of that and the fraternity, through a process, he ended up publishing it in the fraternity's international magazine. One of the people that read the international magazine was an alumnus of the fraternity, a retired medical doctor in Connecticut. And he liked it, so he sent it to the editor of his state medical journal, *Connecticut Medicine,* which ended up printing it. So, I am not a doctor, but I have been published in a medical journal.

The fraternity was proud that its article had been published in a medical journal, so they made a reprint of the article and sent it to the chapters around North America to use for fraternity education. Now understand, this does not say Campus Crusade for Christ at the bottom, it says Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity. Various other versions of it have appeared. There are some in different newspapers, including *The Indianapolis Star,* basically looking at that whole issue. Now that I know more about the internet, it's on the internet and people are able to use it that way.

I share these stories because I want to illustrate that there are lots of nonbelievers who

are very interested in the things you have to say if they're approached right, and if we understand where they are. The things I'm going to say today relate to all different types of evangelism, certainly to internet evangelism, which has become a major emphasis in my own particular ministry. Some of you may do public speaking, or writing, whether for newspapers, magazines, or the internet. Almost all these principles will apply.

Why should we adapt our communication? First of all, it's implicit in the Great Commission. If we want everybody to hear about Christ, we need to present him in a way they can understand, at their own level. Some people might say, "Well, why is it necessary to meet people on their own level? Aren't we in danger of destroying or twisting the message in order to get converts?" On the one hand, Paul emphasized that he changed his message not one bit to suit the tastes of those who heard him. He wanted to proclaim God's good news. He said in I Thessalonians, "Our purpose is to please God, not people." On the other hand, he said, "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some." He was saying, *"Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, so that I might bring them to Christ."*

If you want to reach people for Christ, you have to speak their language.

Here's the distinction: The message remains the same; the approach differs. Look at the ways Jesus approached people. With the immoral woman at the well, he offered living water; he did not mention sin. I got really mad when somebody pointed that out to me. The word "sin" is not there in John 4. Jesus confronted her with her sin, but he didn't use the word "sin" in that encounter; at least it's not recorded. With Nicodemus, he reasoned spiritually. He rebuked the Pharisees for their pride. He praised Nathaniel, the skeptic, for his interest in the truth. He met a physical need in a blind man, a social need in an outcast leper.

As Christian communicators, we need to realize that we are engaged in spiritual warfare. That's why Jesus warned us to be shrewd. We're entering the enemy's camp and snatching up souls. The enemy I'm speaking of is Satan, not those human beings who disagree with us. For a good study of how Paul was very shrewd and skillful, compare the approach he used with the Jews in the synagogue in Acts 13 with the one he used with the Greek philosophers on Mars Hill in Acts 17. Paul had a great love for the lost. It broke his heart to think of people spending eternity without Jesus. That love motivated him to work very, very hard to reach people. Think about this. Do we love people—do you love people, do I love people—like Jesus and Paul did? Are we willing to work to study people, to care carefully, to learn how to reach?

People speak different verbal languages. They also speak different psychological, emotional, and intellectual languages. Now suppose I make this statement, *"Daré un millón dólares a la primera persona que sube aquí y me pregunta."* Some of you may understand Spanish and know what I said. Maybe even if you don't speak Spanish, you understood the Spanish phrase, *un millón dólares*—One million dollars. As we say here in this country, of course, money talks. But if you did not understand what I was saying, you would not have realized that I was pretending to offer one million dollars to the first person to come up here and ask me for it. And I was only pretending. But look, if you learn the translation late, and if I really had a million bucks to give you, you might feel cheated if I did not make that offer to you in a language that you can understand.

Now we're offering the people of your town, of your campus, of your world, a gift that is infinitely more valuable than *un millón dólares.* It's the gift of peace with God and eternal life. But too often we don't speak their intellectual and emotional language. I don't know about you, but at the end of my life, I don't want to look back with regret at all the people who didn't understand about Christ because I did not make the message clear. I want to speak their language so clearly that they see how attractive Jesus is, and they want to run to him to receive him. John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, used British bar room songs of their day and substituted Christian words to reach the masses. If you want to reach people for Christ, you have to speak their language.

Careful audience analysis is essential to good communication. I've said some things that could be a little bit controversial. I'll try to clear them up a little later. Give your audience some valuable information and entertainment, even something fun, so that even if they don't come to Christ right away, they'll feel that they learned something; and maybe they'll come back for more.

Very often if they like you, they will like Jesus as well.

A few years back in the Philippines, the Lord opened the door on one of the nation's most popular TV talk shows. It was like "The Tonight Show," with Jay Leno's predecessor Johnny Carson. The host was the Johnny Carson of the Philippines, and the show was called "Oh No, It's Johnny." He began by telling a risqué joke. I was seated on the front row, and as the audience laughed, the camera zoomed in tightly on my face. Have you ever been in a room where somebody tells a dirty joke and there's a tension there? Sometimes laughter's just a release of the tension, even though you don't want to laugh because you're supposed to be honoring Christ. What do I do in that situation? Well, I tried to smile pleasantly without appearing to be taken in by these remarks and I tried not to look judgmental. I prayed silently, "Lord, please help me shine for you in the snake pit."

When it was my turn, the host interviewed me and asked me some questions about my book on humor. And I told some jokes—some clean ones, of course—and he and the audience laughed. Then he asked about a book I'd written on near-death experiences, and I told him of some close encounters with death. He asked me if I believed in life after death. And that was an open door to talk about Christ's resurrection and offer of eternal life. The host was very warm, and he asked me back. He and his viewers came away entertained and informed, and they got to hear about Jesus in an inoffensive way, on their turf, in a way in which they felt comfortable.

Give the people that visit your website and your readers some new ideas, maybe tips on managing conflict, or tips on dealing with a budget. Illustrate practical principles like the value of forgiveness. Give them good feelings with music or humor or stories. Very often if they like you, they will like Jesus as well.

Another suggestion: When you start your articles, your website, lead with the secular, if you're going to try to reach nonbelievers. When I teach public speaking to leaders to show them how to reach nonbelievers, I tell them to start with the subjects of secular interest, then move gradually to the spiritual. A few years ago, one of the most popular programs on television in our country was "Touched By An Angel." It was written by a dedicated Christian woman who would weave dramas around human reality—family quarrels, terminal illness, teenage love, rebellion,

prejudice, economic stress—and would show how God's wisdom could bring peace and comfort. She really touched a nerve in our society.

Be sure the Gospel legitimately relates to your theme. It's not fair to promise power or love or wealth, and then say, "Now that I've got your attention, I'd like to spring this Gospel on you." The Gospel does relate to many areas of life, but sometimes we just have to think hard to ascertain the relationship. Once we see it, our job is to make the relationship very, very clear to the audience.

How about this approach? The biblical documents explain that humans have an emptiness, an inner void, a longing to love and to be loved. Jesus of Nazareth came to fill that void, to offer hope and genuine purpose. You can make the Gospel very, very clear. You don't have to talk about compromising the Gospel. The good news that God loves us, that we're sinful and that Christ died and rose again, and that we can know him personally, that's Gospel. You don't have to compromise on that. But you can make it clear and use language that relates to your listeners.

I learned this in the classroom: You don't say in a secular university classroom, "You need to receive Christ today." Rather, you say, "The biblical perspective is that human beings are alienated from their creator, and there's a gap; and the gap has been bridged when the creator sent what he claimed was his son to die and pay a penalty. It's just as if I had a traffic fine I couldn't pay, you could choose to pay the fine." That's a little bit more sensitive in a secular setting than, "You need to receive Christ today."

It all depends on the context. Sometimes you can get away with it. Try to strike a balance between emotion and reason. Remember your audience. Have they been turned off by pushy Christians? Surprise them. Be kind and gentle. Do they think that Christians put their brains on the shelf? Give them something to think about. And don't be afraid to have other people critique your work before you put it out there. Sometimes skeptics can offer you the best advice.

These are principles, not techniques. I'll explain that I'm coming from a Christian perspective. The first point it seems logical to ask a basic question, "Why sex?" (Of course, I know some of my fraternity brothers at Duke used to say, "Why not?") But why sex? Now one of the main purposes of sex from a biblical viewpoint (and this may surprise some of you) is pleasure. Sex is meant to be fun. Consider what one wise man named Solomon had to say on the subject. This is what he wrote in the book of Proverbs: "Drink water from your own container. Fresh water from your own well. Should your streams be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving, kind and graceful doe let her breasts satisfy you at all times. Be always exhilarated of her love."

One of the best sex manuals ever written, in my opinion, is the Song of Solomon in the Bible. It describes a love scene, and the man is saying, "How beautiful you are! You're just so beautiful and so delightful!" Solomon said so, in fact. What I'm trying to communicate is, it was one of the best sex manuals ever written. At that point I usually say, "Now, I don't want to raise the room temperature any more; probably getting kind of hot in here."

But the point is, I'm talking about things that are positive. I'm saying things positively. A lot of times you have to do that just to get their attention, because all they've heard is, "thou shalt not." So I would start talking about some positive things about sex, and then, boy, somebody on the internet who tuned in thinking it was about communication, or if they jumped a disc or a track or whatever, but got in right here—they're going to wonder what they're getting into.

Realize that getting the Gospel message in front of people can be good, but is that alone always the best?

That was an example of how I communicate to a secular audience about sex. Start out talking about positive stuff like that. Then what I try to do is build the case that the way to a most fulfilling love life is by building the relationship, with things like love and commitment and communication, and illustrate that. And then I talk about a potential barrier to fulfilling love life. And it's then I get into the emotional and psychological problems that can happen with premarital sex.

Homosexuality. Hot button today. A big political topic. I don't get into the politics of it. I try to stay out of that. That's not my calling. But when somebody asks me that question, what about homosexuality, here's my response. You know I am a Christian, a follower of Jesus, and I have a biblical perspective on homosexuality. What I believe is the biblical perspective. And in my view, the first biblical perspective on homosexuality is that a homosexual is the person for whom Jesus Christ died. So I'll talk about whether it's right or wrong and that sort of thing, but, I try to lead with something that's very, very positive, because a lot of these people have been beaten over the head. Then I would go on to problems of health-related AIDS issues. There are some—a minority—of gay relationships that would be committed, but there's a lot of promiscuity out there, a lot of broken hearts. It's a long-winded answer but it's a complex question. If you're not sure you have the person's trust, I would give them something to read and ask them to get back again later.

Some personal challenges: I think that some of you, maybe many of you, do excellent jobs writing for non-Christians. You need to work at it. You've got to be willing to change the way you've been taught to think about what Christian communication should look like; or at least be willing to consider that. Some of you, if you're students, if you're at a secular university, might want to write a Christian term paper. Write something for the secular media. Speak in a class, fraternity, or sorority house. God may use some of you to appear as guests on secular TV talk shows. I had no idea he would use me to do this until a guy in Michigan called and asked me to be on a talk show early in my speaking career. A Christian woman he knew was one of the hostesses, and she invited me on. I was sitting there in the studio thinking, "Here I am sharing my testimony about Jesus with her, and somebody else is doing all the work to get my message broadcast all over western Michigan."

God may use you to do some of that, just as he may use you in internet outreach. So don't sell yourself short. Dream big dreams. Be willing to work hard. Realize that getting the Gospel message in front of people can be good, but is that alone always the best? Let me clarify what I mean. God can and will use his Word, but perhaps ask this question: Could it be more effective if you developed the context and the theme; if you related to them rather than preach, to help break barriers and get people thinking, and open their hearts? Of course, I'm sure that many of you are far superior to me in effective communication; I just want to challenge all of us, and I consider myself in that challenge.

Jesus and the Samaritan woman had many differences. She was a Samaritan, he was a Jew. She was an immoral woman, he was the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, he was a master communicator. He gained her attention simply. He aroused her curiosity cleverly. He confronted her with sin gently. He kept on the subject tactfully, and he confronted her with Christ directly. And she and many of the townspeople there believed.

Do not allow sloth or ego to prevent you from doing your best.

Good communication is hard work. There may be some boring communicators, but I think everybody could use some work. And please—it's a temptation that very often Christian communicators fall into: do not allow sloth or ego to prevent you from doing your best. Do Christians applaud you wildly while you speak to them, or when they read your stuff, or look at your website? Don't let that fool you into thinking that you're automatically going to be effective with non-Christians. You have to work very hard.

Once early in my career, I spoke to secular university students about premarital sex. It was at Arizona State University. The professor was rude and indifferent. I was saying things that were true, but I was saying them, not in ways that students could understand and accept. The students applauded politely but I sensed that I had missed the mark. Later, my best friend sat me down and said, "Rusty, you're a good speaker, but you're not a great speaker. The reason Josh McDowell is a great speaker is that he works at it, and you could be a great speaker if you worked at it."

Well, after my blood stopped boiling, I asked this friend what she meant. My pride had been very hurt and wounded, so I asked her to explain, and she went on to challenge me. She said, "You need to thoroughly research this topic, and think through and discover the questions that non-Christians are asking. Find secular authorities who support the biblical views and then construct your speech to begin where the audience's mind is."

See how I started that sex talk with how to have a most fulfilling love life? Find out where the minds are, and move them gradually, step by step, to where you want them to be. Remove red flags, unnecessary concepts, and words that are going to enrage your listeners or confuse them. And then write it out word for word so you can understand the words you're going to say. Don't make it sound memorized; you want it to be your own stuff, but know what you want to say. Well, that sounded like a lot of work to me and I didn't want to do all that work. I thought about it, and I thought I was just good enough at off-the-cuff speaking to make it up as I went along.

But my friend was right. I thought more about it, and I tried it. That advice has made a tremendous difference. I don't claim to be a great speaker, but it's made a difference between an audience in which half the people are with you, and the other half are looking at their watch or looking out the window, to one in which a lot of people are waiting and wondering what's going to happen next. And I am so glad that I followed my friend's advice. This article is a result of that. This article that is now accessible on a porn site came because I followed my friend's advice in 1976 to work my tail off to understand what non-Christians were thinking, and put something together in a way that was glorifying to God and that they could understand. And I shudder to think of the millions of people that by God's grace I've been able to touch that I wouldn't have touched if I had ignored my friend.

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Making Real Connections in a Virtual World

by Karen Schenk

About six years ago, I went to someone in our ministry and asked how I could be involved in Internet ministry. I had a journalism background so I thought that would be a nice little fit. She suggested, "What if you start a chat ministry?" I looked at her. We're talking six years ago, and neither of us knew what a chat ministry actually was or what it would look like.

So I talked with friend who had been given a similar challenge. We admitted that neither of us had been to a chat room, thinking they were boring and stupid. But I said I'd go and check some out. I went surfing on the Internet, trying to figure out why people were attracted to chat rooms.

We decided to have a meeting to talk about what a chat room ministry could look like and give it a chance. We knew whatever we did would have to be so exciting and so worthwhile, that people would actually write it in their day planners and make a point of coming. We also agreed both of us were committed to evangelism and the chat room had to be evangelistic, otherwise, what's the point? We're not going to just sit there and chit-chat about nonsense.

So we came up with a plan: use Willow Creek's model of small groups. We decided to start with one small group. We notified one of our e-mail lists, had one session, and nobody came. Oh, this was really, really fun.

We thought perhaps we chose a bad time, so we tried a different time the following week. We had somebody pop in from Germany, so that was really cool. We shared with this person and, over time, we started getting more and more people to come. We realized very quickly that we needed to stick to the same time. Just like going to your favorite restaurant, if you go there and sometimes it's open and sometimes it's closed, you're soon not going to bother going there. We saw that we need to be stable, not closing when we had a day off, but just being committed. We also thought people needed e-mail to remind them to come, so we put together an e-mail group.

One day, I was in the chat room with a lady who started asking questions. I had the opportunity to lead this woman to Christ, and it was such an incredible experience. She kept com-

ing back to the chat room during my session, and I began to help her walk in her faith and grow deeper. At one point I said to her, "Would you mind telling me what province or state you live in? It's real safe here." She told me that she lived in Alberta. I said, "Wow, I live in Alberta!" It turns out she lives a mile from me.

Our church had a banner outside because we had run the "Power to Change" campaign. She'd driven by the church and gone to the website, and ended up in our chat room. I asked her if she would want to meet me in real life, at a coffee shop. I didn't want to freak her out. So we met at a coffee shop, and Laurie is now one of our leaders on our team. She's actually led many people to the Lord herself.

As big as the Internet is, see how small it is! That was such an incredible experience for me, to see that this lady whose online chat room name was "Faith," could encounter Christ; and now, even cooler, when I drop my kids off at Sunday School, there's a man standing there signing the kids in, and that's her husband. He has become a believer and so have two of her kids. That whole family's life is entirely changed because she drove past the church and came to that website.

I am such a believer that the Internet does not have to be something cold. People often ask me how the Internet works; how do you make it warm—so it doesn't feel so cold?

Think about years ago, when the telephone was first invented. Can you imagine? We're used to talking face to face; we get together. Now all of a sudden I'm supposed to talk into this stupid plastic thing? And you're supposed to hear me? I think conversation and communication would have felt just as stilted and cold as it does to non-Internet users. But now that I'm used to the telephone, it's very warm and personal. Obviously getting together is better, but now the telephone is not a barrier to communication. I think we, as a culture, crossed that barrier, and it's become so much warmer.

By the end of the year, predictions are that there will be over one billion people online; and in North America, nearly two-thirds of the adults who use the Internet will use it for faith-related matters, according to the Pew Internet Project. That's huge—that many people coming online trying to seek for faith-related issues.

Just as the Roman roads opened the then-known world to the Gospel, today the Internet is providing a very effective way to take the Gospel around the world. Barriers that used to stop traditional missionary work do not hinder the Internet.

The reality of online evangelism and discipleship: most people come to websites through search engines. I know probably even three years ago, people would have site affinities. They'd have a list of favorite websites and share it with their friends. We don't do that anymore. We all have Google or we have different search engines we use. So we have to be very, very smart about how we use that.

When people come online, you have such a short time to connect with them. Often it might even be one or two seconds to actually share the Gospel with them. One of the things that I often say to our staff team is that every single article, in some way or form, must take people directly to the Gospel message. Then I throw in the clause that the templates don't count. That makes it really challenging and hard. If you go to our websites and try to check up on something

I said, it might be difficult to find. We always move on from this day forward because the the site itself is about eight years old. So if I had to go back I would have to undo thousands of articles, and there's no way I can do that. But we regurgitate content; we pull it forward and then we look at it as a brand new article each time. We apply all the new rules to that particular article.

In TruthMedia, we actually have the privilege of sharing the Gospel with people nearly eight thousand times a day, every day of the year. Everyone has a deep need to know God personally, but many time it is a person's felt needs that are the starting points. As a website, therefore, we need to be so creative. I often say we need to be so creative that we could take an article on tires and link it to the Gospel. (And you know what, I've thought of a way!)

We receive many e-mails from people in every country: "How can I get a true and real Bible—I'm living in an Islamic country?" That comes from one of our websites. Many people write to us about marriage, divorce, and relationship situations: "My wife, who I've been married to for fifteen years, we have three kids—she wants a divorce. She wants out. Please advise." "Speaking spiritually, how does one begin to believe?" "Faith seems like something people create so they don't feel alone or so they feel looked out for." "My brain isn't wired that way and I'm not sure I would want it to be."

Every article on our websites is assessed from the perspective of: is this article meeting a felt need?

When you have people on your website with whom you want to start sharing the Gospel, you need to invite your readers to join in. Communities, evangelism, and discipleship are built on the foundation of strong content. Content is the currency of the Internet. Every article on our websites is assessed from the perspective of: is this article meeting a felt need? How can the reader of this article be connected with either chat or mentoring? Where will the Gospel be shared? So I really don't care if it's an article on hair, or an article from the workplace— whatever the felt need, even how to protect your kids online. It doesn't matter what the topic is. You need to address a felt need. People have incredible needs. Yes we need to work with search engines, but you need to create for what it is that people are feeling. Ask them. Ask people anywhere. You can be standing in line in a grocery store and you can read the magazine racks. What are people looking for?

Our editorial team goes on what I call "tagline field trips." A few of them will go and read taglines for forty five minutes. Then they'll come back and write a short little report on some of the creative new ways magazines are selling, because magazines have the same problem we do: they have one second to get people's attention to buy their issue. Creative tagline writing is very important.

It's very critical to follow up on people immediately. Here's an article that was a really fun one. Bailey's Liquor e-mailed us and asked if they could please link to our summer picnic article. So, one of the girls in our department wrote me to ask what to do—"We can't do this!" I said, "Of course we can, they're not asking for a reciprocal link. So, let's let them link to us." So we ended up last summer having a lot of traffic from Bailey's. It was great. It was awesome.

Here is what I call the "Hot Spot: Look Radiant This Summer." If you click on that article it takes you to a life story, a Gospel presentation. Here's a simple little article about summer picnics

that Bailey's likes. It links to a great article. We have a partnership with a group called Models for Christ, They give us names of models who are willing to share their life stories with us. These models' stories make great hotspots, because they're dealing with felt issues, whether it's weight, beauty—anything. Here's a girl learning to love her body, and so we link to that. It gives us a natural connection. We don't want to take a person straight to *The Four Laws,* because that might just seem a little too direct.

Content draws visitors deeper into the ministry of each site by immediately meeting the felt needs of that visitor, providing an opportunity to interact and ask questions, presenting the Gospel message, creating opportunities to follow up, and equipping readers with opportunity for relationship with Christ. We need to remind each other on our team that we do not want our readers to finish reading any of our entire group of hook articles. It's a funny way to write. You don't write folk articles do you? You write Gospel. But we want them to go from that article to the next one. That's our goal with those articles. It makes for some real fun because you can just think: what are the people in your world interested in? What is your target audience interested in? And you could really, truly, meet those needs, and then share the Gospel.

We prayed for the chat ministry. And the next week, the doors opened up.

What are the necessary elements for a web ministry? We first have a website. You obviously need to do marketing to draw traffic to that website. You need to engage into a system of follow-up. You obviously need some finances to run this web ministry. But, the bottom line is, you need prayer. Remember when I told you about our chat room and how empty it was? I'll tell you what day it changed. We made a decision, as our team, that we would start to meet in the chat room and have prayer time. All over the world, we all came in together. We wanted to be short and concise so that people didn't feel it was too long and drawn out. So we got together and we just started praying for the different areas of the ministry. We prayed for the editors, the programmers, the content, the non-Christians. We really began to pray for them. We prayed for the chat ministry. And the next week, the doors opened up. We don't know what would happen if we stopped praying in there because we don't want to try. We keep praying. Right now, in our network of chat rooms, we have 40 different prayer sessions that happen every month, and we're just so committed to that.

We've got a little model that we find really helps communicate, especially to people who don't understand Internet ministry, so obviously you would understand this. It's a funnel that describes how the website goes from attracting visitors to ministering online. Here's your basic funnel. We all understand that the top of the funnel is traffic coming to the website. That will usually be your largest number. Then we want our visitors to move deeper into the website. We'd like them to read articles that share the Gospel. Our team puts a lot of emphasis on this. We want them to engage in community through chat or mentoring because we know at that point it'll become a deeper relationship with Christ as a result. Obviously we want them to make a decision. The next thing that we would like to see them to do is to recycle that, so they'll build. It just goes around and around. So, Laurie came to our website, read articles, discovered our chat room, and then she made a decision for Christ. We were able to engage her in follow-up and involve her in

ministry. That's a very simple way we found; people understand it, so it's used quite a bit.

Variety enhances the Internet. Here's a little scenario from two real life stories. Miriam, in a recent chat session, asked how to know Christ Jesus personally. Someone shared with her how she could do that, and then Miriam prayed the prayer and asked Jesus into her heart. She was very clear on what she was doing, which was encouraging. And we have Abby. Abby wasn't really sure that she had personal relationship with Christ. She had never invited Christ into her life. When she was asked if she wanted to pray, she answered yes, and then she prayed. The part of the story that's not here is the follow-up and ongoing relationship these ladies have with the person they've been partnered up with.

We have quite a few areas of interactivity. There are actually six of them:

Mentoring. The first one is mentoring. We don't look at mentoring as giving advice; we look at that as coming alongside of. We train our volunteers so that they can, as they're interacting back and forth. A deaf lady e-mailed us and said, "I am really struggling. How do I date? I'm deaf. You know, give me some dating tips." One of my friends gave her some dating tips as they wrote back and forth. It's been two years, and this lady has come deeper in her faith with Christ. It's just transformed her relationship. She actually writes back to this mentor and says, "It's because of you that I've been able to come back to Christ. You've deepened my walk and it was all because I needed some dating tips." It doesn't matter what their point of contact is. A well trained mentor can actually transition that into something deeper.

Prayer Mentoring. Something else we started about a couple years ago is prayer mentoring We do this on our seeker sites. We ran a survey about prayer on one of our seeker sites, WomenTodayMagazine.com. We were just stunned at the results. 80 percent of the people said they believed in prayer. I was devastated. I thought, "We're reaching Christians. I don't want to be reaching Christians." Then I read the next question. It said, "To whom do you pray?" The responses were, to the goddess, to the winds, to the rains. I thought, "Oh my goodness, this is wild. Just some unknown god out there!" It was incredible.

We kept going through the survey results. In response to "How often do you pray?" some people prayed once a day. Why do you pray? "For good luck." "Because I have to." "Because. . ." There were all these ominous reasons.

Do you believe in God, do you believe in Jesus Christ? "No." The percentages just went way down. So I said to our staff team, "Let's try something crazy. Let's put a button on *WomenTo-*

dayMagazine that says "Need prayer? Click here." The conservative on our team had a fit. You can't do that! It seemed so radical, so "Christian-ese." Yet probably 20 to 30 percent of our e-mails from all of our sites are from people wanting prayer.

Discussion boards. Moderated boards help give the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas to hear about the Gospel. Great tool; definitely wise to have somebody monitor them. We have a very unique one on our website thelight.com, which we built in response to the Mel Gibson movie, *The Passion of the Christ.* We put a whole discussion board on, and then after a couple of months, once the whole Mel Gibson thing was waning, we changed the premise of the site to spirituality. So all of the Mel Gibson movie is still on there, but that's not the forefront. We have a discussion board there but that particular website is crazy. We've got Buddhists, we've got all kinds of different cults that meet in there; we have a high priestess, and a satanist who tries to lead our discussion boards. We finally were able to find an apologetic who would come and work on it, to tame it, because we really want to encourage them to talk, but we don't want them to convert other people the wrong way. So it's a real challenge to monitor that particular board, but it's also neat because you know the right people are on your site.

We've created online courses as a discussion tool, not so much an answer.

Follow-up strategy. TruthMedia has developed a strategy that enables online follow-up for offline events. In a nutshell, an event is held which is a supplement to other follow-ups. People at the event are informed that a particular person prayed to receive Christ, and on the comment card it says somebody will be following up on him or her through an e-mail. At this point, it's just a form-driven system. I could go to that e-mail after this breakfast (or whatever event), and enter, "Mary Smith prayed to receive Christ." Mary Smith would then get an e-mail that would say, "Dear Mary, thanks for coming to this event. We understand you just prayed to receive Christ. Here are some resources and some information."

That's just her PDF, an automatic response that she gets. Within two to three days, she is then matched up with a mentor who contacts her by e-mail, and says, "You have just indicated that you prayed to receive Christ. I'd like to help you." The mentor offers online courses, indicating that there's a very basic discipleship one. What we're trying to do is supplement the online ministry for the offline event. Whoever took them to the event can still attend to them in a personal follow-up way—they're still friends; but this is another way to get an e-mail in their inbox within hours of the event.

Online courses. We've created online courses as a discussion tool, not so much an answer. We have every topic from marriage to bible studies. We'd like to think of it as a "Chapters Online." Whatever your area of interest is, you can find a little online course. It can be one lesson, or it could be 11 lessons long. One day, one lady was sending in a lesson every half hour. She did an 11-lesson course. It was like she took the day off and did an online course. Then those lessons get matched up with a study coach, and those two can interact. At the end of every lesson is a question about what are some concerns in your life, or how can I pray for you, which takes it to the spiritual dimension. It's very effective, we see a lot of stuff happening.

Chat rooms. Chat rooms exist on the sites to provide an arena where Bible-based evangelism and discipleship can occur in a safe and welcoming community. We had a lot of suicidal people coming to our chat room for a while. We bought a search word, suicide, and it links to a life story that gives hope about suicide. But what ended up happening was we had a lot of people coming into our chat room, and we had mayhem, because all of our volunteers felt like they had to stay online. If they disconnected, somebody might kill himself or herself. One particular October we had thirteen of those in one month. One girl said, "I'm sitting here with a gun."

You can't do anything but assume they're telling the truth. That's what you need to do in that environment. So we met with a counselor and we came up with resources, all kinds of them. Now if you log into any of our chat rooms it says, "Are you at the end of your rope?" and it links to a page that has a wealth of resources; and we want to connect them to a real community. Then our volunteers' role is just to come along side and say, "Let me pray for you, let me encourage you, this is where you need to go for help." But then the volunteers don't have to carry that burden and feel like they need to save somebody's life that night. However, that being said, God has used us to save many, many lives, just because of that. But I felt that we would have absolute burnout; we wouldn't have a chat ministry if we carried that burden. It was just too heavy.

The simple point is, if someone is distracting from the very purpose we're here for, which is to share the message of Gospel, then they can be booted out.

Just a point that I just want to bring up: People have often said in our chat room, what if they're joshing you? You know, some of the stories people tell you are just incomprehensible. So what I typically encourage people to do is bring it down to something general. So if they're telling you their cat died or their kid fell over, and they go on and on (and they will—the stories are almost unbelievable), I would then say, "You know what, when we go through hard times that are bigger than we can handle . . ." All of a sudden I've brought it down to something general that all of the people in the chat room can relate to now. They don't have to talk about the cat dying, because they can't all relate to that. Then, you teach and share hope in a way that applies in general to all these other situations. And then if that person keeps wanting to push her particular situation, say, "Mary, I really appreciate what you say, but can you and I just take this into private chat afterwards?" Then pull it off later on.

We've found that's very effective. Have you ever been in Bible study when somebody tries to monopolize? We all have been. Those same people come into the chat room. We need to just park that thought and stay focused. In fact, just as people open up quicker on the Internet, you need to shut them down quicker. You just say, "Can we stay focused? The reason we're here today is to discuss this topic, and I really want to discuss that with you. Let's stay focused, in fairness to all of the people who have taken the time to come here today." So we just pull it in very quickly.

I've sat in the chat room sometimes where that doesn't happen and the person just goes on and on. You must say stop, time out. Have rules. We have rules like crazy. Our chat room's a service; we've created it over time. We have all these different scenarios—for instance, if somebody copies eight pages of someone's sermon and pastes it in there (and trust me, they'll do that to make a point), that's not allowed. What we say is, go to our terms of service. The simple point

is, if someone is distracting from the very purpose we're here for, which is to share the message of Gospel, then they can be booted out. Be aware: women's chat room? You know how many Muslim men we have looking for wives? A lot. We don't sell wives. We tried to help out some of our single members but that didn't work.

So just to give you a little insight as to how we pull our team together, create lots of opportunities for interactivity; this is just a snippet of what we have. We have a Christian women's chat room, we have a seeker women's chat room, we have our spirituality chat room, thelight.com chat, we have a "power to change" chat, and all of these work together very much using the same pool of resources. We have mentoring. We have our prayer mentors. We have the online Bible studies and discussion boards. We have online training. And there isn't one of these that works independent of the other. We put them together, we network them. There's just incredible synergy in how all of this works.

Probably the biggest difference between our women's chat rooms and thelife.com chat is that many of the women who come, the chatters, get really uptight when men come in the room. So we have a place for the men to go. I think if God brings somebody to you, lead him or her to Christ. It doesn't matter to me whether they're male or female.

One of the funniest things that we have with our whole interactivity is people like Norma. She couldn't type. She didn't have a computer. She caught the mission. She learned how to type. She got a computer. She's now a leader in chat helping reach the world for Christ. When she first came to me, she said, "I am sorry. I am so excited about what you do, you've just got me so excited, but . . ." And she stated all her problems.

I replied, "That's not a problem, that's not a problem, that's not a problem."

"What do you mean they're not problems?"

"Do you have a friend that can type?"

"Yeah."

I said, "Well, why don't you ask her to help you? You can sit beside her. You talk, she types." So we got two people out of the deal. That was a good thing. Then Norma learned how to type. It is just so exciting to have a ministry where God can use ordinary people to do just unbelievably extraordinary things. It's very exciting.

Team building in a virtual environment. This is one of the things that we just do. My assistant lives fourteen hours away from me and she knows when I'm not at my desk. It's just amazing how we're able to just work together. The key is communication. Most of you work virtually in some way or form or away from people that you work with. It's our

culture. When you develop a team that you're going to be working with virtually, clearly define each position with a job description and expectations.

If you're recruiting volunteers, handle them in the same way you would any paid staff by having them complete an application form process, complete with references. Sometimes when we have volunteers, we think we need to do them a favor by giving them a grey box. That's not a favor. They want to know what you're expecting of them, what you want them to do, how often you want them to do it, because otherwise they feel like they're wasting their time. What I like to do is give them a job description on the front end and say, "Is this what you agree to, is this what you like to do?" They may reply, "Oh my goodness, I can't do all that." I then say, "Well let's pare it down, let's make it something reasonable." There's incredible negotiation on the front end, that would be maybe for a position that we don't already have. If it's something like becoming a mentor, say, "Here's the guidelines, here's the job description, is this something that you want to be a part of?" And then they agree or don't agree to it. So, don't shortcut the process because you have a volunteer.

Equip your team. Provide them with a reporting structure. It's so important for them to know if they have problem, who can they talk to. Because if they don't, they'll talk to everybody, and then you'll have a problem. So, it's very, very important for them to have somebody—a safe place that they can go and work things out. I need to go away for three weeks. I just want to let you know that. So get somebody that they can have direct in command.

Supply ongoing training. If you don't, they'll die. They will not have any interest to stay with you. Just keep fueling the interest. We have a volunteer who actually does this for us. She puts together *Connecting Online,* a volunteer ministry newsletter. It is so content rich. I'm sorry only our volunteers get it, because it's such an incredible thing. Each one of those has resources, devotionals written specifically ministering to those who minister. She wants this to be something that fuels them. For people who lead in our chat room, we have a whole training site that has probably between 500 and 600 articles on it, just equipping them and resourcing them as to how they can take the next step in whatever they're handling or working on.

Now everything's blogging, right? So we need to change to blogging whether we like it or not, because blogging is what communicates to people.

Take time to listen. When we are in these kinds of ministries, we're so busy and we're so cutting edge that when somebody wants to tell you a long, boring story, it can be long and boring. But you know what? That might be their payment. For them to take that time, that would be like you giving them hundreds of dollars because you actually stopped to listen to their story. And be interested. It's really, really important.

Provide opportunity for feedback. Sometimes I marvel at the impact it has on people when they have an idea that you actually listen to or think is a good; or when you implement something they thought of. We don't know everything. This is such a fast moving ministry! Now everything's blogging, right? So we need to change to blogging whether we like it or not, because blogging is what communicates to people. Just like chat rooms, it doesn't seem interesting. Maybe that's something we need to look at. So, provide an opportunity for feedback.

Ask team members for their input. Take the time, listen to them, especially the greater their level of involvement is. Just listen to them; ask them what they think. There are certain things I will actually just put forward to our team, and I could probably think of the answer maybe a little easier just by myself, but I value the team's input. It's like that prayer survey that we ran. That was a team effort. That wasn't my having an idea and just driving it through. I asked what they thought, how can we do this; I asked one of my writers to come up with the questions. We pulled a whole bunch of people together. That was a year and a half ago. Now we've pulled out that same survey and the results, and presented it to one of our other editors. I said, "Can you read what they're saying? And now, can you come up with a list of about ten articles that we can ask people to write that address prayer for unbelievers?" So, she's come up with this list; we've now approached different authors and asked them to write this particular content. She feels valued because I was able to involve her in that way.

When people are asked to pray together, they will pour their hearts out, especially if it's ongoing.

Establish expectations. So much conflict and confusion happens when we expect things of people and they let us down, but we never bothered to let them know what we expected of them. The same thing with our mentors. If we expect them to be answering e-mail, and they're not, take a minute. Don't just take their name off the list. Contact them and ask what's going on in their life. You might even ask, "When you answered that e-mail way back when, do you know what happened as a result?" Just give them that payment, sharing the story with them.

Provide community. How do you do that in a virtual world? Incorporate regular times for your team to connect. Our interactive manager has chat coffee time every Thursday at three o'clock on the nose. They all bring their coffee cups to their computers. They connect. This is the team that works together, they share their lives together. Now, for a task-oriented person like me, I want to know what's coming out of this. Community—that's what comes out of it. They pray for each other, and then another girl on their team sends out a prayer request e-mail just for the people that work together. They share prayer requests, and then they'd all collect them and they send out a list. One lady who actually hasn't worked as a chat moderator for about a year and a half is on the list. I asked her why she was still getting that e-mail. She said, "I love praying for those ladies. I don't have time to be involved, but I love praying for them." Find ways to regularly connect using different groups and different creativity. Provide opportunities to pray together.

When people are asked to pray together, they will pour their hearts out, especially if it's ongoing. It just changes the dynamic of the relationship. As a leader or a team member, make a commitment to acknowledge special days. It's really interesting to be on a virtual team when somebody remembers that it was your birthday or your anniversary. Take the time, even though it takes a tremendous amount of effort to write these days down into your calendar and to remember them. It can make all the difference between you having people work on your team or not. It's their payment.

Send thank you gifts and/or cards when appropriate. We've come up with some creative ways. We have a team of about 500 volunteers so Christmas brings a question: what are we going

to do? We worked out different levels. We discovered that Chapters is great. We can actually order online gift certificates. We wire those to some of our people that are quite involved with us. You'd think you gave them a million dollars. It's just amazing. They're so thankful. It's really important.

We have a partnership with big recipe company in Canada, "Company's Coming." The partnership is very simple. This is a non-Christian firm. We phoned them first and we asked to talk to the president. My husband has some business connection with him so it wasn't totally a cold call. I said, "I'm wondering if there's a way that we could come up with an Internet partnership where we do a win-win sharing." He said, "OK, I'll take a look at what you have to offer." Another colleague and I put a proposal together. We went to see him and walked through it with him. The bottom line is very simple. What they've done for almost four years is to give us two recipes every single month, quality ones that they sell to their constituency. We link back to them. They had no Internet ministry but they do now, because they have people coming to their site like crazy as a result of these.

Regardless of the level of involvement, you want every team member and volunteer to understand he or she makes a difference.

The president of the company said, "We didn't have a web presence. We just couldn't figure it out. But you guys have done the work for us." At Christmas, I thought, "He doesn't even deal with the people that are passing on the recipe." So I send him a Christmas card with a Starbucks gift card. He phoned me and said, "I can't believe you gave me this incredible present." It was really fun. We do this to our volunteers. It really ends up being several hundred dollars but it's a huge investment. For those who aren't involved at our hostesses, we send different gifts, a book or something similar. We handed out a lot of Bill Bright's material that way. It's a really fun thing to do and it makes a huge investment.

Communicate, communicate, communicate. Regular communication systems need to be in place. It will not happen just because you suggest it's a good idea. Minister to your team through volunteer newsletters. Don't let anyone on your team ever wonder if they've been forgotten. We have some people that work in certain areas, and every once in a while I ask if somebody has connected to them recently. If I'd almost forgotten about them, maybe somebody else had. That's why it's really important to have some kind of a system where they're connecting with somebody regularly. Also notice whether they go to a prayer time regularly; and if they're not there then somebody noticed that they didn't come. That's what will keep them involved with you.

Regardless of the level of involvement, you want every team member and volunteer to understand he or she makes a difference. Be careful to not overly praise. You want to give recognition to those who do a lot, but also give recognition to the people that don't, that are able to do what they are able to do. I am so excited to be able to offer a ministry opportunity to people even if all they can do is send one e-mail every two weeks. That is actually ministry in their lives. We know of a business person who had made a commitment to send one e-mail a month. You know how cool it is that somebody that busy would actually do that? That makes me just as excited as the person who says I can answer ten e-mails a week. Somebody who had never, ever taken the time to do ministry can actually do it in the online environment. So value the big and the small.

Communicate office protocol for the virtual team. Now that is very interesting and challenging, and I'm learning more about that as I go. Some of the people in our department think I have video cameras in the building. "How did you know I was wearing jeans yesterday?" Someone told me. It's really important to communicate office protocol. For every different group, every organization, every ministry, it will be the same.

One of the rules we have is, for example, we change all of our issues by noon on the last working day of the month. It used to happen that they were being changed at midnight. Well guess what would happen? Somebody would go to deploy the new issue; the system would get locked up; the poor tech guy gets dragged out of bed in the middle of the morning because somebody on my team was doing this in the middle of the night. We realized that we're just too big to do that, so we have a rule that it's done by noon. Yesterday when I was flying, I stopped and checked that all of our websites have gotten the new issue turned over. And it happened that way.

It's really important to guard our home time. If somebody wants to work at night, it's their choice. It's not because somebody else made choices in their life. We have buffers. We probably have about 77 different units of newsletter items that go out a month. Every one of those needs to get proofed. So we have a two-day turnaround time in the proofing process, so that my lack of planning does not result in your having an emergency. That's really important for our team, and that's one example of what we have. The exciting thing is, real lives are being changed online every single day.

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Getting Inside the Seeker's Head

by Greg Outlaw

I come from a diverse background. If you don't understand a little bit about my background, you won't understand my passion for the Lord, why I do this—why I'm so fervent about it. I was saved in a little Southern Baptist church when I was 12. I felt the calling of the Lord and came to the Lord. My father was a chairman of deacons in that little church and he started cheating on my mother with the secretary of his company. At 12 years old and having just come to Christ, seeing the hypocrisy in my father was devastating to me. In this small 70-person church, I saw gossip, and church discipline, of course, and all those things. When all that happened, I felt, "You know, I still love you, Jesus, but I don't want anything to do with your church." So, I left the church.

Well, if anybody knows what it's like to be outside the church and be saved—you're like a sheep among wolves. Take one foot off the path, another foot, another foot, and before you know it, you're in the middle of the forest and you don't know where the path is anymore. So I started drinking and doing drugs at the age of 14 or 15. I did that because the Holy Spirit inside me was so grieved, but I wouldn't repent and go back to the church, and I just needed a way to deal with it. That's what I did. I covered it up; I quenched the Holy Spirit in my life. I did that for 19 years. I stayed drunk or inebriated for 19 years. That's a long time. People asked, "Didn't they know?" No, they didn't know because over the course of 19 years, people come in and out of your life. If you're on drugs and someone meets you in that condition—if they spend five years of your life with you that way, they have no idea. They just said, "That's who Greg is, he's a little strange." But, they didn't really know. During that period of time, I graduated from high school with straight A's, and from The Citadel, a military college in South Carolina, with honors. The only reason I did was because, in a military college, you got more leave if you made great grades. So, I could take more leave, go out and get drunk and score more drugs. That was my life.

After that, I started my own business. I started several businesses. I made—and lost—lots of money. In the year 2000, I was a multimillionaire on paper, owned a dot com company. It was right when the bubble burst on the Internet, so I lost all of that. At the same time, I was struggling with a terminal illness called chronic pancreatitis. When you eat food your pancreas actually secretes enzymes. These enzymes break the food down into proteins and allow your body to live.

Over this 10-year period that I was really drinking heavily, my doctor kept telling me, "You need to quit. You need to do this, you need to do that . . ." and I never listened. I was a prideful man. I was hurt by the world, and my god, more than anything, was pleasure. I was a hedonist at heart and that's what it basically boils down to. Anything to cover up the pain, anything to medicate. So when I heard the news that I was going to die and that was it, you'd think right then I'd fall on my knees and repent. Especially right after I'd lost all of my money on the Internet and everything else, you'd think that would be "the straw that broke the camel's back." But, not me—I'm a prideful guy and I'm a hard charger. All I did was get angry, ripped the IV's out of my arm and said, "What do I need you for, doc?" I called a cab, took off, scored $2000 worth of cocaine, and did it all in about 35 days. At the end of that period, I was so paranoid . . . I would think people were trying to steal my company, take my money, do all these different kind of things, and I finally just totally lost it.

On December 7, 1999, I rededicated my life to Christ. I called my brother-in-law, who was the only person I knew who went to church. I didn't hang out with people who went to church. Even though I was saved, I just didn't want to think about what happened in the past. I said, "Bro, I just need your help." He took me to a place called "Celebrate Recovery" at Saddleback Church in California. And there, I rededicated my life to Christ before 12 men. I confessed all my sins. It took an hour to confess 19 years worth of sins; it took a long time. In tears, I rededicated myself. I started reading God's Word. I wasn't healed right away, I was still dying and I was coping with that. I started praying, "Lord, I need a way out for my wife." I was so prideful I didn't even have life insurance for her. So, I said, "Lord, if you take me home, that's fine, but I need a way to take care of my wife." My focus had come off of me and now it was on her.

I started to read God's Word over that year and a half; I read it through three times from cover to cover, Genesis to Revelation. It says that you're sanctified by the truth, the Word is truth and I believe that 110%. It started to sanctify things in my life. Even though I had quit drinking a year and a half before, I still had a desire for alcohol. But when I read the Scriptures and prayed, even the desire for alcohol totally went away. I also smoked marijuana every single night for six years. I was also taking 300 mg of morphine, by prescription from my doctor for the pain from the pancreatitis. I got convicted in my heart as I read God's Word, even though I was on all that medication, that I need to quit the drugs. So I cut out all the marijuana and flushed it all down the toilet. I was also trapped in sexual addiction. I had a gigabyte of

that on my laptop computer, and I got convicted on that. I deleted it all and confessed it to my wife. I said, "I'm sorry." and she forgave me. I never touched it again. I had power over all these things, by the power of God's Spirit. He healed me from these things.

So through this year and a half period, my company's going up and down with the market going up and down. I was trying to get the stock sold. It was up for sale four times, and I was praying, "God, let this be it, let this be it." You know, my cut of the company was going to be somewhere between seven or eight figures, a sizeable chunk of money that would easily bail her out from that perspective. It just never happened, that wasn't God's plan. He wanted me totally dependent on him. So when the last deal fell out, I spoke to the leaders of the company, who were running it for me because I was staying at home the whole time. They said, "Well, Greg, that's it, we need to bring in a venture capitalist." They told me his name and I just felt God pierce my heart when I heard it, because I knew the man. He was an atheist and he was a criminal. I never had problems dealing with a man like that in the past. But now that I read God's Word, I knew I could not do that. I heard in my spirit, "You can't do that, you need to leave." So I told them that I can't do that. It says I'm not supposed to be unequally yoked with unbelievers and I think that takes in a business level, too. I had the power to make decisions in my business, and I said, "I won't do that." They said, "Well, Greg, you don't understand. If we don't do this, next month payroll is cut off. There's nothing. The company is gone."

I'm not supposed to be unequally yoked with unbelievers and I think that takes in a business level, too.

"I know it sounds crazy but I can't do that. I've never taken a step of faith before in my life and I just won't do that."

"Well, you have to do it."

"You guys can vote against me if you have to do it, but if you vote against me I'm leaving. I can't be involved in that."

And of course, they voted against me. They were concerned about feeding their families; I left the company that day. After six years of work, I walked out with zero. I didn't take any of the stock, any of the money, or anything.

Most people thought I was crazy. Who could argue with them—I was on drugs! But I just knew in my heart what God told me to do and I was going to do it. For the first time in my life I was going to take that step of faith. Next morning when I woke up, for the first time in a year and a half I didn't have any money. This had been my life, every single day for a year and a half: I would wake up from my drug-induced sleep, 300 mg of morphine, and the minute I opened my eyes, I would wince in tremendous pain. I'd grab a tablet of morphine and I'd take that; and I'd put liquid morphine in a dropper, and drop it on my tongue. Then I'd disconnect the IV that fed me all night long as I slept. For a year and a half I had not eaten a bite of food. I was in a hospice situation at home: wait for the morphine to kick in, use the bathroom, then read God's Word and pray. That's all I did for a year and a half. But on this day I woke up and something was different—there was no pain. I still took the medication and did all that, because I was addicted to that after taking it so long. But the next day I woke up and there was no pain, and the next day, and the next day.

I started believing. "Jesus Christ healed me! He did something!" There was a pendulum swinging—one minute I was dead and all the money and doctors in the world didn't do any good; all plans for the future were useless, junk. Then it swung to the other side and I realized what Jesus Christ did for me. He died on a cross for me, he redeemed me. I realized not only that, but he gave me a second chance on this earth to make a difference. I was supposed to be dead two years ago. This is a walking dead man. But by the grace of God I stand here today. And when you have something like that happen in your life—there's nothing, absolutely nothing I won't do for Jesus Christ.

You need to understand that before I share anything else, because then you understand my passion, why I approach it this way, why I love Jesus so much. I needed to share that one part. This is called, "Getting Inside the Seeker's Head." I think this is really critical and important. You know, it's easy to go build a website and stick something up there. But if it's not relevant and people can't find it, you've just wasted a lot money and time. I don't believe I'm building a website for the church. There are plenty of websites out there for the church. *All About God* is a place that they can gather, but it's not meant specifically for the church. I think it's important that evangelism is done from that perspective.

The key to getting inside the seeker's head is to target your phrase.

Look at MTV, VH1, and all these other things. People today like fast-moving media, and even though that doesn't position well on search engines I think it's important to have something up there to do that. So, we do deal with that. What's interesting to me about this is market research from the church. We went to two Christian schools and asked, "If you could ask Jesus Christ, or God, one question, what would that question be?" The sad part about this is what the answers—the questions—were. In I Corinthians 9:22, Paul said he became all things to all people. In John 16:12, Jesus said, "I have much to tell you, but you can't bear it all right now." Why did he say that? Because the disciples had not yet received the Holy Spirit, who would lead them to all truth.

We think approaching seekers from that perspective is a good idea. Realize where they are, and be strategic in those areas. Paul was strategic. In Acts 17:16-33, Paul spoke to the Greeks on Mars Hill. It's interesting how he did it. Though Paul was called to the Gentiles, in every single city he went to, he started at the synagogue where he reasoned from the Scriptures, and tried to convince them that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah. But in Acts 17, he was speaking to Greeks. The Greeks wanted to know what was going on, what was the latest thing, what was the news of the day. Paul didn't start with the Scriptures, he started with creation—their unknown God, as the maker of heaven and earth. Then he used their own Stoic philosophy as a bridge to the Gospel. Why did he do that?

The Jews believed one God existed. They believed the Bible (the Old Testament) was true. Because of that, they knew who God was. That's why Paul could start in the Scriptures and go straight to Jesus. Today, most people are "Greeks" and they don't necessarily believe one God exists, and he created everything. They don't necessarily believe the Bible is true; in fact, I would say most non-Christians don't believe the Bible is true, the Word of God. They believe it was written by men. So unless you lay a foundation for that, you're going to have a hard time trying to introduce Jesus to people. You need to get into their heads, find out where they in that journey and leap in at that point.

I think that's what Paul did. At the end of that passage, it says that some believed, some didn't, but some said, "I want to hear you again on this matter, Paul."

Another thing is to look where God is working. You would think that in a keyword search, a single word—like "flowers—would be great. Type in "God," though, and primarily you'll get a bunch of people coming to your site who will eat up all your bandwidth and keep other people from coming, but they don't do anything. It's because your keyword is not targeted. The key to getting inside the seeker's head is to target your phrase.

One of the best ones is "coping with." It means that you're struggling and you need help. That's what you're saying when you type that into a search engine. "Dealing with," "Help with,"— those are really good. "Symptoms of" is another good phrase. People type in "Symptoms of depression," or "help with drugs." or "dealing with depression" or "coping with death," or whatever it is. You can lead these types of people to Christ by the droves because they're targeted. Somebody who's hurt, humbled, has revealed exactly where he is spiritually. You can then lead them with the truth. So I think it's key to look for the"low-hanging fruit"—where God is working from that perspective. Obviously, with *The Flow* I do everything, not just life challenges. We've found that life challenges bear more fruit than any of the others, because those hearts are more prepared, softened; they're ready. Searches phrased like questions are important, too; for example, "Is Jesus God?" "Who is God?"—things like that.

People don't read. If you can write something that has bullet points, that's the best thing in the world, because people skim.

What if you don't have any technical skills? What do you do? Partner with others. There are different parts of the body. God wants unity of the body; in fact, God says that the Great Commission won't be fulfilled until we have it. In John 17:21-23, Jesus' prayer right before he goes to the Cross, says, "May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent me." I don't think the Great Commission will be fulfilled until there's unity. I'm praying for partners. The harvest is plentiful, the workers are few. "Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore send out workers into His field." I'm asking. There are people here that want to write or answer e-mails. You don't have to be a technologist to do that; there are other things you can do. Writing content is a great thing. There are two people on the *All About God* payroll, myself and one other person. We have 80 volunteers across the world. We have about 35 writers.

You could spend four hours a day researching. Instead, make it simple, make it your testimony. For example, write one page on the topic of how you overcame sexual promiscuity, or whatever it is. If you position it to the top of the search engine, it will bear fruit. It's one piece of work that took you half a day, and yet it bears fruit the rest of your life. There's no better bang for the buck, time-wise. It's easy to write content. First and foremost, write a compelling introductory paragraph. You've got to engage the reader. Remember, if you don't engage them right away, they're gone. Write something with questions. You know what they searched for. If they just searched for "Dealing with death," the questions could be, "Are you dealing with death?" or, "Do you feel lonely and hurt?" or, "Don't know what to do?" or, "Are you looking for any hope in the world?" or, "Are you grasping at straws?" or, "Do you need something?"

Write something that's going to engage them and get them to go deeper, compel them into the site. It needs to be short overall. People don't read. If you can write something that has bullet points, that's the best thing in the world, because people skim. Bullet points can be powerful. Once you grab them, they'll read the whole thing.

Also, there needs to be a hook at the end. It does you no good in the world to sit there and help that person out of that situation. That's not really their problem, is it? Their whole problem is that they desperately need to be with Jesus Christ. God has allowed whatever that is in their life to bring them to faith in Him; to humble them, so He can show them grace. So it's important to have a hook at the end towards the Gospel or toward another place in the flow that's going to encourage them to go deeper into the content. Challenge them intellectually, emotionally, with what they believe, what they think.

You can also partner by answering e-mails or IM people. Instant-message people back and forth. Obviously instant messaging is a little harder than answering e-mails. Answering e-mails can be done offline. You have plenty of time to think about what the person has written, and you can address it. With IM, you really need to be more knowledgeable or have access and fast typing on the computer to get the knowledge. You can go to allaboutgod.com or other sites and search, get the information they're looking for and put it down.

The best way to do e-mails is the personal touch, with a testimony. Be absolutely honest and authentic. I've seen God use that more than anything. Sometimes the best answer in the world is, "I don't know; but I'll tell you this, I'll pray for you." You can say, "I'll think about it or I'll ask somebody, but I don't know. I'll get back to you."

You'd be surprised at how many people are blessed just to get a response at all, because they usually get nothing or an automated response. So the personal touch is key and it can't be just mush.

> This is what we believe. We do it for free, we reach out for free because we believe it, because we love you.

It's got to be a place where you can deliver truth. Truth is the power of salvation. You shouldn't be condemning. These people are coming to ask questions. You need to realize, "If it weren't for grace, I'd be sitting in a bar stoned and on drugs somewhere; if it weren't for grace, I'd be believing in Darwin's theory of evolution and that there was no God. I'd be believing in the Big Bang Theory." So when people attack you and what you believe, be winsome about it. There will be some hard issues as you debate with people. It's not to say you won't deliver truth, you will, but first build a rapport. You'd be surprised how many people would open up to, "You know what, I'm sorry about that."

Answering e-mails is great. We have 45 people who answer e-mails on topics including testimonies, science and philosophy, religion—anything. Some of them are retired pastors, some are theologians or seminary graduates; some have no training whatsoever. They just know they can research one topic because they read God's Word and they know it. We check everything doctrinally, of course, before we send it out or publish it, because everything flows through us.

We reached 197 countries, just in English, every month last year. I'm no different than a regular missionary. I was called to the nations, not just one—I was called to 197 last month. And these are the ones just in English. I'm working to get the whole thing in multiple languages. So if you know people who want to translate sites, that'd be a blessing too. There are all different kinds of ways to serve.

What it comes down to is the people. I've done this for a long time, four years now. When you're used to being a billionaire making lots of money, and you go to the mission field—you're starving. (I don't look like I'm starving, though. I've got friends, they feed me well.) It's not like you make a great living. We don't sell anything. I purposefully don't have ads on any of my sites. There are plenty of people on television saying, "Give me the money, give me the money." I think that turns people off. So we have purposed in our hearts not to do that. To be above reproach we say, "This is what we believe. We do it for free, we reach out for free because we believe it, because we love you. That's why we do it, there's no other ulterior motive." We have a place for people to donate, but it's on allaboutgod.com. They won't get to allaboutgod.com unless they're a believer. It's specifically written to stay out of the search engine topics for unbelievers.

Here's the real blessing. Just when you think you can't do it anymore, you're tired, you're worn out, and your wife tells you, "I'm sick of this lifestyle, I can't live like this anymore." All of a sudden, one of these e-mails comes in: "Hello, I came upon the website this morning while looking for information on Messianic Jews after a class session. I was amazed at how easy it is to follow information on your page. Thanks for restoring my faith in my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Margaret."

It will change your whole day. When you're under spiritual attack or you're not having a good day; if you don't know how you're going to make all your bills, it changes everything. I love this one: it's from Grant, and it came in at two in the morning from Australia. "I'm a paranoid schizophrenic who just got out of prison for the mentally ill. I was depressed and looking to suicide sites when I stumbled upon one about physical death and spiritual afterlife. I read about how God loved me no matter how I sinned in the past and felt elated and renewed. I realized I was about to make a huge mistake. I searched the web for information on becoming a Christian and found your site. I made the decision to turn to Jesus, renewed my faith, found my childhood Bible and started my new life."

I have read this thousands of times and it still makes my voice and heart break when I think, "I'm going to meet him one day, I'm going to meet him one day in heaven. This guy was going to commit suicide. Because of what happened by my life and by His grace, he's going to be in heaven one day." There's no better feeling. It's the greatest thing in the world. Some e-mails are worth an extra week on the job for God; this one is worth six months.

We get over a hundred e-mails every single day. Some are asking questions, some are things like this. It's just awesome to get these. I like this one, from Joe: "I only went to Catholic Church in CCD as a kid to please my mom. Anyway, let me tell you how I stumbled upon your website. I'm currently attending college night courses and my English teacher asked the class to start keeping a journal to write about various topics that she picks. Well, the first topic she happened to pick was "Why Am I Here?". . . I tried several attempts to give an honest explanation of why I believe we're here. The problem was, I really wasn't sure. So out of calm frustration I went online and opened up Yahoo! Or Google..." (I love that, he didn't even know what search engine he used.)

He continued, "I typed, 'Why Am I Here?' in the search engine and I happened to come across www.whyamihere.com (one of our sites). After reading through a few pages of the site, I felt like I struck oil, no kidding. It really helped me think about things in a new way about life. Anyway, I just wanted to say I think this site, and all the links, are critical sources of information and I especially like how it's all written. There's no force-feeding of opinions, just straight-up facts and info to take or leave, very good stuff. Joe"

I just love that. There actually are people who sit there at two in the morning, typing, "Why Am I Here?" into the search engine. It comes up with the truth, then you can lead them to a relationship with Christ.

I believe that the Internet is the primary missions field of the 21st Century. People will go to a search engine like Yahoo! Or Google and type something they would never ask their best friend or pastor or whomever else, but if you're there at the top, with truth, you'll be able to lead them to a relationship with Christ. It all flows from your relationship with God. If that part's not right, don't even think about doing the rest. Get your heart right with God. Do that in prayer and through his Word. Be in fellowship with others. We're going to meet people where they are, just like Paul did on Mars Hill when he spoke with the Greeks. Whatever situation you're in, be where they are. Do not be judgmental. Be open, be winsome with your conversation but deliver truth. Truth is the power of salvation.

Greg Outlaw is the Co-founder and CEO of AllAboutGOD.com. This internet outreach is using the power of search engine positioning to funnel people to the gospel of Jesus Christ from areas of science, philosophy, medical problems, popular issues, etc. Their visitors are artfully engaged in a matrix of content that is meant to lead them to the Gospel. Greg has been doing search engine positioning since 1995. He left a "DotCom" business to follow the Lord's call on his life after being miraculously healed from a terminal illness.

How to Successfully Minister to Your Target Audience

by Karen Schenk

I've had the privilege of being on staff with the Campus Crusade for Christ for 14 years, and I've been working with the Internet Ministries for the last six years. My journey with the Internet Ministry began when my youngest daughter was 18 months old. I was at home. I was really seeking an involvement that would have high impact. I found it really hard to find a place that I fit. So, with just a background in design journalism, I ended up talking to Catherine Kayler, who was running the Internet Ministries at the time. I asked her, "Is there anything that I could possibly do?" She said, "Yes, of course there is." So after some interaction, she challenged me to start a chat ministry. Now that has absolutely nothing to do with journalism or anything along that bent. I thought, "Well, I don't know what that is." I did some research to find out what people do in chat. This was six years ago.

I discovered I didn't like what people did in chat rooms; it was very boring. It was not interesting. I probably wouldn't waste more than five minutes of my life; were I not doing it for research I probably would not even have bothered. I met with a friend, and we talked about this. If we were to do this, how could we make this something significant and meaningful, and actually do what we love to do, which is evangelism and discipleship? We decided that we would start a chat room that would have incredible focus, so people would actually think that it was important enough to write it down in their planners and remember to come.

Thus began the journey of finding our way in the chat world, for probably about a year and a half. As we worked our way through it, we ended up with a very vibrant, small group ministry, as well as people coming in for open chat, evangelism and discipleship. We were primarily reaching women; that was our focus. I was overseeing *Women Today Online,* which is a network of eight websites. Then, with Truth Media, we realized that we had several different groups within our umbrella. I talked to my director, and we decided that for us to develop an entire team for every website was a lot of hard work; it was not going to be very cost-efficient. We needed to completely reallocate all of our resources.

We had a family of websites, the powertochange.com websites; there were eleven of them in different languages. We were just embarking on a response to the Mel Gibson movie. We looked at this and said, "Where are we going to find all these people?" We had a meeting to find out who wanted to be involved in starting thelife.com. We had six weeks to get our website fully operational with all interactivity online. The people in the meeting did not understand Internet ministry. We left that meeting realizing we would have to start with a whole brand new team, In light of the time frame that we had, we thought, "Why don't we use what we have—our existing team that works on the women's sites." So, we pulled everybody together, re-calibrated exactly how we operate, and realized we could actually use the same group of resources and reach specific audiences.

Have a target audience. Quite a few years ago, my husband and I sat down, and asked ourselves, "Who is our target audience," as a couple. We spent a fair bit of time; we wrote down a list of all the names of people in our life, and asked, "What are the common denominators?" We realized we're interested in people that are professional. We walked through the entire process. That made our life so simple that when somebody asked us to help in a little children's group, we thought, "That doesn't fit what we do." It was so easy to say no because we realized that we had a specific target audience. It's the same for a website. We do need to define our target audience. I'm going to walk you through a little bit of this.

We are trying to be careful that we are focused enough and also broad enough in our ministry scope.

To define the target audience, first you need to ask yourself some questions. Who are they? Consider their gender, their age interest, and get to know them. What do they do, what kind of issues are they facing? We've built *Women Today Online;* we have all these different women's websites. We are now just starting *Men Line.* Now we're doing a target audience assessment. What are the issues for these men? What are the issues they're struggling with? We look at family, marriage, relationships, community, health, home, business, finance, assets, sports or fitness, and we ask a lot of questions. Then we summarize: our audience is men, and we want to reach an age range, ballpark 25 to 55-year olds. We ask, "Do we want to reach business class? Do we want to reach the working man?" We end up with questions coming from so many people asking, "If you reach these people, are you excluding these people? Do you really want to be excluding people?" We are trying to be careful that we are focused enough and also broad enough in our ministry scope.

There's a really fine line you can probably cross too quickly. Do a lot of research on your audience. What kind of website are you planning on building? There are multiple kinds of websites. One we're very familiar with is the brochure website. Often people that have brochure websites are not even aware that's what it is. It's a stationary site that communicates basic information regarding a business or ministry. You might have been there three years ago, you might go there this month, and it may look exactly the same because they're achieving their purposes. There's not anything particularly wrong with a brochure website. Because I'm highly interactive, I like to look at a brochure website and suggest, "You could probably stimulate a little more communication with your audience, and it probably would be very helpful for you and beneficial to do that." But

that may not a big thing for them. A brochure website will never be a ministry website, unless you change it from being a brochure website.

Market your content for search engines. Develop content and community for your target audience, and then, market your content so search engines can find it. I'll go back to *Women Today Magazine.* On *Women Today E-zine,* you'll see there's a lot of small text underneath the taglines and that is to help us with our lovely relationship with Google. We realize that if we want people to search and find the word "woman" or "women," we absolutely fill the page with it. On the left-hand side it says "Women's stories"; it used to say just "Life stories." Celebrate who you are. Throughout all of this text, we use the word "women" from ten to twenty times.

When our marketing team asked us to do that, we thought they were crazy. We said, "We will not compromise design and look for traffic. There's no way that we're going to have an ugly site that works." The marketing team said, "No, you don't have to make it ugly, you can make it work." I believe that our team has done a very good job in peppering that word throughout the site. When we have another article that we want people to read, whether it's on beauty or suicide, we'll put in that word, we'll pepper it throughout. That's a way you can fully and properly get the search engines to become your friends. That's what we want because they bring us the non-Christians.

The Internet is a really amazing thing; the more you share, the bigger you grow.

Definitely use metadata effectively. Consider using newsletters, devotionals, and other mailings. Regular mailings remind your visitors to return to your site. Just make sure that you offer something of value to the reader. Let them know when new content is added and send out a regular schedule if you have regular things happening on your website. We have a chat happening; we send out regular updates about it. We want them to know we're around, and that if they don't come to our website today, they might actually miss something.

Locate free content sources online. We were just in *Christ's Workshop*; they were sharing some up there. Share content with like-minded websites. The Internet is a really amazing thing; the more you share, the bigger you grow. It's just incredible. People will say, "If I share, then I'm giving away my secrets." No you're not. You're growing and expanding the Kingdom. It just multiplies. I've never seen anything given away on the Internet that has made somebody smaller and less effective because they shared. It's really incredible. But, as I say that, share right. We need to be very careful to adhere to copyright issues, and all those kinds of concerns.

Write it yourself. There are people on our team who are not editors, they're not writers, but they have a wealth of content. They could just write a really short article on how to listen effectively, or whatever it is, just write out a few key points. It doesn't need to be fancy, it doesn't need to be polished. Then give it to an editor, who can then have it finalized in such a short time. For that editor to research and gather the information, could take a period of several days or even weeks to contact somebody interested in that area. If you are a specialist in some area, feel free to put that content on paper, and then pass it on to somebody else who can polish it and make it look wonderful. It's much easier to polish something than it is to start from scratch. Don't let that

inhibit you, and don't let that inhibit the people in your life. Be willing to sit down with somebody, and say, "You're gifted in this, you write incredible letters. Can you tell me what you do?" Listen to what she does, write it and then take that to an editor, and you'll have a great article. There's a lot of content that's just waiting at your fingertips.

When you're connecting with a target audience, you need relevant content. Develop articles that address felt needs. If you have a lovely article, but it's just about how to sit in a chair properly, that's probably unnecessary for a lot of people, and I don't think a lot of people would bother reading an article like that. Think, "What are the issues that people struggle with? What are the things that people are feeling," and write articles on those felt needs. For example, if the topic is "Summer Picnic," people want a great summer picnic, so here's an article, and wow, all of a sudden it's got some attention. Then link this content to articles that consider Christ and encourage spiritual growth, don't let it be a dead end.

Karen Schenk is the Managing Director of TruthMedia Internet Group (http://www.truthmedia.com), a ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ, Canada. TruthMedia strategically builds online communities of evangelism and discipleship and currently runs 22 websites in 12 languages. Karen's main areas of responsibility include managing the editorial and interactive teams and overseeing a corps of over 400 volunteers.

A Complete Internet Evangelism Strategy
by Chris Forbes

I first started using the Internet for advocacy for my people group and for keeping in touch with people back in the States. Through my work in Western Europe, I traveled to some of the tourist venues and became fascinated with the opportunities there, where we could target different parts of the tourist industry. In Europe, the biggest sector of the economy is tourism.

I figured out a way that I could reach everybody who works on the Eiffel Tower with the Gospel—and I can do it by using the Internet. I can't target them using search engines but I can target them off-line. It's a website that uses art, media, and design to communicate to a post-modern visual generation, and then also creates sub-webs.

There are a couple of sites that we've developed that you could actually start using right now. Any organization could develop a strategy based off this tool. I'm a "marketing schmooze," so I put on there "A Complete Internet Strategy With No Canned Templates." Now I've just shown you a template-based website but what I'm proposing here is to develop a customized, completely different looking version of the site that uses the same back end. I can implement a completely new Internet evangelism strategy in about eight weeks, depending on what you want to do. The art is what complicates things, usually. There are all kinds of little things that have to happen for an artist to create. He might not be feeling well, or take a day off. The tech guys show up and crank out what we're doing because they're using a database; they're really just changing the style sheets of the website and it implements really quickly.

There are really only three ways that people are going to come to your website. The first way is they are going to know what your URL is, and they're going to go to your website. Or they're going to click a link somewhere they've seen you and go through. Or they're going to find you in a search engine.

A lot of Internet evangelists' websites will focus on search engine optimization—being found in the search engines. Then you'll find others who will focus their Internet evangelism strategy on getting linked up all over the place as often as possible and in different places. They might even buy

Google ads or some other ad to try to get their website promoted. Those are two important strategies and great strategies. I happen to have a bias: getting your URL out there and getting people to come to your website.

Imagine that we're all in Paris, because I love Paris. I feel important when I drink coffee there. I don't know why, but you just feel important drinking coffee in Paris. It's the same coffee at Starbucks but smaller cup, and they're treating you really rude. But that's part of the effect—you go to France so you can gripe about it.

You know why they call it the Eiffel Tower, right? Because if you go to the top you get an "eye full"—you see everything. We could all give a little card to the souvenir shop person there. If enough of us did that, eventually the souvenir shop person would think, "What is up with this thing? I'm going to go see what it is." Then when he's at home, he types in the URL. The way our system works, he would then type in my name. So if you go to mostimportantthing.org, type in my name, and hit "send," my name comes up. When you hit my name, it pulls up my personal testimony.

I tailor-made the content on my site for their interests.

I want people to hang around and explore the Gospels. There are answers to spiritual questions that people have. They are tailor-made for people that, in my target audience, have the church background. They have the experience. It's not like they've never considered Christianity or it's completely out. If you're familiar with the Engle scale of receptivity—how much information they have about the Gospel—in Oklahoma they have a lot more information than in some other places. So I tailor-made the content on my site for their interests. Most Oklahomans perceive themselves as Christians, they just don't go to church.

Unchurched people aren't all pagan and hate God and want to debate about whether evolution is real. There are a lot of Bible-believing people out there who just haven't made the crossover from death to life because they didn't really make a personal commitment to Christ. They have just been around it and they speak it. That's what a lot of Oklahomans are like. So if people read my testimony, they click through to a Gospel presentation.

In some cultures if you ask someone if they're going to die today, that's bad luck; that's like putting the evil eye right on them. But if you say, "What's the most important thing that ever happened to you?" they usually say, "when I got married" or "when I graduated" or simply, "I got a car that I always wanted." There are a lot of people that want to talk about stuff.

You may be familiar with Seth Godin, author of a book called *The Big Red Fez: How to Make Any Web Site Better.* His website talks about site design. One of his suggestions is to have one most obvious thing on the page. That's what we've done here. When we go to Phil's testimony, we can read about Phil and Rocky Creek Baptist Church in Shawnee, Oklahoma. When someone clicks on Phil's testimony, it e-mails him. When Phil checks his inbox, he knows someone is looking at his testimony.

Now Phil is being forced to pray. He doesn't know who it is, but he knows someone is looking at his testimony, and he can be reminded to pray. That's one of the features of the site: it will update you, let you know someone is looking at your website, or your testimony. It will also let you know that

someone has made a decision. It won't say who; if the person allows it, he can use a first name. So Phil can know that someone named Joe made a decision today based on his personal testimony.

I've talked about two different ways to get people to this website. One is through sharing my testimony by giving out a card or putting a footer on my e-mail. I also have some other tools in here. Is anyone familiar with the tool "viral marketing?"

Viral marketing is getting people to promote your site for you. Instead of buying a bunch of ads and trying to do other things, people come to get something from your site. That promotes your site. The most famous example of viral marketing is how Hotmail went from nothing to an Internet giant; it's now one of the biggest e-mail servers. That was done because the bottom of every e-mail said, "Get your own free e-mail." Every e-mail that goes out sends an invitation to other people to join Hotmail.

Many of our sites are just for Christians—we don't really minister to people. I want to be a part of that movement, that solution to bring the Gospel to other places.

Google is doing a viral marketing campaign for their g-mail. A person feels privileged to have g-mail; he can invite you to g-mail, and then you can get it and invite someone else. See how the "viral" goes?

When people put their testimonies on your site, they may not be the prettiest people, but these are better than the best stock photography: the uglier the better. People will come to look at real people. Watch television: reality TV is the biggest thing right now. People are fascinated by that.

We're all familiar with traditional Gospel presentations. We use the same one and translate it into another language. That's the only time we really change it. We changed ours based on the target audience. The Gospel presentation is the same, but it's written by a high school junior who happened to be a pretty good writer.

That's the key whenever you add content to your site. Start from your target audience's perspective, not from your need to inform them about the Gospel perspective. It's important and honorable to want to share the Gospel, but you're not going to get it across until you can think like the person who's watching you explain it. Your questions and your approach make all the difference. So in this case, we tailor-made the Gospel presentation to youth.

This is how the site "Code2Life" works on the back end. You can apply something like this for your ministry, if you're in a position to do so. There is an administration area where we can do things such as managing articles. It's very easy to post an article by just opening one. I don't need an Internet guru to open up some sort of program. It can be as simple as "cut and paste." Our sites are managed by administrative assistants. All the stuff I do is so easy even a pastor can do it. That's my rubric—I want to make sure that anybody can run it.

You don't need to know anything about technology. All you need to be concerned about is the content and how you're going to deliver it. There are two strategies: one is what you're going to post; the other is the design. We work with the designers; they can work on the content. In

marketing, it's not the pictures, it's the coffee that sells—it's not the website itself, it's the copy. So what you put on there makes a difference and brings people back.

We actually have three different modules. You can designate which kind you want to use—which sort of article—so you can syndicate articles in different ways. The most important thing is, you only need to post it one way. We have FAQs, news, and the general articles, so people just can post and it goes to different places in the site.

Internet Evangelism is not "the solution" to reaching the world. It is one way—part of the picture. We definitely have not taken advantage of all the opportunities out there. Many of our sites are just for Christians—we don't really minister to people. I want to be a part of that movement, that solution to bring the Gospel to other places. I know our site is not going to be the "killer app" that will make all sites obsolete, and everyone will get saved through it. I want to facilitate as much evangelism as I can. For Internet evangelism, what we've done is make our modules available for other ministries who want to work with me on strategy. For the artwork and how to leverage the testimony databases and articles, there are custom things that we do.

We are currently developing another site for college students called majorthings.com. It will be a testimony site, and the testimonies will be sorted by major. That will be different. If you're a business major, you can see other business students and their personal testimonies, which will be interesting to you. If you see your major and there's a testimony in it, you're just going to read it. (I would never put "testimony" on a college website. It probably would be "story" or something like that.) We'll also have articles in Latin—we really want to reach out in Latin, ever since *The Passion of the Christ* movie. Another thing we'll have is a quiz game. You go to the site, and you'll be able to take a quiz: Ten questions from freshman level. If you get a C average or better then you go to the sophomore level. Ten questions there. C or better, you keep going. If you "graduate" then you get the right to send your friends a specialized e-card only you can send because you graduated.

I promised a complete evangelism strategy. Don't think Internet evangelism is complete evangelism. It is something that people should dedicate their lives to and be involved and engaged in, but it's not complete evangelism, because people don't live on the Internet. Contrary to the optimism early on, we're not going to drop the brick and mortar stores for all the click stores. We need to have a strategy that reaches out. We have a set of materials that's similar in approach to some other evangelism.

Rev. Chris Forbes is the Marketing Evangelism Specialist for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, (SBC). He has been developing evangelism strategies using the internet since 2001. Some sites he has developed are the popular websites http://www.mostimportantthing.org/ and http://www.code2life.com/ developed for Oklahoma Baptists. Chris also developed the strategy for http://www.vitanovis.com/ for the International Mission Board. As the founder of http://www.ministrymarketingcoach.com/, Chris is a ministry-marketing and outreach coach and consultant that brings his rich background in international ministry marketing and outreach to help ministries develop powerful strategies that reach people. Chris is also a certified Guerrilla Marketing Coach, and knows how to use proven Guerrilla Marketing strategies to get attention and invite response.

Evangelistic Sites and Follow-up Systems

by Allan Beeber & Siam Rogers

People need to talk with people, so we've integrated high tech with high touch. I came to Christ as a grad student at the University of Massachusetts. I was working on my PhD in polymer science and engineering. (If you're wondering what a polymer is, just touch your hair, your skin, the clothes you're wearing; most of these tables are polymers. Wood is polymer. It's a fascinating field.) A guy from MIT shared the *Four Spiritual Laws* with me. I said, "Well, I think I'm a Christian but I'd never seen this thing about personally asking Christ into my life. Okay, sure. Jesus, if you're real, come into my life." I didn't feel any different, and went down to the weekly meeting that night. There were a lot of smiling faces. I left, not feeling any different. But, for the first time in my life, I had this strange desire to read the Bible. I found a study Bible, started reading the New Testament, and it began making incredible sense to me. It was like somebody had turned on a light in my brain. I began to grow in my faith, and got involved in a high-level discipleship group.

The staff asked me to lead a Bible study in the graduate school, which I began to do. Some Christians started inviting some non-Christians We shared Christ with them and they started coming to Christ. It raised the ire of my professor. He thought I was a religious nut.

In my last year I thought I would tell God what I should do with my life, because he needed a little bit of career counseling, of course. I said, "You know, God, I know your will is for me to get a great job and support some missionaries." Have you ever thought of the Father in heaven on a throne, and he's got his arms crossed? He's almost whistling. You get this knot in your stomach that says, "He's not talking until I shut up and listen. He has something different in mind." So I thought, "Okay, God, tell you what. I promise I'll find a really good church, I'll give a lot of money to missions, I'll be involved in ministry. I promise. Okay?" Oh. The very loud silence of God. You've been in the throne room. You've made your statements to God. You want him to rubber stamp and bless them, don't you? He wasn't going to rubber stamp anything for me. I began to sense that he was calling me to full-time Christian work. I was scared to death.

I come from a broken family. My dad went away when I was nine, and I was in boarding school since I was nine-and-a-half. I was by myself, learning to live and survive. The idea of a loving father was not something that really made a lot of emotional sense to me. I cannot picture that.

I had to really wrestle with, "Did God really love me?" I even asked, "Is God for real? Is Jesus for real? I've had some emotions, I've had some experiences, but I'm a scientist. Can I prove this? What if I'm so dysfunctional I need Christianity as a crutch?" I went through all the questions.

I always share that when I share my testimony because there are a few in the crowd who've said, "That's where I am." It's okay to say those things. You need to say that to somebody you trust, and you need to ask those questions, because there are good answers for the critical questions. You may not get answers for every question you have, but for the critical ones, there are good answers.

I thought, "O.K., I've got to make sure, and the only thing I can make sure about is, is the resurrection true?" So I spent months reading and thinking about that. I came to the point where I said, "It doesn't seem to be a myth or a legend. Jesus didn't seem to be a liar, pathologically. He made these claims to be God, and his followers all went to their deaths singing his praises. But I've never had an angel come down. I've never had an experience and I probably would doubt even more if I had." So I said, "I just have to trust God. And God, I'm going to go on full-time staff at Campus Crusade and if I'm doing the wrong thing, I'm just going to have to trust that you love me enough to grab me by the arms, and say no, Allan, this is the direction I want you to go." I had to trust God and do that. In July, '76, I made that decision. I felt terrible. But six days later I was reading *Evidence That Demands a Verdict,* and God gave me incredible peace that I was in his will.

I finished up my doctorate and came on staff at Campus Crusade. I worked in the campus ministry for a number of years, two years in Connecticut, seven years as the director at MIT. It was fun, going back to the school where the guy who'd led me to Christ had graduated from. The director of Crusade asked me to come to Arrowhead Springs, where I developed a concept known as "Student Link." Steve Douglas had asked me to figure out a system to do and start campus ministries by phone, mail, and fax. There was no internet. I asked, "Why are you asking me?'

He said, "Well I think you're sufficiently non traditional."

"Is, is that compliment?"

"Yes, I think you think outside the box enough and you maybe can get something to work."

"Well, what would be successful? Give me some metrics."

"Five or ten campuses by the next six months, maybe? I'd be really excited if you could do that."

And I thought to myself, "Two to four and I'd be excited." because my paradigm of ministry was, ministry can only occur if you're face-to-face. That's what I had been trained to do all my life.

I went back to my office and told my wife. She's a manager, I'm a designer. She cried. She said, "You don't have a ministry. You have no budget, you have no tools." It was funny. She's an opposite to me. She thinks of all the details. I just think of things. My team groans any time I say, "I've got an idea!" They hide. I'm real careful about that.

I suddenly realized, as I looked at my Bible, that I have a Bible because men like Paul were in prison and used the latest technology of the day—papyrus and quill—to communicate over hundreds and thousands of miles. That long distance communication survived two thousand years and I'm being discipled by it. There's evangelism here. In fact, he wrote letters to people he'd never met. (Bible quiz: What are the two letters Paul wrote to audiences he had never met? Romans and Galatians.)

We forget that Paul was doing long distance ministry, letters which would take weeks and months to arrive. But they would effectively impact entire congregations. Now we could do it by phone, fax, and a fairly good postal service. Then the internet came along.

That first semester, God did something. God showed up, and we started 25 campuses. I had two part-time staffers who had no campus experience. One was in a prayer ministry, which is important. And the other had been in our high school ministry; had no campus experience. We went to 25 campuses, with an average of five to ten students per campus. At that time, the campus ministry had plateaued. There was no growth. And suddenly, 25 campuses opened up. Usually we'd have six to eight staff per campus, with 50 to 75 students involved. The next year, Steve gave me two staff who were as green as the new grass. We went to 50 campuses. After that the dam burst, and the entire campus ministry began. Everybody started talking about other ways to do ministry. Steve estimates that as a result of the strategy God gave us, 2500 new ministries have started here and overseas. A number of things have occurred, not only in campus but in high school, military, athletic, Christian leadership, our faculty division. Countries are taking the strategy because it is so much more resource intensive and effective.

We put up the *Four Spiritual Laws,* and we started getting one or two people a day telling us they received Christ.

I was just starting on the main website. I was in my office looking at the site, and the Holy Spirit gently nudged me and said, "Allan, you're missing something." I just felt his voice, and he said, "There's nothing here about Jesus." I said, "Oops."

You might think, "It's a Christian website." But we put up the *Four Spiritual Laws,* and we started getting one or two people a day telling us they received Christ. I should not have been surprised because we've been doing long distance ministry. We began getting these statistics. Then I said, "I wonder what would happen if we start putting up other languages?" So we started adding different language versions of the *Four Spiritual Laws,* and we began to get two to four, three to five decisions per day.

I worked with our friends in Canada, and had a great designer develop a site called "Who's Jesus Really?" If you type "Jesus" into Yahoo you'll come to that site; it's number one. We jumped to five to eight decisions a day. We started doing other versions of that site in different languages. If you go there now, there are 30 major languages, and you can click on a link that will take you to 150 language versions of the *Four Spiritual Laws.*

As I've worked with the Internet Evangelism Coalition, and I've thought about what needs the body of Christ has, I got infected with the "Bill Bright virus." It's a virus which comes from mediating on John 17, Jesus' prayer for unity. Bill modeled John 17. Promise Keepers was about to go down the drain because they would not take more registration funds. The coach had just said "Make it for free." Bill stepped in and said, "I'll mail to our entire Campus Crusade list." I don't know how many millions came in, and Coach McCartney almost was in tears, because no other organization stepped forward in such a major way. Bill's heart for unity infected Steve Douglas, the current president, and it's infected me. This is what I think is a way to do kingdom ministry.

More ministries are creating evangelistic websites, yet few have adequate response systems. How many webmasters do you know who have deleted bunches of inquiries to their sites? Quite a few. Because they're overwhelmed. They were techies. They did the website, they're keeping it going, but they don't have time to answer all these questions.

Some proper response to internet inquiries: First, some response is better than no response. Second, just sending an automatic response is the minimum that we should do. As Walt Wilson, a wonderful Christian brother who was on the first team to build the Apple computer, said, "People should answer people, not computers." There's a major ministry in this country that uses artificial intelligence software. You type in your question, the software parses the sentence. it'll spit out ten different links that might help you—hopefully. You have to really drill down until you get to a possibility of talking with a person. You contact the person and he will send you a templated response with a little bit of personalization. That's what they do. What we need to do is integrate high tech with high touch, which is both an art and a science. We need to be seeking to involve growing numbers of online volunteers who can personally answer sincere seekers' or believers' questions.

What we need to do is integrate high tech with high touch, which is both an art and a science.

While we'll continue to develop some basic evangelism sites and improve others, such as "Who's Jesus Really?" we decided the best way to help the global body of Christ would be to spend the time, effort, and funds to develop a world-class online response system. We want to develop a system which, rather than being competitive, simply allows each denomination, university, and/or ministry to use a good back end response solution which they control for each of their sites; one which allows ready access to central measurements. We want to see collaboration in the context of our functions.

For example, in working with Evangelism Explosion, we're asking for their list of churches overseas, churches they work with, that would welcome seekers or interested believers. We don't want mainline churches that couldn't care less about Jesus Christ. We want the good churches. We want the ones where there's a heartbeat for evangelism, follow-up, and discipleship. At least there would be a core in the church who cares about people. You don't want to send them to a church that doesn't care and increase the bad experience.

We want to enable ministries everywhere to accomplish more effective ministry without harming them or traditional ministries. Traditional ministries might get scared of this. Steve Douglas has said he thinks by the year 2010 there'll be more ministry done by Campus Crusade via the internet than through all of our traditional ministries. That's scary if you're a person who is high control, and if you have a traditional ministry and you're not willing to change. But it's wonderful if you're a person who says, "Gee, God is providing new technology, and I can unite that with timeless truth of the Gospel." You need leaders who are good adapters, who say, "The issue is not the technology, and there are no sacred cows. I'm going to figure out what works, and I'm going to honor God by putting resources into that." It's not that I'm going to say goodbye to traditional ministry. I'm saying that the new opportunities should be pursued. You continue to support traditional ministry, but you also support these new opportunities with innovative ministry.

We need to allow the church denomination or ministry to maintain central control instruction of their community. This was important in building what we did, a system which provides global functionality and decreases the frustration level by incorporating simple administrative processes, especially for the volunteers, but also for the team leader. It's rule-based. Our software has community team leaders with extensive control of functionality: language, routing of context, contents, stats from measurement, ability of volunteer assignments to regulate that, training of volunteers, templates you use. The aging features are used. We also wanted to make sure that whatever we developed could be used in internet cafés, as well as on personal computers. We have a lot of computers here in the United States but in Beirut, very few people have their own PCs. On almost every other block. though, there's an internet café they can get on.

if people know somebody who truly follows Jesus, they'll be seeing the Gospel live.

I'm going to share some of our work which incorporates these principles. GMO, Global Media Outreach, is the overall ministry I report to in Crusade. We want to present the good news of Jesus Christ to billions of people, fulfilling the Great Commission of each generation by leveraging cutting-edge communication technologies in native languages, through cultural windows, while partnering with many online volunteers for many churches, denominations, and organizations. Our intended outcome is to develop multiplying leaders to win the lost, build them in their faith through discipleship, connect them to local movements and churches, and send them into the world. The result would be that eventually, everyone in the world will know somebody who truly follows Jesus.

Steve Douglas believes that once we get to that point, the Great Commission will be fulfilled, because if people know somebody who truly follows Jesus, they'll be seeing the Gospel live. Those who've never been told about Jesus will see, those who have never heard of him will understand. I was talking with Walt Wilson and he said, "I'm going to places in the world I've never been." And he's the world traveller. He was answering evangelistic e-mail from all over the world. He was so excited.

Most of you know that hits on a webpage do not accurately measure the number of people who come to your site. My heart aches when donors get figures and don't know what is actually being said— "Oh, we had a million hits per month." They've got 50 graphic images per page, so, yes, they had 20,000 people. Let's be ethical here. In like manner, somebody who clicks a button which indicates they've received Christ may not have just received Christ. They may be indicating a redecision; they may be a Christian wondering what's on the other side of the link; it could be a webmaster checking out the site.

Measurement is really important to me, maybe it's because I came from a science background. We've taken the six steps of ministry involvement, and we've modified it with the Ingalls scale. We've created a response form and we attach it to different sites. We can re-skin this so it seamlessly looks like it's part of the original site. It doesn't have Campus Crusade plastered over it. We have *The Passion of the Christ,* on which we worked with the Mel Gibson group. 350,000 people come to that site. "God Loves the World" is getting hundreds of contacts every day. "Meant for More" is our recent teenage site. We cannot keep up with the volume of e-mails that are coming from these kids.

We can place a similar form to submit a response in each of the websites, and these response forms are the entry point for contacts to enter our online ministry correspondence center.

On a long form, we tell them at the very top that they don't have to fill in anything, but the more they fill in, the better we can help them. We're hopeful they'll at least give us a comment. Many of them do fill these in, especially people from India. They will fill out every single thing that you put there. They're just great, and most of them have just such a sweet heart, really appreciative.

We differentiate between country and nationality, because maybe it's an Indian living in Los Angeles. Phone. Age. We tell people who are under thirteen that they can't give us personal information unless their parents okay that. In fact, our system is designed to not accept the information if they click here. Gender is here. Profession. We actually look for athletes, business people, college students, high school students, homemakers, government leaders, pastors, so they can tell us. This is the win section: "I just prayed to receive Christ my savior for the first time." That's very important to us. "I have now rededicated my life"— that drops the figure. It doesn't look as great to the donors. But the smart guys are going to say, "Thank you, I've always wondered about that. Thank you for being accurate." Be honest with the donors, show them that you're doing your work well in a Godly, business way, and they'll put some money there.

Be honest with the donors, show them that you're doing your work well in a Godly, business way, and they'll put some money there.

Other responses: "I'm already a Christian." "I'd like to invite Christ into my life." "I'm unsure." "I'm just not interested in receiving Christ at this time." I had two of those, but they gave me their comments. One was, "What about where Jesus was on the cross, you know, Father, why have you forsaken me?" I think it was a woman, Helen. I wrote back, "Helen, that's a great question. That shows a lot of thought. Did you know when he made that quote on the cross, all the Jews around the foot of the cross would realize that was the very first line of Psalm 22? And here, if you go to this site, and read the psalm, keep in mind that crucifixion was not a form of punishment known to the world at that time, or hundreds of years later. This was prophecy. So Christ, choking the words out as he was dying, was reminding them that he was fulfilling prophecy. Think about that. And if you're interested and you come to a point where you're saying maybe I do want to know Christ, go to whoisjesus really.org."

Here's a short form we use for "God Loves the World," which is the *Four Spiritual Laws.* Once a person clicks on submit, it goes into the magical box. Even though I direct World Link Ministry, I have never put up a webpage in my life. That's not my gifting. I could learn how to do that, but I have wonderful folks who serve Jesus, because they have better brains for that than I do. I come up with ideas, and they help make it work. So we have a genius in our office named Jim, who has created this system using open source, nonproprietary. The reason is Americans who've come up with all this software in Campus Crusade would bring it overseas, and the staff would say, "That looks interesting." The Americans would give the price as only $5000 a month, or a year, and the staff would exclaim, "They don't have $5000. They just don't have the money we do. You can charge somebody in the United States that, but you couldn't do that in Lebanon." Because we wanted to be Kingdom-minded, we thought from the beginning we'd do something open source. It's rules-based, with modules.

This is the Arcmail alert. You have a screen, once you put in your penname and password it comes up automatically. Siam's going to go through more of how to read these things.

In this example there'd be three people, three contacts. We have an aging function, so that if you've not answered it in, let's say, three days, it goes from blue to yellow; another three days, it goes to red. As you're going through your tasks real quckly you can say, "I need to get to this one." If for some reason you don't, it's taken out of your virtual mailbox and reassigned to the next person in line.

These are real people, with real needs. Why aren't we responding quickly to them? Are they any less real, since we can't go down to Chik-Fil-A and have a cup of coffee or a sandwich with them? Are they less important? Are their souls less important to Christ? Are their questions less important because we're not face-to-face with them? We've really got to rethink what ministry is. It's great when we can do face-to-face, but there are many people who have questions that we cannot get face-to-face with, except through this system.

These are real people, with real needs.
Why aren't we responding quickly to them?

I got involved in all this through chat. I was watching about 13 of us converse back and forth. I said, "You know, if I shared John 3:16 in here, everybody's got to read it. And if they read it, they've just been infiltrated by the living Word of God. And if they've been infiltrated by the living Word of God, they'll either come to their salvation, or—the unfortunate part—it would be part of their condemnation." That really spawned this whole heart passion of mine: we were in a place where Christians came to chat. A Christian who was involved in the chat ministry with me was asking about my personal testimony. I started to share it. About that time, two people popped into the channel, sat there and watched what was going on. At the end of my personal testimony they both said, "I want what you have. How do I have that?" And there, in chat, we led them to Christ. That was it, for me—I'm done, this is it, this is where I want to be. I'm going to go share Jesus out here. And that's what I've been doing since about '96.

My background is engineering, telecommunications with British Telecom, MCI, and all the other big characters. I don't come from a ministry background, per se, as far as coming out of the church. The Lord called me out of an executive level position, right out of corporate America, and it's been baptism by fire ever since, so I've been learning on the ground. In many cases that's been really good because there's a number of presuppositions that I don't have from being in that environment. In other cases it works against you because there are some things you miss from not being in ministry. But God is gracious and he's on the throne and what he's doing to date is incredible. I'm going to hit you with a couple things. I want to state right up front, something that my psych teacher in seminary discussed: Your perspective is your reality.

I chewed on that comment for about two weeks real hard. Every one of you is coming from a different place. You've been "culturalized" by whatever your background is. I don't know if the internet's the solution for you. I don't know how you view the internet. However you think about it, you always need to have a "Yes, Lord" in your heart, no matter what he asks you to do.

One of the Gospel presentations here is a 9/11 presentation. I was in Syracuse when all that happened, and 24 hours later I was standing on the pile digging out bodies with firemen and police officers and everybody else for about three weeks as a chaplain. It had nothing to do with my ministry. It had nothing to do with the internet. Because of some of my background and things of that nature I was drafted into that situation very, very quickly. So, when I share with you that you need to have a "Yes, Lord" in your heart, I say that very sincerely.

If you think about Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, or the Last Crusade, he's standing on this side, and over there is where he needs to be. He's standing on this side saying, "Believe, believe," and Sean Connery's out there saying, "Believe, boy, believe." What does this belief do? It kept him here. Until he exercised faith, until he put his foot out there, he didn't discover there was solid ground. There's a Holy Grail on the other side that the Lord wants you to drink out of. But you've got to put your faith-foot out there, and you've got to discover what that is. When you get there, I guarantee, there's going to be another one, and there'll be another one; because it never stops at the one he lets you drink out of that time. At least it hasn't been for me.

Understanding what you are looking at is critical for the correct interpretation of a response.

So let's step into this. We're going to talk about responses. If you're doing anything out on the web at all, the very nature of what you're doing should, in some way, be driving for somebody to respond to you. Is it e-mail? Is it all those other things? It's probably all that, but I qualify it as a response. Somebody is responding to either your website, or a Gospel presentation, or something that you're putting out there. The Arc application was some technology and some thought framing that I'd brought with me from the North American Mission Board. It was a gift from Microsoft because Microsoft has a little thing they call MSNBC News Alert. I had, by the grace of God, been able to get in contact with Michael Wan with MSNBC. They released all the software to me, and said, "Go ahead and develop whatever you want." I was sharing with him how we wanted to use it to share Christ and get people involved and he said, "Great, that's awesome. Have at it." He wasn't a Christian, but I got to share Jesus with him. The Lord works all that stuff together.

Understanding what you are looking at is critical for the correct interpretation of a response. There is valuable and insightful data for you to discern while formulating the correct response or a series of responses. There are going to be many times when people respond back in checkboxes that you provide them, comment boxes or fields, or something of that nature. Remember, these are, in my opinion, divine appointments. Through God's favor something has happened out on that end out of whatever he has called you to put up. He has caused that person to have some type of interaction, where he has delivered that person over to you; now that person is providing some type of response back to you. That, in and of itself, is just a very passionate and incredible heartbeat.

REV. ALLAN BEEBER serves on the Executive Committee of the Internet Evangelism Coalition, chaired by Sterling Huston, director of the North American Billy Graham Evangelistic Organization. He continues developing The Evangelism Toolbox at www.evangelismtoolbox.com, which lists many of the best evangelistic materials in the world from various organizations with appropriate links. It is usually rated in the top five of Google.com. He worked with the Billy Graham Association to create a CD-ROM version that was distributed to the 10,000 itinerant evangelists at Amsterdam 2000.

Using Guerrilla Marketing in Internet Marketing

by Chris Forbes

Let's talk about guerilla marketing. Jay Conrad Levinson, author and founder of Guerilla Marketing International, says an ordinary marketer sells to markets, but guerilla marketing sells to individuals. That's very compatible with what we're talking about: being concerned about people. A guerilla marketer would never go for the quick sale just so that he could make a fast buck, because a guerilla marketer knows that you never really close a sale; you open a relationship. In the marketing world the purpose of maintaining a relationship is to increase your sales.

Once you've sold to someone, it's easier to sell to them again. In the ministry marketing context, developing a relationship is important. You don't just walk up to the guy in 7-11 and say, "How are you doing and you need to accept Jesus Christ and here's how you get to heaven." You usually say, "Wow, this is a really good Big Gulp. Wow, they even have a bigger Super Gulp in the store. You can store rain water for later." Don't you usually make conversation if you know the person? You might not even share the Gospel with the person on the first time, because you know you're going to be back to spend more time. A lot of times on our evangelism websites, we just jump right in and assume a person is ready for it. You can build a lot more relationship if you continue to focus on the individual.

There are a couple of books I really like, with a lot of the tech stuff that's a little dated, but what you want to glean is the marketing principles, and not the tactics. That's the problem with internet books—technology is always changing and there is always something new, making it impossible to stay abreast of the latest thing. If you have good discipline you'll know what to look for. Also look at the "Online Marketing Superstars" course. There are a lot of marketers on the internet who make a living selling products online. These are a collection of lessons from guerilla marketers, some of whom we know in ministry, the big names in internet marketing.

One of the things that you need to get into your mind is, when you are doing internet marketing you're doing the most sublime form of direct marketing. There are a lot of things you can do with the internet in terms of branding and just talking about your brand. But we're looking for a

response, and response marketing is direct marketing. So I'd encourage you all to look at some of the direct marketing materials that are out there. If we're engaging in internet evangelism we are doing direct marketing.

Sometimes people may feel a little bit nervous talking about marketing. Think of marketing like any other business discipline the church uses—management, budgeting, time management. Marketing brings us a way to manage our communications. So just as a ministry wouldn't be a good steward of its resources by not having a budget and sticking with it, it wouldn't be saying that you're not depending on the Holy Spirit to lead your ministry to have a budget or have time management. The same is true for marketing. I liken marketing to a farmer; in evangelism Christ uses that analogy. No farmer should stand before God and say, "I grew the crop." God brings the increase; but what farmer worth his soul doesn't cultivate, doesn't till, and get active? Just because he's active doesn't mean he doesn't depend on God. Just because you're active in marketing doesn't mean you aren't depending on God. Marketing is involved in every contact you have with people. So every internet contact you have with your internet ministry, every contact for church marketing, is not just the promotional side—ads or a website or what not. It's also how clean your bathrooms. A guy wanted to do a billboard for his church. I asked, "Would it be okay if I came out and toured your church to see what it's like? Because you know, I'm using an extreme example, I'd hate for your basement to smell like raw sewage or something and then you advertise that."

Guerilla marketers don't have a lot of money so they use time, energy, and imagination.

He got really silent on the phone for a minute. "Funny you should mention that, because our fellowship hall has an odor that's unique about it." I said, "Your best marketing expenditure would be to fix that versus a billboard. We don't want to use a billboard to increase the speed at which people find out how bad the smell is. You know why they call them pews? They will wash the cushions.

What do I mean by guerilla marketing? Guerilla marketers don't have a lot of money so they use time, energy, and imagination. Instead of spending money you're going to have to trade off. Because you don't have millions of dollars, you're going to have to get active. There is no such thing as passive marketing. "Guerilla" in guerilla marketing refers to guerilla warfare—using unconventional means to achieve a conventional objective. It's asymmetrical marketing. There are tactics that, for example, Dr. Pepper would never do. They would never take a stapler and a poster, and put posters in all the laundromats in the city. A "mother day's out" program for a church might; or a ministry to immigrants might do something like that. Guerilla marketing is using strategies and tactics that aren't like spending money.

I'll show you a couple and you'll be surprised. The thing about marketing in the guerilla sense is that marketing is a circle, it never ends. Don't imagine it as one parade where one float goes by—oooh ahh. Great, what's next? You just watch it go by and there's a fireworks display. Everything is unconnected. But your marketing has to be connected and it's an ongoing process. Think about marketing as most people do it: it's a direct line, looking for more customers but they

are ignoring the people they have been reaching. There's a lot more in reaching more people in terms of getting your message out; there's people who can help you continue. Guerilla marketing uses these tactics to help other people share your message.

I'm going to talk about how guerilla marketing can help your evangelistic website. Out on the web I talked about how to get attention on the internet with so many distractions, so many things out there. It's hard to build an audience for your website. People can outspend you and do all sorts of things you can't do to fill traffic since you don't have the money. But you can capture people's attention by doing things that are guerilla. You are going to do things that money can't buy. A lot of the marketing opportunities out there are completely free, just requiring you to do them.

Some of the tactics I'm going to talk about relate to that. I'm going to give you some material that is straight from Jay Conrad Levinson, *The Eight Golden Rules for your Website.* You'll see here that I have number one and then I'm going to riff a little and add my own ideas and input there. But the first thing you want to do for your marketing website is to know what you want to accomplish with your website. I remember my first website. I had the ability to make a website and I got all excited but realized I didn't have anything to say. I was just excited. How many websites are out there are still in that mode? There's really nothing there but people are excited about having websites. Okay, it's not 1994 anymore. It's not unique that you have a website. I know you may be excited that you have the weather on your website. Some people are like that: I have weather on my website—just click that. Or I have weather on the moon on my website. That's my competitive advantage. You need to have a strategy for what you are trying accomplish. As a guerilla marketer, you don't just want hits, you want to meet people. If that's your objective you're going to win. But if it's just to get hits, and more hits than the other guy, this is not the class for you. There are some things you can do to grab more traffic but I really don't want just traffic, I want to meet people and present them with my message. So in my planning I get on the internet and I think about people I want to reach. Then I start crafting a plan to reach them by researching them.

As a guerilla marketer, you don't just want hits, you want to meet people. If that's your objective, you're going to win.

In planning I also try to benchmark other sites in my area and see which ones get good traffic. I use alexa.com. This is where it gets interesting. Now I'm going to Alexa now. You can track the stats on any website. I'm going to go to Rick Warren's purposedrivenlife.com. From "purposedrivenlife" I can see their traffic ranking and they're 45,000 off the web. I can benchmark that and say that's a pretty good ranking. MSN normally gets a number one ranking, but now it's Yahoo, because more people use it. All the way down the list to his website—it's 45,000 on the list. You can look up your website to see how you relate and you can also benchmark other sites by looking at their reach and see his statistics are growing. Look at the end—you can probably see the big jump being the Atlanta situation. His book sales jumped up on Amazon during that time. You can also see his ranking over time. You can do that on yours also. It'll only rank you if you're in the top 100,000. They've been there since October and their traffic is growing. You can see where page views go and how many pages per person. By the way, I meant to say reach, which is the number of people—it's an advertising term that the number of people

per million who see the website. Another thing you could do with this tool is to compare sites together. Let me go to HollywoodJesus.com. Now I'm comparing page views from "HollywoodJesus" versus "purposedrivenlife." Comparing their ranking, how they're growing.

I want a marketing plan and I write down what I want to do. I want to be able to share with my team, which is why I want to write it down. I set out a calendar with a monthly and daily marketing schedule: I'm going to post a list or guide on Amazon.com. I'm going to do an e-mail blast to my newsletter list that talks about another feature on my website. Write those things down and put yourself on a schedule to do that. Decide on your MWR: your *most wanted response*. Normally you don't know what your MWR is. There are so many options on there it confuses most people. Get Seth Godden's book *Big Red Fez*—it's about that thick—it'll take you one cup of latte to read it so any internet person can do it. By the way, I just recommend that you read. 95% of books purchased are not read past the first chapter. What is your most wanted response? You want to drive people towards that. I think the best most wanted response is that people either come to my website and leave their e-mail, make a purchase or leave. If they leave I want to try to recycle them one last time by giving them an opportunity to respond to me. The most wanted response is the main thing that we're looking for: a response to the gospel.

You want to market who you are, not who you're not. Build on your strengths and your ministry and your website.

Rule number two is to have great content on your website that will attract your visitors. That's what keeps people coming back. It's also an issue for people. What are we going to have on there? I have some strategies. First of all, one of the things about your content is, if you have no response ii's because you don't write for response. Articles that inform should be on your website. If you want responses, you need to use direct marketing tactics that ask for a response. The AIDA is a standard direct marking format. The A is for attention-getting headline; the I is for interest, the D is for desire—make them want to do this; I really think I should do this. Some of the things you do to build desire besides pitching is having testimonial and social proofs. That's one of the aspects of evangelism—personal testimony builds credibility. It says, "This is someone like my peer."

Back to the facade, you want to market who you are, not who you're not. Build on your strengths and your ministry and your website. If you over-promise with your graphics and art and things that you're not. people are going to distrust you later. So you want to be who you are. Here are some content tips I like. I like swapping banners. I like having a different look on my website every time you hit refresh. When people come to the website and it looks the same even though the content has changed, you can try the 1995 "New." But that's old. What I like to do is have a different look, and I also like to rotate my content. I put new articles on the front line. Put the most read article on the top, something that makes it a little bit different. You can hire a writer relatively inexpensively. There are a lot of freelance writers out there who are interested in helping you. You can throw up on paper give it to a writer and he'll make it look nice. Depending on the writer it could be as little as $20 for 800 words. For finding writers there's, "Get Rusty in here. he's a writer." There's also some of websites that have Christian content on them; those writers also like to freelance. A lot of my stuff was written from the international mission board. Also, if you see something you like on a site, ask the author if you can reprint it.

Don't try to do too many things with your website. If you're not sure how to do some design things, go and ask questions. Back to Rick Warren's website—remember here when we were looking at it? I'm on alexa.com and I go back here to the wayback machine and I want to see what it looked like when that site first got started. You can go back to 1996 with different webs. Let's see what it was like when it first came out. You can surf your website from years ago. I like to go back and go to websites I really respect and see when they really stunk to make myself feel better. You can see a lot of design changes over time. That's a lesson in itself. Some of the best education you get is from what not to do. Get feedback and critique about your website. Most people don't want to know how bad their website is, if it's bad. Earlier, someone came up and said there's something right there [points to his face]. I would have rather known before we started. It's better to know. Your grandma is not going to tell you how ugly you are. You need to hear a word of criticism. Your critic is not your enemy. Ask someone who can tell you and give their input. Don't take it personally. There's more wisdom in multiple minds than a single mind.

On production, avoid too much tech. Just because you can do it doesn't mean you should do it.

There are a lot of things you can do with DreamWeaver or FrontPage—more than ever—and there are blogs and templates that you can download. Depending on what your ministry is, you really want to consider whether or not to do it yourself. There are a lot of graphic designers that are trained to use good design conventions and optimize your site for search engines. There are so many out there that are working, you would be surprised at how inexpensively you can develop a website. One guy that I use is ministrybeehive.com. He will design a logo for you for $125 and he is a Christian. He designs websites, print materials, and he is a registered graphic artist in Canada. He is an excellent artist and doesn't care about the size of your organization; he doesn't charge you differently. I would recommend him: ministrybeehive.com from David Gagne.

On production, avoid too much tech. Just because you can do it doesn't mean you should do it. There are so many websites that can do stuff with Java—my favorite is the trailing mouse cursor. Hey look the letters are mixed up will it ever reassemble?! That was funny and interesting eight years ago but now it's just annoying. Some of the things that the web can do are not contributing to what you are doing. On Flash intros, I'm not a big fan of the splash screens because I don't see much benefit; there have only been a couple of pages I liked. Anytime you come to a website that says, "please wait," you're already losing traffic.

If you look at your web stats you'll see your front page gets the most traffic. If you wanted to cut your web traffic in half then go ahead and have a splash page. Pay attention to how you're using fonts. Blue letters on a black background don't work, it's hard to read—some simple things like that. I wouldn't use a whole lot of white text; I think search engines will think I'm trying to spoof them. People will put a lot of meta tags in white on a background to fool the search engines. The search engines have learned to spot that sort of stuff. Google will automatically reject it. I'm not an expert but I have experienced it. Production makes sure your website works before you promote. Make sure that the navigation and tools work. Recently, I was able to help judge a contest for a website in journalism.

You'd be so surprised. Websites submitted themselves to the contest and their websites didn't function. The navigation was broken. All the permalinks were broken. That's a bad thing. Your website is like a garden. You have to keep it weeded to make sure it's working. Soon there will be content on this page, but right now let this graphic of "under construction" suffice. I think I'm coming back, I can't wait to see what they put right here at this spot. If it's under construction there's no need to have it live or in your navigation until it's ready.

Number six, follow up when people visit your site or e-mail you, or ask or answer questions. The real key is to stay in touch. The number one thing is to respond to people and to be there. Answer their e-mail when you get it. It's not going to go away, it's just going to get colder and colder. It's difficult but you need to answer your e-mail. You may not have many responses because you didn't ask for any responses. None was necessary so none was given. You want to use the AIDA on your website.

You must promote your site online by registering with search engines and linking with other sites, while promoting it offline in mass media, mailings, and wherever your name appears.

Collect e-mails that you can follow up on. Always be capturing something from your website so that you can follow up on. Most people that visit your website may never come back again. But those whose e-mail you have—you can make them come back a couple of times. Always make sure they can opt out of your e-mails. In marketing and direct marketing, direct marketers say the money is in the list. For a guerilla marketer, they use the list to extend the value of their customer base by getting more purchases out of each customer. For you, you're not selling anything, but deepening the relationship each person has. You can offer things that segment-out people. Now you've got a list of really important leads towards evangelism or helping you network to improve your ministry. Don't just have evangelism, segment that list.

Another thing guerilla marketers do is have sequential auto responders on their website. A sequential auto responder could be used for evangelism purposes. You could offer a sequential auto responder that people subscribe to. For example, I'll use "Forty Days of Purpose." He could offer forty days of purpose as a reason to come see you. He comes over the space of forty days and touches people in an area that is evangelistic, or takes things deeper into the site. For forty days an e-mail comes in from there. If I subscribe on a Monday, forty days from Monday the subscription ends. A lot of guerrilla marketers do that and automate their website where they can because people on the web like instant response. So it could be midnight and I'm getting an e-mail from an auto responder because I just signed up for the newsletter. I don't want to wait around for a week or two weeks or whenever David got around to sending out an e-mail.

Number seven. Promotion: you must promote your site online by registering with search engines and linking with other sites, while promoting it offline in mass media, mailings and wherever your name appears. Now I'm not going to get into search engine optimization, but I want to tell you three ways people are going to get to your website. One, they're going to type your URL into their browser and go. Two, they're going to click on a link and go to your website; or, three, they're going to find you in a search engine.

A lot of internet ministries only focus on two of these, search engine optimization or working really busily at getting linked up, or even spend lots of money on Google ads to drag traffic to their website. Incidentally, you want to use the AIDA when you're using Google ads or click ads because you need to have an attention-getting headline that really draws people. I forgot to say that earlier.

There are lots of ways of getting your URL out there if you promote it. Here are some ways to promote your URL. One is to be sure to send out news releases on a regular basis. In fact, this conference was promoted heavily by sending out news releases through the free news release services that are out there. When you send out a news release, even if the major media don't pick it up, the search engines pick up that story. It becomes part of the results when people search for something related to a keyword of something you are talking about. So I could send out news releases about diet and other things too. I could start appearing in those and I have my dietright.com, and people will go there if they click on a link; or maybe the news release website won't allow me to post a URL as a hypertext link, but it may allow me to just put my URL in there.

A fusion partner is someone who is also looking for your target audience, but is targeting them for another area.

Use offline tools to get your URL out there, to buy ads, advertise in targeted magazines. You could advertise in magazines that dieters read, on the back of major magazines; I could drive traffic that way. I could have cards that I give out to people. I put my logo on t-shirts or squeeze bottles or oven mitts—there are lots of things out there. In fact most of my strategy for my websites, mostimportantthing.com and code2life.com, are related to offline promotion. In fact that's almost exclusively what I do. I have a bias in that area because I want to target Oklahoma, and I can't afford to buy ads on all the Oklahoma websites. But I know I can find Oklahomans in different locations; for instance, I can go to the State Fair in Oklahoma and find a lot of Oklahomans. I was actually thinking of creating an evangelistic website for NASCAR drivers called mulletover.com, which would disprove the belief that Dale Earnhardt rose from the dead.

Another way people can find your site by typing in your URL is by getting fusion partners out there to help you promote it. A fusion partner is someone who is also looking for your target audience, but is targeting them for another area. They're not necessarily a competitor, they're a potential partner. You can help promote them, they can help promote you, and it's a mutually beneficial arrangement. Also I like to use a lot of networking tools with people I meet, especially people who can help get my URL out there. I use Plaxo and I am proud Plaxo user. Those people who don't like to get Plaxo updates, just get Plaxo and you won't see them anymore. Just submit people! I've found Plaxo helps me to keep in touch with a lot of people. This is my pitch: it reminds me of someone's birthday and I can send them and e-card; it puts them on my calendar to remember to pray for them; or also I might have their e-mail, but not their phone or cell phone number, and if they happen to fill that out, then I do. Then if they ever change it, it updates automatically. Whatever network tool you use, manage your contacts and keep in touch. George Bush is president because he has a great big rolodex and he keeps in touch with people. He writes notes and

meets people. When he gets a business card, he takes that card and at the end of the day and writes down what he remembers of that person and then works out a creative way he might be able to stay in touch. That's how George Bush's dad did it, and that's an important ministry practice, anyway.

Give away content. You can give articles to other websites. The most traffic I ever had was because I gave an article to the Rick Warren website. They allowed me to put it on there, and it drove traffic back to my website. Giving away content with your URL will also get people out there.

Click a link. You can join online communities that are out there. Your link will be in your profile, and you can also put it in a forum post that you have,or as a footer on your e-mail, and it will be there every time.

Start your own forum. There are lots of different forums, I'm sure there are diet forums I could join and get involved in, where I could begin to communicate and build credibility for my new evangelistic website related to dieting.

Also use viral marketing tools like the track we talked about. Has anybody seen jibjab.com? There really needs to a "jibjab" for Christianity, I just don't know if we can afford it, but something that spreads like wildfire because of the novelty of it, or the media of it. Also e-books—I'm giving away 25 free marketing tools on my website. I put production into it to make it nice. It's a good book, it will help people. It's for churches, and any church can do these 25 free things to help improve their marketing right away. In exchange for the value of giving them this book I get their e-mail, so I can keep in touch with them and communicate. Who knows, I might consult with them, or I might have another opportunity, or I might make a new friend. E-books are a great tool and very popular on the internet. I could compile a diet book based on information I've got, a 20-page e-book on dieting that people could download, and I would get their e-mail.

Use different kinds of media, like "jibjab" with flash presentations or videos—those are good uses of flash. Promotion, clicking a link, using e-mail footers—make sure that your URL is at the foot of every e-mail that you send. Post it on web bulletin boards; even go to the laundromat, if you like.

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Making the Cultural Connection
by David Bruce

David Bruce: Since I think this is my last time, I'll think I'll just simply be even more pointed in my remarks. There's a hesitancy, I've noticed, in the conference to really say the obvious. We're in deep trouble, the Church. Our present models are not working, and as long as we want to pretend like this is God's will that we bring people into models that aren't working, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. And we just need to, quite bluntly, allow the Holy Spirit to have a place in our lives and in our fellowships, and let God evolve what needs to evolve so that we can be better servants to those that Jesus Christ died for and that God dearly loves. And then if that isn't our attitude, if our attitude is more maintaining institution systems, we're dead. My entire existence in the Church has been, always, evangelism is the stepping stone into the institution and into a paradigm of what church is. And I don't think that that's a right one. I think evangelism is the step into Christ. If I'm not mistaken, the Church is not an institution, but it's a spiritual body. Protestants have historically believed in the church within the Church. Does anybody know what that means?

[Inaudible audience member]

David Bruce: Thank you. Born-again believers, the Church largely hates—not necessarily but largely—hates on Sunday. THE Church consists of the born-again believers that might go to the Baptist Church, the Pentecostal Church, the Methodist Church. Collectively, that's the Church. The Church within the different churches. It's old stuff, but we forget and I think we just need to really make it clear. Evangelism is about bringing people into relationships with God through Jesus Christ. That's evangelism. Evangelism works best in relationship—being there for the other person through thick and thin, modeling God's love, and that MAY not involve anything to do with the local church. I don't think that's really radical, but it seems like it is. It's just the way it is. Our present models work for some, but are not working for most.

O.K. Making cultural connections. Speaking largely to those under 35, the key point with me: Are people over 35 important? Say Yes. Should there be ministry for people over 35? Say Yes. But where is the Church failing the most? Yes! Youth Specialty says that if a young person does not

accept Jesus Christ by the age of 18 (someone told me this was an old statistic, and it's more now, but I'll just go with what I heard) that there's an 85% chance they never will. If you're in a local church or an institution, what is the most, THE most important, without exception, ministry of the Church? Youth ministry. Absolutely. What is the most underfunded, besides missions and internet evangelism? [laugh] Do we want to die or not? I do believe the American evangelical church—disagree with me if you want, but I do believe it—has a death wish, and I don't understand it.

I thought a little example today of the opening speech where he says, "I was talking to a major historic denomination, and we looked at the homepage of where was there an invitation to understand the gospel, and it wasn't even there. It wasn't even a thought." And I do think there's been a radical shift, just simply new cultural realities that go largely overlooked. But you know what? You all are here because in your heart you know that things have changed. God has called you, and you don't necessarily fit in in the paradigm that you're in. I just know that, or you wouldn't be here. You go to the beat of a different drum than most.

What is the most, THE most important, without exception, ministry of the Church? Youth Ministry.

I think that we're in a time when we're a media-saturated culture, and that we should be able to use that. As a matter of fact, we should be able to use that better than Disney, and I think we should be able to use it better than Warner Brothers or any of these other holding companies. Somebody asked me just before this about copyright laws. Would you like me to talk to you about copyright laws and use of images and works in copyright in church? You want me to do that? And if you want the copyright law I'll be glad to e-mail it to you. What you do is you send me a little e-mail at david@HollywoodJesus.com. Just say, "Hi. I met you at the internet conference at Liberty and you said you could send me the copyright law. Please do." And I'll send it to you. And what the copyright law says is this: If you have a legal right to do something, do you think you should be able to exercise that right? Do you think it's good stewardship to say, "Well, O.K., so I have a legal right. I'm not going to do it." We give up a lot of legal rights as Christians, but this is one that is really good. Here it is. How many of you pay a fee to CCLI? In CCLI you get this little list and you've got to write down the worship songs that you've used, right? Or probably, approximate it. And then based on the number of people in your congregation, you send money to CCLI. Am I right? When did the Church ever have to do that? When? Never.

[Inaudible audience response]

David Bruce: It happened before and after. The nice thing about CCLI is it gives money to groups who otherwise wouldn't have compensation for their work. I like that. A lot of people ask me, "Should we give to CCLI?" I think sure, of course, keep track and send the money. Consider that like a donation to groups that need money to survive. It's not easy, sometimes, being a Christian musician. So on the one hand, I want to say that that's a good thing. But that has nothing to do with your legal right to use works in copyright in worship service. Copyright law says there's a little section called Worship Exemption Clause, and the Worship Exemption Clause says this: you can perform any work in copyright within the context of a worship service. I consider this a worship service. And

then the second one we fall under is barely used, which everyone does. Worship Exemption Clause is really very liberal for churches, and what it says is that you can sing a hymn in copyright, or any hymn or any song or any work or any poem or any video or anything else—as a matter of fact it even says audio/video media—in its entirety within the context of a worship service. You have a legal right to do it. If you sing, "Happy birthday to you..." on *The Tonight Show* you owe that estate money. If you sing that in church, as we always have, you owe nobody anything.

Back to the days of the hymnals—just remember when you used to sing the songs out of the hymnal—you didn't have to pay anybody. Now under CCLI, you do. You actually have no legal precedent; there's no legal precedent that says you have to. You have the right to the words of the music, to either say them or whatever. You can't publish them like a publishing company without paying the copyright holder, but you certainly can display them or use the music within a worship service without compensation to the legal owner.

Then "fair use" says that you can use 30 seconds of any song that's in copyright. If you go over to Amazon you see examples of that where you can see a CD, click Examples, and it will play about 30 seconds. So 30 seconds, 10% of three minutes. On a movie clip in fair use, usually you can do about three minutes. For a poem, not more than 10%. Or music, as I already said, about 30 seconds. And that's what you would do if you were doing a public event or public speaking not in the context of a worship service.

I think we spend a lot of our Christian time thinking about ways why we shouldn't really love the world.

So in any case, you could still show a movie clip. You could still play part of a song and then comment on it. The reason for that is, if you wrote a book or something like that and someone critiqued it or reviewed it, they have an absolute right to take a paragraph from your book, quote it and comment on it as part of their review, without ever compensating you or writing you for permission. The same way with blogs, Christians on blogs, you can take works in copyright as long as you're not taking the whole thing, in your commenting and in your reviewing, your critiquing, and you can just put it right there. That's under the fair use part of the copyright law.

O.K. Making cultural connections. I think these—no matter how the culture changes or how it evolves—are solid and they'll work with any culture at any time.

Generally love others. Yes, "generally" love others. I use John 3:16, and the reason why I use John 3:16 is because it says, "For God" what? "so loved the world." I think LOVED it, all the cultures, all the people, everything, just LOVED it. I think we spend a lot of our Christian time thinking about ways why we shouldn't really love the world. It's a dangerous place out there, don't you know? Greater is the one who is out there than the One who is in you. You go out there and, boy! You don't stand a chance! I think it's NONSENSE what the Church is teaching today.

Sometimes I feel like standing up in the middle of a sermon and saying, "Pastor! Have you not read the Bible? Do you not believe in the power of the Holy Spirit? Whatever happened to the preaching of the overcoming light? 'Shut yourself away in your room. Do not watch Hollywood

movies. Don't turn on the television. All these things can tear you down.' " Nonsense. Is that what you get out of the Book of Acts? "Paul was in Athens noticing the festival idols in the city. He found himself a room where he could lock himself in so that his eyes would have no evil thing before them." Have you ever looked at that?

I think part of our witness is just to be honest and open..

I get this stuff all the time at HollywoodJesus: "Dear Mr. Bruce, The Bible says, 'Don't put any evil thing in front of your eyes.' " So the last time someone did that, I took the psalm and I exegeted it for him. I said first what the psalm was saying. "I put no evil thing before my eyes." Have you ever read this psalm? Have you ever heard that phrase, anybody? I'd say this is some of Paul, and he's saying, "The evil things are people who slander," and that he's going to kill them. So it seems to me that this is more OLD Covenant than NEW Covenant.

The guy wrote back to me to address the context of that last little bit and he said, "Well, you know, Jesus often used the Psalms, like on the cross." Which is true, very true. Psalm 22, for example: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" So when David speaks, he's really speaking prophetically the words of Christ. So what you read in Psalms is really New Covenant, I think. So, Jesus was wanting to kill the woman at the well? People will go out of their way to take verses out of context in the flow of Scripture, particularly when it comes to evangelism. And being in the real world trying to bring the Kingdom, they'll just slay you.

Incarnate into the culture. So generally love the others, and incarnate into the culture. This says that God actually became—left His holy estate, all the protection of Heaven, and came down and dwelled among us. This was a maiden girl, just lowly, poor, and God allowed Himself to be birthed into a human state in the most unseemly of situations. A virgin birth? Who would believe that? And then who were the first ones to see Jesus, other than Mary and Joseph? Sweaty, stinking, smelly, swearing shepherds. That's really a huge statement by God. Incarnation. And Jesus immediately set up a ministry in the temple, didn't he? And really tried to get people to come on out to hear the last and the greatest at the temple? Never. He went out where the people were in the hillsides, hung around with the publicans, the sinners, wine dippers, and the wrong kind of women as well.

Relate confessionally. "The evil that I wouldn't, I do; and the good that I would, I don't always do." Paul was just amazingly confessional. I think part of our witness is just to be honest and open. One of the books that changed my life was Becky Pippert's *Out of the Salt Shaker.* If you haven't read it, I recommend it to you. She felt that she was a very poor witness at work because she had so many problems in her life, and that people would see that she wasn't a very good Christian, because frankly, she had problems. One day a girl came up to her and said, "I'd like you to pray for my situation. It's really bad." And Becky was just amazed that this woman who wasn't a Christian would be asking her to do that. And the woman said, "You know, you have all the same problems I do except you have a resource, and I don't have that resource." And she suddenly realized that by honestly sharing her life and what she was about, and coupling that with seeking God's help, she was witnessing. So being open and honest about who you are in your humanness and your faults—it's a tremendous, has a tremendous effect on other people, because we are all human. I think relating to confession,

there's a powerful passage, Romans 7:14-25, where Paul really spells that out. I've heard this in the pulpit preached, and I've heard preachers try to soften this, but just take it as it is in its harshness. It's good.

Be there as a friend. Romans 12. I think one of the best things to be in terms of evangelism is just to be a "Chicken Soup Christian," as I call it. When somebody's sick, you're the one who shows up with the chicken soup, and you're just there for them. No matter what, you're just there for them. You're modeling God's love. On the internet, you're just there for them with those e-mails with lots of encouragement, etc.

Think of the spiritual journey. We had a whole session in American evangelism for such a long time where we just focused on the instant conversion. Instant, instant, instant. I'm thinking that really we'd be better off if we just thought in terms of long-term journey.

"I was just a great Christian. Then I saw that *Harry Potter* movie, and now I'm a decadent, vile sinner."

What I'd like to do here is just explore basic mission principles, things that have worked. Use pop culture connections, because that's where we are. Music and movie clips. I think that music and video clips and all that are sort of like the idols of the day. They're the common ground, they are the language of our culture; and I think that we should always be interactive in the relational, either in person or on the internet. I think all the principles of good evangelism apply both in the one-to-one and p2p. Yes?

[Inaudible audience question]

David Bruce: You almost have to kind of make them. But there are some places I can tell you later. This is really interesting: In 1974, one-half of the world was within shouting distance of a evangelical Bible-centered, Christ-centered church, and today two-thirds of the people in the world have a witness in their people group. The Church is growing exponentially. The problem is that it's not happening here. The slide I showed before—it's just devastating. People with no religion. You know, I've heard people lament over *Harry Potter,* as if that's a problem; as if you just meet people all day: "Oh yeah, I was just a great Christian. Then I saw that *Harry Potter* movie, and now I'm a decadent, vile sinner." I've never heard anybody say that. It's amazing to me. They're looking for things out there.

You know, there's a passage in the Bible, "Whatsoever things are good and pure, think on these things." And that's when I decided to use movies for evangelism. I thought, "When I go to see a movie, I will never put my mind on the flesh, I will always keep my mind on the spirit." Therefore, I will look at stories redemptively, looking for that part which I can use to proclaim Christ, rather than doing the moralistic "parental guides" that Christians seem to be obsessed with. Then that becomes who people see us as—the moral policemen. I don't want to be a moral policeman, I'll let the Holy Spirit do that within the person. I just want to help people think, "Jesus." Look at this, this is just in ten years. Something is radically wrong, and it just ain't working. What I'm going to do now is just let you watch this and I'll tell you about it.

[Barely audible video being shown to audience]

David Bruce: [Commenting on video] I am a little older than most, but I do remember Christian radio my mother used to listen to. They went on and on about how rock and roll was going to be taking our children into the Communists' hands. I remember the "Christian Crusade" with Billy James Hargis—used to have David A. Noble on all the time. These probably are names that none of you are familiar with, but I just want to tell you, this was mainstream Christianity at the time. There was this big concern about rock and roll, there was something about the beat—you know, from Hell—and this beat just caused you to do things. You became like a robot, and you willingly followed the Reds and Communism, and then overthrew the United States of America. Then in the 60s and the 70s, when the Baby Boomers decided they didn't like modernity, and they decided to protest—wearing wool, the Church, why not Levis? An amazing change, but rock and roll was just music that reflected its time. And now in most churches you go into, what do you hear? The devil music? But what did we do? And this is Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis. What do they all have in common?

[Inaudible audience response]

David Bruce: Yes, and what else did they experience?

[Inaudible audience response]

David Bruce: Thank you. Watch this, this is amazing.

[Shows part of another video, *The Million Dollar Quartet*]

David Bruce: You can get those recordings, by the way. *The Million Dollar Quartet.* What do they call it? *The Million Dollar Quartet?* Yeah, very available, so if you want to hear Elvis and Johnny Cash and Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis singing the hymns, it's an amazing experience. But you see they couldn't show it in church. You know, it's typical. And that's why in my opening presentation I made a big deal about the irrelevance of the "Boomer Church." It didn't connect. Maybe that's O.K. for a huge congregation, but contemporary music is not contemporary. It's not. Yesterday I called attention to the fact that the church is 50% Boomer, over 35. What we have in the Church is a Boomer culture. Just like when the Church was monopolized by the World War II generation. Today the predominant generation, the style of the Church, fits them. Only 9% of Gen-X is sticking in the Church. Only 9%. This is really bad.

Maybe what we will have to do is start some kind of online churches for those who just don't feel comfortable in their community church; not to replace it—why does it have to be either/or?

One of the things with the blogging thing this morning, we're sort of backing off from saying that maybe what evangelism is, is putting together new churches on the internet, where people don't even go to a local church. I like it when people go to a local church, but the fact is, maybe what we will have to do is start some kind of online churches for those who just don't feel comfortable in their community church. Not to replace it. Why does it always have to be either/or? But to be another form for people who aren't resonating with the other.

Then I think also we should really seriously consider this question: "Hey, how would you change a local church?"

I said, "You have a youth group."

"Oh, yeah."

"Well, why don't you have a youth group come in and do a Youth Sunday? And then talk about what a success that was, and have them do it once a month. And then every other week."

You know, a lot of times you go into these Boomer churches and you see up on the stage a worship team; and usually it's a lot of Gen-X-ers in the worship team. That's why they come. But these poor Gen-X-ers, they're up there doing Boomer songs—you know, "Worship His Majesty" by Jack Hayford. I mean, that's a moldy-oldy. It's a great song, but he wrote that thing in the 70s. The Boomer style, I think, if I can identify the style, it's folk rock, isn't it? Folk rock? From the days of Peter, Paul and Mary. What was wrong with these guys?

He used music that's in the culture, current, and he used it as a statement for Christ.

Did you see the last video that Johnny Cash did? He did more on the outside of the Church to promote Christ than he did on the inside. Amazing what this guy did. He was very confessional. Everybody knew about his drug addictions, right? And he acquired lots of wealth from his music. So how did he go out from life? I'll tell you. I'm going to show you a video. He took music that was written by a very violent group and turned it into something sacred. "Nine Inch Nails." Do you all know this song? Yeah. But he used music that's in the culture, current, and he used it as a statement for Christ. I just want you to see the last video that Johnny Cash made before his death, shortly after the death of his wife.

[Song begins but was cut from the recording]

David Bruce: I was at a spot when I thought that I needed to learn how to do things differently in preaching, so I thought I would just go to a seminary and commiserate with some of the professors and see what they could tell me. I went over to the Golden State Theological Seminary, the Southern Baptists, and I made an appointment with a missions guy, because I wanted to talk to him about how to share Christ and effective ways of doing it. Wasn't that effective? That Johnny Cash song? Does anybody know "Nine Inch Nails?" That's who wrote that song. I went over and I was just talking to him. I told him about my website. He said, "Oh, you need to meet this Thomas Wolfe, who's writing a dissertation about how Paul taught." And I said, "Wow, really? I want to talk to this guy."

So I went over and I talked to Thomas Wolfe. I suppose his dissertation has been published by now—Dr. Thomas Wolfe—you can probably get it off the internet or something. He said, "Did you ever wonder how Paul could say five years later to a group, 'Remember when I told you la dee da?' " He said, "Now, most preachers can't even remember their sermon three months after they deliver it. And the congregation, they're lucky if they can remember it three Sundays later."

I said, "Yeah, that's true." Most sermons that are preached are pretty forgettable, and we all forget them.

He said, "How could Paul say, 'Remember when I told you five years ago?' " And then he said the most interesting thing that I've ever heard, ever. It just hadn't dawned on me. Yet I had learned it in seminary, it just didn't click. Nor do I think it clicked with the professor who was teaching me at the time. He said, "Paul used music." And it just hit me like, "What did you just say?" He said, "Paul used music."

He said, "Don't you remember in seminary when they told you how to identify what professors call a 'himp' in the text? That it's kind of set off like a little poem. You read text and it's like this little poem. Paul will quote something, and then he'll comment, and then he'll quote something, and then he'll comment, and then he'll quote something."

I've always made presentations like this, where I use music and clips and video to strengthen a point, so you don't forget it.

He said, "Those are the songs. Those are the jingles." People would remember the jingles. He would attach the conversation to the jingle, to the song.

I thought, "Wow, this is radical." And so from that point forward, I've always made presentations like this, where I use music and clips and video to strengthen a point, so you don't forget it. You will never, as long as you live, forget that Johnny Cash song. I guarantee you. You'll always remember that I connected that to being relevant, and how effective something can be if it's relevant to your audience. Flows with the culture.

[inaudible question]

David Bruce: *The Passion of the Christ.* Yes, exactly, and that's part of convergence. I was talking to...this is New Living translation, it doesn't do the hymns very well, but the...I forget what they call them...I suppose no one would ever call them jingles. Back then they didn't have printing presses, so they had to have clever memory tricks, and that's what they would use. Convergence. I was talking to Rob Johnson over at Polar Theological Seminary, he's a Professor of Culture, and he said, "With the emerging churches, they're making the same problem as the boomer churches, in that the emerging churches aren't...the things aren't coming together." For example, on the internet: text, music, image all come together. Matter of fact, it's all in the digital format, really. All this comes together. Why not in a church service? Why can't the music, and the proclamation, and all these images, all of it, converge together?

So perhaps if you're going to have a sermon on, or the theme is, "How to Overcome Anger," you'd start by maybe reading a text, or prayer, and then the worship team would sing not more than two or three things that might have to do with that, with wonderful video going on in the background about people resolving anger or what anger can lead to. You might even use some songs out of the culture that talk about the destructive value of it, and then maybe a brief 10-minute thing about the importance of anger in terms of our feelings, how God made us: just don't deal with it, don't let the sun go down on it, and then how can we deal with it. Maybe then go into communion, then back. So it flows and gives people a chance to digest, and it gives them the message in many different forms, and the whole thing becomes the message rather than just the sermon part. Doing the little bits of

video in back of the spoken word, the preaching, is part of that—a right step into convergence. The thing is that it would take a lot of work to put together what I just outlined, but it would involve community, and that's what I think the church is.

To one is given this gift, and to another this gift, so that we all can profit. If we can have more participation, and a more culturally sensitive form of communicating the Gospel, I think the Church would be a lot further on down the path, and then just let the Holy Spirit do His work. Here's a video I got on what happened in Africa, and it's really quite humorous when Christians confuse their culture with the culture they're supposed to win people to; rather than winning people to Christ, winning them to a culture.

What did you think? How can that apply to where we're at right now in America? Do we impose a Christian culture on people when they come into the church? Maybe unconsciously? One of the great books that has been written, kind of a guerrilla manual for many of us, is Bob Briner's *Roaring Lambs* book. He died in 1999, and his final book, which I prefer, is called *Final Roar,* It's like the *Magna Carta* for liberating Christians out of the Christian subculture in America. If you feel that you really want to connect with the real world, but perhaps you've been a little depressed by the people around you, these would be great books to read.

His story is that he was an Emmy award-winning television producer in Hollywood. When he became a Christian, Christians wanted him to drop out of sinful Hollywood, make Christian films; i.e., family-friendly films. And he refused. He said, "No! What we need is more salt and light in all industry. If you're a plumber, you don't suddenly drop out and only do Christian houses, because you're a Christian plumber, you serve everybody, and you look at your occupation as part of your mission field." He makes a strong case for being salt and light WITHIN whatever your vocation is, for Christ.He's absolutely right.

We think, "Where's the real grid for the real church? It's got to be here somewhere, doesn't it?

In this film, we saw how the missionaries would start separating out the Christians from the non-Christians. Jesus did quite the opposite. His example was coming together and talking to those kind of people. And He finally said—what? "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel." Paul was not as effective as the people that he converted that he left to run the churches, the natives of whatever place he was in. He'd preach, preach, preach, until he could get a homeowner, and that would be where the church would be. There were a lot of servants back then; people that didn't own, but he'd just keep preaching until he could convert a homeowner, and convert a few others to form the fellowship, and let 'em go. Each church, as we have noted in reading the Scriptures, was just a little different from the other.

There is no common grid, as most of us would like. We think, "Where's the real grid for the real church? It's got to be here somewhere, doesn't it? Oh, here's one: 'go and sell all you have.' Oh, I don't like that one. Oh, they met by the riverside! That's pretty good! Oh, the church in your home? Wow."

It's so different; and then there was this huge split in the middle of that. If you're a Jewish Christian, you like it this way; we had to give permission for the Gentiles to structure their own. Why don't we

let the church structure itself right now? Hands off! Let the Holy Spirit do it, and trust people who've made that decision for Christ. Trust them, and trust God. See what works, see what develops, allow it to happen. That's what happened here. Isn't that what happened here?

When we came out of China, we thought it was all over. Why? Because Western missionaries couldn't go there anymore, but Western missionaries, like Paul, had made a few converts, and guess what happened? When the Iron Curtain raised, we discovered that there was a whole church movement going on in China, which was thrilling and exciting, but it was relevant to their culture, not ours. That is how the Holy Spirit works, and I think that's what we have to do—just absolutely have to do. Just let it happen.

I covered those points. I think what makes Martin Luther so vital is that he used current music, pop music. You know the story, don't you? Martin Luther? There had been German translations of the Bible, but none of them worked, so he wrote a Bible that was in the language of the housekeeper, the language of the person on the street. It worked; it's still a good translation today. The next thing he did was he took music from behind the front part of the church. He brought it out into the congregation and had congregational participation and interactive singing. Then he brought in a very worldly instrument that they had used in pubs to do the music, an instrument. Do you know what that instrument was, that he brought into the church, that people had hissyfits about? Yes, thank you, it was the organ. Lutherans kind of stuck right there. They didn't get what he was doing—bringing in the best way to do it.

Usually when you have a hard-fought battle, the way that you win it is, whatever form you have, you call that sacred.

Then he would go down to the pub—he liked it there. Many of the reformers did. He took the music from the pub and brought it to the church, and he changed the lyrics. Those are what are now in the hymns and the hymnals. Charles Wesley did the same thing. He took songs that were current and made them so that they could be done in the church.

But what do we do today? We baptize all that has gone on before, and suddenly you can't move forward, because we've baptized what's in the past. We've seen that happen in our time. I guess I belabored one point, but it's all right. I'll do what has happened currently in your time in the 90s. What happened in the 90s? We had this big battle, didn't we, between the hymnal and the moldy oldy contemporary music? Remember that? It divided churches, so some churches were having two services, the traditional and the contemporary. That was a hard-fought battle.

Usually when you have a hard-fought battle, the way that you win it is, whatever form you have, you call that sacred. Sacred. The hymnal was sacred to those! I mean, that was God! And it was music of substance! And those little contemporary things, they're just little lines. They don't have any theological depth! You know, they were just out of it! You remember this. People that did the contemporary, they'd say, "No! When you begin to worship and praise God, God begins to inhabit the worship and praise of other people." God inhabits the praises of His people. It's not in the Bible. It's a perversion of Psalm 22:3. But it served the purpose, and the purpose was to sanctify that music. That music was actually like going "Ommmm." It brought in the "divine presence of God!" So, as you stand there, you're singing these

magical chants, God comes into the service! And you do this for 30 minutes, because you really need to praise God through this. It became a religious something, other than what it is. That's not good. It got baptized. Now, the church can't move past that.

I'll tell you what. God inhabits what? Songs? Or people? Now, if two or three people come together in the name of Christ, what's the promise? I don't have to do a musical chant to get God to come. God is in the service. We sing music as a community act of worship, because we love God. That's it. It's simple, and we don't have to go on and on with dreadful boomer music.

The younger the generation, now, the less likely they are to be religious, or spiritual.

I've done this. I said, "Pastor, don't sit in the front row, come around to the back, and let's just watch what happens during your worship service." The worship team, in order to look spiritual, they close their eyes. Totally out of touch with the people, am I right? They're tiring. Now, when you have a tired person, you're not really worshipping. You're thinking about your...admit it! And the old folks, with the arthritis, guess what. They never need spin. Besides, they actually thought the hymnal was better. And Gen-X, they're in the back! They're in the back, or they're outside. I went around to some of the big boomer churches. I just started counting Gen-X-ers who were actually on the outside of the church during worship time. Do it! Get in the back of the church, and observe what's happening. And then ask yourself, "Are we having community worship right here, or is there a dysfunction going on?"

Now, how can you get people to participate? Everybody participate? I would suggest that it has to do with actually inviting people in and making it a deliberate event. Eye contact. And, also be sensitive to the form of music, whatever works for the group you're with. It could be any kind of music. But, any kind of music is valid. It just needs to be appropriate music, that's all.

All right. It's vital that he loved Jesus, he connected with the people, he understood the culture, bar songs. He had a common language Bible, and turned the world upside down; and it's a good model for us. I think he was just amazing. You know all the divisions, right? I want to get the POD on you, too, so I'm going to steam ahead.

The younger the generation, now, the less likely they are to be religious, or spiritual. That's what a church looks like, the back. It's an amazing model, because it's just a model by everybody, and I just think, "Take more time thinking about your area, who's in it, who are you trying to reach," and then incarnate, incarnate. Be like them in terms of how they understand, how they learn, how they think. That's what we should be like—Jesus. Incarnational.

I've put this one in, because in other cultures, you know, the Holy Spirit fell on them, on each of them, while they were sitting. In some cultures, sitting is the preferred way to experience the working of the Holy Spirit in their lives. But Jesus said, "It isn't the posture, but worshipping in..." What? Spirit and in truth.

[inaudible comment]

David Bruce: So this is a guy who sings in a tavern, and what he's saying is to get the people involved in his music. What does he do? He writes confessionally. And I would say that the Bible is very confes-

sional. I think that when music is at its best, it is when it's confessional. Or, if you're on your blog, you're at your best when you are confessional. You're being open and honest and transparent. If you read the Psalms, the psalmist will say, "You know, God, I'm knocking on heaven's door, and you're not responding. Don't you realize that if you leave me in this condition, you're going to have one less person to worship you? You got to come to my aid! Help me out here! God, I am in a lot of pain. My enemies surround me. I need for you to be right now my high power." You read all through the Psalms. And it'll say, "Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord." What we do with our music is we strip out all of the humanity, all of the part that says, "I'm having a bummer right now," or, "I'm surrounded by my enemies." We strip all that out and we just leave the part that says, "Praise the Lord."

What I want to say is, we've made a deliberate attempt to strip out confessional aspects, things that relate to being human. That's why I think the blogs are doing so well—because they are more human, more confessional. Our music no longer is, because people don't connect with that kind of music. Did you connect with Johnny Cash's music? That was what kind of music? Confessional, just like the Psalm.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer. World War II. Resisted the Nazis, maintained his Christian faith; the Nazis pretty much destroyed the church. The church couldn't stand up against its enemy. He was walking through the remains of the church just before the Nazis killed him, and he gave a prophecy. He said, "It's a godless world. We need a new form of Christianity. Real Christianity means sharing each other's pain. There will be a new language, nonreligious, redeeming. It will shock people by its power." I think he's right on.

Becky Pippert said, "Jesus wants us to see that the neighbor next door, or the people sitting next to us on the plane, or in a classroom, are not interruptions to our schedule, but they are divine appointments." Jesus wants us to see their needs, their loneliness, their longing, and He wants to give us the courage to reach out to them. Incarnation is going to start with where they're at, and you bring the news. Just elementary to bringing people to Christ.

People are important. It's not about you. It's about them.

There's a wonderful movie. It's called *Four Feathers.* This African is helping a white guy, and the white guy can't understand why. And the comment that the African makes to him is, "I have to, because God's put you in my way." To see people that God's put in our way as divine appointment, is a wonderful thing. So, if you're blogging, or you're on the internet, you get an e-mail, or you meet somebody in a chat room, you just think of it as, "Oh, here's an opportunity. This is perhaps someone that God has put in my way," or throughout your life, whatever. People are important. It's not about you. It's about them.

My points again: genuine love, incarnate into the culture, relate confessionally, be there as a friend, and think spiritual journey.

And, "Roaring Lambs"—I do want to hit the creative comment. "Roaring Lambs" suggests an essential model for our times, one that works, instead of one that doesn't work. Some of the people who are Roaring Lambs, who have refused to leave the culture but operate within the culture in terms of its own stuff—here's one. Amazing! Instead of leaving an MTV world, becoming salt and light within an MTV world.

Here, I want to go into "U2." Many Christian leaders were praying that God would send an event into America that would cause people to return to churches and become Christian. They didn't want anything really bad to happen, but just something that would draw people back to the church. For example, in LA when there was an earthquake many years ago, the next Sunday, churches were filled. People have a tendency to go to church when something happens. So they were praying that God would do that. Well, that answer came in a very terrible thing. It was 9/11. The next Sunday, churches were filled. George Barna did a survey of how many churches that were filled that following Sunday even mentioned 9/11, the reason why people came. The churches were so locked in to their own grid, and their own paradigm, 85% of the churches didn't mention anything about 9/11.

If we just follow our hearts, and do our passion, wonderful things will happen, because God trusts us, and then God begins to trust us even more.

U2 is a group that many Christians don't like, but who are Christian indeed, and Bono is one of Christianity's best spokespeople. Matter of fact, *The Message Bible* actually has a quote from him on the back of it. Good for them, you know. They had MTV put together a memorial for the victims of 9/11. They celebrated it outside the church, as the church should have. They celebrated every name. They raised up two sheets, and they projected all the names of all the victims on that, as they sang a song about Bono's vision of heaven. And at the end, they let those sheets drop. It's absolutely mesmerizing to watch, you're going to watch it here in a minute. Just before Bono begins to get into it, he comes out onto the stage, and he's quoting a psalm as a prayer to God, that God would use his mouth as an instrument for him. It's powerful. Watch this.

Nice, huh? There's a huge movement of a group of people that consider themselves Roaring Lambs. One of the latest projects of Roaring Lambs were in the industry and refused to leave the *Chronicles of Narnia* with Walden Media and Walt Disney. And, I must say that we are hoping that it will bring people out to see the theaters so that all—there are actually five on the drawing table—of the *Chronicles* can be brought to the screen. But we will see, and I think it will be a wonderful time when we again can use theater to talk to people about Christ. So we will see how it goes! *Chronicles of Narnia,* Roaring Lambs project. As a matter of fact, we'd like to be put in touch with some of the Roaring Lambs that are operating. Just send me an e-mail, and I'll tell you how to get in touch. From my own personal view, just doing what I'm doing on the internet with using movies as a way to evangelize with the numbers, Hollywood now flies me to the various junkets, at their expense. And I'll watch it. And I get the interview with the stars. Just a little while ago, just before Constantine came in, I got to interview Keanu Reeves personally about the meaning of repentance.

It's just neat to actually be in the industry as salt and light. And feeling comfortable, that this is a good thing. It's like Jesus with the woman at the well, just to be there. I think if we just follow our hearts, and do our passion, wonderful things will happen, because God trusts us, and then God begins to trust us even more. Even more. NBC has a new show coming out called *Revelations.* It's written by a guy who really loves the Bible but doesn't go to church. It's the time period just before Revelation. He's a Jesus believer, he loves the Bible, but he just doesn't go to church, can't relate. He's not a Hal Lindsey guy, he's not a Tim LaHaye guy; he's just totally off the wall. But he's actually talked NBC into putting on this six-hour epic,

the most expensive mini-series that NBC's ever done. The thing talks about Jesus Christ—it's absolutely amazing. They flew me out from the West Coast, all the way to New York to see this. I was only one of two reviewers in the whole of the United States, secular and otherwise, that they flew out, just because—get this—television respects the Christian audience. And they saw me as a way to speak to that audience, since the Mel Gibson film went out.

It's a wonderful day when we can cooperate with the world and be there as salt and light. Wonderful things happen. One of the wonderful things that happened to me while I was there was I got to talk to Bill Pullman. Bill Pullman is a major star in Hollywood, and so we could talk about his spiritual life and his kids, what's going on in his family. It's just great, just wonderful.

I've got one more thing I want to do, and then we're going to go, and that is, a sermon.

With television, they don't fly reviewers in, because they don't have the money. With Constantine, they flew everybody in to see this movie and be able to talk with the different people involved with it. But not television—they just don't have the money. My sense is, Christians will look at it and say, "This isn't the Revelation I know." But, it's really a story before the book of Revelation. And, I'm sure that they'll pick it apart. We have so many bone pickers in Christianity that we can't see good things. We're always looking for the ugly, and not the good. We're looking for the disconnect, rather than the connect. As Christians, we are always building on the past, always building on it. We don't discount it.

For example, I always think, one of the songs that's in the public domain right now is "Amazing Grace." That song, as we go along in time, is sung differently. Twenty years ago, you never would have heard "Amazing Grace" done with bagpipes. Now, it's rather common. I think that if the Lord tarried another thousand years, "Amazing Grace" would still be around, but it would be done differently. We don't have to destroy the past. We just have to build on it. We just keep flowing with time, and creativity always builds on it. Like I was talking about how Paul used jingles, or poems, and then he would talk theology, he got some of that from here. When Matthew wrote about Jesus, he borrowed from the old to tell us about the new. We're always building on the past. I thought the best way to proceed with Christians on the internet is that we all agree that what we do, all of our work will be protected by Creative Commons, the CC. In other words, you can define the right, so anybody can use it, so long as they don't change it. Anybody can use it, as long as they don't kill it. Whatever you want to define the rights as. For example, a music group can distribute their music but nobody could use it for profit, So I would suggest that we would go on our websites and make it truly available for the content. Let's stand. Well, thanks for putting up with me.

David Bruce is Webmaster of www.hollywoodjesus.com, the highly popular Internet site for movies and culture. A former pastor, he believes youth workers and teenagers should practice the same willingness to move out, observe culture, and then engage people with the Gospel by using what they've observed and already know.

Technology and Evangelism in Urban Mission Field

by Andrew Sears

Just to give you an outline of what I'm going to be covering, I'm going to give a little bit of background on our approach to technology and urban missions, including some of their Biblical foundations. Then we'll look at Christian community computer centers, or cyber cafés, both in an American context, and an international context for urban missions.

People often think about technology in church history as beginning about 1900 or so. I'm going to go back a little farther—to Paul, as an example of a user of technology in church history. A lot of people ask, "Why was Paul so unique in church history?" Most say it's because he was the apostle to the Gentiles.

I personally have another theory: part of the reason why Paul was so unique is that he was a "techie." Compared to all the other apostles who were out there, Paul was innovative for the time. When there was no formal postal service, he'd strap a letter to somebody's back and say, "Go to the Corinthian church, go to this place . . ." Paul was an innovator, responsible for writing over half of the New Testament. If you look at the other apostles, you might think, "Who's the greatest apostle?" or, "Who's had the most impact on the church?" Peter probably is the most prominent, but Paul has had the greatest legacy, largely because of his interest in technology—he used letters, he took advantage of the Roman roads, and that helped the spread of the Gospel message.

In the Middle Ages, Wycliffe translated the first Bible into English. Most people are familiar with that, but what many don't realize is that Wycliffe was a major reformer.The reason he translated the Bible into English was that he was going to be killed, because he was under significant persecution for of some of his beliefs. Wycliffe hid himself in a closet for two years, and because he was so bored, he said, "I'll translate the Bible." That's an example of how God used persecution for good. If you look at the Reformation, you'll see early attempts at reformation weren't successful in an era when book burning was a big thing and heretics were burned at the stake.That was significant because people couldn't write many copies of whatever it was. Wycliffe actually wrote a lot of copies of the same things.

Luther said Wycliffe and his followers were stamped out ultimately because information couldn't get out, basically because there was no printing press. The Reformation wasn't able to move forward. The Catholic Church burned all of Wycliffe's writings and a lot of the reformation stuff that he had. But one of his students, a German, took his books and hid them in the basement of a church in Germany. John Hus discovered Wycliffe's writings 100 years later, and he started another reformation based on information from these writings. It just shows you the power information can have in the development of the church.

Many people say Hus laid the groundwork for Luther. 100 years before Luther, Huss was was burned at the stake in Germany. He's reported to have said, "In 100 years' time somebody's going to come and you're not going to be able to stop him." That was Luther. The printing press made Luther unique. In church history, people always talk about Luther and the "99 Theses" that he put on the church door. I don't think that's the most interesting thing about Luther. Shortly after Luther wrote his "99 Theses," a nobleman funded a printing press for him and he made thousands of copies of his challenge. He distributed them to all the nobles in Germany. Because he had a printing press and was able to get the information out, the church would have had to have invaded every noble's castle to retrieve it. The genie was out of the bottle. This is one more demonstration of technology's effect on the church.

The next phase is the Industrial Revolution. The big issue there is the focus on literacy. The term "Sunday School" actually originated with literacy classes that were taught before the Sunday service. IThe purpose of Sunday School was to teach people how to read, and the Bible was the textbook. That accomplished three things. First, it allowed people to gain the reading skills they needed in order to learn from the Bible on their own. Second, teaching from the Bible was an evangelistic tool, because many of the people being taught weren't Christians. Third, it was the major means of teaching reading before the public school system was established. For 100 years this was the primary way people learned how to read. Churches everywhere were doing that, because with the Industrial Revolution, people moved from agricultural jobs to industrial jobs, and to get those industrial jobs people had to be literate.

The next era I would describe as the "broadcast era": radio and TV. While Christian radio and Christian TV have been extremely strong, I think the *Jesus* film is one project that has reached more people than anything else. It's the biggest example out of that era.

The next question is, "What is the 'killer app' for Christians?" In the "dotcom" era, everyone was trying to figure out what the "Killer Application" was. The web browser Netscape, Amazon.com, and E-Bay all found something. So what is the killer app for Christians in evangelism and in urban and foreign missions? One of the things we can look at is, "Why was the *Jesus* film so successful?" What were the principles involved in the success of the film? Results of the *Jesus* film indicate there have been two billion viewers with over 200 million decisions to follow Jesus. It was successful because it recognized the global trends in the growth of Christianity. It recognized that most of the growth in Christianity was not happening in developed countries, it was happening in developing countries. It recognized the need to translate it into local languages—about 800 translations were made.

For a lot of people across the world this was not only the first time that they were seeing a film, but it was the first time they were hearing something like that in their own language. The distributors partnered with indigenous leaders, so they found indigenous churches. There was local implementation of global resources. It's great to tell churches, "You need to present the Gospel in your own languages," but the producers of the *Jesus* film invested several million dollars in developing it first, and then did the local implementation.

What, then, is the killer app for Christians on the internet? We don't know yet. We're seeing glimpses of it, but the same principles for the most part are going to apply based on global trends in the growth of Christianity: putting tools in the hands of indigenous Christian leaders and putting them in local languages—local implementation of global resources.

There's a fourth thing that is particularly important. It takes advantages of the differences between the broadcast era and the internet. A lot of people think of the internet as just a new medium. That is not giving it enough credit. The internet is primarily a tool; secondarily, it's a medium. Both are important, For instance, you couldn't really describe the television as a tool. But the internet is a tool, so it can be used for a lot more than just sending information.

Another difference is, broadcast is "one to many" communication; the internet is "many to many" communication. Look at the big successes of the internet, for example, E-Bay. In many ways, it's more successful than Amazon.com, because they recognize the internet can do something fundamentally different from what had been possible before: millions of people to sell to millions of other people. Previously, the best you could do was have a flea market. The internet made something that wasn't possible before, possible.

Another important difference between the internet and broadcast is, broadcast has centralized content development. A major Christian institution develops content and then distributes it around the world. The internet has both content development and distribution. Sites like Yahoo! or MSN are developing a lot of content that's centralized, but they are also taking advantage of the distributed content. Additionally, the internet isn't just one-way communication. It's one-way and two-way communication.

With these principles in mind, how do we apply them in an urban missions field? What's working in the urban missions field? The Biblical model for missions is set out by Paul in I Corinthians 9:19-23:

> Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law though I myself am not under the law so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law, though I am not free to serve from God's law but am under Christ's law so as to win those not having the law. To the weak, I became weak to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

What's important here is that Paul entered into the culture on its own terms. As we think about technology and ministry, what we have to consider how technology, ministry and evangelism are translated into the local needs of the culture. Therefore, the killer application is going to depend on whom you're targeting. That is the really important point in the urban missions field. Are you targeting developed countries? Developing countries? Much of what we've talked about involves developed countries, but the elite of developing countries must be targeted, as well. Are you targeting urban, suburban, or rural areas? Are you targeting the techies, the normal computer user, or the non-user? Depending on which group you're targeting, your approach is going to be very different.

The killer application in the urban missions field . . . is called "Christian community computer centers."

Looking internationally at church growth, historical trends show that at the beginning of the 1900s much more of the growth was happening in Europe and North America. Now, more than 95 percent of the expected growth of the church, based on current trends, will be in Asia and the Southern Hemisphere. Another consideration is where is the growth in the church happening between urban and rural. In the next 20 years it's expected that 75 percent of the growth of the church is going to be urban.

Initially in technology in ministry, it's "by geeks for geeks." These are the people like me—people who like technology for its own sake, or techies. (The politically correct term to use is "techies," but being a geek I have no problem with that term, and I often describe myself as being bi-cultural in the sense that I can speak geek and I can also speak normally.) Some people can only speak geek. If you ask them to speak to a normal person, they can't leave out the things about IP addresses, megabytes and so forth, which just leave people out.

There's an element of cross-cultural ministry even in technology, so there's "by geeks, for normal people," which is what we're trying to do here. We're techies by nature but we're trying to figure out how to translate internet evangelism and the Gospel for normal users.

The next phase is where normal users start to promote technology for normal users. The final stage occurs when normal users are working to reach non-users. My nephew who's four years old is more proficient right now than my father who's in his 60s, so sometimes they'll partner on surfing the internet. My nephew will show my dad where to click and my father will read the pages of text because my nephew can't read. That's a normal user to a non-user translation happening there.

I believe that the killer application in the urban missions field (and there are multiple ones) is called "Christian community computer centers." There are a lot of ways to try to figure out, "What is the killer app?" One is to say, "I'm going to find it myself." Another is to observe what God is doing. In the past 15 years there have been more than 2000 Christian community computer centers started in Christian organizations. Many urban ministries from around the world are originating here in the U.S. They are starting up these technology centers, and more than 500 of these sites have joined an association that we started called a "C4."

The biblical basis for C4s comes from James 2:15-16: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you said to him, 'Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed' but does nothing to meet his physical needs, what good is it?"

"Computer skills to make a living, a spiritual foundation to make a life."

The other biblical example is Jesus, who always met both spiritual needs and felt needs. The trick is in realizing both, not just in urban missions but in all the ministry we do. That's something Jesus did.

Then the question is, "What are felt needs?" And how does that change depending on the particular people group? This is based on "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs." The idea is that, depending on what stage people are in life, they have different primary needs. For example, if you're having problems with some of the physiological needs—you don't have enough food, water, sleep, warmth—then you aren't thinking about, "What new project should I start?" or "How do I become innovative and creative?" or things along those lines. Physiological needs must be met first, then the need for safety. So the most common order of needs, particularly in the urban community, is: physical safety, economic security, and freedom from threats. This is the primary difference between urban ministry and other ministries. It's also true in developing countries where in inner city areas, physical safety is an issue; getting a job—economic safety—is a significant issue; as are freedom from threat and physical survival, food, water, sleep.

It's important to recognize these priorities, because if someone's thirsty or hungry and we're trying to show them how to use a computer, we're missing the need. It's easier to give someone a glass of water and then tell him about Jesus, than it is to tell him about Jesus and then give him a glass of water! Most ministries in the US are focused on social belonging—we're trying to have small groups, the big small group movement—and leadership development trends, important projects, recognition, creativity, etc. Meeting those needs is great, given your target group. So be sure to recognize the most common needs in urban missions, and where those needs fit whenever we use technology.

Our little Tech Mission flyer has a tagline: "Computer skills to make a living, a spiritual foundation to make a life." Both of those are important. Jesus always helped both felt needs and spiritual needs, so the ministries we work with are providing discipleship and evangelism, but they're also providing computer skills so people can get jobs. So some of the C4s provide computer classes for the unemployed. They provide after-school child care that might involve computers. That helps someone who's on the wrong side of the digital divide to get the skills for both school

and jobs. Some C4s also offer adult rehabilitation programs for homeless people, using computers—perhaps through the Salvation Army or Gospel Rescue Missions. Some of that might involve substance abuse and Bible study classes as well as giving people technology skills and adult education, GD, ESL, or similar subjects. This is particularly how computer centers are being used in the U.S.; some of this also translates internationally.

Here are some specific examples of how to use evangelism with these computer centers. It's not just about providing computer skills to make a living, it's also about providing the spiritual foundation to make a life. The Association of Gospel Rescue Missions is probably the best current model. It was founded in 1913 as a group of more than 300 Christian homeless shelters. Their statistics are amazing. Last year more than 85,000 people enrolled in AGRM educational programs on the meeting of spiritual needs side. Over half of the people in those programs made the decision to follow Jesus. That's over 42,500—a lot of people making decisions to follow Jesus! Many times it's easy to focus just on the internet side; but we're seeing a lot of people coming to Jesus through these cyber cafés' educational programs. At the same time they also helped felt needs. They had 5,000 graduates who got a GD or diploma, and 15,000 formerly homeless people who moved on to become productive members of society. That's what the heart of the Gospel is all about—bringing people to Jesus, and transforming their lives.

The three values we have in Tech Mission are Jesus, Justice, and Technology. That's the order of our values.

Tech Mission, our organization, supports Christian organizations using technology in urban ministry. We have three programs. The Association of Christian community computer centers provides training around internet evangelism. We have a group around Christian computer centers to help people just to come together, and we have a national conference. We also have a program called Tech Mission Core. We provide 20 full-time urban mystery interns to use technology to serve at-risk youth. It's based in Boston and Los Angeles.

The third program that we're just getting ready to launch is Tech Mission's Safe Families program, which is focused on protecting at-risk youth from pornography and other dangers on the internet. In addressing the digital divide in urban communities, we've found it's one thing to get people across the digital divide, it's another to get them across safely. If all we're doing is taking a family that didn't have a computer and we're giving them a computer, with the result that the father's addicted to porn, the mother's having an affair online, and the kids are exposed to perpetrators online, then that's a serious issue—we aren't living our mission. We aren't doing the spiritual foundation to make a life. In developing countries, pornography may not be as prevalent but getting access to the internet may make it a much bigger issue. That's a third program that we're launching. We're also looking for partners in that.

The three values we have in Tech Mission are Jesus, Justice, and Technology. That's the order of our values. Jesus is always first, but part of what makes us unique is that Justice is a key value. We work in a lot of urban ministries, most of which consider justice to be a key value. We look at what the Bible says about justice; for example, the digital divide is an issue of justice with respect to people who aren't able to get jobs because they don't have access to computers or training in computer-related fields. It's the biblical view of justice, not secular society's view, which is

more about locking people up or similar things. There are a lot of urban ministries that have the first two values, Jesus and Justice; we're really the only large national/international organization that has all three values. That's part of what makes Tech Mission unique.

I was in a mission in South Africa, an amazing ministry which had taken 1000 people off the street in a period of a year. They were all living in a building the city had given them. 100 people quit their jobs in that year to start working for the mission full-time. There were amazing stories about people, completely faith-driven, doing astonishing things. They never had food for more than a couple of days, they never asked for money, yet they never went hungry.

One of the things I found surprising, living really at the poverty line, was even though they never had enough food for the next couple of days, they had a $20,000 sound system. At the time I thought, "That doesn't make sense, why do they have a $20,000 sound system?" They had worship every day in this community in South Africa before apartheid was fully dismantled. They had Muslims living with Christians, blacks living with whites in this compound, and they never had any fights break out.

It's one thing to charge forward with internet evangelism but you also have to protect yourself against pornography.

A big part of the reason for that was they had worship services every day that everyone attended, regardless of their background. The people really loved the worship. It did something to that community, so it was the right investment for them to have a $20,000 sound system because the worship was so effective, it brought peace into that community. This is often true in developing countries, whether it's equipment to do the *Jesus* film or something like that: basic stuff is also important.

It's surprising that some of the more established ministries in developing countries— ministries that are serving hundreds or thousands of people—don't have websites. Granted, 90 percent of the people they're serving may not use the web, but if they actually had a website they might be able to establish more partners in the U.S. or in other developed countries if people were aware of their ministries. A website can be a great resource.

A new initiative we're getting ready to start is the Sick Families initiative. A major issue today is the effect of pornography on the church. One of the effects of the internet is that pornography is coming into the church like never before in church history. In a *USA Today* survey, 51 percent of pastors say that cyber pornography is a possible temptation and 37 percent say it's a current struggle; meaning that they've struggled with it or fallen recently. That's a major concern. How would you feel if 37 percent of pastors were alcohol-addicted or drug-addicted? It's one thing to charge forward with internet evangelism but you also have to protect yourself against pornography. That's what we're trying to do.

Pornography addiction has become a major issue across the country, when 25 million Americans visit cyber sex sites between one and ten hours per week. Another 4.7 million people are visiting cyber sex sites more than 11 hours a week. Basically at that point visiting pornography sites is a part time job. It's a major issue, and it's not just an issue for men. *Today's Christian Woman* did a survey which found one in six women, including Christians, struggles with pornography.

There's also a major issue concerning online affairs. I talked with a counselor about that problem. He said, "I've seen a lot of guys, but it's surprising, I've actually seen more women from having online affairs." Guys have online affairs, too. It's a major issue because the church really hasn't caught up with our teachings and our trainings. Many people don't realize how dangerous it is—they call it a cyber affair—saying it's not real or it's a cyber relationship. Suddenly, they find they've fallen in love with a person they've never met. My brother's marriage was broken up because his wife met someone online and left him. They're both Christians, they're both in the church. My wife's parents were divorced due to a cyber affair, also. It's a major issue. The church needs to protect itself.

Pornography is also a concern with kids. Nine in ten kids have between the ages of nine and sixteen have viewed pornography online, mostly unintentionally, when using the internet to do homework. In doing research for this program we're launching, I found out that before the internet, the average age kids were exposed to pornography was surprisingly low—eleven years old. Recent testimony before Congress said that after the internet, the average age is five. Think about the effect that has on kids. It's not just soft core pornography, either; it can be much more serious.

We've operated computer centers and we see kids. They'll type in innocent things, they'll misspell a website or type in a search of girls or something, and suddenly this stuff comes up. If you misspell "girls" in a certain way, it'll go to a pornography website, for instance, if you type in girls.com, or something like that. Whitehouse.com's another example. Many times kids are being exposed to this, and they aren't even trying to find it. It's a major issue we've found in urban communities. There are many other city issues. One kid in a computer lab was trying to purchase a gun online. Most parents aren't aware of the dangers on the internet. It can be as dangerous as a gun, or more dangerous, particularly around chat rooms, where one in five kids who use chat rooms have been approached by a pedophile online.

Chat rooms are the most dangerous area on the internet. Eighty-nine percent of sexual solicitations were made in chat rooms or in instant messages. Another major issue is abductions, particularly for teenagers. Teenagers will meet someone online, get into romantic relationships, and don't know whom they're actually meeting. They'll set up a rendevous with that person. In some parts of the country, two in five of all the abductions begin with a relationship that someone developed online. We need to both charge forward and advance but we also need to be on the defensive. That's why Tech Missions developed theSafe Families program.

Andrew Sears is the Executive Director of Techmission. The goal of TechMission is to support Christian Community Computer Centers in providing others with computer skills to make a living and a spiritual foundation to make a life. TechMission supports over 500 Christian organizations that serve over 100,000 individuals each year in technology ministries. Andrew has worked in technology and ministry for seven years and has given dozens of presentations on technology and ministry at national Christian conferences and other forums. Before entering into technology ministry full-time, Andrew worked as a consultant to venture capitalists evaluating new Internet technologies, and he co-founded the Internet and Telecoms Consortium at MIT, which is a multidisciplinary research group studying how the Internet is transforming society.

Internet Evangelism and the Third World
by John Edmiston & Don M

There is a large number of teams on the ground hoping to be able to use the site. The site has not been very useful for some time, so we have lost some of the team support, because some of the people that initially asked about it got moved to other assignments. In the last two months, we've acquired some new people—champions, as I would call them. On-the-ground people that see a need and a validity for a site are absolutely critical. It is vital to integrate the site into your strategy on the field or on the ground, and then have people champion it, and continue to keep it fresh, because if the site doesn't change often, then nobody's going to go to it. Chat rooms and blogging have the strongest ability to bring content, keeping it fresh. Getting good content on the site all the time is a major task.

This site has been up for about 18 months. We're really still struggling with it. It's brought a group of people together; in terms of establishing a church, it hasn't happened. That's the bar. If the site isn't doing what it should, then we should give it to someone smarter, and move onto what we do know, which is bringing people together. The other site I want to point out is one which we started with focus groups. We started talking with a "trade language." In these cultures, there is a trade language that is very prevalent, so we knew that if we used this trade language, we could really span a number of countries. The trade language is so established in business and government, we knew we would be able to take it to the leadership and the rising number of affluent people. We thought if we could go to universities—to people who would be out of university in two to four years—these would be the professionals. We realized quickly that we could not do that; we had to divide them into two groups, and leave the student or the university element out, because once they graduate, their worldview, their direction in life, changes. Sites that are university-oriented in this culture were dealing more with music or entertainment.

Once you get to a professional level, people are trying to find out the answers to course/career questions such as, "How do I motivate myself to be better? How do I get better at my particular job?" We decided we'd not even attempt the university level but went straight for the young professional. This one is totally directed at that—even the name is a mix of focus groups, because

we're trying to appeal to young people or the young professional. You only have to drill down a few steps, and you come into a major area of Scripture distribution. The whole Bible had just been translated into this particular trade language, a very significant step. We had the type of material we wanted to be able to put out there for it. We were lacking an on-the-ground strategy to tie this in. We hope to make some of that happen soon. This one has the potential; we already have all the code and everything set up for the chat room. We don't have the native speakers we need yet, because you can't just do this in translation work, it has to be in slang, the vernacular. It can't be duplicated any other way.

How do we conduct our research groups? First of all we start off with a client, a team that needs something. They may have some ideas about what they want, and then they come to us. At that point, we hopefully have the freedom to move them back a couple of steps, and ask them core questions: Who do you want to reach; why do you want to reach them; what sort of resources do you have in place already; where does this particular site sit in your overall strategy?

Then we ask our client to get us connected with a group of people. We do groupings of six to eight believers, and we sit down with them. Then we do a mix, a believer and a non-believer; then we go to one that's all non-believers. Sometimes we're able to pull it off, sometimes the believers don't want to connect with anything and we can't do that, so we have to go to the other sites. We are very up-front that we are Christians. We try to talk up Christianity to people. We don't feel we can come to these people and say, "We're doing some kind of self motivation site." We just go straight to the point of what we're trying to do.

They surf in groups. One guy sits and drives; all the others surround him.

That's quite often received well, so once we get the focus groups, we start asking them about the motivators: why do they go to site, how do they go to site. One of the things we found was that most of the guys don't surf by themselves. That's a western thing, an American thing. They surf in groups. One guy sits and drives; all the others surround him. We adjusted the way we created our site as a result.

Our site is full of discussion questions. But now we weren't looking at an individual who would be reading this at 10 o'clock with nothing else on. No, this was a party activity, a group activity. We changed the site to accommodate that kind of attitude. That also meant there would be no secret believers. If they were going to interact with this, then they were probably going to be able to come to this question in their life in a group format, which was actually a very good thing for us. We felt that was a better way to go about it. That's the kind of thing that came straight out of the focus group.

You can sometimes ask a group of people to get together without their knowing why. One of the good things about some of these countries is they sometimes don't have a lot to do. Failed economies can work for you. You can get a group of people together, sit down and explain, "We want to tell you something that's really important to our culture, and we want to figure out how to tell you that." It's that simple.

When we were dealing with the first site, the focus groups there were predominantly believers. We tagged onto a conference of young professionals which was in session and actually had a little dinner. We paid for the meals for anyone who would come and sit at our tables. We sat

there probably for four hours, and got a lot of insight. If we had the money, in terms of an accurate researching element, we would have done this multiple times, but we didn't have that luxury.

We then tested the site. We would put the site up and have them to take it to their group of people. We would bring one of the designers back, and then stand while other people worked through the site. We spent a bit of money on the front end before we put it up.

John Edmiston: Basically we'd take a whole container of computers in to a country—100, 200, 400. Then we'd set up internet cafés, each having 21 computers, each staffed by three or four indigenous missionaries who would run the cafés. Ultimately, we want to have an incarnational church planting movement in the UPG community, doing friendship evangelism in these internet cafés. We put in 21 computers: one for a firewall, 20 for the clients. The computers are donated from the United States, Hong Kong, and Australia. We can use even Pentium I and Pentium II computers. We can do that because we use Linux and thin-client technology. We just have one powerful server, a Pentium IV server, and all the others are "dummies." They don't even need hard drives; they're connected up by the thin-client technology. It's fine as long as you're not running high-powered games. It's fine for surfing, MSOffice, and things like that.

We can get these old computers that people are throwing away by the hundreds. Eighty percent of computers in the world are in storage, so there are whole warehouses full that people just want to throw away. It's only a matter of us getting the funding for the shipping. We bring them over to a country, and we can set them up. We locate them in various UPG communities, with a range of other services appropriate to that community. We find that if it's properly run, you can have $1000 a month net profit. Now $1000 a month doesn't support a westerner, but it will support four Filipinos very well. A good wage for a missionary in the Philippines is $150 a month. $250 a month is excellent—you'll get a lot of missionaries for $250 a month. So you can easily support three or four missionaries on $1000 a month. That may shock some of you! I've actually done that, I'm one of these silly people that's an incarnational missionary. I go and live at the level of the people amongwhom I minister. I've lived at that level and it is possible—difficult, but possible. When you set these things up, you need a computer technician, a ministry expert, and an entrepreneur. The hardest person to get is someone who will make the business decisions and run it as an effective business. If you see me tearing my hair out, it's because at one of these internet cafés someone's made another silly business decision.

One of the keys is adequate startup capital and a good location. This is like McDonald's— it's a franchise. It's location, location, location. If you put your internet café well away from the school or well away form the business district, you will get no customers. It's got to be where

people are. Ideally, they're best off in the mall. Never put them in a church. We want them to be a neutral platform that looks like a business. You form your relationships in the internet café; outside the internet café you share Christ with them. In many of these places you'd get the internet café firebombed if you directly evangelized from it. You do the evangelism outside of the premises. It just looks like it's supposed to: a business. That's all it appears to be in the community, a kind-hearted, peaceful business; when people go in, they feel that it's good. It shouldn't have a "Jesus Converts the World Internet Café" sign outside it. This is an entry platform.

With internet cafés, the content you put online, and the relationship is built offline. Particularly when you're working with unreached people groups, content's the dangerous bit. If you go to China and you start talking about politically sensitive matters, or even the return of the Lord, or some other matters that the government doesn't like, that content has to be put online. You can't mention it offline. Certain words or even discussion of certain topics can be very risky. But you build a relationship, and then you point them to the content. Then you can go and examine that content.

Illicit content drives the internet. There's bad illicit content, and there's good illicit content. The Gospel is illicit content to many people in this world.

Illicit content drives the internet. There's bad illicit content, and there's good illicit content. The Gospel is illicit content to may people in this world. So the internet is designed to share illicit information—it's actually designed to share information, not just illicit information. But if Jesus is an "off" topic, that's attractive to a lot of people. People will go online to find out the stuff in secret that they're not allowed in their culture. So you build the relationship, and then say, "If you want to find out more about Jesus on the sly, go here." And they go to your website, because the web is where people do their illicit thinking, whether it's pornography, politics or religion. As a Christian, you might even say, "I'd like to find out about another religion," Islam, for instance, but you know you're in a conservative church and you don't want to ask those questions there. You go online and you find out, you do your thinking, you do your examination of other religions online.

In the process we developed a ministry plan, and we tested and checked the team. We signed a franchise agreement. We set up reporting arrangements. We set up the location. They received the computers, and we trained them for six months. We hope after a while the house church starts from it. We have seen that in a few places. Various Muslim house churches started out of internet cafés. Internet cafés have greatly increased the rate of Muslim conversion in the countries where they've been operated. Most places were only seeing three or four converts a year. After the internet cafés arrived, they were seeing three or four conversions a month. It's a ten-fold increase. It's a very powerful platform, and I still muse about why. Well, people are in there for an hour or more, they're relating to people; something about Islam is very logical, something about computers is very logical. I find a lot of people in Muslim ministry also like computers. There seems to be an overlap between the two worlds and for some reason at the moment internet cafés are proving a very powerful platform for reaching Muslims.

I asked a group of people involved in Muslim ministry, "What games can you put on an internet café?" They said in Christian organization they couldn't use Counterstrike or Ragnarok; those are very violent games. But in a Muslim country you can't even put cards, not even solitaire,

because that's offensive. What can you put? They ended up with Chess, because it was acceptable; it was cultural and it was part of the Muslim world.

In many countries, you need to put dividers between computers because people are secretive and they don't want people looking at them, and they're afraid of people stealing their knowledge. Similarly with your websites, even colors can make a huge difference. Obviously if you're going for Chinese culture you want a lot of red on your website. It's the redemptive color, the lucky color; you want a lot of red borders around your website if you're ministering to the Chinese. Don't use blue in the Philippines—it's unlucky, it has a curse. There are all these tiny little details you have to think about at great depth. You need to know the language, you need to know the culture. Using the internet cross-culturally is very, very powerful if you can take the time to incarnate it right down deep in that culture.

With the internet, the more specific your website is, the more hits you get.

With the internet, the more specific your website is, the more hits you get. Generic websites get lost. There are various people who won't go to the internet to buy their normal groceries, for instance. But they will go to the internet to find a 1933 vintage car because they can't locate that down at the normal car yard. They will go to the internet to find a rare wine or a rare book. Rowland Croucher sells an Australian author's books, and he funds his ministry selling books online. I've got a friend who earns $120,000 selling worms online. So being very, very specific in your cultural website is not a bad thing. Don't try to tell everyone about God. Try to tell Uzbeks about Jesus in a particular way, and try to be as specific as possible. Then find the Uzbek search engine, because there will be one, and get yourself in that. If you type "cybermissions" into Google, the whole first page is me. Why? Because "cybermissions" is an extremely specific keyword. Billy Shankar From Malaysia invented the word "cybermissions," and then I got it from him! I've got cybermissions.org; I've got cybermissions articles, I kept using my keyword cybermissions over and over again, so if anyone types it in to Google, there I am. I get all the hits and all the kudos because I manage to use my keyword. Being specific pays off; the challenge is to be specific. Think of the city of Tashkent. Do a specific site on "how did Tashkent come to Jesus?" Think about it deeply, think about it missiologically, and make it happen.

Don M: We don't have a lot of money, so we have to argue with the client for some time to get him to go back a step or two. They want to have something up next month, or next week, or yesterday more likely! That is our biggest step. The colors that we pick are critical. Every aspect of it has a meaning. When you come into this as a foreigner, you have to recognize every assumption you bring to the table. Just because you know how to code, or how to take pictures, or how to write, it doesn't give you the right or the ability to make those kind of judgments. Local partners become critical.

The local partner needs to have a base of research to begin, because if you don't start with some kind of general understanding of what you have on paper, they're lost. You have to guide them along, educating your local partner in what you're doing. If they've dealt with Westerners before, they're usually pretty adept at giving you what you want. You're trying to get them to forget some

of what they learned with other partners. We don't have to go back to basic research questions. You have to cut off the research, and then make your best guess. We are not Procter and Gamble; we do not have those kind of budgets. We literally go to one level, and get it as quickly as possible into the national partners that are working with us. We look at the national media, we look at how other brands—western products—are marketed across cultures. Let somebody else do the marketing for you. Coke has spent a lot of money figuring out how to sell those to Uzbeks or Kurgis or whatever. So you can take some hints from what other people have done, and then you cut it off and make a best bet, because otherwise it'll never get off somebody's laptop. You have to get out there, and maybe make some mistakes, We've made a lot of mistakes, but at least we know we have a product that's out the door and now we're using it and interacting with it. It's a mix.

We do a lot of looking for secondary resources. BBC has some really good information about a country, and we pull from that. We look at what national marketers are doing, both western products and a local company. For example looking at an Indian product like Thumbs Up—that was a great response to Coke's being cut out of the market.Now Thumbs Up is owned by Coke, but that was a great example of how a local company took their product in to the market and made it well-known. Make yourself think as a researcher for a while and then switch over to the other side. We don't have a lot of money; we don't hire professionals to do this for us.

By giving everyone his little bit of time, the status of your internet café rises; everyone's your friend.

John Edmiston: I've been asked about the Genrev.net site and the training they need on it. The 25 volunteers are all what they call peer-to-peer volunteers. Some of them are 16, some 18, some 20, some are over 25 years old. They're then trained by their priest, their associate priest, and they're trained in IT techniques and answering the basic questions that young believers have. I think there's a little bit of a pyramid structure to it. There are more senior leaders, they get stuff referred up, and the forums are monitored by the clergy, so there are no heresies propounded. The basic sharing is done peer-to-peer, young Filipino to young Filipino. That's why it's so powerfully effective. They type a language that I hardly know. It's full of abbreviations and text message slang, which other young people understand, so they share the Jesus in them. It's a very small missiological jump—they're going from Catholic to born-again Catholic, basic witnessing and things like that.

John Edmiston: We want to put very small-range Christian radio in the internet cafés, in about a five-kilometer radius. We're working with a couple of Christian radio ministries to do that. What you get is a miniature radio station in the community. The Imam can come in and do his call over it. The local policeman can come in and do his stories. And you get to know your community. Everybody wants his five minutes of fame on the local radio. Nobody wants the local radio station to shut down because that's their five minutes of fame. By giving everyone his little bit of time, the status of your internet café rises; everyone's your friend. It's a great missiological strategy. These suitcase radios—that's what they call them; they're a lot bigger than a suitcase, but that's the nickname—can be put in those Internet cafés. We're actively working to make that happen in the future.

Rev. John Edmiston is the founder of Asian Internet Bible Institute, which was born to give free/low cost training to Asia's pastors. The AIBI now has around 5000 students (nearly all are part-time) in over 40 nations. The courses are in English, Spanish, Thai and Tagalog and AIBI offers a Diploma in Evangelism and Church-planting, and a Diploma In Global Ministry, as well as the online course CYBERMISSIONS.

Don M is the leader of an eight-member communications team which focuses outreach efforts on the peoples of Asia. In the past year, the team has developed evangelistic web sites in multiple languages and launched a number of advocacy campaigns directed toward developing international networks of church support. Martin has worked in journalism and communications for the past 20 years. He has worked as a reporter and editor for secular newspapers, as well as worked as a staff writer for a major mission. He and his family moved overseas in the early '90s, where he and his wife work as writers and photographers, focusing their work on outreach efforts in areas of the world that were traditionally closed to Christian witness.

Cybermissions: Use of the Internet in Missions

by John Edmiston

Up until a couple of years ago, when you talked about missions and computing you were talking about fund-raising databases, the local office network of a computing society. No one saw computers as a way of reaching the world. It was something that was just done in the back office of the missionary society. Then the engineer came and missions put up their websites: the SIM website, or the OM or APCM websites. But those websites weren't aimed at reaching the lost. They were aimed at fund-raising for their respective missionary societies. Unfortunately, that is still predominantly the case. Very few people are using the internet intentionally to reach the lost as a front-line application. Only a fairly small handful of people are doing so successfully; those doing it full time are very rare. What we're going to look at today is "cybermissions," the intentional front-line use of computers and the internet to facilitate the greater mission.

I'll open up with a word of prayer: "Father of heaven. . . Father in heaven, who has created the heavens and the earth. We know that you have made people to know you and you have created ways in which we can reach you, and one of these ways is the internet. We ask that you will send your Holy Spirit on this small gathering, that we may learn, that we may understand, that we may grow in the way we can use computers and the internet to reach the world for Jesus. Be with us. Reveal your Son to us. Reveal your mission to us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!"

Let's go to William Carey, the great Baptist missionary. He talked about the use of means—missionary societies back then—thinking intelligently and pragmatically about how we can communicate the powerful Gospel of Jesus Christ to as many people and nations as possible. He was very efficient in his Bible translations and his other works. If William Carey were here today, I'm sure he would be advocating cybermissions, because it is a very efficient means of reaching people for Jesus.

The average cost of producing an additional baptized believer in today's church is $300,000. The average cost for doing that online is about $100. That's the cost efficiency of the internet. One of these means is the use of the internet. The internet has many features that make it very well-suited for missions. It reaches about a billion people in many nations simultaneously. It

can build community. It can reach a mass audience. It can communicate just one-to-one securely, especially if you're using Skype and other one-to-one, point-to-point encrypted chat mechanisms. You can use a vast variety of media. You see, the internet is not a medium, it is a way in which you can find media. On the internet media is text, graphics, audio, video. You put the media on the internet and the internet just helps you find the media. The media don't go anywhere. They sit on that server. It is not a broadcast medium. Nothing goes out via the internet. The people come to it. If it's streaming audio, it does go out, but the people come to the media on your server. They get there by following a community of links or going to a search engine. It's connections between media. It's media with hyperlinks embedded in it.

On the internet you can use a wide variety of languages; it can be regionally or culturally targeted. Other advantages: you don't need airfare to reach your target, you don't need a visa. There are fewer health problems. There's greater personal safety, especially when witnessing to Muslims. You can get into closed countries and reach community leaders. It works even when you're asleep.

My first experiences of internet evangelism were incredibly humbling. I've been brought up in, "get the *Four Spiritual Laws,* go to someone, share the Gospel with them or preach from the pulpit and make the decision" kind of evangelism. I had come to believe in my little heart-of-hearts that I was a very effective little evangelist, and that somehow this depended on my personality. I went online and my Gospel presentation was very simple, it was what we call "Old Roman Roads: 3:23, 6:23, 5:8. 10:9," with a little bit of explanation on each verse. The response form, you know, down on the bottom with, "I decided to follow Christ for the first time. Recommit. . ." —you know, four or five things there. Twelve follow-up lessons. Download a Bible. All on one page.

Suddenly people were coming to the Lord in considerable numbers. I'd wake up in the morning and people would have been saved without my intervention—without my wonderful personality being involved at all. It was just the power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. People were seeking, typing "how to become a Christian" into Google, and arriving at my website page called "How to become a Christian, giving your life to Jesus." And I wasn't involved.

I thought, "These can't be real conversions because I'm not involved." It took me quite a while to see that, yes, they were really saved and they did come to Christ, because it's not John Edmiston who is the power of God unto salvation, is it? The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. And you can encounter the Gospel in the Bible, you can encounter the Gospel in a Christian tract, you can encounter the Gospel on a web page. If it's the Gospel and it's properly explained in the heart language, that's the power of God unto salvation. It will do its work, and it does do its work with amazing efficiency. It's extremely cost-effective, and it's ideal for a retired missionary.

I want to get our tech people over here tied up with our retired missionaries over there who have deep cultural and language skills. Put the two together and have these missionaries who have still got good health have another fifteen years of missionary work online. Many people who are highly effective in the fields have come back because of illness just when they were getting effective and understanding their culture. They can get on a computer, they can get online, they can do dynamic work for Jesus—the biggest advantages.

People arrive at websites because of purposeful behavior. They click on a link or a search engine. Thus, web visitors are there with a purpose and already have some interest. If people arrive at your website they have a minimal amount of interest. They have at least clicked on that link on Google, or they've clicked on a link on another website. They are pre-approved; pre-selected. You are not dealing with apathetic people or highly resistant people. You are dealing with people who at least have some interest in the Gospel. You are ministering straight to the people you want to be ministering to. You are able to minister to people who are already interested in what you have to say, and that's the biggest advantage of cybermissions.

If you put up a Christian website on depression, you know the people arriving at that website are already interested in depression. Maybe they're depressed, maybe they have a relative who's depressed, maybe they're a counselor; but you know they wouldn't be visiting a website on depression unless they were already interested. You've got an audience that's already hot to trot. That's much better than trying to preach to some of the country churches in Australia, especially at harvest time, when everyone is tired. They're like blocks of wood. You don't get that response on the internet because they've been pre-selected. You're already talking to people who are interested, and for an evangelist that's what you want. You want to be talking to people who are already curious about the Gospel. People use the internet to do private searching for information. It's a community of seekers driven by curiosity. It might be curiosity about relationships, information, politics, sex, religion—all sorts of things. They will chase along through the community of links as they search for their private information. The thinking they're not allowed to do in their culture, they will do online. They search for things their culture defines as illicit. It might be pornography, might be forbidden political information, it might be forbidden religious information. Whatever it is, that's where people go to do their sneaky peaking. Students go online to find assignments that other students have written so they can cheat. They go online to do all sorts of illicit behavior.

You want to be talking to people who are already curious about the Gospel.

That's what you can take advantage of, because if the Gospel is illicit, as it is in China, Iran, and other places, people can use the internet to search for something that is forbidden. And so that curiosity drives them online. Whether it be conspiracy theories or health information, people go online to find out what they are afraid to ask out loud publicly. People considering adopting the Christian faith also use the internet to find out information and to talk to Christians. Religion seekers are a major internet phenomenon, with forty percent at least of internet users regularly searching for religious information online. If you've got a billion people online at the moment, forty percent, or more, are searching for religious information regularly. That means you've got four hundred million seekers already wanting to find out religious information.

What evangelist doesn't want a community of four hundred million seekers! Now, my response rate online is about two percent. In other words, one in fifty people that read a Gospel form, fill it out and make a positive decision to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior for the first time. A lot more than that do recommitments. If you can get ten thousand people to read your page in a year, all right. Divide by fifty and you'll have two hundred people come to faith online.

Getting ten thousand people to read a web page is not hard if you know how to do your search engine optimization and create an interesting website or a bridge website. It is not hard to lead two hundred people a year to faith in Jesus Christ. I'm not an evangelist; primarily I'm a Bible teacher—I run an online seminary. I've only a couple of evangelistic pages, but between them I'm seeing between 500 and 700 people saved a year, with no work, because I'm mainly doing my seminary and internet stuff. Doing face-to-face evangelism, personal evangelism, my best year was 100 offline. So, 700, 500 online is good. I'm happy.

Religion seekers are not just hits or visitors, or statistics, they have names like Bob and Jane and Mohammed and Bing. They live in a real country and they do real work. They're not virtual people. They have histories, they have names, they have places, they have connections. You lead them to Christ and they can lead someone else to Christ because they're real. They're not just concepts. They're just as real as people in the street and they come to a website seeking answers to their questions. They are very curious about Christianity. Are we seeker-sensitive? Are our websites even vaguely aimed at that enormous community of curious people?

Are our websites even vaguely aimed at that enormous community of curious people?

This is why the evangelistic page I have is very simply called "How to become a Christian." Why would I call it that? Because someone out there who's desperate to receive Jesus—and that's the person I want to talk to—is going to type into Google "How to become a Christian." I want to be at the top of that keyword search. I'm trying to think like a seeker. What's a seeker who wants to be born again going to type into Google? They're going to type in the words like, "born again, how to become a Christian," or phrases like these. That's what I call my web pages. I name webpage the same as the Google query, and I try to think like a seeker on the internet.

I ask myself what I want the page to be like. It's got to be fast loading. I don't want to wait for ten years for the page to come up. I want it to get to the point straight away because I'm desperate to receive Jesus. I want to know how to become a Christian, because that's where I am. I'm right there on the skyline, right at the point. I know in my life I need something more.

That's the person I'm aiming for. I arrange everything to pull those people off the search engine to my site. The search engine only refers those kinds of people to me. And I use the search engine to select the people with whom I want to share the Gospel. Now you can spend all your time in atheism,arguing with atheists and going around and around in circles, but no one's saved because you're going to the people who really don't want to hear about Jesus. I don't want to talk to them. (I do want to see them saved, but they're not my primary target community.) My primary target community is those people that are crying out to God, "Please show me how to get saved!" You can design a webpage to reach them—people God has already raised up.

My partner is the Holy Spirit. He's raising people up all the time. At any time and point, in any crowd anywhere around the world, two percent of people are ripe and ready to receive Jesus. Those of us who have preached evangelistically know, if you've got a crowd of 800 and you preach, you expect 16 people down the front. If you've got a crowd of 200 you expect at least four people down the front. Billy Graham has the same percentage, two percent. I get the same percentage,

two percent. How come? Because it's the Holy Spirit, not Billy Graham or John Edmiston. That two percent is what God's got already. They're the people wanting to receive Jesus. You come along with a simple, clear, outline and say, "Okay, I know God's at work in your heart. I know you want to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Here's how, now come down the front." You don't have to convince them because there is always two percent ready in any crowd to receive Jesus. There's two percent of the internet, ready, right now, this hour to receive Jesus Christ and you want to get them on your website.

A lot of our websites don't answer the questions that non-Christians ask of Christianity. They're often the church website, which is just corporate image. "Here's our church, here's our pastor, here's our picture of our pastor preaching. Isn't he wonderful? Look at those smiling teeth. Look at the big black Bible. That's our pastor." "Oh, look at our church building, look at our new carpet. Look at our stained glass window." The seeker might say, "Very nice, I like your stained glass window, I like your pastor, but how do I get saved?" That's the question you have to answer: "How do I get saved? What will I have to do? Will I have to pay any money?" All these silly little questions. Not that they're silly questions. They're big questions people ask, and you've got to answer them. The harvest field is online. It's not offline, it's right there—people seeking Jesus. Christian mission agencies need to get the point: there are four hundred million people with spiritual questions who are just a mouse click away from salvation. Websites need to be harvest fields and the website is one of your most strategic tools for evangelism. Religion surfers can hear the Gospel online, just as they can hear it from a book, a tract, or a pulpit, and give their lives to Christ. The right reason for a missions website is to get spiritual results for Jesus. That spiritual result might be a conversion, an inquiry, discipleship, helping a person out of a cult, training a leader—whatever. Every website has to be asking, "What spiritual results do I want to get for Jesus Christ out of this website?"

Every website has to be asking, "What spiritual results do I want to get for Jesus Christ out of this website?"

Once you ask that question, it then dictates everything else you do. Some people say, "Oh, we have a website now, look at this wonderful graphic." Right, you've got a website, but what's the website going to do to get spiritual results for Jesus in your target community, in your unreached people group, in China, in Zimbabwe, wherever? What's that website going to do? And if it has a big video on there—what use is it? The people in Zimbabwe can't download it on their 56k modem. It's not going to get any spiritual results for Jesus. You can explain, you can answer questions, you can exert, reprove, instruct and disciple, train and counsel. You have to ask yourself, "What would Jesus do with this website for his kingdom?"

Here are some possibilities: Web evangelism, Bible teaching, online seminaries, discipleship, online counseling and mentoring, city-wide Christian web portals, targeting a specific people group or interest group, offering practical help. One of the areas I hope to develop in cybermissions is to have a web portal that helps churches in the developing world minister holistically to their communities. Many of the communities around the globe are under-served with social services. The government can't or won't provide them. The urban slums, the great sprawling slums of Asia and the mega cities, the urban areas, are heavily under-serviced. The only presence there is

the church, and the pastor doesn't have the faintest idea how to reach his community. But he can go online. We'll have a database set up there, and people he can connect with, and do-it-yourself instructions: "This is how to purify water in your community. You can make some money for your church by purifying and selling purified water to help support your salary as a pastor. Here's how to go about it..." Then do this for dozens of different things so the local church can be holistic and powerful; and it's resourced from the website. The church becomes practical to its local community. One church is growing vegetables on its roof by hydroponics because it's in the midst of a terrible sprawling slum and people have no fresh food, no fresh vegetables. The church grows the vegetables and sells them. That's a sensible solution for that church in that context. Because so many churches throughout the world are facing the same problems, they can all go back to the one source, the one website, which can be a resource for thousands of churches around the world.

Question 1

John Edmiston: The question was, "Do these websites already exist or is it something I'd like to do?" It's something I'm planning to do but there are already some websites out there and some CD's produced for this. But it hasn't been put into one big mega website.

Question 2

John Edmiston: I have been given a pile of information and websites so I know where the information is. I then have to contact these people for their copyright permissions and then collect that unto one big website. Then I need to find a graphic designer to simplify the information. It's got to be greatly simplified so it looks like a do-it-yourself manual—step one, step two, step three, step four. The delay is that I have to get $50,000 to fund the people who will simplify this information. All the information already exists, it's just in a fairly inaccessible form, too complicated for the average pastor in the developing world to readily use.

There is some very good information from the United Nations, and some produced by World Vision. There are a lot of human development resources out there, but it's all complex. It's all at graduate level. We need to pull it down, show pictures, steps; do it properly. That's going to take a lot of time. But the information is there and it just needs to be pulled out. We have to catch the vision of equipping the church in the developing world to be holistic and relevant in these desperate situations. We need to equip them in simple, culturally appropriate, technologically appropriate ways that aren't too high up there. This is something I intend to do. I

We can do a lot of different things by using the internet. More possibilities are: safely witness to Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. Next one, language and culture exposure. One of the advantages of the internet is we can get Bible college students and expose them to Muslims here in America, online. So they can go out to a Muslim chat room and they can chat to Muslims and they can learn about Muslims.They can have debates and make their cultural mistakes anonymously with a made up "Bill123" at yahoo.com e-mail address. They can learn how to interact with that culture without going all the way to Saudi Arabia and trying to witness and getting thrown in prison. They can learn how to witness to Buddhists and how to preserve face and how to relate

online and make the mistakes. If they do that for six months before they go to the field, they will arrive much more culturally sensitive. They won't make the mistakes because they've done their missions exposure online, in chat rooms, and they've heard the heart of the people. People often open up, so they arrive with a much greater degree of language and culture exposure.

The next thing is, build friendships before going to the field. Before I went to the Philippines, I knew where I was going, a city called General Santos City. I looked it up on the web and I found there was a regional area discussion group. So I joined that and got to know the people. I found something else, I got to write the-mail to the other people, so I'd say, "Hello I'm coming to your city. I'd just like to introduce who I am." Then I found that the vice president of the Philippines, who is now the president, had her own discussion group, so I joined that, and I got to know her. It was open, it was public. So I joined that. I kept joining all these things. I arrived on the field. As soon as I got there all these friends in the discussion group said, "Hi, we'll invite you out to dinner John. Come over here. Glad to see you." You know, we'd been chatting away. I arrived instantly with a community of friends and because they were internet people in this remote area, and they were all the leaders of the community. I was in. Two weeks later I had a visa problem. I e-mailed the vice president's discussion group: "What do I do? They're asking me for a bribe to purchase my visa." An hour later I got a phone call from a very scared immigration official, "It's all right, it's all right, it's all right!" My visa problem was solved, Why? Because I used the internet to build friendships before going to the field. And I did it nicely. I wasn't like a salesman, I was genuine, and it worked.

Tightly coordinate your website with your other outreach efforts. Build relationships offline. Put the information online.

Use websites to follow up after your crusades. You preach the Gospel, and then you say, "I know a lot of you are going to have a lot of questions. You've heard the Gospel today and you haven't come down to the front here. You're still thinking about Jesus. Well, for more information go to churchwebsite.com." Or you take your youth group down to Mexico, California. That's where all the churches go, down to Mexico for a mission field. They meet people and have a great time. They're down there for ten days. How do they follow up all those contacts and friendships? "Here's our churchwebsite.com—come to us." Swap e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers. Keep in contact.

Tightly coordinate your website with your other outreach efforts. Build relationships offline. Put the information online. Genrev.net is a Philippino site that gets two million hits a month. It works among renewed Catholics in the Philippines. The charismatic renewal group goes out to the more traditional Catholic schools where they're forbidden to share the Gospel, and they build a worship team. They build relationships, they have fun, and they get all the young people interested. Then they say, "Now if you want to know more about what we do, come to genrev.net" The kids come online, go to the chat rooms, and give their lives to Jesus. Thousands—four thousand a month, because it's a small jump from traditional Catholicism to renewal Catholicism. "Would you like the Holy Spirit in your life? Would you like to be born again?" They chat on these websites all about their dating relationships and God and understanding things. It's fantastic because they build the relationship offline, put the information online.

You can use the internet to network widely scattered mission specialists. If you have a mission specialist and he's great at translating language "x" and there's another person who's also good at language "x" but he's over here; and they need some computer support from a guy over there— you can have an e group and pull them all together. You can raise up informed interests. We've all seen prayer points put around, but we can even do better than that. We can inform interests and have websites that raise up prayer. The tsunami came through December 26. What happened? Because of the internet, online databases coordinated massive relief efforts, millions of dollars were donated by websites, theological questions about justice, suffering and tragedy were answered in blogs, web pages, and e-mails. Short-term mission teams were pulled together rapidly using websites, e-mails, and online recruitment teams, People and locations were prayed for on internet prayer boards. The internet made the Christian response to the tsunami far more timely and possible and profitable. Those who knew how to use the internet best responded best when the crisis came.

Those who knew how to use the internet best responded best when the crisis came.

This is our strategy section: How to be effective, what is appropriate technology; the Word in cyberspace. It is the Gospel that is the power of God to salvation, not technology, methodology, or personality. The Gospel can be encountered on a webpage or a chat room, and a person can give his life to Jesus. It's the Gospel that we have to get into people's hearts and minds. That is primary to our strategy.

Missiology, that is thinking deeply about cultural issues, still applies online. You still need to think missiologically when you're doing your online ministry. You have to think about language, culture, worldviews, and even colors, styles, illustrations, and what's offensive and not offensive. The idea is to assist the implementation of a good missionary strategy by using powerful technology. You can't assist a bad strategy with technology.A bad strategy is always a bad strategy. Talking to Turkish people in Chinese is a bad strategy. You still have to talk to Turkish people in Turkish and you still have to understand what Turkish people want and think; how Turkish people react. You have to enter into their worldview and their culture, and you have to be missiological. Then you have to think strategically and logically. In a sense, you have to spend a lot of time asking deep questions about simple things. Who are you aiming to reach? What are they interested in? What do they feel they need? What sort of people do they want to meet online?

Now this is surprising. You will find that people often want to meet someone different. Muslims often want to meet a Christian because they're curious. I'll give you an example, not from the online world. You know what the greatest priority of overseas students in America is? The number one priority: to find a real American friend. Apart from their studies, that's what they want. They want someone who's different.

What's the hard interest? What are their questions about God? For instance, in Papua, New Guinea, the question about God in everyone's mind is, "How powerful is God"? Is he more powerful than the spirits and the demons and the witchcraft? That's the big question. How powerful is God? Can he deal with this? That's not often a question that's asked in American culture. People have different questions about God.

What language do they use? What is their communication style? The recent Lausanne

Conference talked about "orality," that is, seventy something percent of the world's communication is oral. What does that mean for the text-based world of the internet? We have to start putting audio materials online or use very simple English such as the Easy English system of communicating with 800 or 1500 words, and English vocabularies. We have to think about how to put audio and video online, if that is the preferred way people have of receiving information.

How can all these factors be put into a well-designed website? It might take you many, many hours to answer those questions, including, what security issues are there? If you're dealing with Muslims, there may be many. What's their bandwidth? Are they sitting there like I was at General Santos City, where just going to a webpage could take two or three minutes for a simple text-based webpage to load in an internet café? It was horrible! Some people have almost no bandwidth. If you're designing for them it must be very simple.

In designing a cybermissions website, you must start with the need and work backwards, not with your message.

What is their level of technological understanding? How patient are they with technology? There is a misconception that young people are the main users of the internet. In fact, they're not because they're too impatient. Studies have shown that young people get really impatient with websites that don't load quickly. They just dash in, get ten minutes worth of information, and go out again. The longest time spent online is by the elderly. Are they group learners or individual learners? Are they oral learners? How much time can you put into your website? In designing a cybermissions website, you must start with the need and work backwards, not with your message.

Question 3:

John Edmiston: Physical need, felt need, spiritual need. Often the best place to start is with the need that they perceive they have. So it might be how to become a Christian. That might be a felt need. It might be how to purify water in my slum. It might be how to lose weight with a link to a Christian testimony of someone who lost a lot of weight and how God helped them to do it. Whatever their felt need, that's where you start, and you build towards the need. The mistake of most preachers, teachers, and missionaries is, we have a great message and we say, "This is it! This is the message that will save the world!" I preached that,and I thought, "That was a great sermon. This is the sermon that will change the world." Then three days later I realized it's probably not the sermon that's going to change the world. You get enthusiastic about your content and you put it out there for the world to see. But you don't ask yourself, "Is this actually going to meet anyone's needs?" You're acting out of your passion and hoping someone else out there needs it. Sometimes they don't—especially my theology. I have these great theological insights the world really needs to know about, and they're all falling asleep, because it's not meeting their needs.

We have to say, "What is the need of this people group? Where are we going to?" If you're going to China, you know there's a lot of urbanization. You know there's a lot of generational background. There are young people moving to the cities away from their parents and grandparents, so there's a lot of stress in the society at the moment. There's concern over dishonesty and corrup-

tion and they are confused. So there is a need about confusion and an existential vacuum in the heart of the Chinese people. How can you meet that need? You might get a focus group of Chinese people and say, "Well, how does this work?"

Then you will have a website on relationships, on the meaning of life, on the felt needs that are coming out of their mouths. In China there's also a burning need to learn English. You can have a "learn English" page on your website and you teach them from the Gospel of John in the Good News Bible or another simple translation. You teach them English. The Gospel of John is very good for that because it's repetitive and it's easy to learn the words. "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was God." It's like a grade one reader.

You start with the need, then you design the website. Not the other way around. It's okay to have lots of different websites or web pages, as long as each one is focused on a different need.

There are no physical barriers. You never reach a country on the internet. You only reach a language group, or an interest group.

Strategy. When your thinking about the internet and cybermissions you have to remember, on the internet there is no little boundary between this country and that. The boundary between the United States and Canada does not exist on the internet. They're both English-speaking countries and they both go to English-speaking websites. There are no physical barriers. You never reach a country on the internet. You only reach a language group, or an interest group. Language groups and interest groups divide up the internet. You will find people who are interested in health, so they will go to all the websites about health. You will find other people who are interested in dieting. They go to all the websites about dieting. You find Christians going to Christian websites. Of course, English-speaking people go to English-speaking websites. Germans go to German-speaking sites.

You never see the website before you decide to visit it. The decision to go to the website is completely independent of its look, its graphic. The content and the position in the search engine is what drives the visitor, not the appearance. Your appearance, if it's too graphically heavy can drive people away or slow them down, or it can build brand loyalty. It can be useful. Don't override it completely, but it's not a factor in getting people to your website. There was a point where the top ten websites were mainly graphically low. The top ten, non-pornographic websites (forget about the pornographic ones) are often graphically very simple, like Google. Word of mouth and viral marketing drive the internet, so connect with those that can connect with others. If you find a church leader in another country, say Kenya, he can get five hundred people to your website, because you've connected with someone who can connect with others.

The more specific a website is, the more visitors it often attracts. Again, this is upside-down from normal thinking. If you have a website about God, no one will visit it. Why? You'll never find it in Google. Your website on God will be website 192,368 on Google and nobody will visit it. My web page on "Has science gone too far with cloning?" is one of the few Christian responses to cloning on the internet. It has many visitors. Why? People are interested in cloning; they want a Christian response; and there's practically nothing out there. It's unique, in Google it goes straight to the top.

The same is true with cybermissions. I can write a website on missions and have a little bit on cybermissions. But I have an entire website dedicated to cybermissions It's called cybermissions.org. It uses the term "cybermissions" often, and if you put "cybermissions" into Google, the entire first page is my website. I dominate that keyword because I've been highly specific. The more specific you are, the more successful you are.

Look at the businesses that have worked on a low budget online. I have a friend who's making a $120,000 a year selling worms online. He sells earthworms online. He buys them from the wholesaler, and sells them to the other people who are doing worm farms, which is trendy at the moment. If he were trying to sell groceries online, he would get nowhere. No one buys shampoo online. You buy your shampoo when you go to the supermarket. But let's consider rare books. Rare books websites sell very well. Rowland Croucher sells F. W. Warren books online and that pays for his petro money for his vehicle and for a few other things. He gets a nice little income out of selling one author who is very rare, online. Vintage wines, vintage cars—if you're going to buy a 1933 Rolls Royce, you would go online, put in "1933 Rolls Royce," and you would find one in Chicago because it's not going to be in your local car yard. If it's specific, it does very well online without a big advertising budget. If you've got the advertising budget of Amazon, then you can be more generic. If you're a missionary society, you have to be very specific to push your keyword up to the top of Google and be something that people will hunt—something that's rare. Be something that's unique and you will pop up to the top of the search engines.

If you're a missionary society, you have to be very specific to push your keyword up to the top of Google and be something that people will hunt—something that's rare.

Combine a niche market—specialized websites. Design with the average user in mind. The internet is driven by seekers searching for information, for relationships, or both. People are looking generally for a pen pal or a certain kind of information when they go online. They start either at a link, or a search engine. You need to have information people are looking for, relationships they can connect to. You need to have many links pointing to your website, be well ranked in the search engines, be clear, easy to use and to navigate. You cannot believe how much damage you can do to your website by being unclear. You cannot believe how many mistakes the average user can make. For instance in 1995, I used to have a devotional and a sign up box; and on the sign up box I used to have, "Type in your e-mail address." I had 200 people sign up as "your e-mail address." They typed in "your e-mail address" instead of joeblosson@yahoo.com. So I had to change my instructions to, "Type in your e-mail address *e.g.* . . . Include the 'at' sign." This is reality. You have to be extremely clear if you're going to lead a person to Christ, and then to a follow-up form, and then to materials for downloading a Bible. Each step has to be extremely obvious if you're not going to lose people.

Many people are easily confused by computers and the internet. You may even have to train people in how to use your website. Have help buttons, have plenty of cues, make it fast-loading and not cluttered or unreadable. Use high-contrast text. Many people don't read small text very well. Also, if you put red text on a black background, it's unreadable. Generally speaking, it should be white on green or some other high contrast, black on white, blue on white, you know. You can

use black on very light yellow, but have a high-contrast between the background of the page and the text so it's easily readable. Make links underlined, avoid junk like rotating crosses, and things that clutter the site. You've seen Christian websites that load up, amazing grace plays, the little Holy Spirit dove flutters down to the left of the page, the rotating cross leaps up and flashes "Be saved!" There's so much visual clutter and so much noise that a lot of people are turned off and it's counterproductive.

Think interaction, not just information. Be prompt, on topic, and personal when you reply to people. Do not commercialize the interaction. There is a temptation when you see all these responses to start asking for donations, which has happened. That turns people off very quickly. Never commercialize the spiritual relationship. On your website have lots of ways that people can respond to you. Say, "Visit our forums, e-mail us, ask a question." Create lots and lots of opportunities for them to get back to you, and make it obvious that you encourage questions and interaction because that's what you're there for.

Think interaction, not just information. Be prompt, on topic, and personal when you reply to people.

You're there to build an interactive relationship with people. Make it easy for them to spread the word. Make articles and pages easy to print out and take home. Let them copy and distribute your materials for free. Make it easy to download on an internet café and make it fit on a floppy disk (which are still used in many parts of world).

Question 4

John Edmiston: For an internet café in the third world, you don't want to have a file over one megabyte. Any file over one megabyte is too big. You're better off having a lot of little files. For instance, I put my e-books for my courses into an e-book format that is compressed. So the whole book, the whole course, is about 300 kilobytes, maximum 600 kilobytes, and downloads in two to three minutes even on the slowest of connections; five minutes on a very slow connection. That's adequate, that works. Think about having your resources in little chunks. The temptation here in America where most people broadband is to say, "Here is our eight megabyte file." It's a video clip that's too big and it just doesn't work. I had a friend who wanted to do some training material for pastors in urban slums. I asked, "How big is the training material for each course"? He said, "It's only two gigabytes." —2000 megabytes!—"I want you to put this on the internet for these urban pastors."

I said, "Even on broadband connection, two gigabytes will take you sixteen hours to download." This is impractical. This guy wanted lots and lots of video. He wanted three-hour video files and things like this. I said, "You can't do that. You have to think about your end-user and what they can cope with, and what they're prepared to put up with in order to get that information." The eventual solution was to send them all the modules, and a 160 gigabyte hard drive.

Use e-books that are compressed. Provide "tell-a-friend" forms: "To tell a friend about this website, type their e-mail address here and click it." Have a web address that is easy to write down or remember. This is why I don't use a database driven back end for my websites. I use

fixed URLs that people can write down, send to a friend and keep communicating. It's much easier to send them "www.aipi.ph/forms.htm" forms or something, than to send them "www.aipi.ph?squiggleabcd700."

Man 5: [inaudible]

John Edmiston: PDF files which are now much more widely accepted. At sourceforce.net you can get a free PDF creator simply called PDF Creator—that's the name of the program. I use it to make free PDF files. It saves me $1100 or whatever Adobe Acrobat costs. Sourceforce.net and Adobe Acrobat are both very good for making e-books. There are various e-books software programs out that are excellent.

John Edmiston: A lot of people say, "Oh, but they're not online. How can we reach the Arabs who are running around with the camels in the Saudi desert or whatever?" They're not online, but the fact is that their community leaders are, and often at least one extended family member is. If you can reach one key person you can often reach the community. This is called the tunnel and glass strategy. You tunnel into the people group. You find one person who's highly responsive. "Train faithful men who can train others also." If you find some faithful men or women in that community, train them and start the movement within the community. Internet cafés provide access for many people in developing nations. You're not just connecting to a person, especially in the developing world. You're connecting to an extended family or a network. If you connect to a Filipino, Filipinos have an average of 300 family members. That's true. I'm married to a Filipina and I can tell you they have this incredible system of cousins and friends that all get incorporated in the family network. So when you're contacting a Filipino you're contacting 300 people. It's fun being married into such a large network.

If you can reach one key person you can often reach the community.

Use the internet to connect to people who can connect you to still more people. Some people say, "But it won't work everywhere." The fact that you can't do something everywhere is no reason to stop trying it somewhere. I even got it working in Bhutan, the most closed country on earth, up in the Himalayas with hardly any internet access. I get material to one guy there. He passes it on to others. It can work through online strategies and offline strategies such as internet cafés and student centers. There's an enormous hunger for technology and free information in developing nations.

Set up a cybermissions department in your church with various people—tech people, content editors, field missionaries, language and experience evangelists, Bible teachers. Missions should be the focus. Focus the team around clear missiological objectives. Keep the technology appropriate to the average end-user. Coordinate the goals of the cybermissions team with the other objectives of the missions agency. Your internet team should operate along with the other missionaries so they compliment each other. Someone will write to you from your website, and say, "I know where that person is—in such and such village and we've got a team visiting there this

weekend." You pass that contact on to your team. On another occasion, the team may visit, preach, and then say, "For more information go to our website." Then the people there will be interacting back with the website.

Select a major people group and focus your efforts for maximum effectiveness. China, Japan, and the Middle East have hundreds of people that can be reached with just one language; India also. There are 43 nations that are most suitable for internet outreach. In these 43 nations the internet may be the very best way to reach the people. For instance in Japan, conventional missions have not done well. But Japan is highly internet savvy and connected. You can make a big impact there. The same is true with China and some closed countries such as Saudi Arabia. You really can't witness that well, but you can go into there by a lot of internet connections. These are countries where conventional missions simply won't work or have failed, but they have sufficient internet connectivity to start a church planting movement.

Dollars and cents. You can set up low-cost internet cafés in unreached people groups using donated recycled computers. These old computers can be made fast using thin client technology. You use the old computers as dummies, hook them up to a fast server using thin client technology and they go fast. I use a lot of open source software. That saves a lot of money. I just have to hunt down the software I need for the job.

These are countries where conventional missions simply won't work or have failed, but they have sufficient internet connectivity to start a church planting movement.

Major foundations are starting to look at funding cybermissions. Cybermissions is ideal for volunteers. It's also possible to get free web hosting. On the average cybermissions cost less than $100 per convert. That's not bad going. Cyber missionaries can work alongside conventional missionaries to generate synergies and spread the Gospel. The internet is where many seekers are doing their seeking and Christian missions need to prioritize four hundred million easy-to-reach religious surfers online.

Question 5

John Edmiston: Start the relationship in the chat room and you have a series of information on a website. You might get talking about it and you just drop a URL in there, in the chat room. They can go off to the website and have people look at it that way. Chat is so fast it's really hard to get a lot of good Christian evangelists. In chat you just build a relationship. You get them to know your "nick," your handle. They get to know you as all right. Every now and then you drop these URLs to take them out of the chat room to a saner environment where they can read a Gospel presentation or something concerning their issue.

The other thing is to get *E-sword* software. You have it on one half of your screen and you have your chat friend on the other. Grab a verse from *e-sword,* copy and paste it in your chat room. If you're fast, you can put the Word of God into the chat room, and you can look it up.

Question 6

John Edmiston: This is what they call social engineering or con artistry. You have to find someone who knows the language obviously, because they're going to have to be answering e-mails in that language and answering questions. A lot of internet ministry is about going into chat rooms over time, and finding someone you can ask, "Would you do some work for the Lord, and really help me and translate?" It's a matter of making sure you get your volunteers. This is where retired mis sionaries can be a big help. People with the language, the culture, the resources who can be part of that team. Someone else can do the text stuff for them.

There's a lot of online game-playing. One area which is yet to be fully explored is the creation of Christian virtual worlds, where people play these role-playing games, but instead of being evil and demonic, it's Christian and teaches Christian lessons. Many years ago there was a simple role playing game called "Destiny," which was very strongly theological and good, but that was way back in '93 or '94. It wouldn't work now, it's not good enough. There are some out and I would like to see them developed for reaching these game-playing people that are all over the place.

Spend a few weeks, or a couple of months, cruising around the internet to find people that you click with, people that you can minister to.

Here are some other ways that I've looked at for cybermissions. Urban slums is one. Reaching out through internet radio is another. Audio and video can be put online. There is a whole world of mentally ill people on the internet that need ministry. The mentally ill are still people in the image of God. There's the whole ministry in jails, people locked away. Another cybermissions group is sailors on ships. They're not going to a church, they're on a ship, but they have internet access.

Question 7

John Edmiston: Military places. All these sorts of places where you can get into with the internet. Shift workers. A lot of people don't go to church on Sunday morning because they're asleep then or they're at work because they're a shift worker. There are a whole groups of people that cybermissions can reach. We have to start thinking very strategically about that.

Question 8

John Edmiston: If you don't know who your target group is, how do you go about finding that target group? Spend a few weeks, or a couple of months, cruising around the internet to find people that you click with, people that you can minister to. Sometimes you will find people even in your normal relationships who will ask you about one question more than another. Some people might ask always about marriage and family questions, but not so much about finance or career questions. Some might ask more about salvation questions and Bible teachings. What are people naturally asking you about? Then build it around that.

Or build around an interest that you have, that you know other people have. I was talking to a young man whose passion was boat-building. I said, "Great! There are a lot of American

men who like building boats but won't go anywhere near a church." The NASCAR generation, not so much, but the practical working man—how are you going to reach him? You can have a boat-building website and then have some Bible stories about Peter on the boat, Paul in the storm, those who go down in the sea in ships. You can build it around his interests. His interests should be genuinely about boats. People should learn about boats there, about boat-building, but it can have his culture. It can have that nice male feel about it, with pictures of boats. It can be obviously a boat enthusiasts' website, but off to the side, there are links to the Gospel. Gospel presentations, and things like that.

I have an interest in mathematics, particularly in what we call fractals. Fractals are very pretty. Have you seen the Mandelbrot set? There's a whole community interested in these fractals on the net—Nerdy types like myself. All these nerdy physics types look at these fractals. I have spiritual fractals and I have little Bible verses under them. That reaches that community because they are interested in that particular, highly specialized branch of mathematics. This is called a bridge strategy. You have your interests and then you link that across to the Gospel.

Father in heaven, we thank You for Your gracious goodness towards us. We ask, Lord Jesus, that You will use us to extend Your kingdom and to fulfill the greater mission and that You'll show us how to use cyberspace for the glory of God. In Jesus' name. Amen!

Rev. John Edmiston is the founder of Asian Internet Bible Institute, which was born to give free/low cost training to Asia's pastors. The AIBI now has around 5000 students (nearly all are part-time) in over 40 nations. The courses are in English, Spanish, Thai and Tagalog and AIBI offers a Diploma in Evangelism and Church-planting, and a Diploma In Global Ministry, as well as the online course CYBERMISSIONS.

Evangelism on Usenet Newsgroups
by Rowland Croucher

Rowland Croucher: Do you all think you're in a workshop on Usenet newsgroups? Is that where you think you are? Anybody not know who they are—I mean—anyone not know where they are? O.K. By way of introduction, we have the campus paper editor come and ask me any question he likes. Come on up here. Your name is?

Aaron: Aaron Bauer.

Rowland Croucher: Aaron?

Aaron: Yes. I'm just a lowly reporter.

Rowland Croucher: Aaron, I'm going to pray. So that I'm given wisdom to answer the difficult questions you're going to ask me. Is that O.K.?

Aaron: That's great, yes.

Rowland Croucher: O.K., we'll do that and you can fire anything you like.

Aaron: O.K., Rowland. Well?

Rowland Croucher: Well, let me pray first.

Aaron: O.K., go ahead. We're going to need it.

Rowland Croucher: [Laughs] Lord, thank you for Aaron and thank you for his commitment to you and to ministry and to serving his sisters and brothers here, as we together talk about reaching the lost. In terms of tens and hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, we pray for your wisdom and we pray for love and we pray for a passionate desire to use the one life you've given us effectively. Bless our time together, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Aaron: Amen.

Rowland Croucher: Do you want to record something?

Aaron: Yes. I'll probably just take mental notes and go back and scratch it down if it's O.K.

Rowland Croucher: You can remember all this stuff?

Aaron: Like I told you earlier, I really don't know what Usenet newsgroups are. So that's why I'm really coming—to get an education.

Rowland Croucher: I hope so. That's what I flew from Melbourne to do.

Aaron: So you're from Melbourne?

Rowland Croucher: I'm from Melbourne, Australia.

Aaron: And going to Phoenix pretty soon?

Rowland Croucher: I'm going to Phoenix, at the age of 67 to be initiated into manhood.

Aaron: O.K., good.

Rowland Croucher: [Laughs].

Aaron: Well, I know there are a lot of skeptics out there that hear Internet evangelism and hold their nose. Maybe they're not educated about the Internet. Maybe they're not educated about this new practice that's going on, but what would you say to a person on why Internet evangelism is really effective?

Rowland Croucher: Internet evangelism is really effective because, first of all, it produces results. I get a hundred e-mails a day in response to Usenet posts and through a very busy website that I run, so I can see the flow back into my inbox everyday from people who ask questions, who want prayer, who want guidance and so on. Second thing is the Internet can reach people who will not come—and as a British friend of mine says, occupew a pie in church—or occupy a pew in church! They've given up on church. God is O.K. Jesus is O.K. But Church is *psssh.* But they'll anonymously read something on the Internet, bring their questions through someone like myself, I guess, and learn so much there anonymously where a preacher won't get at them.

Aaron: Right. Is the ultimate goal of Internet evangelism to reach the person continuously through the Internet or hopefully to get them in a body of fellowship, whether it's a large or small group?

Rowland Croucher: As of last year, George Barnet told us that more than 50% of committed evangelical Christians are not attending church. First time in history.

Aaron: Wow.

Rowland Croucher: That's happened. So you've only got a 50% chance of introducing them to a church anyway. However—and I'm a pastor—rather than being pessimistic about that, yes, I would want to encourage them to join a— what was said in the last group here—a seeker- friendly church. A church where they'll grow. A church where they'll get into a small group. A church which operates by grace rather than law, and where the Christians are actually happy, rather than fighting one another. Yes, I'd be encouraging that.

Aaron: I know, again, from the skeptic's point of view, someone would say, "Can you really build an authentic relationship over an electronic media?" How would you answer those questions?

Rowland Croucher: I conducted a wedding a couple of years ago between two people who met

online. And I met them, separately, online. Then met them together when they met each other. Online. And I conducted their wedding. Not a lie. She was in America, he was in Australia, and then she'd fly over there and they've begun to populate the Earth. They're happily married. Real friendships can happen sometimes online, as in a previous generation, real friendships happen between pen pals. When someone's online, people reveal stuff about themselves that they might not do face-to-face. I'm a counselor, so there's hardly anything we don't talk about. I'm going to phone a black, lesbian, Christian woman in Chicago, when I go up there for another conference—after the Phoenix one. We've met online. She's an amazing woman, and we talk to one another on newsgroups. It's all in public except for two e-mails. But I want to meet her. I want to know what makes a black, lesbian, Christian woman tick. I've never met a black, lesbian, Christian woman ever before.

Aaron: Not in my life so I know how it goes. I think my last question for you—and then I'll just sit back and let you roll with your presentation—is, do you think people are more honest online because it's not a face-to-face confrontation—is there more vulnerability, I guess?

Rowland Croucher: They're more honest until they get hurt.

Aaron: Right.

Rowland Croucher: I'll be talking about that. In terms of Usenet newsgroups, sometimes you can be too honest and then someone will get at you. Let me tell you an example. On the Usenet newsgroup alt.christnet.christian.life, a guy confessed that he had problems with pornography and that he was still having problems with pornography. Someone who disagreed with his theology gave him a nickname, called the Porn Prophet, and called him that. It's rough out there; it's awful. You've got to be careful, I think, about what you reveal online about yourself because there are people out there who are not nice.

Aaron: Right.

Rowland Croucher: Do you know what you did not ask me?

Aaron: What's that?

Rowland Croucher: When I'm introduced to a group by interview, if the person is a male, they'll ask me what I do; if the person is a female, they ask something else first. Always.

Aaron: Any females going to help me out? Are you married?

Rowland Croucher: Yes! Hey! [Laughter] Women ask me about relationships; men ask me about what I do. That's the facts. But the utilitarian effect. Yes, I've been married for 45 and a half years.

Aaron: You meet your wife on the Internet?

Rowland Croucher: No. [Laughter] I met my wife at a teachers' college. And my older son is 44 - he's eighteen months younger than the day we got married. He's about 44. Our eldest daughter is about 43. Our eldest granddaughter's 23. In any other culture I would be a great-grandfather and I still run up steps, which is odd! I have six grandchildren. I'm sure you wanted to know that!

Aaron: Yes I did!

Rowland Croucher: And the little one who's 19 months who lives with her parents at the front of

their house is the person I've bonded with more than any other individual on the planet other than my wife. She's gorgeous. Now there's a new little one—about six weeks old; she's just smiling at us and we're having a nice time with her. I'm sure you wanted to know that!

Aaron: I did. I really did! It's been great meeting you, so I'll let you take it away.

Rowland Croucher: [Laughter] Thank you, Aaron. Hey, give him a hand, he did all right.

[Applause].

Rowland Croucher: He'll make a good reporter. Well, you're already a good reporter! All right, this is a very big subject and I teach this to graduate students.

Let me tell you a little about myself, just as much as you need to know. More than 40 years ago, I was ordained as a Baptist pastor in Australia. Steven Allford—does that name do anything to anybody? Steven Allford preached the ordination sermon. I was ordained to a ministry with—you call it Intervarsity Christian Fellowship here—it was Intervarsity Fellowship in Australia. So I was a minister to students in the universities and teachers' colleges around the country. I wandered around for about three to five years, went back and did some study. Before that, I was a school-teacher. Then went into a couple of pastorates—a Baptist church in Australia; then went to Canada to be pastor of the downtown Baptist church in Vancouver, the first Baptist church in Vancouver. I stayed there only a short time and we don't need to go into the story there. Then I did some study at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, went back to Australia and began a ministry again, Australia-wide and worldwide actually, to pastors. So I'm called to be a pastor to pastors. John Mark Ministries is a little ministry that is named after the great apostle, who became great but he bombed out—went home to mommy in Jerusalem. Peter and Barnabas got hold of him. You know the story. And he came back into ministry again.

John Mark Ministries is a ministry particularly to ex-pastors but also to pastors; and Priscilla's Friends is a website for pastors' spouses, particularly pastor's wives. That's the main ministry. However, for about two hours a day my hobby and calling as an evangelist is to go onto Usenet newsgroups where, conservatively—I'm just mentioning these statistics to encourage you—conservatively, I talk to, or I'm read by about a million people a month. Any one of you can do that. You may not be able to set up websites or you may not be able to do chat stuff and so on, but Usenet newsgroups are an amazing medium. There are two texts up here which you can read at your leisure. Daniel 12 talks about an explosion of information. Knowledge. II Timothy 4:1-6 talks about doing the work of an evangelist. And there are three aspects in II Timothy that Paul encourages Timothy to do: To convince, to rebuke and to encourage. To convince, to rebuke, to encourage. Convincing is the work of the apologists. Apologist is not making apologies for something, it's giving a reasoned defense of your faith. To rebuke, that's the work of the prophet. To encourage, that's the work of—if you like—the pastor, the friend and so on. So that's my text for internet evangelism via Usenet newsgroups. And perhaps a question we could think about just for a minute: if you'll reach more people in the world via one

communications medium, which would you use? Even today there is a communications medium which reaches more people than the internet. What is it? It's not radio, not television, not newspapers. It's not word of mouth. It's not the internet. Not yet. It will be. Anyone got a Bible with them? I'd like you to read us a text on this. Look up Matthew 23:23.

> Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

Rowland Croucher: OK. That'll do. No repeat after me. According to Jesus, the most important things in God's law are:

[Inaudible audience interaction].

Rowland Croucher: No! [Laughs] The most important things in God's law according to our text?

[Inaudible audience interaction].

Rowland Croucher: You've neglected the most important, the weightier matters of the law.

[Inaudible audience interaction].

Rowland Croucher: Justice! You've got it. What comes after that. Mercy! What comes after that? Faithfulness! O.K. Hand up, anybody who has never heard your pastor preach a sermon on social justice. That's most of us! Question. Why is it number one for Jesus but not number one for our churches? Why is justice not in any of the creeds? Not one? .

[Inaudible audience interaction].

Rowland Croucher: An extremely good question, that's the question I planned. You have to ask another question: what did justice mean to Jesus? You answer that by saying, what did Jesus' Bible say about justice, which is the Old Testament, and there are three answers to that question.

Now, your question has to be: Why do people who are supposed to be Bible believers not major on the things that Jesus majors on?

There is legal righteousness, which is obeying the law of God; forensic justice which is obeying the law of the land—that's the Justice System. You've got a Justice Department here in the States, don't you, or something? Number three, social justice, which is the strong helping the weak. The number one message of the prophets is social justice. That's in my article on Evangelicals. What Jesus has in mind there is mainly social justice. Now my friends, I wish I had time to go into this, but this is not an apologetics class, except I'm introducing you to the headlines of apologetics. If you're going to really debate with people you have to know what the Bible really is on about. If you want another text for that, the parallel text is Luke 11:42, which is slightly different but justice comes first in that as well. In those two texts, Matthew 23:23 and Luke 11:42, Jesus highlights the most important values for Him.

Now, your question has to be: Why do people who are supposed to be Bible believers not major on the things that Jesus majors on? That's got to be your question. I have a conspiracy theory about that and you can read about it on our website. Let me tell you a story. I was preaching at a rural church in Australia. I was coming through the town. They heard I was coming through and they invited me to preach. It was one of these churches where they had big, black—I don't

know if you have them in your town—they had big, black Bibles and severe expressions. As I got the feel of this place I thought, this is going to be interesting. We can have a lot of fun here because I don't need to be invited back. They had a blackboard behind the pulpit and I engaged in a dialog rather then preaching a sermon, like I'm doing now. I said, "I wonder if you could tell me who the Pharisees were?" They knew who the Pharisees were—they were people who did Jesus in and got Him crucified. The Pharisees got a pretty bad press in Matthew particularly. Strong on law, no love except for their own. So I said, "I want to ask you a question that you may not have thought of. I want you to list for me all the good things you can think of about the Pharisees." And they stopped like you've stopped now. I could hear the machinery going! "I want you to tell me all the good things you can think of about the Pharisees."

They gave me this list—an amazing list: Pharisees knew their Bible off by heart. Put up your hand anybody, just put your hand up humbly if you know the Bible off by heart. Anybody here? O.K. Well you know there are a couple of hundred thousand Muslims who know the Koran off by heart. We send missionaries to these people and they wonder why we don't love the Bible as much as they love the Koran. Good question. The Pharisees knew the Bible off by heart.

The people who know the Bible best are the most likely to miss the point. And the point is justice. And love. And mercy.

They were disciplined in their praying. They tithed up to a third of their income. They fasted twice a week. They attended church regularly. They were martyrs. One guy had read his intertestamental history—many Pharisees died loudly proclaiming their love for Yahweh and the Torah. They were moral people; they could say, "All these commands I've kept from my youth." They were evangelists. They'd go over the ocean to win a convert, Jesus said. And for a Jew to travel over the ocean to win a convert was something, because "Jewish sailor" is an oxymoron! Jews do not make good sailors, they leave that to the Phoenicians, right? The sea, in the Bible, is a place of terror and monsters and shipwrecks. In heaven, a Jew that follows Jesus, John the Seer, says that in heaven there is going to be no more sea, and every Jew breaths a huge sigh of relief! But the Pharisees crossed the ocean to win a convert. Wow! That's something. They were evangelical. They believed all the right doctrines.

So I wrote this on a blackboard up in front of this group. The Pharisees were Bible people, prayerful, tithing, fasting, moral, church attending. What else? Martyrs, evangelical, evangelistic. And you could have heard a pin drop! There was an extrovert down the front here, and I said, "Peter, is there something wrong?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "What is it?" He said, "That's us!" I said "Is it? Well, Peter. If that's you, you've got a problem. Because Jesus said those people were children of the devil." Didn't He? Yes. Now, question: How can Bible-believing, prayerful, tithing, fasting, church-attending, moral, martyrs who are evangelical and evangelistic be children of the devil? The answer is easy. Because you can know the whole Bible off by heart and miss the whole point. You've got to trust me on this: the people who know the Bible best—I counsel clergy, I talk to several pastors a week and I've done it for about thirty years—the people who know the Bible best are the most likely to miss the point. And the point is justice. And love. And mercy. And so on.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Who wins the world Bible quizzes? They used to hold them in Jerusalem every year. Are there any Seventh Day Adventists here amongst you? The Seventh Day Adventists know the Bible better than any other church. But the Seventh Day Adventists that I counsel, when we really talk about stuff, confess that they are not really strong on grace and love. They are strong on law. But they know the text of the Bible. You're making exactly the same point as I am. You can know the text of the Bible off by heart and miss the point. Are you with me? Your heresy bells were ringing for a little while there! [Laughs] Good on you! That's not bad for early afternoon when you're supposed to be asleep! All right!

Here's the next thing I want to teach you. If you're going to talk out in the mall to people—anyone who comes into the newsgroup, you don't use that schema. That's your way of organizing what you believe. Or, that's my way of organizing what I believe. God, Jesus, Bible, humans, justice and love. But if you're going to translate that into evangelism and apologetics, Jesus, you'll notice, didn't give us any creeds. He didn't give us any schemas like that. What did He do? In John chapter three, He talked to a guy and began with his questions. In John chapter four He talks with a woman and connects with her feelings. Unless we start where people are—we don't just trot out a whole load of doctrines and think we're communicating to people. We do what Jesus did and we connect to their questions. Marketing used to be a bad word for Christians but I think marketing's a neutral word. Marketing's simply asking, "What do people want and how can we help them get what they want?" That's marketing, and that's just basic human psychology. There's nothing fancy about that.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: How can we persuade them to? On newsgroups, people don't think they need Jesus. I'll give you a quote on that in a minute. I've been wondering around Usenet newsgroups for about 11 or 12 years. That's the order in which people ask questions on Christian newsgroups. That's the order. They are the most common questions in order. We can't do all of that now; let me just tell you something about a couple of them.

Homosexuality. If you make a statement like this: "God, the Bible condemns homosexuality," you're in for trouble. Because the Bible doesn't condemn homosexuality. The Bible condemns some forms of homosexual practice. The Bible knows nothing about sexual orientation. So you've got to get your apologetics right here. The ancient peoples knew nothing about homosexual orientation. In fact, our grandfathers knew nothing about homosexual orientation. But there are certain forms of homosexual practice that the Bible proscribes, in Leviticus 1, Romans 1, I Corinthians 6, and so on.

Masturbation. That's a question in my counseling that men and women ask. 90% of men do it, the other 10% are liars! And 30% of women. And it's a big question. Of course preachers

can't preach about it because people who are baby boomers and older like me, don't want preachers to preach about this sensitive stuff. But younger people talk about it. So I post a thing about once every month or once every other month that says in the subject line, "Masturbation: A Christian Perspective." I can guarantee a thousand visits a day to my website to read the article. I just put the URL of the article and maybe put a little quote—there's a famous little quote about masturbation: "Masturbation is nothing to be ashamed of, but it's nothing to be proud of either." I put that little quote in. I get a huge amount of traffic on that question. People want to know. Is there a Christian perspective? Is there a Christian perspective on homosexuality? If you want to look at a very interesting article that I've written on that, I did an interview with Jesus, an imaginary interview with Jesus about homosexuality. You'll find that on our website. If you look under the section "Most Popular Articles," it's there.

Creation and Evolution. I just want to say one thing about that. In terms of the Proton, the beginning of the world, and the Eschaton, the end of the world, there are only four questions. I'm summarizing creation science, a whole year in about three sentences. There are only four questions: Who? Why? How? and When? You can summarize the whole of the creation/evolution debate under those four questions. Who? Why? How? and When? The Bible only answers two of those questions. Which are they?

Make it simple. Who, why, how, and when? Make it simple.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Yeah. The Bible does not answer how and when. So even amongst creationists they argue about seven 24 hour days, 6,000 years ago, 10,000 years ago, early Earth, young Earth, etc. Jesus actually told us not to argue about when for the Second Coming, didn't He? God's in charge of that. I want to suggest to you that if you really want to get into any discussions on creation/evolution, go to simplicity—the other side of complexity—because a lot of discussions are either simplicity this side of complexity or their complexity, the other side of simplicity. Make it simple. Who, why, how, and when? Make it simple.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction about dealing with homosexuality]

Rowland Croucher: How do I deal with it? The Bible doesn't not condemn homosexuality as an orientation. The Bible does condemn some homosexual practices. You've got to look at the Greek words in Romans. Jesus said nothing about it, but look at the Greek words in Romans 1, I Corinthians 6, I Timothy, you've got to look at the Greek words there.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction about dealing with homosexuality]

Rowland Croucher: Sure. I'm conservative on that as well. But you've got to move to simplicity on the other side of complexity on that, because it's not simple. See the statement, "Got hates homosexuals" is, to my mind, demonic. God hates nobody. Second, "God condemns homosexuality" is wrong. The Bible doesn't say that. He doesn't condemn sinners, he condemns sin. Anyway, we can go into that. He condemns our sin, but He loves us sinners.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction about dealing with homosexuality]

Rowland Croucher: I'd love to develop it, but I think we should leave it. But I've written on it. Go to my website, it's all there. It's not the kind of question I can cover. You can contact me by e-mail. Read my articles and argue with me! There's a contact button on every page of my website. You can be one of my 100 e-mails a day that I try to answer! In fact I've got 1,200 e-mails I left behind in "Urgent" to do in the next few days, and I've left them all. But we'll try. All right?

In terms if inerrancy, do your thinking. The Bible does not say that the Bible is inerrant. That's an inference drawn from other truths. Be careful before you make dogmatic statements. That's something that we conservatives have drawn up in terms of a credo. But the Bible doesn't say that. The Bible has something to say about authority, but not inerrancy. You can believe in inerrancy as long as you do not believe that the Bible teaches it. Got it? Inerrancy in the original autographs and so on. I don't care if you believe that or not, but just make sure you didn't get it from the Bible. You got it from the Five Fundamentals or the Ten Fundamentals or...

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Yeah. But that's not inerrant. That's an inference from inerrancy. Inerrancy's an inference from that. You know what a syllogism is? Have you studied that? God is truth. God inspired the Bible to be written. Therefore the Bible is true. Now forming doctrines out of logical syllogisms is a dangerous thing to do, because I am a Biblical Christian and I prefer to believe what the Bible actually says rather than draw inferences from it.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I've got about 400 articles answering that question. I'm going to ask, "What do we mean by truth?" Do we mean historical truth? Do we mean scientific truth? Do we mean theological truth? And so on. It's not simple. They're good questions though, they are very good questions! All I'm doing is suggesting you ask the questions. Jesus. Nowhere—and I'm being provocative here—nowhere did Jesus say, "I am God." Jesus did not say, "I am God." However, eighty times in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jesus did the sort of things that only God could do. Right? Like forgiving sins.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: They will. Where in the Bible does it say Jesus is God? The closest you'll get is Thomas worshiping the risen Lord, saying, "My Lord and my God," and Jesus did not correct him. That's the closest you'll get to it.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: He forgave sins and did lots of other things that only God could do. .

[Inaudible Audience Interaction].

Rowland Croucher: Oh yeah, like using phrases that the Old Testament applies to God and using them as Himself. "I am", yeah, "I am the father...", there's a whole load of stuff. Read C.S. Lewis on that. Quite brilliant stuff on that.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Yeah, *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*. In fact, I know C.S. Lewis' step-

son. He stayed at our home, Doug Gresham. Yes, and I've stayed at his home in Ireland. It's going to be a very exciting movie. Disney's now doing the distribution of it. Did you see that?

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: It is, and Doug Gresham, C.S. Lewis' stepson, my friend, was the consultant for it.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Yes. In fact there are some things in the script that he vetoed because they weren't evangelical truth. Brilliant, brilliant stuff. "Does God Exist," "Homosexuality," "Masturbation," "Creation / Evolution," "Inerrancy," "Was Jesus God"—and we haven't even got into doctrines yet—the toughest question of all is the last one. That's the hardest one that you'll meet on Usenet.

That is the toughest question I know.
Why do Christians not represent Jesus better?

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: "If Jesus gave you repeated warnings"—this is a Christian speaking—"If Jesus gave you repeated warnings that eternal death was imminent but showed you the way to salvation, would you blame Christ for your choosing to ignore His repeated warnings?"

Non-Christian's response: "Actually Christ has never warned me personally. If He tried the 'But what about all the people I sent to warn you in my name,' I'd suggest He get a better class of people."

Anyone got a smart answer for that? That is the hardest question. I've spent my whole 67— 50 something—years of my life trying to answer tough questions. That is the toughest question I know. Why do Christians not represent Jesus better? Why do we fight one another on these Usenet newsgroups in public? Why are we fighting over trivial stuff all the time? Now this is all in your notes.

Look at Google Groups and select a few groups. If you like, put my name into Google drop-down menu, Google Groups and you'll see the Usenet newsgroups that I inhabit. You can critique some of the responses that I make of people.

Don't use Bible texts out of context. Use non-sexist language, that's a matter of courtesy and justice towards women without being a slave to political correctness. Be teachable. What does *irenic* mean? Beautiful word, I'd like to offer you as a gift. This word. You studied Greek? What's the Greek word for peace? *Irene.* Irenic is an English word derived from *irene,* the Greek for peace. It means, "Be peace loving." What unites Christians is more important than what divides them. Learn to affirm Christian unity and diversity. "In things essential, unity, in things doubtful, liberty, and in all things charity," said Thomas à Kempis.

There are just a few tips about how to organize Outlook Express. Never put your e-mail address on Usenet newsgroups. Never put it on a website, never put it on anything public unless you enjoy getting millions of spam. You disguise it. There are lots of ways of disguising it; you'll see when you go to Usenet newsgroups.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: You put a contact button and you hide the e-mail address behind it. Good web developers know how to do that now. Don't ever put your e-mail address anywhere in public. There are spiders, bots that go right through all this stuff and I get so much stuff from years ago. Master Google.

There are some Biblical principles; let me give you one, just the top one: The guiding principle for me in relating to people who challenge me about my faith is in I Peter 3:15-16, where the scripture says, "If someone"—and I'm paraphrasing here, "If someone challenges you about the hope which is within you, then respond with..." Do you remember the text? "Gentleness and reverence." Or respect. Reverence is the correct word. You've got the NIV there did you say? I Peter 3:15-16:

> But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

The word "respect" is the same word as "reverence." Now, here's something that'll blow your minds. This is a critic. You'll meet them all on Usenet. A critic challenging you about your faith, and you're to treat that person with gentleness and reverence; and reverence is the same word we use when relating to God. Doesn't that blow your mind? That he's your enemy, wanting to beat you in an argument; and you've got to treat him with gentleness and reverence. That is very hard to do.

[Inaudible Audience Interaction]

Rowland Croucher: Reflecting Jesus. But we don't have the authority of Jesus to condemn people to hell. I want to remind you about that. You're not Jesus. At least I don't think you are! There's an old saying, "You love God just as much and no more than the person you love least." Do you want me to repeat that or is that too convicting? Shall we move on? "You love God just as much and no more than the person you love least." Which is why Jesus talked about loving your enemies.

That's the prophet saying that. Let me put on my pastoral hat. But what about the people I talk to every week who have been raped or abused sexually or emotionally or physically or psychologically? Are they supposed to forgive and love the person who raped them? And my pastoral hat says, "No, not until they're ready to." Hurt people hurt people. Hurt— adjective—people hurt—verb–people. The reason why many people cannot be easily forgiving or easily loving is that they got hurt. The degree to which we got hurt will be the degree to which we are cranky with people who stomp on us. I've just given you a summary of Psychology 101. Post unto others as you would wish them to post unto you.

Be careful how transparent you are; be careful how much you share. On Usenet everything's archived unless "X-No-Archive: Yes" is in your header or in the first line of your text. Think before you post. Google will remove posts if you want them to. If you don't want your faith challenged, don't go into Usenet. It'll be challenged. You cannot make any assumptions about people. All you deal with is black characters on a white background. You have the text but no context.

Very wise, that. People in most newsgroups are not here to truly listen. They're here to prove their point. For most, logic and reason are used for the first post or two, then when attacked personally or ideologically they revert to name-calling. If you look up "Rowland Croucher" on Google, drop-down menu, Google Groups, you'll see that I have a discussion with a guy called Pedro. I said to Pedro, "The people who you are aligned with, I want you to find one post in the last"—I forget how many years—"which says one of two things: one: 'I apologize, I was wrong' or two: 'That's a good idea, I'll change my thinking on that.' " I said, "I'll give you a week." No, I think I said, "I'll give you a month." To find just one post from these hard line fundamentalists who are not there to learn anything; they are there simply to attack. This is not the place for the faint-hearted or the easily-upset.

What can one person do? On our website in the keywords I've got a whole lot of articles on *The Power of One.* Who's read *The Power of One?* Seen the movie? From South Africa? Powerful stuff isn't it? I have a great belief that one person can change the world. There's a woman in Canada, she's in her twenties, and she got the idea that if we organized the United Nations and organized the world, we could get rid of landmines that are blowing up Cambodian children and Ethiopian kids and so on. She got the award of the year from the United Nations. This one woman. In America here, there's this organization acronymed M.A.D.D. What is that? "Mothers Against Drunk Drivers." Who are these mothers? They're mothers of kids who got killed by drunk drivers. And one person started that. One person can do an amazing amount.

I suggest also that you go online willing to serve.

I suggest also that you go online willing to serve. One of the little things that I do once or twice a week is I post prayer material to those groups. It takes me four minutes to post prayer material to all those groups for Christians who have been persecuted. My suggestion is that we be unselfish and that we serve those who have been persecuted. You know in 40 countries of the world it is very dangerous to be a Christian, and we should never forget that. Now that's my little deal and you might have another one.

In your notes there are Usenet resources—you can read some of that. Is Usenet public domain? You can read about that. Don't post private e-mail messages onto public sites. If you e-mail me, I have no right to put that e-mail on a newsgroup. It's private. All right?

A little bit of humor to finish with. Let's find a good one here.

> "The trouble with the world is, the stupid are cock-sure and the intelligent are full of doubt. Best to shut your mouth and be thought stupid than to open it and remove all doubt."

> "This is actually normal heathen behavior. He just doesn't see it that way, but neither do the heathen."

"Oh Lord, Jack's post was so dull that I think I must be dead. But if it be, Lord, by Your grace and favor that I am not in fact dead, merely stunned into mind numbing oblivion by the overall tedium and general inconsequentiality of the proceedings, grant Your servant this. Grant that Jack becomes called up yonder to that place that You have prepared for him right away, if that be not too forward a request, of course."

"The anti-moron software on my PC went crazy when I started to read your post. You are obviously suffering from clue-deficit disorder. A long period of non-posting would be most welcome on your part."

"I am reminded of something relevant that Benjamin Disraeli said: 'He was distinguished for ignorance. He had one idea, and that was wrong.' "

"Do you have any suggestions besides curse words," asked one poster. Me: "Yes, I have a very simple suggestion. Why don't you donate your computer to a charity and then cancel your internet subscription!"

DaVinci said, "Mathematics is the language in which God wrote the universe.

B: Galileo said it, not DaVinci.

A: But I made you look it up, though, didn't I!"

"I thought this group was uk.rec.humour and not uk.spelling.police. Please correce me if I am mistaken."

"Consider yourself correced!"

"I've made but one prayer to God, a very short one: Oh, Lord, make my enemies ridiculous. And God granted it."

"These comments are meant to offend everyone equally, If for some reason you are not offended please write me with a description of yourself including your name, race, weight, religious views, political party, strong opinions, physical disabilities and anything else that you are touchy about, and I'll try to offend you in a future comment. Complaints should be e-mailed to BiteMe@LikeIActuallyCare."

And this is to add to your store of worthless information: Studies indicate that five percent of all laxatives are bought by non-Christians!

All right. Be paranoid, they're out to get you! Use humor. There are three thousand funny stories on our website. Help yourself, they're clean, funny stories so feel free to raid them and use them. You've been very good and I think I ought to let you go. Any other urgent questions before I bless you? Otherwise, I'll see you in heaven, I hope, if not before.

[Inaudible Question].

Rowland Croucher: Yeah, I'm doing several conferences actually.

[Inaudible Question].

Rowland Croucher: If I can get a fare for cheaper than $957.50 to Phoenix tomorrow I'm going there. This is very interesting. Who's heard of the number one American spiritual director—there's a global statement for you! His name is Richard Rohr. Has anyone heard of him? No. You haven't heard of him because he's Catholic. He's Franciscan. He's the best expositor of manhood in this country and I believe in the world. I've got some articles by Richard Rohr on our website. I'm going to spend a week with him and with some other guys doing men's stuff. Then I go to a conference in Chicago for a conference with I think the two best church consultants in this country, Tom Bandy and Paul Borden. And they're both together. So I'm going there. I'm having a lot of fun. I love coming here. I've been here about 12, 15 times. I did some study at Fuller, I taught at Fuller. I love this country. Are you all Americans? You're probably not are you? Philippino? Are you here to study, here to stay? Both? Maybe? Doesn't matter! [Laughs] I've been to the Philippines three times. I don't like driving cars in Manila! The one thing good about driving cars in Manila is that you learn to pray without ceasing! But you live in a very privileged country. Did you know—something I've noticed this time that I've never noticed before, in Atlanta, in the airport at Atlanta, I saw kids with laptops, sitting on the carpet playing with laptops. The technology! Every third person I counted as I walked up and down the mall had some technology in their hand. And some older people, mobile phones!

[Inaudible Question].

Rowland Croucher: I check my e-mail all day, every day when I'm sitting at my desk. I have the volume up and I get a ping when I get an e-mail. I answer them immediately. If I don't want to answer it I just leave it there. I answer all the time.

[Inaudible Question].

Rowland Croucher: Yes, there's a religious vilification law just passed in Victoria where two Pentecostal Christians were indicted for making defamatory statements about Islam. And that law is now—and you can pray about this, and I've got articles on my website about this—now the House of Commons and Lords in London is looking at the same kind of law. There are two sides to that question. We don't have a right to be defamatory and to start wars with words against people we don't agree with. That's fair enough. But on the other hand, free speech allows us, surely, the freedom to speak our minds.

[Inaudible Question].

Rowland Croucher: That's the Christian approach. What the Muslims were saying is that they were selecting out the negative stuff about Islam and not making it balanced. And the religious vilification laws. They emphasize the bias thing.

[Inaudible Question].

Rowland Croucher: No. In fact, in your notes I think I have referred to some court cases. There have been a couple of court cases here and if you really want an interesting introduction to Usenet, look up the name Steve Winter, if you want to jot it down. He is the most famous poster on Christian Usenet. Steve Winter and Jason Gastridge. Look him up. They are two of the colorful characters. Steve Winter belongs to a Pentecostal church and is constantly cursing people. He calls people who don't agree with him "False Christian Scum." I once got three adjectives before "False Christian Scum" I gave myself an award for that. We have all this sort of fun. There's a website devoted for him there's another for Jason Gastridge. These are two guys that are very high profile in Christian newsgroups. O.K., that's enough, let me pray for you: Lord, bless my friends here and thank You for their commitment to You and to disseminating Your Word. Lord, I ask for them gifts of wisdom, a gift of love, particularly for the lost, and a gift of a vision for what they can do with their life, and a gift of hope and a gift of optimism that every single person here can influence for good. We don't have to be brilliant, we don't have to have lots of degrees after our name, but we can tell people honestly what Jesus has done for us, and that can be an encouragement to people to get to know our Jesus. Lord, help us each to do that. Thank You for this incredible facility which gives us opportunity to reach millions and millions of people. and Lord. we pray that You'll give us wisdom in how we do that. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Rowland Croucher, when asked, 'How shall I introduce you?' suggests we start with his faith (a Christian 60+ years), then his marriage (47 1/2 years), children (four adults: three married, one single - Lindy's an urban missionary), six grandchildren (aged 25 to two!). Vocation? Pastor of small and large churches in Australia and British Columbia (Canada), graduate of half a dozen tertiary institutions, writer of 13 books (best known: 'Still Waters Deep Waters'), teacher in various Theological/Bible Colleges etc. Currently director of John Mark Ministries - serving pastors, ex-pastors, church leaders and their spouses - counselling, writing, preaching, seminaring, and running the busy JMM website (http://jmm.aaa.net.au/)—100,000+ unique visitors a month, and several '1Month' blogs. Hobbies? Relaxing with his wife Jan and our grandchildren, reading and reviewing books, collecting and disseminating wisdom, watching sports of all kinds, and talking to people on-line. Greatest satisfaction? Hearing someone on a two-day retreat say, 'Thanks for listening: no one's ever done that for six hours before. My life now makes a lot more sense!'

New Media Technology and Trends for the Future

by Harry Sova

We're going to take a very quick trip through several areas of mass communication, moving into a whole new realm of interactive communication today. First of all we're going to look at what has happened in the world. We are at the end—the beginning, certainly, of the end—of mass media, mass communications. It's been a role model for the last 150 to 200 years and has worked very well. But we are now moving away from that model into a completely new model of communication and interaction. Then we're going to take a look at what some people believe are the five top points to keep in mind for this new means of communication. We'll take a real quick look, romp through, three areas of new media.

Mass media: I hate clipart and that's why I'm using it. Mass media is all about the "one to many" relationship of mass communication theory. That is, there is a group that originates the signal—a gatekeeper, a media mogul, as you wish—and that signal goes out to everybody. It doesn't recognize that there are any variants in cultural issues, or geo demographics of the audience; everybody gets the same signal. That's the whole concept of mass communication. It's a one product content out to a mass of people.

This model, "one to many," has existed for the last 150 years. Then, about 10 years ago, with the advent of computers and internet, we went to an interactive communications system, which was a "one to one" arrangement, in which the consumer sitting at the laptop or desktop queries the server. The content by the individual content producer is up on the server. The person at the desktop goes to the server, like a web page, pulls up the content they wish to experience, and comes back to the desktop. Because we can use cookies and understand who those people are, we can then key that information on the website specifically to that one individual on the laptop. There's a problem with that, of course, because we're assuming the cookie on the desktop belongs to the person who's online right now, and that's not necessarily the case. There's no way to verify that information. That's a "one to one" arrangement.

What's happened in the last year or two years throws out the last 150 years' worth of mass media structure, theory, and concepts about mass communication. We are now in the information age. While that looks like a lot of spaghetti up there, the presence of blogging is what's been doing that. Blogs started out with people just putting up diaries. One of the aspects about blogging is, you post the blog which is content, then somebody else can come along and add a comment to that blog. Now you've got a link between the comment and the blog itself.

These are the five points to consider, people believe, when you're thinking about new media and the technologies that come along with it. I'm an old newspaper reporter. I was a photographer for a daily newspaper.Back in those days there was some film when I was photographer. I had a something pretty close to a graphics camera I would take out. I would shoot my pictures in the morning. I had an 11 o'clock deadline. I had to have the camera and film back to the newspaper office by 11am; then take it out, put them in through the soup—as we called it to develop the film. Then the editor would look at the negatives to figure out which pictures to use. Next it went to the darkroom where they printed the paper, ran it through the chemicals, dried it, then sent it to the photographers in the chemical room, so they could shoot it as a dot matrix half-tone for the newspaper. My deadline was 11 o'clock; the press deadline was four am. If anything in the world happened after 11 am, we weren't going to have a picture of it. It was pure and simple. We went through a lot of film, and a lot of dark room and a lot of chemicals, but we were certainly a mass medium because we were the only newspaper in town. If you wanted your story, you came to our newspaper.

That's the old model. Here's the current model. This is the digital model in which you take the picture. Most cameras today have WIFI built in—a wireless system so the pictures can actually transfer right to the laptop. It goes to the server, but notice where the arrows are. Because it's digital now, these pictures can be shared by the radio station, or the website. Iit goes to the radio website, it goes to the newspaper, it goes to their website, the television people can use it, they can use it with magazines. It just keeps massaging the data, dummying it down or up within the dots per inch, and the color or black-and-white approach. Once it's taken, it's all digital. And once it's digital and uploaded immediately, everybody can use it. Instead of the mass media model which is sent out to people, now the newspaper editor goes to the server, gets it, and pulls it back. Or the television station goes up and pulls it off of the server. It's all digital, and that means: forget about formats, forget about platforms. It doesn't matter anymore.

Second item: think about the process, it's not about the technology. I've been teaching television production since David Sarnoff was in high school. When I taught television production ten years ago, if you were in my class you learned back focus, and you learned how to set up the chips on the camera. Chips set up the tubes on the ditacons[sp], and set up the beam splitters, and set up the sync generators, so that the cabling would be just the right length under the floorboards. It was a mess. I did over 800 hours of church services by satellite from Los Angeles, and every Sunday our students would move up to LA and set up the satellite dishes and the cameras—three hours, for a crew of about ten to set these things up. That was then.

Now you think about the process, creating the content. You don't worry about the medium. The medium you're going to send it through isn't important anymore. It doesn't matter. It's

digital. And because it's digital it goes across platforms. You just extend it to anything you want. So it's not about the technology, it's about what you're trying to accomplish.

Next; you create it first. Don't worry about the destination: is it going on radio, is it going on television, or is it going into a magazine? I had an ad agency in LA and that's the first thing that you would do—you'd try to figure out which medium it's going into, because that started everything. Not anymore. Just create it. Create it in the best definition, number of pixels, best clarity you can, and bitrate; you put it up on the server, and away you go.

Own the content. This is important. You have to own the content today. I don't care if you've got a small ministry on the side, after a day job. Own the content. If you own the content, then you can control where things go, and you can especially take advantage of opportunities. If somebody else owns the content, you can't do that. They're in control. How do you control content? You do it through Digital Rights Management today, DRM is loved by anybody in the media, because it means you can actually work in media for a living and not starve to death. Somebody using Digital Rights Management can't necessarily use your content and duplicate it for a few thousand friends, and neighbors, and pastors, and everybody else. So Digital Rights Management is extremely important. There's a new system coming out called "Snowcap," by the same people who did—I want to say Napster, but I'm not sure that's right.

The most important thing that a lot of current media don't understand: the customer determines the consumption.

Right now, if you download a music track or a movie, you get the license that comes along with it. But you can't necessarily then turn around and sell it to somebody. With "Snowcap," which is being installed for music companies and video companies, if I buy that movie, I get the Snowcap license. For instance, say I bought this music track for 99 cents, but nobody has it. They stopped selling it. And I meet this gentleman at a garage sale, and he says, "I'd be willing to pay you $5.00 for that." You know what I'd do? I'm not selling him the physical media on that, I'm selling him the license. I go over to my computer and I transfer the license to him, and now he's got the license. He doesn't have the music, but the moment he hits "play," it's going to go over to the internet, find the music; it says he's the legitimate owner, and it plays it for him. I don't have that ability because I sold the license. By the way, about five years from now, no DVD's or CD-rom's, because they want you to rent that movie over and over again, or the music track. So like buying a DVD or book or anything else, you're able to resell it, instead of what we're locked into right now.

Finally, and probably the most important thing that a lot of current media don't understand: the customer determines the consumption. In the era of mass media, if I were a newspaper publisher, I would say to you, "I'm the publisher, I will determine what the content of this newspaper will be today—whose picture will be there, what the "letters to the editor" column will contain. I will tell you what you're going to pay for it, I'm going to tell you when it's going to be available, I'm going to tell you all the things I want you to know, and you have no say in any of this."

This new integrated interactive model says the customers can. This is a flip-flop. This is a 180-degree turnaround The customer now says, "You know, I don't want to read the obituaries or

the lifestyle pages. I'm not interested in garage sales. And I'm not going to pay for it." So I think what we're going to start seeing is, you go up to the web server, and you say, "This is what I want, and this is what I'm going to pay for it." It may be pennies on the dollar, it could be a dollar, but if you're the right target audience, an advertising agency is going to pay for you to read that paper, and it maybe would even put money into an account for you.

Three things I'd like to cover. The whole element of blogs, which is phenomenal. By most estimates now, there are 8.5 million blogs being tracked by Technorati and blogcritics.com. There are believed to be 14 million blogs out there: 14 million publishers. 14 million reporters, writers, creators of content. That's a lot! Each of those blogs is then being read by people around the world, and advertisers are starting to move into that area now.

Citizen journalism is replacing reporters. It's starting to really take off at some newspapers, and some TV stations. Citizen journalists who have never written an article in their life, have never sat in a journalism course, are one day, all of a sudden, writing articles for publications. And the criterion is not that you know how to write, or can do an inverted pyramid style for writing. It's the fact that you have an eyewitness. If you were an eyewitness to the event, you are a citizen journalist. If you saw the tsunami on any of the television news places like MSNBC and others, you saw a section of the earliest pictures coming from the tsunami. That was a citizen journalist report. This is a real hot thing.

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We'll talk also about world reportings, and finally, interactive media. This is the kingpin of the system, as the millennials, up to age 35, are redeveloping and pushing the whole mass media arena to be interactive, fully interactive. It fits their lifestyle.

"Blog" comes from a combination of "web," and "log"; the "b" from web and "l", "o", "g", sets up a "blog." It began as people bearing their souls on the internet (for what reason I certainly don't understand). But there were people up there writing, "Well, I just ate a carrot, it was nice, and now I think I'm going over to the refrigerator, be right back." They'd go to the refrigerator and come back, and type what was in the refrigerator. These things started off as vanity publishing—I would have called that—about 20 years ago. People would put up their telephone numbers and their pictures and their social security numbers, and everything else under the sun—very lonely people. But when the presidential primaries took place, the Democrats, known as the "deniacs," decided they wanted to reach into the individual towns and cities, but they didn't have the money. They didn't have the political party controls to reach into every little city and town in America, to reach people that might support the D campaign. So they went to the blogs.When they went to the blogs, the other Democrat candidates said, "Oh my goodness, look at the power of this thing." The D groups were able to raise a million dollars a week through the blogs. Republicans took notice of this. By June, Republicans had outdistanced the Democrats something fierce with blogs, all the way through the presidential election campaign. So this thing called blogging took off as an alternative means of news and information.

We are seeing a trend in the world in which the general group of people in the community are no longer as trusting of mass media for reporting. We had a time in the United States when we had partisan press back in the 1800's and you knew it. We're going back to that same premise now. We're losing that middle ground for journalistic reporting. As a society we are listening only to those news shows and networks and reading those newspapers and magazines that really fit our lifestyle, our culture, and our point of view as to how the world should be. The net result is, the millennials—under 35 year olds—are going away from traditional media, and they're going to the blogs. They are attracted to the blogs because the people writing blogs are on the front lines of the events that are happening. They don't care if it's good prose or good grammar; what they care about is, "I'm hearing the story direct, it's not being filtered through five gatekeepers and editors and grammatarians, or anything else under the sun, I'm just seeing the raw news as it's happening and I've got an eye witness from that news." That's the power of the blog. Every website now, every news organization, has got at least a section on blogs.

This is only the news you ask to have, and this is only the news that's important to you. And it's free. There's no charge for this.

Here's how blogs work, if you're not familiar with it. You subscribe to a certain free reader on the system like "Bloglines." The blog reader is a great change from reading websites. If you really follow a website, when do you know that the news articles are changing? You don't. You can go back the next hour, but maybe they put up a new news article five minutes ago which was critical to your lifestyle, your business, your home, your family. You would never know about it. So in order to know when news comes in, it needs to come directly to your desktop.

That's the beauty of blogs, because it uses something called RSS, or Real Simple Syndication. When you subscribe to a group like "Bloglines," you can search through probably about eight million blogs right now, by subject material. You may see there's one article posted on communications and curriculum blog. You bring this up and there's the article. There's only a couple of lines, and that fits people's lifestyles today, because you can read through maybe 40 or 50 headlines in about five minutes' time. You don't have to wait for the newspaper to arrive. You don't have to surf the net looking at web pages. You don't have to sit there scrolling down page after page. This is only the news you ask to have, and this is only the news that's important to you. And it's free. There's no charge for this.

In this case I wrote an article on March 28th called, "DRM, Digital Rights Management, the Hackers' Posterboy." They hacked iTunes' Digital Rights Management; Apple fixed it; a couple of hours later they hacked it again. (Give a college student a screwdriver and a few minutes' time and they can probably get around any security system under the sun.) You see the article and you say, "Hey that's interesting." You then click on that title and it takes you right to the website and into the article itself. It becomes my own clipping service, it's my own librarian, sitting at my desktop 24 hours a day. If I didn't want to read that article, I could skip right by it; but if I wanted to read that article, it takes me right to the site and I can see where it is. In this case I've listed the website, I've listed the title, and those are all links.

Now you're wondering, "Is Sova's head screwed on right? Is he writing truth here or is it not true?" You can click on the links, which take you to other websites, and pretty soon, just like buying a newspaper or magazine, after a while you get to learn which blogs are accurate and which blogs are fudging the truth just a little bit. That's the beauty of blogs. Then when I'm done, I get on with life, I don't have to worry about taking the newspapers out or putting the magazines back on the shelf.

Here's the "blogosphere," as I'm calling it. From March 2003 to 2005, it's doubling every three months. The number of blogs, the number of activity up on the web, is doubling very, very quickly. "Technorati" is tracking now eight million blogs, and 968 million links. When you go up there and search, it's instant research, it's instant information. Is it valid? Well it's just as valid as reading letters to the editor, in a column. It's just as valid as picking up a newspaper or magazine that you've never heard of before and walking your way through it.

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Here are the top 100 blogs. I don't know if any of you have ever heard of these, but some of them are just for (figurative term) "technogeeks." Those are people like me who just love to read blogs like "Boingboing" or "bismodo"[sp] just to see what the new devices are, that I can talk my wife into buying, because I need them for a class.

Blogcritics.org, is a website that changes a sampling of blogs every hour. They have a new group of blogs under different categories. So you still don't miss the surfing capability of looking for blogs, but many of these blogs are being written by the actual people who are experiencing the event. I subscribe to one blog about copyrights; it's done by an attorney. This attorney charges about $1200 for a day session explaining what he does. I get it for free. When he comes out of the courtroom on a copyright case, he writes in his blog what he's thinking, what the judge said, what the jury might have done. It's on his blog and it's free of charge. But it's first person. It's like experiencing being in the courtroom myself, but the price is actually right.

In North Carolina an intern showed up at a newspaper, which was having trouble with circulation. This student intern says, "Why don't we turn this newspaper around? Instead of being the sage on the stage, why don't we just turn this thing around—let the people in the community participate in the newspaper?" He's got some pretty radical ideas for this paper, including that citizens should be able to go newspaper on the website and actually edit reporters' material; or should be able to write their "letters to the editors" column; or should be able to do those kinds of things through a blog—this becomes true community journalism. This becomes a town hall, and the newspaper is at the focal point, which means they can run advertising. Newspapers, radio and television local communities that can key into this blogosphere in the community will be the ones that survive and thrive in the next 10 to 20 years.

Here's a project that just completed in Austria. In this village of 8,000 people, they allowed everybody in the community to upload their own newspaper stories, their own audio clips, their own television clips. Then people in the community would pay so many cents, or *pfennigs,* to

download this content. It was a great success. Now they're rolling this thing out to Vienna in October of this year, and they're talking about rolling it out to the rest of the nation in 2006. It's another element of bypassing traditional media. It's another element that empowers the individual in the community to control their own news, to control their own information, their own entertainment screens, how much their going to pay for it, where they're going to view it, and experience it, and it's all about this interactive model of communication, that bypasses traditional mainstream media.

"Ohmynews"—how many people have heard of ohmynews? (Just for the record, nobody.) "Ohmynews" started in Korea and is based on the premise that, if Mrs. Smith walks down my neighborhood, and walks down my street, and she trips over the curb, I can write an article for "Ohmynews." And if I post it up there and somebody reads it, I'm going to get paid for that. I become a citizen journalist. It's called "participatory journalism." Now "Ohmynews" has gone to an international version. What happens to the reporters? Reporters have gone up the ladder and have become the gatekeepers, now, of the news and information and photographs that are coming in to the system.

The reason they're writing for "Ohmynews" is because they want to better other people's lives.

How many people do you think are writing for "Ohmynews?" Thirty-seven thousand worldwide. They just had a conference in London, and they brought a number of these people together, from all walks of life, all cultures, all nationalities, all points of views. They write articles, and if it gets selected they get paid money. There's probably not a journalist in the whole bunch. But it's a different era, it's an era in which they look for who experiences the event, who is writing about it in real time. That becomes more important than some of the other things that we've been at. The reason they're writing for "Ohmynews" is because they want to better other people's lives. They want to inform their neighbors, they want to help, they want to participate in the journalistic process.

Here's our intern again. This is what the intern suggested—boy, he was gutsy! Imagine being an intern for a newspaper and submitting this to the editor and publisher, saying, "Here's my idea for this newspaper: Assign local bloggers to cover things in depth that we don't cover. Recruit a blogger from every neighborhood. Readers rewrite the stories for what they believe are selling points. Build "Wiki's "on subjects." (A "wiki" is a Hawaiian term for "very quickly, very fast.")

We have "Wikipedia," "Wiktionary"; we've got all sorts of "wiki"-websites in which thousands of people worldwide contribute articles. If you go up to Wikipedia, I'm not sure how many thousands are listed there, but it's probably as good an encyclopedia online as anything else you'll ever see. Part of the Wikipedia area or the Wikipedia approach is that you don't have to know HTMLor extensible meta language, or be a computer whiz or know asp or visualstudio.net—you don't have to know that anymore. You go up to a wiki basic site—my blog is with a wiki group—and all I do is select the template, I select the colors I want, and now I concentrate on writing content. That's what the wiki approach is all about. It enables you to add content without having to go through the licensing and procedure of running a website.

Broadcast Engineering indicated that now newspaper people, or journalists, can upload

video clips or audio clips to a server without knowing anything about this technology or software. It'll just upload it for you very quickly. *Associated Press* also has a software program which they claim will upload anything you take in only four button clicks—pictures, video, audio, text—it puts it up in the right format for the server to handle. You can just be a reporter, and send it right up to the server.

Interactive media, again, is the process that moves away from mass media. A "one to many" arrangement instead goes to a "one to one" basis. If I'm the radio station manager, instead of me determining the format for the radio programs and station, I go to you, or I tell you what you want to hear and how you want to hear it. Are you willing to pay some money so you don't have to hear any commercials in it? Or do you want to hear some commercials? How do you want to arrange your lifestyle and your receipt of the data?

Clearchannel, one of the major radio companies in America, has announced that they are going to make a number of their radio station programs into podcasts. If you've not heard of podcasting, it's in iPod. You take your iPod home at night and you put it in the cradle next to your desktop computer. Go ahead go to sleep, the iPod's charging. It also downloads through a blog, a radio show that you want to subscribe to—half-hour show, hour show, a couple five minute programs—all goes into the iPod. You get up, fix a cup of coffee, go out to the car, plug in the iPod, and now you're listening to the radio broadcast you downloaded onto that iPod overnight. Now the neat thing about this is, that you don't have to listen to screaming idiots, you do not have to listen to somebody's idea of music format because you selected the blog, and you decided whether you want to pay some money for that subscription with no commercials, or if you're willing to listen to commercials and get it free. Several car manufacturers have been installing pods for your iPod in the car. So it's right in the dashboard. You get in your car in the morning, you plug that in and you're listening to your podcast, you stop at a fast food restaurant to get a cup of coffee, take the iPod with you, or just turn it off, when you come back it resumes right where you were. You have no concerns whether you will miss the program, you just rewind and you listen to the program. Tonight it's going to erase itself again and provide you fresh content.

You don't have to listen to screaming idiots, you do not have to listen to somebody's idea of music format because you selected the blog.

They're also going to take 100 of their radio stations and add them to Webstream. Webstreaming is becoming very important. Groups like "live365" and pirateradio.com boast anywhere from 10,000 to 20,000 radio stations up on the net, and instead of reaching out 20 miles or so, here we're reaching the entire world. I was once a DJ for an all-polka, polka, radio station in Wisconson. I think we have more cows as listeners than human beings. But if I were putting this up on the world wide net, there might be a few more people in the world who would support that polka format.

So podcasting and webstreaming are getting to be very important for us. Here's a newspaper in Jacksonville, Florida, that figured out, if you're going to be interactive, why not allow people in the community to upload their own pictures about Jacksonville; and what do they have? 80,000

local pictures now. That generated 21 million page views in 2004. That is where the newspaper realized they could pull in an audience they're losing on the print side, but they're pulling in this way. If you're in communication, you're a story teller. If you're a story teller, what's important is revenue through advertising and subscriptions, and this is doing it. This is changing the model but it's pulling in an audience.

This is a different group of people; they're wired differently, they see life differently.

All right, wakeup call. Fasten down your seatbelt because these are items that have happened in the last two weeks. and where it's going I think is going to be kind of clear. This came out just this week I believe it is, through the media center, American Press Institute, and it's all a part of the *Carnegie Report.* It's called "abandon the news." This is available,by the way, as a PowerPoint for faculty and other interested people. It's up on their website. You can download the PowerPoint with complete statistics about where the audiences are segmenting out to various media, and what they prefer to view and to use. I think what's important here is that they're talking about the millennials abandoning traditional news media. Everything is getting altered. The future course of news is being changed by savvy young people no longer wedded to traditional news outlets, or even accessing news in traditional ways. In short, the future of the U.S. news industry is seriously threatened by a conceivably irrevocable move by young people away from traditional sources of news. Now, in my classes, that's not a story. I can go into any of my large classes and say, "How many of you subscribe to newspapers?" I won't see a hand. "How many of you listen to radio stations at least a half-hour a day?" I'll maybe see one hand or two hands, and sometimes I'll see a hand saying, "Well if I listen to internet radio is that the same thing?" And I'll say, "No I'm looking for traditional media." This is a different group of people; they're wired differently, they see life differently. It's got to fit their lifestyle, because life has gotten just too complex.

Broadcast Engineering had this article on the weekend: the BBC is cutting 2,000 positions from their workforce. It's across the board: secretaries, producers, engineers, journalists—2,000 positions over the next three years. They're resetting the purpose, the function, of a diverse broadcasting company. They're putting more money into Mid-Eastern journalism, but their whole premise is, "While we still have time let's reinvent ourselves. We are a communications medium, a company, but we are not locked into traditional mass media channels." I think they're thriving, or they will thrive because of that, but that's an awful lot of people out on the streets looking for jobs, hoping for jobs. This article came out, in which an individual is asking, "Why don't the current mass media people wake up? Why can't they see what's going on and change their way of doing business?" They're having a tough time with this, they're having a really tough time. It's saying the transition we are going through is nothing less than cataclysmic, involving huge issues like relationship between freedom of the press, democracies, the growing power of individuals over corporate interests. So why isn't this front page news—splashed across newspapers, magazine covers, broadcast through the air, radio, cable, satellite—why aren't we talking about it? I think a lot of people are scared, I think a lot of people are hoping this thing is a fad and it's just going to go away at some point.

I was a freshman in college, and I wanted to do television production. I was assigned

to the radio faculty member, who told me that television was a fad, it wasn't going to last much longer, and I'd be smart to take radio classes and major in radio drama. Fortunately, I held out and said, "No I want to do television." The radio drama group just sort of died away. We are creatures of our own cultures and our own upbringing, and what we're comfortable with we want to have just go on forever. But it won't.

Here's an article about broadband killing off the newspapers, because as people get broadband communication they are again bypassing mass media. This one is talking about the last presidential election, and this one came from the *Pew internet & American Life Project,* Just under 40% of people with broadband cited internet as a major source of political news, compared to 30% who obtain their news primarily from newspapers. It's not that people don't like newspapers, it just doesn't fit the lifestyle of the millennials, and it's the millennials, of course, that the advertising agencies are going for. It's the millenials that many of you are going to be trying to reach. They take life differently, they approach media differently. That's what this conference is all about. It's about an idea conference, not about technology but ideas coming together in a collaborative manner, to discuss new ways of reaching the millennials who see the world differently.

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Nokia is coming out with a new phone. This telephone has built-in Bluetooth, so it goes right to the printer. It's got USB, it's got a *Microsoft Office* symbol on it. This cell phone is going to have a 16-gigabyte hard drive, it's going to have an OLED, which is an Organic Light Emitting Diode screen, full color. Beautiful clarity. It will have WImax built in. WImax is like WIFI on steroids. I think I can say that here. It's got a keyboard that folds out, a full "qwerty" keyboard. It's got *Microsoft Office* on the inside. I'll be willing to bet, as long as I'm not held accountable, that in about five years time we'll start to see the end of laptops, and PC's versus Macs. I think I'm going to see a lot of students come into the classroom with their cell phone/trio/blackberry/PDA/laptop—you name it. They'll set it up on the table and take their notes, take their exams and everything else, on this cell phone combination.

As we move to individual communication systems and devices, this particular cell phone or one other I had shown in class has a rudimentary video-editing software package installed. So you can shoot your video on your cell phone, and then sit down and edit, and even provide titles, a folder thing. There's a new cell phone coming out with a seven megapixel capability for still pictures. It's coming out in Asia and it should be over in the States by fall.

Finally, for those of you who are technically-oriented, the Japanese have come up with all sorts of devices that are USB-capable. Here is a toothbrush that plugs into your USB tube on the side, so you can brush your teeth anywhere—in the lab, at home, if you just didn't want to get to the bathroom. Men, here is an electric shaver that plugs into the USB container on the side. Here's a cup warmer, a spaghetti maker for noodles. It does everything, it heats the water, it's a marvelous device. But for those of you who say, "Look, I am so busy at the computer, I really would like to make my meals at the computer," boy, do I have a product for you. The "George Forman USB grill."

I kid you not. It plugs into the USB connector on the side of your laptop, or your computer. It's supposed to generate enough heat to make that hamburger or that fillet mignon that you've been thinking about having, and you just don't want to get up and go to the kitchen. Where you're storing fillet mignon until then I don't know.

These are a lot of the keys to the future for media, and for reaching the unreached, which is what this conference is all about. You have to realize that the millennials think digital, always digital. Analog is gone. Did you know that the last analog tape manufacturing company went out of business about a month ago? Ampex closed its doors for good, and now there's only a couple left in the world. Most of them are in Asia, manufacturing audio tape, reel-to-reel audio tape. We're going to see the end of VHS tape shortly, as well.

Think processing, think about the content you're creating, don't think about the medium that it's going to be distributed on. Create it, then copy it, own the rights through Digital Rights Management. And recognize the customer is your client. So you're spreading the Gospel message, and you're trying to reach these groups. They're not going sit and look at *TV Guide* and figure out when this broadcast is going to happen. Their life's are too busy, they're too complex. When they want to watch a program, or listen to your program, or download video material, they want to do it when they want to do it, anywhere in the world, 24/7, and they want to be able to hit a few buttons and have it. They've started distributing novels in Japan on cell phones, and I think they said something like 10,000 people are paying for the privilege of a new novel downloaded to those little cell phone screens, and they're reading them—and they're loving them, because the advertising is keyed to the novel you're reading. You take a test and advertisers give you coupons and cents off of things. It's all keyed to the cell phone and the lifestyle technologies of this group.

Dr. Harry Sova teaches media at Regent University. His main interests are new technologies and their impact on our lives.

The Church, Evangelism, and Interactive Virtual Reality Worlds

by Todd Smith

What I would like to do today is review some of the developments in the media that we call virtual reality, virtual environment simulation. There are a lot of different names this technology goes by. I want to show you examples of this media and how it's being used now. I'm not going to show you things the church is doing right now with this media. I will show you an online world I have, and I will talk to you about some of the things I was planning on doing with that. I'm taking a point of view that says, "I want to put you in a secular environment so you can see what the potential is and what people do with this." After all, that's what we are trying to do—to think about some applications for this media and consider some of the spiritual implications.

About me, I have been married for 18 years; we have two children, Caleb and Luke, they're six and two. Also I am a professional artist. Besides being a professor, I work outside the University as a traditional artist. This is some of my work; you see some of the traditional media there in terms of sculpture and drawing. When I was in my MA program I did a portrait and it really opened a lot of doors for me. I do painting; also graphics, and I do some cover design, and 3D models generated using various kinds of software: *Maya, 3D Studio Max, Cinema 4D, Rhino* and *Bryce,* just to name a few. So, I've used that technology also.

So what is virtual reality? Basically, it allows a user to get into a 3D simulation and interact with it. When we think about interactivity, we think about the ability of the user to control some kind of presentation media. We see that in lots of different formats.

One thing I wanted to look at, for instance, is video games. That is a hugely popular area. You can see the amount of money that was spent in 1998 for video games and box office receipts for Hollywood. Video games are at 30 percent of the market, and the number of computers is at a million in 1998. On average we have two video games in each home. It shows here that about 90 percent of the United States households have rented or owned a video game or computer game. How many have rented or owned a video game or computer game? 49 percent of all children have a video game player or computer on which to play video games. When my son Caleb (who's six

now) was two years old, I had him going to virtual environments to play around. He wanted his own computer earlier than that but I wouldn't let him. Notice here—this is interesting—40 percent of children would choose, as a preference, a video game over any other form of media to have on an island with them. A 1993 survey says 307 seventh and eighth grade students, especially boys, spent more time playing video games then girls. 60 percent of the girls clocked an average two hours a week playing video games. 90 percent of the boys played for more then four hours a week. Now I guarantee it was longer. Look at the violence: all ages prefer games with violent content, boys prefer human violence and girls, fantasy violence.

I wanted to show you some of the hardware and software that is out there, and before I do that, think about the development of this media. How many of you remember when you would get the nice little Mac Lisa—the monitor had a black screen and the font was green—think about how far it's come. Well, a lot of that is because the ability of the hardware to process the data is incredible, and the software needed to do images in virtual environments has come along way, along with the programming languages.

Now, what forms do virtual environments take, or how can you view this? Handhelds, data glove, head mounted displays, desktop, iDesk, Helio display, Fog Screen. The two newest innovations in this are Helio display and Fog Screen. Some of you might actually have this on Playstation and Xbox, for gaming. This is a HP iPAQ handheld. You can hold it and actually take a pen and manipulate and spin it around. This is a data glove. You can use it and work on a desktop or an iDesk. As you move your fingers to grasp something, that same thing is created on the computer screen: the hand moves and grasps the pieces.

This is HMV. When you are looking at your computer, many times the HMV tracks your head movement. At the advanced computer center atVirginia Tech, we have these handheld displays and you can actually go to a mall in Georgia, a computer-generated mall, they replicated it. When you go into it, as you move your head, it's as if you moved your head in real life. They use that for folks who have a fear of heights. You can actually walk up and off of an elevator, look down and there is nothing in front of you. And the simulation is used to show you that you're not going to fall, you shouldn't fear, I never jumped.

This is hardware that uses desktop VR. The maker of this is StereoGraphics. You have a set of goggles or glasses and as you look at your computer screen, it three-

dimensionalizes the image. There is also a designing network—if you do a design you actually have to create it in a certain way so that the design will match with the rest of the scene.

This is an iDesk. Now, all of you will remember Star Wars' Princess Leia and her little holograph—well, this is called a Helio Display. That's a three-dimensional watch that was created using three-dimensional hardware, so look at this and watch this.

[Screen presentation]

It projects up from this device. That's not a trick, it's actually projected into thin air. We talked about video game play. In lots of ways we think in two dimensions, but look at the internet. In the future we'll have more things like the data glove.

This is the fog screen. This thing's absolutely incredible, it's basically a screen that has an image projected on it, but it's fog, it's vapor, and if you reach your hand through it, you will see a guy walk through it in a minute. It's another new technology, and the possibilities for this are really incredible. I will show you in a minute what a cave looks like. Caves limit you to a ten-by-ten room, but this can extend on and on and on forever. If you have your glasses on, it would be as if you're walking through many different rooms or worlds, I'll show you what it looks like, and remember that's not an actual screen that's mist that he's actually drawing on.

[Screen presentation]

He stepped through the screen. Notice that even when you walk through the fog it pulls along with you, but this doesn't do that, it's very smooth. Let me describe this to you: If you can image a screen like the screens that we have, there's something like that at the top and bottom. Somehow there is a wind being forced—they've set it up so the wind blows through a narrow hole. This is a cave. If you look, this is a ten-by-ten room. You have computers that project images on these walls and as you go into this, you have your glasses on. So this is what it would look like: a person standing inside the cave with his glasses on, and two trains going by; they see that. With your glasses on it's a seamless, seamless picture.

Now, I want to talk about some of the gaming software. Notice here, the rating, bottom lower right here, all of these have different ratings, *Grand Theft Auto, Halo, Fiend, Star Wars.* I'm a huge Star Wars fan. This is the kind of stuff that's really around—let's go to Wal Mart and look at the video game selection. Now, another form of what I would call a plug-in, is a plug-in online that allows you to do desktop VR stuff. One is called *Cosmo.* There are actually many, but I'll show you this one.

This is an area of science called "extra soul." What happens is *Cosmo* player gives you an interface to interact with a virtual world created using VR. You get this interface—this is the Cosmo Player interface—and you can set the speed that you view your world in. You can also set things like audio, graphics, object protection. In these worlds, if you bump into a wall it will actually stop. You can turn that off and on. It tells you how to utilize here, you page up page down, and it tells you how to start, manipulate stuff that you notice here. When I do this I can drag forward to go here, if I do this and move around. That's *Cosmo,* which is a plug-in.

Another technology is called Activeworlds This is the Activeworlds interface. It's a 3D online world that you can go to, where you can have instant message rooms. It's a free download. I'll show you how to download.

Here you can move around, and notice there you can see what people are saying. Most of those names are not their true names, but when you come into the Activeworld gate, you come in right here. Right now there are 750 different worlds that have been made here, and 218 people in different worlds. You can track which world they are in.

This is Activeworld gate. (It's better to have world names that starts with the letter A.) Let me show you some of the different features here. Remember the reason I am showing you this—this is a whole area that needs to be witnessed to. We show this technology in the lab, students actually get on here and play around. We go in the Activeworld gate and one student decides to start sharing Jesus. He types down to someone standing nearby, "Do you know Jesus?" to another avatar. Those are called *avatars,* which is the Indian word for "little god." Another avatar comes up to this guy and says, "You religious bigot." Everybody in class saw that because we had it projected just like this, and you could see it on the monitor. Everyone is saying, "Can you read what they're saying?" and I said, "Yes." Well, we're all familiar with what it's like going to the beach, and you have somebody preaching to the crowds. That's what we did. There were 20 people in there, ganging up on that one person, so you have to be careful.

Remember the reason I am showing you this—this is a whole area that needs to be witnessed to.

Now let's talk about the future. The vision here is the whole thing. In television and radio for instance, in its infancy, who would have thought what kind of impact it would have on the world today? As we get more and more powerful computers, this type of technology will be incredible. If you remember, the characters on Activeworld are similar to cartoons. What happens when those things are crystal clear and they look like people? It's going to be incredible. In my opinion, this is the direction of the future. Instead of going to a room and looking at the TV screen, we will enter the world that's like a little cave, and our entertainment will surround us like a data glove. We will reach out in this world and we will be able to see a briefcase; we will be able to reach out and put on our glasses—who knows where it will go? I really think that entertainment and information will be dimensionalized.

That's the future. Lots of people who go to these sites have no knowledge of the Lord, have never been to church. So we have to reach out to them and utilize this technology. Somebody, somewhere made these worlds, and that's the kind of thing I teach here—from the 3D modeling, texturing, all that kind of stuff. We don't have classes for it but it's the kind of thing I have been in touch with in the past, and I know that the people who create these worlds have a ton of influence. What would happen if the church gained stature in the arts? If it said "art is valuable." If it produced more graphic designers, traditional artists and those kinds of people, but who are also grounded in scripture. The church as an institution now has incredible opportunity to do just that.

Professor Todd Smith has taught at a number of universities in interactive media. He currently teaches 3D design at Liberty.

Podcasting and Internet Evangelism
by Nick Ciske

Welcome to podcasting and internet evangelism. podcasting is really new. It started about October of last year as a kind of public force, mainstream thing. It's not even really mainstream yet but people have been putting audio on the internet for years. Until podcasting came along, there was really no good way to get an audio file to people. They had to come to your website and download it. Now, I don't know about you, but going to a website every week and downloading a file is not my idea of a good way to spend my time, and I would quickly tire of it. So podcasting solved that critical last gap. We had the internet, we had audio on the internet, we had compelling audio shows, we had iPods and we had computers, but there was something missing in between and that was getting the content to the people in a broadcast fashion, without broadcast's limitations, particularly timing. So podcasting came along and said, "We've got a solution."

Podcasting owes its existence to Dave Weiner and Adam Curry, primarily. Dave Weiner is the inventor of RSS. He was one of the first people to make weblogs very popular. He started a service called Radio.Userland, and lots of people still blog there. He shut his service down and moved to other services. He wanted to get away from weblogs to jump outside the web pages in other forms. He wanted to be able to read them without having to go to the website. So he developed the RSS concept for blogs. Adam Curry, who is good friends with Dave Weiner, wanted to be able to do a radio show, doing same thing with his radio show as Dave was doing with his blogs. He and Dave talked, and he said, "That's easy, we'll just put it in as an enclosure element in it, and point it at your file, and we're done," RSS 2.0 with enclosures was born, podcasting happened.

Adam Curry hacked together an Apple script to download his favorite shows, and he sent out the call to the open source community to make it better. He said, "I'm not a programmer, this is not going to work. You need to make it better. You need to make it more user-friendly." So Ipodder was born as an open source project on SourceForge.

The great thing about podcasting is, it's a conversation. It's not one way. It's not a DJ on a radio station streaming out this broadcast, who can never really hear from his fans except at

appearances and stuff like that. Every time you post a podcast, it's a chance for interaction. Most people podcast on blogs. You create a blog post, and you link your podcast. You have comments, you have track backs. Everything inherent to blogs happens on podcast. What's really cool in pod casts is people can leave you audio comments. There are lots of services that let people call up and leave a comment. They send you a Wav file or an MP3 file on your show.

You don't have to chop it up and trim it down, you don't have to censor yourself or censor them. You can just talk really honestly, because there's no regulation.

Adam Curry will play it and stop it, and actually have a conversation with you, in your comment. Little games have popped up, called hit tests, where you play the first ten seconds of a song, and the person has to guess what song you're playing. They do it live, on their podcast. The listener will guess, or he won't know what it is, next song—so you listen to the next one, and you're hearing them, you're having this visceral experience with them trying to guess these songs. You're trying to guess them before they guess them, and at the end they give you the answers.

Interviews can be really cool because they bring other voices to your podcast. If you have someone really interesting, you can have this really long interview. You don't have to chop it up and trim it down, you don't have to censor yourself or censor them. You can just talk really honestly, because there's no regulation. You can't get sued for saying the "f-bomb," if you so desire. Or if you're interviewing someone who likes to use the "f-bomb," you're not going to get sued for airing it.

People have used that to do what's called "mobcasting." For example, someone might say, "All you protesters at the Republican National Convention, any time you see something interesting, call this number and tell us about it. If you see the police beating somebody down, call this number and give us a live report." It then goes straight to the blog, straight to the podcast and out to people, with no filter in between.It's dangerous but it's pretty cool. People can put anything they want on there, but at the same time people understand that. Anything can go up there, so it can really be a really cool citizen journalism thing. You can also do it with your youth or church group—give them all the number and say, If you have a spiritual thought, drop it on our podcast."

I would not recommend using Itunes to convert to MP3. Itunes has an iffy MP3 encoder, and at low bit rates, you get tons of artifacts, which make it hard to listen to. Most applications will have MP3 export, or they'll tell you how to add it in, using a free LAME MP3 encoder. They'll all have instructions on their web site. If you buy one, it's guaranteed to have MP3.

Now that we've got our MP3 file, there are a couple of ways we can get it on our website. You can FTP it up, if you're familiar with that. You can use Ourmedia.org, which is an extension of the internet archive. It has an application that you can download and run, and it will upload your file to the internet archive, which is free forever. And if you do it through Ourmedia, they'll give you a link to your file in about an hour. Then you can use that link in your podcast feed. If you're uploading it, you should know what the link is, and you can just enter that in.

The other option which isn't free but it's really really affordable, is "Liberated Syndication,"

a new podcast hosting service that just came out. Liberated Syndication hosts your file forever, as long as you sign up for their service. Their plans work like this: for $5/month, you can upload 100 MB of new content every month. All of your old stuff is archived automatically, so this just new, this is how often you podcast. If you do a 20 MB podcast every week, you're going to scrape under this, unless it's a five-week month, then you'll be fine. You might have to bump up a little bit. It's all about how much you're shoving out at their servers each month.

Getting heard: this is pretty much the same concept as if you have a blog. Listen to other podcasts, comment on their podcasts, send audio feedback to them, mention your podcast. Send a promo to Adam Curry; he will play it, really he will. I think he's setting up a channel just for podcast promos—a podcast of podcast promos. There are other people that love to play promos, too. There's a "Godcast" network, although if you're doing evangelism, doing a Godcast network might not be the best idea, because it pretty much puts a big old "C" on your forehead, and says "Christian." Most of the stuff on the Godcast network is not evangelistic, it's for the church. So associating yourself with that might not be the best idea, because they're not really your audience, your audience is non-Christians, if you're doing evangelism. Godcast.org is a network of podcasts, but it's very much podcast by the church for the church; It's like independent Christian music, it's the word of the day, and things like that; it's the scripture of the day. It's contemporary Christian radio in podcast.

I haven't really stumbled across anybody who's really doing podcast evangelism yet. I don't even think I'm really doing podcast evangelism with thought refinery, although people are listening to me, and if they dig around they find out that I'm a follower of God. Hopefully they're intrigued by that. That links to my blog, and on my blog I talk openly about my faith; but I talk about my whole life. I'm waiting for it to have an impact, and I have very deep spiritual thoughts sometimes on blog posts. I hope people out there are reading my blog and taking steps towards God, whether I know it or not, whether I have a registered decision at the end of it or not.

You might want to do more of a bridge strategy and go into storytelling. Do moral stories, or do stories about your life and have that be your podcast.

The other big big thing is getting in the podcast directories. Ipodder.org is the big main one, but there are thousands. Google "podcast directory" and submit to them all. You have to figure out what category you want to put yourself in, if you're an evangelistic podcast. "Religion and Christianity" might be the right place and it might not be. You might want to do more of a bridge strategy and go into storytelling. Do moral stories, or do stories about your life and have that be your podcast. Obviously there are Christian underpinnings; there's a Christian worldview there, but it's not explicitly religion/Christian. It kills me that every every directory is "religion," and not "spirituality." Some have the "spirituality" node, if you have to decide which node you go under. Some people see "religion" and are turned off; some people see "spirituality" and think. "Oh, I can deal with spiritual Christians. It's the religious ones that get me down." So you have to navigate that water for yourself and decide what your podcast is really about.

I do have some fears, though: the fears are that we'll make all the same mistakes that we've made in every other medium. The church is an early adapter, and that's really cool. Billy Graham was one of the first people on the radio, preaching the Gospel. But over time, people start to abuse the medium, and it tends to turn people off. I don't think I need to mention things that have turned people off on TV and radio. So one of my fears is that it's going to happen again. I pretty much know it's going to happen again, but I hope that the positive can drown out the negative. That people who are doing this in love and with a heart to save people will drown out those people who are out there preaching hate and really just preaching against things.

I'm also afraid that's it's just going to be Christian radio on podcasting. That's been what happening, so far. I really can't wait until I hear the first podcast that blows my mind, because it's by a Christian, and it's so innovative and it's so new and it just blows up. The "Catholic Insider" blew me away. It's in the top 10. And that was before the Pope got sick, so that's not a Pope thing. I took that screenshot five days ago. This guy is speaking into thousands of people's lives. There's power in this. If you get an audience, you can speak directly into their lives. In radio, there's no intimacy. Most people listen to podcasts on headphones. There's something about headphones—the voice is going directly in to their head, there's an intimacy there. You get a good mic, there's so much texture in the human voice that goes straight into your soul, and you can have real power there.

Nick Ciske has been staring at a computer screen for most of his young life. Starting with Apple Basic in 4th grade, he's been programming ever since. After a five-year stint at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (www.billygraham.org), he's now managing Web development for Bethany Press (www.bethanypress.com), a major Christian book printer in Bloomington, MN. As a freelance developer he has worked for such clients as Carmichael Lynch (www.carmichaellynch.com) and Highway Video (www.highwayvideo.com). He is also the media coordinator and webmaster for bluer (www.bluer.org), an emergent Vineyard Church (www.vineyardusa.org) in Minneapolis which has been featured in the New York Times (www.twincities.com/mld/pioneerpress/living/religion/8000817.htm?1c) and on NPR. He also maintains his blog, portfolio site (www.nickciske.com), and a bunch of other sites, as well as coercing many of his friends and co-workers (some kicking and screaming) into the blogosphere (www.emergingjournal.com). His church was one of the first to podcast (www.wikipedia.org/podcast/) its weekly sermon (www.bluer.org/message/). He started producing original podcasts (www.thoughtrefinery.com) in January 2005.

Reaching the Connected Generation with Blogging

Panel: Steve Knight, DJ Chuang, Stephen Shields, Will Sampson, Nick Ciske

DJ Chuang: My name's DJ Chuang. I'm a digital ministry architect at ForMinistry.com, which is the Internet ministry of the American Bible Society. I blog on the ForMinistry site; I also blog on my personal site, DjChuang.com, and I've been blogging since 1999 when the thing was just starting.

Stephen Shields: My name is Stephen Shields, I'm the principal and founder of FaithMaps.org. I also have a blog, which is faithmaps.blogspot.com, and also since May, 2001, I've moderated an online group of about 150 people who post between 800 and 1000 e-mails a month. For my day job I work for *USA Today.* I'm *USA Today's* national home delivery circulation manager, and I'm delighted to be with you today.

Will Sampson: My name is Will Sampson, I'm an independent technology consultant. I blog on a personal blog, and I also blog for the American Bible Society.

Steve Knight: My name is Steve Knight. I have three blogs. I have a personal blog at knightopia.com/journal. I also have a reality television blog which is a collaborative project called realityblogs.com; and I have a local blog which is satirical, called gastoncountyspectator.com for the region I live in. These are personal projects; my day job is as senior Internet editor for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and I've been blogging for about a year and a half.

Nick Ciske: I'm Nick Ciske. My day job is at Bethany Press, which is a major Christian book printer in Bloomington, Minnesota. I also blog personally on my website, NickCiske.com/blog. I also have a blog about creativity in the church. It's actually a communal blog—there's a bunch of people who blog with me on that. And I'm a podcaster. I podcast church sermons and a couple of other podcasts.

Steve Knight: I think Will had thrown out a question or a series of questions earlier. I just want to gauge where everyone is coming from so that we can tailor our comments for you this morning.

Will Sampson: Well, do we have that list?

Steve Knight: The envelope please!We're streaming on the Internet right now!

Will Sampson: This is good. We have some brand new to blogging people. This is exciting!

Steve Knight: OK, cool. So let's start with the basics, which is "What is a Blog?" *Blog* is short for "Web Log," which is a type of online journal that has several key characteristics, one of which is reverse chronological posts. Everything that you post is dated so the most recent post is at the top of the page. There are quite a few different blogging software programs that are free and available. There are others you can pay for, Let's just do a quick rundown—if anybody wants to jump in and comment on some other distinctives of a blog and what those popular platforms are?

Nick Ciske: One distinctive of a blog that is not necessarily on a website is commenting. Blogs are conversation, a discussion, meaning it's your show. You get to determine the topics that are talked about. If you're a good blogger you don't have to turn comments on, but you should. It allows anybody on the internet who comes across your post to leave comments on it, to correct you, to offer their opinion, or to add to the discussion.

Will Sampson: Here's an example of a guy who's a very popular blogger, a friend of a lot of us, named Adam Cleveland, who's a Princeton seminary student. He put up an April Fools joke and got 57 comments. So essentially what he's doing is creating a conversation there. He turned on comments, he put something out there, and then people commented on that. Often what you'll get is sub-conversations where people will actually comment on the comments, and begin to have a conversation within the comments themselves. So that gives you some context for what comments are.

it starts to form this community, this group of people all talking about the same thing.

Nick Ciske: Another thing is called a "trackback." If I write a post about someone else's post, I can track back or ping it. That puts a little thing on his post saying that I talked about his post. People can say, "Oh, there's more conversation about this topic over here." So it becomes this mesh, this little miniweb of discussion about certain topics. And then, as bloggers link to each other as we always tend to do, if you read somebody's blog you get to find about who they read and who their friends are, and you start to read them. So it starts to form this community, this group of people all talking about the same thing. They're talking to each other—it's this huge conversation but it's all in individual "oblongs." It's a really cool phenomenon to find somebody's weblog you didn't know existed—they're in Australia or somewhere else in the world—and then you start to find their friends, you start reading their blogs and get involved in this conversation you would never hear without weblogs being on the internet.

Steve Knight: Trackback is the technology that is built into a lot of blog software. It's something that happens behind the scenes. You don't necessarily have to know a lot to take advantage of it. There are certain blog softwares that don't use trackback, but one of the most popular blogging applications is Blogger.com. You can set up a blog on Blogger in about five minutes. They'll host it for you free on their hosting service, blogspot.com. The conference blog is set up on Blogger. It's

a really simple and easy-to-use platform. It's one of the most popular out there. Let's give a quick rundown. I use Blogger for one of my blogs. I also use Moveable Type. I need friends like Nick who are more technologically savvy to help me set up Moveable Type. It's something that you can have set up with your ISP. You install it on your server and you have to configure things and other techie stuff like that. So it's not for everyone, but it's more feature-rich. It offers more capabilities and functionality that you won't get from Blogger or some of the other free blogging platforms out there. What else do you guys use, what do you recommend, and why?

Will Sampson: Well, I actually started with Blogger. The reason I moved from it is Blogger does not have trackbacks. Let me just take a minute to talk about why I blog, which is the whole idea of being in conversation with other people. Blogging can feel one-way, but really blogging is more of a two-way conversation. If you ever get a chance there's a book I'll recommend very strongly to you, called *The Cluetrain Manifesto.* All the internet evangelism books are great, but frankly the best internet evangelism book you will ever read is *ClueTrain Manifesto,* by four guys: Rick Levine, Doc Searles, David Weinberger, and Christopher Locke. It's not a "Christian" book. It's about the idea that the web is creating whole new areas for conversations to take place. What's happening in a blog is a conversation. What you really want to be thinking about is what's going to allow the best conversation to take place. It's not just me throwing a thought out there and getting people to read it, but me creating a space for a conversation to take place. That's where comments come in, because I can put a thought out there and people can make a comment. A trackback, as Nick pointed out, is another method for a conversation. Nick writes something that's really great, and I say, "Wow, I want to continue this conversation," so I'm going to reference what Nick wrote. I'm going to trackback to what Nick wrote and then I'm going to continue the conversation. I'm going to comment on it, as well. I might write a post about it. I use TypePad. TypePad seems to work best for me.

Steve Knight: How much does it cost?

Will Sampson: Blogger's free. It doesn't include trackbacks but it is free. TypePad costs money but I use TypePad because it allows me to have multiple blogs. I have severe ADD and I'm likely to just create a blog on a whim! I currently have two or three other blogs that I didn't publish because they're in various states of lameness! It also allows you to have multiple authors. Nick talked about the idea of communalblogging, which I think is also important particularly if you're doing it around the idea of a church or of you're doing it around group evangelistic activities. So if you're trying to do things where multiple people are authoring the blog, then you need to look at group blogging. TypePad allows you to do multiple authors.

Stephen Shields: One URL you definitely want to write

down is NickCiske.com. Nick has graciously agreed he's going to put up a page we can all go to that will have links to the various URLs we refer to. Maybe we can also include, Nick, a couple of links to good articles on what blogging is, that will serve as an introduction for you. I use Blogger myself—it meets all my needs. I've been using it for a couple of years. I think it's fantastic. If you want more bells and whistles, there are others out there, and DJ's going to talk about his favorite right now.

DJ Chuang: My current very favorite one is WordPress, which is an open-source, free blogging tool that's gained enormous popularity. A friend of ours who's not techie installed it in ten minutes, had it up and running. It's very customizable, very powerful. Since I've been blogging—since 1999—I've switched software almost once a year just as the whole revolution has matured over the years. Two of the other very popular blogging tools, just for your reference, are Xenga and LiveJournal.com. Those two are very popular. What's nice about using popular blog software is that you can find other people who can help you with technical issues or people using the same thing. To give you a sense of how big a revolution this is, there are currently over eight million blogs in the world and the number doubles every five months. So there's a lot of individuals as well as organizations that are blogging as a means of communication. It started out as a metaphor for online journaling or an online diary. Now it's become an individual communication tool, a corporate communication tool which allows the fostering of transparency. This is a good thing and a scary thing at the same time because what you say instantly gets registered onto something like search engines. There's a search engine specifically for blogs, so if you say something about a product, an organization, or yourself, it's out there for the world to see in ten minutes or less. If you think about the publishing revolution that was started in the 1500s with the Gutenberg Press, that gave power and voice to the institution. Now blogging has given voice to the individual. You can instantly put your voice out, and if you have something to say and it shows up on people's radar, you can influence the world. You've seen the impact of blogging in politics, in media and certainly in evangelism.

You can instantly put your voice out, and if you have something to say and it shows up on people's radar, you can influence the world.

Will Sampson: Just to follow up on what DJ said: We come across the whole spectrum in terms of what motivates us and why we're here. I'm the one who always comes at the higher principles and that gets me in trouble. These guys are great techies—I do a lot of technical things myself. I think it's important to remember to have a theory of missions behind what you do. If you look at what's been happening in missiology (and by missiology I just mean the study of missions over the last fifty years), we've realized that something went terribly wrong in western missions. If you read books like *Gospel in a Pluralist Society* by Leslie Newbigin or *Transforming Mission* by David Bosch—any of those sorts of missiological texts—we understand that missions only really work when you are part of the culture and you are indigenous to the culture.

I offer that as kind of a caution because there can be a real danger with the idea that "I'm going to evangelize on the web." It's the same danger with the notion that we were going to bring western Christianity to places in the East and in Africa and places. It failed and it failed miserably; and it wasn't until we pulled out that we saw this massive global spread of Christianity. I think in

the same way as you think about coming onto the web and blogging and all these other things, I would just issue a statement to be both humble and really be an inhabitant of digital culture if you're going to do that. That sort of comes up with what DJ said. It seems to me that there's a real danger of coming in from the outside.

Steve Knight: Bouncing off that, or at least following along that path, we're talking about the philosophy and mindset behind blogging and why that may be an effective way of doing ministry on the web for whatever you're doing, whether it's missions or a church situation or whatever. I started a reality television blog based around two things. One was using reality television as a bridge strategy to say our culture has a fascination with reality television and why is that? What is reality television tapping into that is so attractive. And on my reality television site I tie that into what Leonard Sweet calls EPIC, which stands for "Experiential, Participatory, Image-based and Connective." That's an acronym he uses to talk about what our culture is searching for and how reality television really addresses a lot of those things. I also just love reality TV shows. There's a lot of junk because they keep trying to come up with the next great one, and they're all bad. But there's a lot of interesting good stuff that happens there. To be able to talk about that and to that niche, that segment of the population—which is fairly large—it would be inauthentic of me to just look at statistics and just say, "You know, there are millions of people who watch reality television shows. I don't watch reality television shows but I want to reach people who watch reality television shows, so I'm going to start a reality television website and talk about that." If it's not something that you're truly passionate about, it's going to quickly be discovered on the web that this guy is really a ploy; this is a bait-and-switch situation.

We have this opportunity to help point people to examples of how to create radical communities of faith.

Will Sampson: Yes. And if I can track back off that to extend the metaphor: It seems to me that what blogging can do is point people to an understanding of what it means to follow God in the way of Jesus; and possibly bring us to times where we can begin to talk to people about what it means to follow God in the way of Jesus. But we need to be able to open up the whole story. I was thinking as Dr. Houston was preaching, of just the idea of Matthew 25. I love the parable of the talents, but I love it in part because of the whole sermon of Matthew 25. Matthew 25 is such an interesting sermon. The parable of the talents is just the first half. As the sermon goes on, what does Jesus say? He says, "I'm going to judge you on how you use the resources." What's the evaluation for how we use the resources? He goes on to say it's the parable of the sheep and the goats: how you care for the least among you. That's the idea of this notion of creating radical communities of faith that actually care for the people around you. And it seems to me that we have this opportunity to help point people to examples of how to create radical communities of faith. And we can use this wonderful space we've got in the blogging world to try to market Jesus to them, or we can point them to new expressions, we can point them back to radical expressions of faith. Really, the choice is ours.

Stephen Shields: One thing that I wanted to comment on with regard to blogging is, I do think community and the message we have are the two most important points. One thing we really have to seek to avoid is an unwarranted technological triumphalism when it comes to blogging. We need to recognize the limits of what we have with blogging. When you think about the things that have been spiritually "transformative" in your life, usually you are not naming books and sermons; it's usually people you know, people who have had a personal impact on you. But the internet, in terms of blogging—and also in terms of internet groups, discussion groups, chat rooms—has an interesting dynamic. That is, the anonymity of it enables people to be more open than they normally would be. I say that the internet has an "optional relationality." For instance, if I go on Steve's site and I'm not into reality television, I can easily make Steve go away. I can easily delete him from my blog lines and not read his blog. If we meet on a discussion group and I don't like what he says, I can easily just leave the discussion group. If he and I exchange personal e-mails, I can write a rule in Outlook that will cause all of his e-mails to go right to my deleted folders. About a year ago Steve and I met, and the moment we met the stakes instantly went up enormously higher. He was no longer merely a URL or an e-mail address, but we met, our families met, our children met and we had an unmediated face-to-face relationship.

I say that the internet has an "optional relationality."

That being said, there can be a significant degree of intimacy that develops online—what I call a "virtually unmediated relationship"—where you can get down to brass tacks and talk about each other's lives. The dynamic I've seen in our FaithMaps discussion groups we've had for the last four years is that people open up usually earlier and more intimately in an online environment than they would face-to-face, and then they get, as it were, "tricked" into a genuine friendship, because as they develop a level of trust, the relationship can segue from online to realtime face-to-face. That is one way I think we need to look at blogging, at online—it's a segue ministry to try to help people transform and move into genuine face-to-face relationships. I'm not saying that can't happen online; it absolutely can, but I think we have to recognize its limits. The other caution that I'll make about blogging is, when you think about the different types of things you can do online—you've got your static website which is merely content, and then a little bit more interactive is blogging—but still when I'm on Will's site, it's Will's show. I'm just commenting on what he says and it's his show. And then more interactive than that would be the discussion groups and the chat rooms where it's more egalitarian. People are speaking more at an equal level. I think those are two cautions we have to look at with blogging. Steve really seems to be anxious to make a comment based on things that I've just said.

Steve Knight: Can you go a little bit further for anyone out there that might be thinking, "We pretty much have a static brochure-type website now. We want to add more community, more interactivity. Should I do a blog? Should I start a message board?" Maybe talk a little more about the conversation that happens on a blog versus the conversations that happen on a discussion board.

Stephen Shields: Well, one thing I should say about a discussion board: you definitely need to have a moderator. For example we've had FaithMaps discussion groups going since May,2001. We have about 800 to 1000 e-mails a month and I'm the moderator. When I travel or when I'm not hooked

up as much as I think I'm going to be, I have other people who step in as co-moderators. The one criterion of participation that is absolutely non-negotiable is respect. You can say anything, you can disagree with anything, but the one thing you can't do is jump in and add homonyms and talk about people being stupid. You can say, "That's the most ridiculous thing I ever heard," but you can't say, "You are ridiculous," or anything like that. When that happens in a discussion group you have a certain amount of power to stop that sort of thing because you can ban someone from your group or you can moderate all their messages, so you read all their messages before they get posted. That's worked out really well for the last four years. That's probably the best way to really get a discussion going. If you're a small church or maybe you only want to have a discussion between four or five people who really need to say things, you might have a group blog where a smaller number of people can post to the blog and then make an interaction. The third level of discussion is with comments, where one person posts something and then you can have a sub-conversation relative to that one post, around whatever they did. Of course that gives priority to what the one person said, so that gets a little bit more broadcasting. Do you have any comment on that?

How much time do your staff and volunteers have to support a blog or to support a message board?

DJ Chuang: That's a strategy question, and strategy flows out of looking at your goals and your resources. ForMinistry provides a website building tool that's web-based, so people can build a website for free. It's donor-supported and churches don't have to learn HTML. What we've come up against, even though we've lowered the threshold on coming online with technology, is the question of time. We all have the same amount of time and we have to make choices on where to use that. So one of the other factors in addition to what's been shared, is how much time do your staff and volunteers have to support a blog or to support a message board. I've found that message boards are much more time-intensive than blogs, because you do need to moderate, but the conversations just explode if people find engaging conversations.

Will Sampson: Just on the subject of strategy, lest I lose my credibility as the wild, out-there voice coming off something Stephen said earlier—we were talking together at breakfast and somebody named Dave Berghams made the statement: "We win people to what we win them with." I'll repeat that: "We win people to what we win them with."

Steve Knight: I think that's "We win people TO what we win them with."

Will Sampson: Sorry. "We win people TO what we win them with." Sorry. Forgive the improper cadence there! I was just thinking of John 6. In John 6, if you recall, Jesus fed the 5000, and then all the people came to Him. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, you were looking for me not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give you. On Him, God the Father has placed His seal of approval." If you look around this culture, what was the

number one rap song this year? "Jesus Walks," right? Kanye West. What was the number one R&B song last year? "Where is the Love?," Black-Eyed Peas.

> "Father, Father, Father, help us with some guidance from above/
> 'Cause people got me questioning where is the love?"

There is so much desperate desire for spirituality in this culture, and if we try to market Jesus, if we provide an inauthentic relationship, if we say, "Come to Jesus and your marriage will be cured," if we say, "Come to Jesus and this problem will be fixed"—well, if the problem doesn't get fixed, guess what? They're going to go to the next person offering a solution for that problem. If, on the other hand, we offer people a chance to be part of the radical call of Jesus—to drop their nets, leave everything they have and follow Jesus—which is a radical call in a highly individualistic, highly consumerist culture, then we have a real chance of getting people to follow the radical call of Christ. In blogging, we're just at this interesting time where people are really interested in it and actually reading these things. We're going to get to the point where they're over-saturated and people are going to stop reading them, but right now people are reading a ton of blogs, and I think we need to take advantage of that time and offer a realistic vision of the radical call of Christ.

In blogging, we're just at this interesting time where people are really interested in it and actually reading these things.

Steve Knight: All right, so we've been talking a lot up here and hopefully something that we've said has maybe sparked some questions, some thoughts. So does anybody have anything they want to just jump in and throw at us? Yes?

[inaudible question]

Steve Knight: The question is: In Blogger, how do you get the conversation started, and the comments; and then the technical question is when people post the comments, does it actually come up? Every post that you create will show up on your main page, but then there will also be what's called a "permalink" that is like a unique page created for that post. Different Bloggers do it a little bit differently, but essentially there'll be a link there that says, "Comments." And it'll show up on that page or it'll show up in a little window. There's a little counter there that says there's this many comments.

Nick Ciske: I've got Blogger right here and it shows how many comments are available on this post. Blogger links the date to the permalink (which is really annoying, because it should link the title to the permalink for search engines). Most other web log software does that. Here's the thing, if you really want to do stuff like that, shy away from Blogger. Look more into TypePad or MoveableType or WordPress. WordPress is super-customizable. You might not need to know PHP; there's loads of great plug-ins; so look around, see what plug-ins are available for your publishing platform. There's lots of stuff where people have already done the work. You pop it in, you hit OK and your comments are on the home page or on the side bar. It's really easy to move stuff around because all this is just data in a database. You can display it however you want. It doesn't have to look like every other blog.

Stephen Shields: Was part of your question also about how to entice people to come and make comments?

[inaudible reply]

Stephen Shields: What's your audience? Anybody or just your local church?

[inaudible reply]

Stephen Shields: You're a local church? OK. One thing you should do then is to put information on your blog that they need to know, and refer to it in other media. If you have a letter saying we're going to have this event at such and such a place, details are here; give the URL so it forces them to say, "If I want to do this, I've got to go to the web site." You want to start building an appetite so when they get on your website or they get on your blog they say, "Oh, there's other interesting stuff here." Use other media to refer to the URL to draw them in. That's one thing to do. The other way to do it is to pay them enormous sums of money to go to your website! Most churches don't offer that!

[inaudible question]

Will Sampson: Blogger also allows you to use Blogger as the back end for another website. So that can be just your content management tool. Also in the same vein, WordPress, which Nick and DJ have been pumping—I would strongly recommend the system they've been pushing.

[inaudible question]

Steve Knight: How much time is involved in daily maintenance of a blog? As much or as little as you want to give it. As Will was talking earlier I really wanted to butt in again (as I'm prone to do) and say blogging can become addictive and you have to be careful of that. I'm impressed with those of us up here who only have one blog and have not yet moved on to multiple blogs. Even there, you could give it as much or as little time as you want..

[inaudible question]

Stephen Shields: Sure! I absolutely could. Or an antiluddite site! I spend five to seven minutes a day blogging. That's an average. I'm a freelance writer and usually the articles that get published are ones that started as blog posts. A lot of times when I blog, I'm referring to things that other people have written. I say, "I think this is worth looking at, go and look at this...." That doesn't take much time. The other thing I do, a little trick if I have a little extra time, is to write posts for future days but I won't post them all at the same time. I'll try to always post one thing a day—at least one. I skipped yesterday which is really bad, but I did post this morning. And then sometimes I'll write original content that will probably turn into an article, and that, of course, takes more than five to seven minutes a day.

DJ Chuang: Some of the most popular bloggers on the web are called "A-List" bloggers, and they generate 500,000 or even 750,000 unique visitors a day. One blogger has even more traffic than USA Today, just to give you a sense of how much traffic a good writer—an active blogger—can generate. I've heard testimony of the most active bloggers taking two to three hours a day to maintain their content.

[inaudible question]

Steve Knight: Who's bigger than *USA Today?* Instapundit.com.

[inaudible question]

Steve Knight: People who blog, or people who post comments or both?

[inaudible reply]

Steve Knight: It's a good question. I would say most use their real names. There are a few situations where people do not and have not, we can talk about what those have been.

Will Sampson: You guys can address the ones outside of the church. There are some people inside of the church who have blogged anonymously. I read a couple of them and follow them and have come to know some of those people. I think it's harder to create that kind of authentic relationship, blogging anonymously. There are some people who feel like they've got to process some stuff that they feel they might not be able to say, particularly if they're in church context. There's a guy whose blog I was reading, frankly, who was asked to leave his pastorate because of his blog, so there's that warning as well. It's a public forum. You're saying stuff and you're putting it out there, so that's part of the reality as well. But yes, I think there's the issue of credibility and authenticity. It's not necessarily as authentic if you're blogging anonymously.

If you're going to blog anonymously you've got to be compelling, because you don't have that additional relational aspect.

Stephen Shields: My experience is that most people blog with their names. In discussion groups we have had people who have joined and have wanted to remain anonymous for various reasons. The important thing to stress, I think, is you really respect that; and if they want to stay anonymous, you let them stay anonymous. But most people do reveal who they are.

Nick Ciske: One really classic example of that is the real-life preacher who blogged anonymously for years to protect his church and his family and he referred to everyone by pseudonyms. Then he wrote a book, so he realized he had to come out and tell everyone who he was, and he did. He had a huge following, blogging as a real life preacher from a church somewhere in the US. No one knew who he was. But he was a phenomenal writer. If you're going to blog anonymously you've got to be compelling, because you don't have that additional relational aspect. You're just Joe Schmoe on the internet, so there's that to look at. Sometimes in your comments you get people who are anonymous or who claim to be other people. Steve had some problems with his comments where people were posting as him in other forums and stuff like that. It was really nasty for a while. So it is a very open and unregulated space. Luckily, it's very self-policing.

[inaudible question]

Nick Ciske: Well that's the self-policing part of the blogosphere. It's very self-connected, so what'll happen is if you're not being truthful, you're going to get caught in a lie soon enough. There are enough people watching your blog, who know you, who'll say, "I know this guy. And he's not who he says he is." So hopefully, nobody's out there that would intentionally lie in this room; but you've got to be careful because it's a public forum and anyone can comment on your blog and anyone can trackback you and point you out and expose you if you're not being truthful. So there is a self-policing aspect. People watch each other's backs and people are looking for the truth, and so they will seek it out. If you're blogging as someone else and your domain is registered in your name,

they'll find it. They'll "whois" you and they'll find your real name and they'll find your address. It's very, very hard to hide on the internet because you may use that pseudonym somewhere else and your name's associated with it so somebody's going to find you out eventually. Google's very powerful in finding out who people really are!

Will Sampson: This is another reason why I would recommend you read the book *ClueTrain Manifesto.* It's just the idea that a lot of the structures that may have represented the way we think and act are eroding. I know if I get a comment and it's really harsh, the first thing I'll do is I'll click through their links and I'll go to their site and see if they're really even a person. And then I may e-mail them and reach out to them and say, "Hey, got your comment," first of all, and thank them for it, because that's keeping me in check. Then I'll say, "Hey, what were you thinking when you said this?" And if they're not willing to be in conversation with me, well, then that's great, but right away there's all these new mechanisms for relationship and for authenticity and we're going to figure out right away who that person is and if they're even an authentic member of the community. That also goes back to what I talked about before: Are these people really authentic members of the community? Or are they just coming in from the outside and trying to colonize the community?

[inaudible question]

Will Sampson: The question is, "Is there a need for PKI or any other security mechanisms?" PKI is a method of ensuring who the person's identity is. So the question is, how do you know who the person is, and how do you verify someone's identity?

Steve Knight: Going back to the cyberstalker that I had on my site, because my blog is through MoveableType, they have a service called TypeKey that I was able to install with the help of friends. It forced people who wanted to comment to register with TypeKey, and then those comments would be captured but they would be moderated by me before they would go up on my site. Therefore they would have to use a fake e-mail address to register with TypeKey, but it would accomplish nothing because their comment would be seen only by me and I would be able to recognize it as fake and delete it before it ever got posted. That's one example of a technology that works on Moveable Type blogs, I don't know if TypeKey works on other blogs.

In the end, though, on the internet you never really, truly know who anybody is. You only know who they say they are and who others say they are.

Nick Ciske: TypeKey is an open system, so I don't know if any other blogs have picked it up. Most systems have a moderator type of feature. The latest version of WordPress starts to identify people as "This is a good commentor" and lets them comment without being moderated. All new comments are moderated until you basically say, "This person is cool; let them comment whenever they want." The systems are getting much better—the anti-spam systems are getting much better. It's an evolving technology. We're regularly leapfrogged by the people who want to abuse the technology. But really quickly the software makers pick it back up, catch it and start to keep people honest.

In the end, though, on the internet you never really, truly know who anybody is. You only know who they say they are and who others say they are. That's the power of linking on the net: If you know Will and you trust him and he says I'm legit, then you can probably trust that I'm legit

until I prove that to be a wrong assumption. That's how it works in real life, too: if you don't know me you tend to ask people who know me or you go to someone you trust and say, "Do you know this person? Is he cool? Weird? Wacky?" You go on that promise, that recommendation, until they prove you wrong. And it's very similar on the internet. If you want to find out who somebody is, find out who's linking to him and see what they say he is. If everybody's linking and saying he's a liar, a fake and a cheat, he probably is—although not necessarily, because it could be some total libel, slander thing they're trying to do.

Stephen Shields: One thing I think is important to think about is, you have to balance giving people barriers to participate versus security. Now I've never had happen to me what happened to Steve, so on my site I don't have any kind of registering where you have to register to put your name on there or register to be able to make a comment. So I think we have to be careful to balance those two concerns, because if you put up a security barrier to any degree, some people will choose not to participate. That is a personal decision you have to make and it's a balancing act.

[inaudible question]

Part of my blog is about finding other people, frankly, who are like me.

Steve Knight: I'll try to address the second question first. I'm going to get an answer for your other question because I'm curious too! Blogging was the hottest trend on the internet last year. Podcasting is really going to explode this year, Some would argue that video blogging is here now. The bloggers are typically influential people in culture. DJ had some comments yesterday and he can talk more about this, but one of the big questions people ask themselves is, what do they have to say? I think somebody shared this yesterday: "I thought about starting a blog, but what do I really have to say?" Those of us who have started blogs have done so because we've said, "I have something to say. I'm just going to put this out there, even if it's just going to be for this small group of people and anyone else who decides to come along." Many of the A-List bloggers talk about politics; politics is probably the number one topic in the blogosphere, the world of bloggers. They are highly influential and were highly influential in the last election. There may be a psychological component or maybe a type of person or a personality trait that says, "I'm going to do this, I have something to say." I think our evangelistic passion and motivation can drive that for us to say, "I'm going to use this technology for this purpose more than any selfish motivation."

Will Sampson: Well, I have been a follower of Jesus my whole life. Last year I came to the point where if I didn't change something I was going to have to leave the church, because there's nothing left for me in the church (not the upper case 'C' church, because I'm deeply in love with the body of Christ)—the organized American church had little left for me. And so, for me, blogging has been a place to find other people. I'm one of the statistics. When David Bruce quoted statistics of people who are deeply committed to God but leaving the church, I'm one of them. Part of my blog is about finding other people, frankly, who are like me. As I talk to people about following God in the way of Jesus, which I do often, I consider one of my strongest spiritual gifts is evangelism. It's really funny as I talk to people about following God in the way of Jesus in the American context, inevitably in the third or fourth conversation we have, they say, "Oh, you're not like..." and then

they name a Christian leader or something that they associate with American Christianity. I don't claim to speak for everyone on the podium at all, I'm speaking purely for myself. Since you asked as specific individual question of me, blogging has been a way to work out in public dialog with the global church some of those questions. And it's been a way to come into conversation with other people. So I'm in conversation now with people in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia and in other parts of the globe who are also seeking to follow God in the way of Jesus. And that may not look like what American cultural Christianity looks like.

It's a world of words and it's very comfortable to be in a world of words and to not actually have to do anything.

Stephen Shields: I want to make a couple of comments on that question. On the positive side there are people who are drawn to internet participation in religious events because they're churchless Christians like Will was talking about; he may have gone in that direction. We have a number of folks in the FaithMaps discussion groups that just don't feel they have anywhere to turn, that don't have anywhere else to go, and they have developed a strong sense of online community where they are mutually accountable. Their self-perception is that's all they've got that is their church. It's sad but that's the reality. Some people join and they're very bitter about the church. That has also segued into bitterness about God, but they're still sort of hungry and they want to try to differentiate that. "What do I need to be mad at? And what do I not need to be mad at?" So from a positive perspective, that's why some people tend to spend more time online.

From a negative perspective and specifically to your question, I think there are two dynamics at work: One, it's a lot easier for me to blog about how I should be as a husband and how I should be as a father than it is for me to be a good husband and to be a good father. And in evangelicalism, we have a tendency to think that spiritual formation occurs primarily by information transfer. From that perspective, the internet is lowering the cost of information as the printed word did, then as radio did, them as television did. As the cost of information gets lower it can have the negative effect of us thinking, "Oh look, it's easier for us to get all the information out. We'll be incredible Christians because we'll have all this theology and all this propositional presentation of the gospel." We think that's going to transform people. Now hear me carefully, I am not saying that there should not be information transfer; I am not saying that propositions are not important. I'm not saying that at all. I'm saying it's not enough. And it's easy for us to be online because it's just a world of words. It's a world of words and it's very comfortable to be in a world of words and to not actually have to do anything. That's one reason why we can be drawn to the internet.

The second thing relates to me as a man and I think men are more susceptible to this; although to a certain extent women are, too. In November, 2003, I very intentionally ramped down the amount of time I was spending blogging, working on my website, and moderating my discussion group, because I realized that when I'm on my computer and I'm online I'm in control. I'm the moderator of a huge group. It's my website, it's my blog, I'm in control. I like that and it can be addictive, because you have that feeling

of, "this is my world." I realized this is messed up and I changed my priorities. But I think this is one reason why people tend to stay online, or two reasons—because it's very information-based and that's very comfortable for us, and secondly, because we're in complete control of the world we create through our online friends, through the websites we visit, through the blogs we look at, and the discussion groups we're in.

DJ Chuang: I'll cite one statistic about bloggers: 70% of blog readers are influentials, that is, people who are articulate and networked—the 10% of America who set the agenda for the other 90%. So bloggers blog because they have something to say. What reason is more of an individual psychology, so each one of us have a different reason for why we blog. Every blogger has a reason for why he or she blogs. But they have something to say and the audience will weigh in on whether what they have to say improves the noise or is just noise. Lets take some more questions.

[inaudible question]

DJ Chuang: OK, the question is, with eight million blogs out there, what is the way to find a specific person like myself or a specific topic? Well, search engines are incredibly powerful in indexing the web and there are also search engines that index specifically just the blogosphere, the world of blogs. One of these is "Technorati." Nick can tell us a little more about what Technorati can do.

Nick Ciske: Let me just open with any search engine. Seriously, search engines love blogs because they are content-heavy. Individual posts are all about one subject. They're interlinked so search engines love blogs. That said, Technorati is probably one of the best known blog search engines. They call it "Searching the World Live Web" instead of the World Wide Web. Basically what happens is when you post a blog post, most software and most top A-List bloggers ping Technorati. You send them a little packet and say, "I updated—check out my blog," so the computer goes and crawls your blog. So let's look for "evangelism." (And spell it right!) You can see here that somebody posted about evangelism referencing Pope John Paul II eight minutes ago. That's how fast Technorati puts it in its index, because that person let Technorati know "I updated."

There are eight million blogs and they're all interlinked. You can crawl them all from everywhere.

Google will get around to that page eventually, but Technorati gets it right away. It will follow all the links on that post and index anything it finds there; so if you really want to find out about what bloggers are talking about, Technorati's a good place to go. For any subject, it'll tell you who's talking about it. Then what's really cool is here: this is called their "Cosmos." For example, this blogger has a blog named "I'll sleep while you drive." It has seven links from five searches. That means seven people are talking about this post. When you click on that, it shows you who's talking about that blogger. This is how you can find if someone's legit, go find them on Technorati, and find out who links to them. You can see who's talking about them, and on and on and on ad infinitum until you fall over dead! It never ends. There are eight million blogs and they're all interlinked. You can crawl them all from everywhere. It's just phenomenal. It's like a little internet kind of thing. It's a subweb of everything that's going on out there.

[inaudible question]

Nick Ciske: The question is, "What happens when somebody comes to Christ on your blog. What do you do with them then?"

Will Sampson: I'd like to answer that because, in part, it has happened to me. It wasn't a person that came to faith but I direct churches all the time. My concern is more with what's considered the organized church. At least for myself I'm in a conversation with what's called the "emerging church," so a lot of my personal efforts are in creating radical new communities of faith; not abandoning the church but creating new communities of faith that are compelling and that call people out to communal faith back to the radical call of Christ. There are some great places that have some communities of faith listed. One is "Emerging Village." Now I'm showing my bias here for the emerging church, but Emerging Village has a few churches listed on it, as does Karen Wards (emergingleadersnetwork.org/blog/5). Ginkworld.net is also another really great church finder.

Ask the bloggers for help. Ask other people for help—"Hey, Where can I plug this person in?"

Steve Knight: I'll just mention this. The Internet Evangelism Coalition that Dr. Sterling Houston chairs, is developing a church referral system. It's something that a number of ministries are now linking into and it's something that you can contact the IC about. It is a zip code-based search for referring people to a local church. That's a web-based ministry tool that is becoming available, and the Internet Evangelism Coalition is supporting and sponsoring it.

[inaudible question]

Steve Knight: Allan Beeber from Campus Crusade for Christ is very involved with the IEC. His caveat there is that the database right now is not weighted, so the search results are just coming up based on location. The vision and the goal is to weight that by churches that have been involved with and have shown vision for evangelism and discipleship and bringing in new believers.

Nick Ciske: I just want to say that if you're looking for a church, find out where the person lives. Look for someone in that town who blogs. Find a blogging pastor, read his blog, and see if you feel that would be the right church for that person. Or ask that pastor, for example, "I've got this person, from a Lutheran background. He's come back to faith. Where in your town should I plug him in? Where's a good place?" On your blog, you could say, "I'm looking for a Bible-believing, Jesus-preaching, Lutheran church in [that particular area]. Does anybody know of one?" Ask the bloggers for help. Ask other people for help—"Hey, Where can I plug this person in?" You don't have to mention their name. There's a huge network of Christians online. Somebody's going to know someone in that town who can say "Yeah, First Lutheran is the best place, that's a great church, send them over there, they'll welcome them." If you can, contact that pastor and let him know the person's coming so he won't get lost when he walks in that door.

Stephen Shields: Without depreciating inordinately the programmatic approaches that have been

discussed, which I think are totally legitimate and we need those, I like Nick's answer especially because you're the answer. Use your resources, use whatever you can to find somebody in that state, in that area, so that you can make a personal connection, because people want that personal connection to be able to go into a church. They want someone to recognize them when they get there. I did an experiment when I was on staff with a church up in Baltimore. I went to the foyer of a large, growing church. I got a cup of coffee and I stood in the lobby for fifteen minutes looking stupid (not scary stupid, just looked my normal stupid). No one talked to me, no one walked up to me, nothing happened. That is so typical. That was the comment we received at our church: that would happen with us. The human connection is absolutely critical.

Will Sampson: One of the theological frameworks you might wrap around this comes out of John 14. If you recall in the beginning of John 14, Jesus has just told all the disciples this sort of scary stuff and then He tells them that He gives them a future hope. He says, "I'm going to go and prepare a place for you." There's a beautiful promise of a future hope. But then what does He say? He says, "I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life." Great, we all know this verse; I'm seeing a lot of you even repeat it with me as I say it. So why did He say that, and why did He say it that way? What was the intentionality of the order? It seems to me that the intentionality of the order was so thatwe'd do it in that order.

The dynamic of blogging is it exposes what is already happening in a person's life.

For the most part the way we've done evangelism and the way I learned evangelism growing up and the way I even taught evangelism as a pastor was, we present truth, and if people come to truth then they get to come into the way. But what did Jesus say? Jesus said, "I am the way." Come to the way and what will you find? You will find truth. And from truth, you will have a transformed life. To the Hebrew mind, what did life mean? It meant a radically new way of thinking. And so, to answer your question, it seems to me that we need to be thinking about how to get people plugged back into the way. Get people plugged back into radical communities of faith. That comes when we are part of communities as well, and I think we all touched on that when we're all linked into communities. As Stephen said, we take responsibility for that person all the way through; so I figure out if somebody contacts me from Paducah, Kentucky, even though I don't know anybody in Paducah, I can find somebody that's seeking to live out the way of Jesus in Paducah and contact them. I say, "This guy contacted me on my blog. I don't know you but let's have a conversation and I'm going to put you in touch with this guy."

[inaudible question]

Steve Knight: The question is, if blogging can be addictive and it can potentially be pulling people out of the church, should we even be doing it? I think that's a misunderstanding of a couple of things that we were saying earlier. I was being facetious with the addictive comment, so don't take that too literally. The question of the internet pulling people out of the church, I don't think it's the internet that is responsible for that, or is the cause of that.

DJ Chuang: I think the dynamic of blogging is it exposes what is already happening in a person's life. For someone who would choose to leave the church as part of his increasing following of Jesus Christ, blogging exposes that, because it puts your thoughts and ideas out in the open as part of

your processing. Blogging can also enhance church communities. For example, there's a church in Kansas City, Missouri, called The Well, where they have their community, their members in the church, blogging. It enhances their incarnational relationship because they're talking during the course of the week. Most of us in the United States have community churches where you only see each other a few times a week at best; and to have ongoing conversation on a more regular basis, even on a daily basis, can enhance those relationships and enhance the church community. I think the opportunity is more of enhancing. It reveals what's happening in a person's heart.

Will Sampson: To totally agree with DJ and to enhance that, it seems to me that the American church prides itself in being Bible-believing Christians. But we don't talk about the Bible much or talk about the application of living out the Bible in our faith. So when I read a passage like Matthew 13 and the Parable of the Weeds, there's this notion that God is at work everywhere and we might not even recognize that God is at work. But God is always at work; it's really more a question of us recognizing that. One of the people that I read talks about the idea that our sociology derives from our theology. To put that in simple terms, I think everything we do is related to how we think about God. So, it seems to me at least, what's happening in the church—and actually if you look at the numbers, the American church is in decline— is people are less likely to go to church and to be a part of church or communities of faith, less likely to be in relationship with other Christians. So there's a tendency to want to say that blogging can enhance that or can drive that.

I would look at blogging as simply a conversational tool about what's happening in the culture. If we're presenting God as an individualistic God and not as a communal God, then it seems to me that the outcome is that we're going to have people who are less likely to want to live in church community and less likely to want to live in relationship with each other. Blogging may be a place where people can talk about that. It's not necessarily driving that move, but it's more just chronicling it.

It's not an alternate expression of the Kingdom.

[inaudible question]

Stephen Shields: The question is, isn't blogging actually drawing people away from the church instead of having them stay in the church, and focusing on and fixing the church as it is? For what it's worth anecdotally, I have never ever actually met someone who has left the church because they liked what's going on religiously online better. Personally I have never even heard of anyone like that. In the four years I've been doing this, as far as the discussion groups where I've got most of my connections with people online, they have already made that decision. They have already left the church, and now they're saying, "Listen, I'm into God, I'm interested in God, I just hate the church. And I can't live with this organization as it is today, at least where I am right now." Some of those people are also saying, "And I don't even know about God anymore." But some hunger has brought them to FaithMaps.

Obviously if they're coming to that site they have some sort of hunger and are searching. Our orientation in working with people like that is to deal with them where they are—in this virtual environment. And we want to move them back into face-to-face community, because we believe they are hungry for that face-to-face community. It's sacramental; it's something they

must have, and that is the ideal. It happens with some people; with others it hasn't happened yet. We're still working on it, using all the means that we've been talking about in terms of my personal involvement in contacting people in that area, sleuthing out churches, using one of these other programmatic solutions such as doing a search on a zip code and things like that. I think it's an arbitrary distinction and we wouldn't be serving you well if we presented the internet as an alternative to church. It's not an alternative to church, it's an alternate expression of the Kingdom. It's another way in which God's Kingdom is breaking out in the 21st century. It doesn't replace the church.

Steve Knight: I would just say if you're hearing us talk about folks who have left the church, with a lower case 'c,' it's probably because that's the conversation that a lot of us up here are most involved with. But there are huge numbers of people—look at Barna statistics—who are completely unchurched. They have no church background whatsoever. We want to encourage you to know your audience; and know that in your audience, there are going to be people who are unchurched. There are going to be people who were churched and have left the church. Blogging is just another tool to communicate with people. I like the way Will has put it: on that sacred space on the internet, for that one moment in time, they're going to be sitting in front of their computer screen looking at something that you've written or posted. And you have an opportunity there to communicate something that brings the love and the truth of the Gospel to them. So that's what we're talking about. We're not talking about moving the church to some virtual online form.

Nick Ciske: There are lots of people who say, "Oh, I'd love an e-church." I look at them and say, "Are you sure you really want to do that? Are you sure you want to have a completely virtual faith?" Is that really real? Or is that just a bunch of people who don't have the guts to go and live with each other, because living with each other is messy and dirty? That's what I love about church—people are messy and dirty, living together in community and faith. I see blogging, not as drawing people away from the church, but as a safety net just under the church (little 'c.') Our hope and prayer is that people who give up on the church (little 'c'), don't give up on God; that they hit the safety net and talk with us for a while. We help them heal, we plug them in with people who are asking the same questions, and together they journey back towards God; and maybe they find a different church they can plug into where they feel they're being fed, or that accepts them despite their brokenness.

That's how I see blogging for the "church" or blogging for Christians: it is a safety net to catch the people who fall out. Because they do fall out. The stats show that, and I've met many people who have dropped out of the church, have been wounded deeply by people in the church or even by pastors in the church. They've fallen out, but they haven't given up on God. They still know God is it, but they're looking for someone who can help them deal with the emotions they're feeling and what has happened to them. I don't see it as taking people out of the church, I see it as restoring them to the church. It takes a little while to get people back in and sometimes they need to go to a different church because the pain is just too deep from where they were.

Steve Knight: I think we have to wrap up here, but I just want to say come talk to us, we'd love to keep the conversation, the dialog going. Go to NickCiske.com/blog and we'll get the links and the notes and stuff. Thanks for coming.

Steve Knight is Senior Editor in the internet department of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA). He's been with BGEA for five years, and moved to Charlotte, N.C., when the organization relocated there from Minneapolis in 2003. He's also been blogging since 2003, and in addition to his personal blog (www.knighttopia.com/journal/), Steve maintains a "bridge strategy" reality TV blog (www.realityblogs.com), which is one of the few evangelistic blogs in existence. Steve is active in the arts and Web ministries of his church (www.warehouse242.org) and currently serves on the boards of two evangelistic ministries—Eric Elder Ministries (www.theranch.org) and Steiger International (www.steiger.org).

Videoblog Killed the TV Star: The Emergence of the Vlog and What It Might Mean for You and Me

by Aaron Flores

With video blogging, you just have to get a little comfortable with yourself, because you don't always come out the way you want to look. When I first started I thought, "I'm really going to try to do my hair and make sure I have clothes on and I'm not in my pajamas." Then by the time the lighting was bad, or I looked horrible, or I had a pimple on my face (I have a video where I'm talking about it),I thought, "Forget it." We were moving, and I didn't get a haircut for like a month and a half. My hair was—I called it a Mexican fro—"Mexifro." I did a video of it because my wife took the video; she put it right on me and said, "I dare you to put that online. I totally dare you."

One of the things people ask is, "What is a vlog?" A vlog is video in a blog, or "web log." It can be in exchange for the text—instead of putting in text you can just put in a video. A lot of people do that. They put in an intro line—this is what it's about—and then they post the video. Or they do a bunch of text, they'll tell you what happened, or what led up to the video. Then they'll do another line of text, and tell you more about the story, and post another video. So there's a bunch of different ways you can do it. It doesn't necessarily have to replace text. It could be a supplement to text—and should be, I think. You don't want to click on a video and not know what it's about. We always try to put something up there. There are a lot of different types of styles to blogging. The genres are not very distinguished. Some of my pieces are artsy. Some of them are a personal journal. Some of them are conversational pieces. It just depends on what I posted. The other day I posted me walking to the mailbox, which is something you'd think would be lame and stupid, and I'd probably agree with that. Who wants to watch you walk to your mailbox? You might be surprised.

There are a lot of people who give you credibility because you're willing to share with them a video of you walking to your mailbox. They take you seriously. One of the big things in my initial hesitations was: I speak, I'm a pastor, and I take people seriously. This allows you not to take

it seriously, because you're dancing in your living room. You've got a Mexifro, you've got a zit on your face, and you're talking all about it. You'd think that people would totally discount everything you had to say. To my surprise, that only added credibility and reliability to everything I had to say, and soon people weren't just interested in me walking to the mailbox, they wanted to know what I thought about religion, what I thought about religion, about faith, about life, about the Terry Schiavo case, about Michael Jackson. I got e-mails to do posts on all sorts of things. I never thought that me walking out to the mailbox or me with a Mexifro would ever—ever!—open those types of opportunities.

Citizen journalism. That's a good thing. This whole distrust of old media or traditional media flows into the blogosphere. We want to hear news from each other. We want to hear information from each other. We want first-hand, eyewitness accounts from each other. So we depend on each other to bring each other news. A friend of mine named Ryanne Hodson did a piece on something that she was really bothered by—censorship of a PBS children's cartoon called Buster. She was pretty outraged about it. She's a film director, and she was working in a station where the director and creator of Buster the Bunny were. So she got out her camera and she had them talk. This was widespread and it was pretty powerful, the conversation on what she thinks censorship is—it was pretty dynamic.

Well, guess what? The opportunities are ripe. YOU are the media.

Video remixes. I just pulled everyone's things and I mixed them all together and I made this whole video. Video remixes; editorial and conversational pieces; shows and programming: diversity is key. No blogger is committed to a category as a blogger. RyanneHodson.com says we are the media. We are the mass media. This is so different from the old media. To them, they are "the media" and we're the peons that have to listen. This is: WE are the media. She says, and I agree with her: "Everyone who is complaining, 'the media is this' and "the media is that' and 'the media is all this stuff' and 'we hate the media'—there's a lot of that, especially in the church—Well, guess what? The opportunities are ripe. YOU are the media. So you can change that. It's no longer them looking down upon us. It will be them coming to us for information. Because we are the media."

The power of the media is with us, technologically, to do that. That's what's really exciting. If you want to complain about it and gripe about it then do that, but if you want to make a difference then you need to make a difference.

I add a few things. Videoblogging 2005 theVoiz.com, says the name of the vlog and the version. I put a tag on the end of my videos, because when I distribute them out into the world blogosphere, I like people to know, "That's theVoiz video." They can come back and find my videos. That's how I mass-distribute and get everyone to know where to come and get the video they just saw.

I put this music in earlier the same way I put in the video. I always compress them in the highest quality firs, in this case because I recompress. I compress and then recompress into QuickTime, because on the PC it's easier and QuickTime by far outdoes Windows Media—especially if you're trying out conversations with people who use QuickTime, or if you're going to slice and dice your video.

Windows Media can only be edited in Windows Movie Maker. That's it. And Windows Movie Maker is a real basic program. So I always convert it to something else. Windows Media actually gives you tons of different options. You have "Video for Pocket PC," which is great. Some of my first videos were done in "Video for Pocket PC," because I want people to download them and put them on their pocket PCs and watch them wherever they are. I don't normally have time to do that; what I'll do is broadband/dial-up users. This is the thing with video. Dial-up users cannot access it. You can recompress it and get it really small, but you're going to be so pixilated that it's not going to be worth it. So in doing video blogging and putting media online, you're somewhat limited as to whom you can reach: there are only broadband users. As broadband becomes more widespread and people start to get broadband, dial-up tends to fade away. Hopefully very soon it won't be a problem. But that is something we get a lot of questions about—what about dial up users? We have to say,"So sad, too bad. Go to the library because it's just doesn't work."

Vlogs are typically different from television on broadcast by length, content, consumption, and corporate sponsorship.

Podcasts are marketed to MP3 hand-held users, not just people with iPods. Videoblogs are marketed to people who have computers, or pocket PCs who use video aggregators that actually download video and place it on your TV for you to watch. I downloaded a bunch of videos before I came in. I plugged it into my PC to see how many people had hooked up, and it was so weird. I watched as all these people that I see online are now on my television. I just sat there watching like they were my favorite program, three minutes at a time, these different videos. It was really, really a cool thing.

Videoblogging—vlogs are typically different from television on broadcast by length, content, consumption, and corporate sponsorship. Videoblogging is not television. It's a different medium totally. It's not television. If you go into the blogosphere and say that it is television, they are going to "nail you to the cross," because it's not television, at all. It's watched on your computer. And it's not a replacement for television. It is kind of scary, I don't know why.

Podcasts are distributed daily, monthly, weekly; and you're able to do the same thing with videoblogs. Some videobloggers will do it every day. I'm a daily blogger. Which is really time-consuming. But I love it so I do it everyday. Some people do it once a week or once a month—there's no time frame. Obviously, the more you do, the bigger your audience is going to become. Give them one video, and they are going to say, "Okay, where's the next one, and where's the next one?" Do whatever time permits.

Podcasts are generally less intimate, allowing the podcaster to remain anonymous. In podcasting you can still be anonymous. You can be screaming, you can be whatever you want to be. No one will even know. In videoblogging it's really hard to do that. There are videobloggers who are anonymous. They do a lot of zoom-ups of their face so you can't make out who they are. I don't understand the purpose of that, but that's fine. Or sometimes they wear costumes. There's a guy called the "Videoblogging Jihad," and he wears this thing across his face—he's "the Jihad."

Those are some of the major big differences between the two. This is something that you can't do in podcasts: you can't show a building in your neighborhood on fire. You can't show a telephone casual conversation with the gentleman sitting at a bar near a webcam. They call some random bar in Kentucky or something and they showed this conversation with this guy. You can't show yourself licking your girlfriend's eyeball. Which is what my buddy did to his girlfriend. They met through videoblogging. He actually sticks his tongue in her eyeball.

The software is already on your computer. You have that. You get a free blogger account. That's free. Server space—everyone always asks me, "What do you do about server space?" There's actually free server space with unlimited bandwidth and unlimited megs of output, called the Internet Archive. It's Archive.org. You can upload videos to the archive forever. The whole idea of the archive is to get media from all over the place, all over online, and put in a library of sorts and store it. So internet Archive actually has a thing called the "wayback machine," that takes pictures of the entire internet and stores it on there. Forever. You type in the site that you want, going back, whatever, five years ago, and it's there on the "wayback machine" at Internet Archive.

The other big thing is called Ourmedia.org. They're associated with the Internet Archive. They just went live. They're in Alpha still. (You know there's Alpha, Beta launch. They're still in Alpha so there are a lot of bugs.) They actually use the Internet Archive.

There's actually free server space with unlimited bandwidth and unlimited megs of output, called the Internet Archive.

Now the catch to the Internet Archive is that you have to wait 24 hours before your video is given a link there. That's just how it is for some odd reason. And Internet Archive is kind of hard. It's not difficult, but it's going to take a little time for you to figure out how to upload your video. Once you figure it out it's really easy. Ourmedia actually helps you to upload it to Internet Archive. It's a lot more user-friendly, and you only have to wait an hour.

How are they funded then? They're funded through corporations. I don't know which ones off the top of my head. The corporations are actually financially investing in storing information from the internet forever—possibly for consumer reasons, possibly for marketing reasons. There's a wealth of information that you could probably get from the internet if you store software forever.

Image hosting. One of the things we do is put pictures up to our posts. You actually have to upload the pictures somewhere. Flickr, if you are familiar with flickr.com, you can upload pictures you just took, so you can be a free video blogger.

Typepad is one of the blogging software programs that's out there. My account's like 88-something. I have the middle account. I have my own server space, too. I know programming languages pretty well. It was just cheap and fast, and I didn't have to worry about it. so that's what I did. I have another videoblog, too, called "It's a hit." That's my four-year-old's and my six-months-old's videoblog. I give them the video camera and whatever they do with the video camera, I put it online. People love that stuff.

Enclosures attach the media file when it goes out through RSS. So if you're using RSS and you're subscribing to a feed from any source, whether it be a blog feed, a vlog feed, a podcast feed—enclosures attach the media that's in that post from that feed and download it to your computer. Enclosures—all it means is enclosing media. Enclosures are important because Yahoo and Google are coming out with video searches. I know people have ended up on my site from Yahoo video searches. They'll type in something—whatever they want—and there you'll see all these videos all over the internet that meet the criteria of the search. They get it from enclosures; enclosures make that possible.

One of the things that I value in terms of evangelism is being a human presence. It's that simple.

I'm pinging a site called "videoblogginginfo" because this is where all of us videobloggers live. "Videoblogginginfo" is a list of the videobloggers. These are pretty much active videobloggers. It has grown so much. Once you ping the site what happens is it sends a message to this site.

Mass distribution. If you can post a video online and it doesn't go anywhere it's just on your website—even if you do a Gospel—it hurts us, right? So we use this program called ANT. It's really cool; you can download it for free. It's only available to our Mac users; it's going to be available for PC beta testing and you can subscribe and download the content from the website.

The videoblogging community is really a powerful community to belong to, as well. There's a little videobloggers' pledge. I think content and Gospel in all of this, especially at an Internet Evangelism Conference. It's an opportunity to figure out how this all plays into evangelism. I am the sole Christian videoblogger. I'm still playing with the medium myself and trying to figure it out. The videoblog—my videoblog–is really personal and very true to all of who I am and how I believe and what I value as a person. One of the things that I value in terms of evangelism is being a human presence. It's that simple.

One of my goals—this isn't number one and I said it before it was on the board—one of my goals was, if I could change the way that the majority of the world, or in particular the United States, sees Christians, then I would have achieved my goal, at theVoiz.com. If I could change the way the world perceives us as a church, as God's people, I would achieve my goal. This is so true because we actually had a regular religious conversation in the blogosphere. We've had several. We were just talking about religion. And I stepped up, I got behind the camera and I told them how I felt. Mainly I told them that a lot of those criticisms against Christianity, about how they hated Christians, how they felt that Christians were this and that—I saw a lot of validity to what they were saying, because sometimes that's how I feel about my own brothers and sisters in Christ. So I felt a need to apologize, and say, "You know, my post is called 'why people hate Christianity,' and it's just me apologizing, and saying I'm sorry. I'm sorry that we've done this, and I'm sorry that we've done that." It's an apologetic post. That's what it is. I got feedback on it like you wouldn't believe from the blogging community. One guy said, "Thank you, Finally a real Christian. You're the first one I have met." And to me that was so impactful.

My wife and I went out to New York in February. Two of the main videobloggers, Ryanne and Jay I talked about, live out there. They said, "Hey, you're coming out to here? Let's get together." And I said, "Wow, that's cool."

I know them from their videos, they know me from my videos—we know each other. We e-mail. I have really lengthy conversations with Ryanne about faith and theology, about God—really lengthy e-mails. She trusts me. So we went out to New York and we talked about all sorts of off-subjects. They had to do with the Gospel and with faith, but they were not typical discussions at all. Ryanne said to me, "You know what, since I've met you and since "theVoiz" has been there, you've changed the way that I see Christians. You've changed the way that I see God. You've changed the way that I see Jesus."

"I don't think there are enough Christians showing us what it is to be a Christian. They are too busy telling us."

She actually said in her post that she hates Jesus. She told me, "You know what, I don't really hate Jesus. I don't really hate the Church. I don't really hate the Christians. But I don't think there are enough Christians showing us what it is to be a Christian. They are too busy telling us."

Now I talked to them before I came here and said: "If I could send a message to these people what would you want me to tell them?" They said just tell them that. Tell them if you're going to show us something, show us your life. Show us that you're a real person. Show us your life. So the presentation of the Gospel through "theVoiz" for me has really been me showing my life. And I know as lame as it sounds, my going to the postbox and opening up the thing gives me credibility online, because I'm willing to step in front of the camera and take them around my house.

I'm comfortable with that. I'm completely okay with that. How someone else might use this, I don't know. I can tell you what, I would be scared to see it used by the Church, I think the Church has done some harm in some areas. And the blogosphere apart from videos is really sensitive. It's a culture of its own and you really have to see it to understand it and know it. The blogosphere is no different. They are brutally honest. And if text has such power—if someone writes a flaming text about you—okay, big deal. If someone flames you in a video, it hurts. And they will. They will call you out. Not only will they call you out, they will slice and dice your video into their own, and call you out as if they were talking to you one-on-one. It's a lot more personal.

There is this whole bridge where they feel like they know you. I was talking to the guy over here and he said, "It's weird that I feel like I know you from you videos." And I said, "I know, video is like that. People can get to know you." There's not a lot that I hide from online. I mean, if I'm having times when I doubt God, and I don't know if he is going to come through, I will share that online. I will say, "I am having this horrible time."

There are going to be things I don't want to disclose and I want to give a good first impression. Videoblogging is not like that. If someone tells you they're a fan of your site and they know you and they've seen all of your videos, all of a sudden you're in this real-life relationship with them and you know that they know all these things about you. Sometimes you skip—they're a videoblogger too—and you know all of these other things about them. So you just skip all the initial

pre-relationship jitters and all of that. I find it really refreshing. It takes so much time to build a relationship. Honestly there's not enough time out there to build more than a handful of relationships.

I don't know when "theVoiz" will see its end. I read somewhere that all blogs, and I assume videoblog, will see their end, because they live their course, they run their course. Maybe I will start a new blog or whatever. I don't know what the future of "theVoiz" will be. Part of the thing is I want to do this as long as I can, because I want my kids to be able to see it. Videoblogging: *Force Magazine* said that it's going to be the trend of 2005.

I know because the blog is moving towards video on demand. You'll actually be able to download video onto your television via TiVo, DVR, and be watching video from the web on your television.

Aaron Flores is co-founder of Armor of Light Productions (www.armoroflight.org), a ministry geared towards embracing culture and emerging generations. He is creator of the blog turn videoblog, theVoiz.com where he shares his personal life, faith, culture, art, and other areas of interest using video, new media, and the internet. For Aaron, theVoiz.com is an experiment with new media, social networking, and cultural engagement. Aaron is completing an MA in Religion from Vanguard University. He is in community at CircleChurch, Orange, where he serves as Pastor of Leadership and Ministry Development and as a teaching pastor.

Help! I'm Not a Techie!

by Rusty Wright

I especially look forward to this session because I am not a techie, and as you'll hear a little bit later I don't know a whole lot about the technology that goes into the internet, but I've seen that God's been able to use me. He's been able to use a lot of other people too, in this regard. How many of you would classify yourselves as non-techies? O.K., I guess just about everybody here, except the guy back there working the sound system and the technology. I'm glad he's not a non-techie. But you know, sometimes looking at the world of the internet, people use all these different fancy terms. At breakfast this morning somebody was talking about DXL or DXML or something. He said it's kind of like HTML, and he was having to translate all this stuff for me, and I was asking what podcasting was, because that's a relatively new term to me. It can add to your stress level a little bit. Did you ever notice that when you're around technologically oriented people? You sort of feel like you're on the outside. Of course, there's a lot of stress in the modern world, just in terms of work responsibilities or family or relationships or terror or finances or whatever. Maybe you find you have some month left over at the end of your money.

I came across an interesting way of coping with stress not too long ago that relates to diet. A lot of times what you eat can influence your stress level, so this was a diet that is designed to help you cope with the stressful day. Maybe this will be useful to you sometime. For breakfast, you start off with half a grapefruit, one slice of whole wheat toast (dry), and eight ounces of skim milk. For lunch, you have four ounces of broiled chicken breast, one cup of steamed spinach, one cup of herb tea, and one Oreo cookie. Midafternoon snack: rest of the Oreos in the package, two pints of Rocky Road ice cream, and one jar of hot fudge sauce. And for dinner, two loaves of garlic bread with cheese, a large sausage mushroom cheese pizza, a large pitcher of sweetened tea, and three Milky Way bars. You can substitute Snickers if you want to. And then for the late evening news, three entire frozen cheesecakes eaten directly from the freezer. There are also some dieting principles here, some ten principles—let's see if any of these relate.

Number one is if no one sees you eat it, it has no calories. Number two, drinking a diet soda cancels the calories in a candy bar. Number three, when you eat with someone else, calories

don't count unless you eat more than they do. So that's good to remember when you're dining out. Food used for medicinal purposes—hot chocolate, jello, Sara Lee cheesecake—never count. Number five, fatten up everyone around you so you look thinner. Number six, movie-related foods—buttered popcorn, Milk Duds, Junior Mints, Tootsie Rolls—have no additional calories because they are part of the entire entertainment package. Number seven, and I really like this one, cookie pieces contain no calories. With cookie pieces, the process of breaking causes calorie leakage. So you can eat all those cookie pieces. Number eight (there are only three more) food licked off of knives and spoons has no calories if you are in the process of preparing something else, like peanut butter on a knife making a sandwich, ice cream on a spoon making a sundae. Number nine, foods having the same color have the same number of calories. Spinach and pistachio ice cream. Mushrooms and white chocolate. And number ten, I like this one—chocolate is a universal color and may be substituted for any other food color. So maybe some of those ideas will help you not only with relieving stress but also with dieting.

Well I hope you'll see during this time, too, I like to have a lot of fun. I'm going to share some stories that will poke a little fun at me and maybe some fun at some other people, too. I hope we'll have a good enjoyable time today, and also good interaction, because I want to leave plenty of time for questions. I think would be appropriate to open this with a word of prayer because I think that the group of non-techies in the world who have an interest in internet evangelism is one of the greatest untapped resources of the internet evangelism movement. I pray that the things I'll share with you here today and with others who will see or may be watching online or will see this later will have a tremendous impact on the internet evangelism movement. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we love You and we thank You for this wonderful new tool that You allowed us to use to help reach people for Christ. Even though we don't understand all the technological details about it, Lord, I believe that if we're available, You can use us to help touch people for You, and so I pray that You'll work through me and work through the folks here in this room and others who will be listening now or later and are watching now, and are watching now or later to really seek Your will on the question of what is it You would like us to do regarding the skills and talents and abilities You've given us in helping reach people for Christ through the internet. We look forward to what You're going to do and pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Think about the question: Could God use you to reach people for Christ via the internet? Now theanswer may surprise some of you. You might wonder, "How could I ever do this? You know, I'm no techie." You might just know how to send e-mail and read news online but that's about it. And frankly, I can identify with that because I mentioned earlier my technical knowledge is very limited. For many years, I was very hesitant to use an ATM, an automatic teller machine at the bank, for fear that I would do something stupid and it would swallow up my card. Gradually I overcame my technophobia and I began to use computers for word processing, but I used rather primitive setups. Only in 1998 did I switch from the rather archaeic DOS operating system to Windows because friends said I should get with the '90s before the '90s were over. Windows was introduced a long time ago

Think about the question: Could God use you to reach people for Christ via the internet?.

but I was still using DOS. But think about your own talents. We all have talents and abilities, and a key to usefulness is making our talents available to God. Your talents may include building friendships, or engaging in conversations, or answering questions, inspring people, or telling stories. And God can certainly use those.

Here's a story that may encourage you. My own interest involved communication, especially relating Christ to secular audiences. Over the years I've written a number of evangelistic articles aimed at unbelievers, at seekers and skeptics. A few years ago, a couple of friends of mine, Keith Seabourn and Allan Beeber, asked me to send in my evangelistic articles, so that they could put them online—whatever that meant. I didn't understand it. But they said it would make the articles free, available free to people all around the globe, and I thought that seemed like a good thing. Now Keith's website is Leadership University, and they aim to collect thousands of articles supporting the validity of the Christian faith. Alan also has the Evangelism Toolbox. It became an online yellow pages or directory of evangelism resources. These friends of mine helped introduce me to internet outreach.

The Great Commission is going digital. Are you ready?

At a convention in Amsterdam in 2000, I saw a brochure that said this: "The Great Commission is going digital. Are you ready?" That piqued my interest. I thought maybe God wanted me to devote my energies to internet evangelism. The brochure talked about a group called the Internet Evangelism Coalition, which was then in its early stages, and I started to hang out with these folks. Sterling Houston is the chairman of it. Allan Beeber's involved in it; lots of other fine folks. I started to learn from them, and I began to write more for the web; and various articles would appear online. A friend of mine encouraged me to do a Google search under my name. I was amazed to see page after page of websites that had my articles; websites I'd never heard of before. I also found a number of other Rusty Wrights, including a platform tennis player, a university professor, a football coach, a singer, a rodeo cowboy, a racecar driver, a cruise ship captain, and a convict. I thought, there but for the grace of God it could be I. I don't know, maybe I should use that some time to try to help reach these other Rusty Wrights—use that connection that we have there.

I saw that the simplicity and pervasive nature of the internet was allowing people to find my articles in ways that I'd never imagined. I could just sit at my laptop, in a hotel room, or on an airplane, or in my office, or wherever, and type out an article that would tactually nudge people toward Christ or biblical principles; and then I just push the "Send" button, and I could send it to internet publishers who would make it available to people all over the globe. Frankly, this seems almost too good to be true. It was a great, great potential for spreading the good news.

In August, 2003, I was out jogging one morning, and I felt impressed to pray and ask that God would, kind of like the prayer of Jabez, enlarge my borders, although I didn't put it in those terms. I felt impressed to pray specifically that within a year I would know of 100 websites that were using my material. It wasn't like handwriting on the sidewalk or an audible voice or anything, just an impression as I was jogging. At the time I was aware of 43 websites that used my material.

About a year later—actually it was the day before that year was up—I found the one hundredth site that used this material. They either post the articles online, or they link to them. The articles had appeared in several languages: English, Spanish, Albanian, Croatian, French, Hungarian, Italian, and Polish. People just kept translating and posting, and it seemed beyond my control or my ability. A surprising number of the sites were not Christian sites. For instance, one site linked to a version of an article I'd written about Elvis Presley, based on a magazine article that I did, "Elvis Has Left the Building." It traces fascination with Elvis Presley and its spiritual implications.

Another website in Argentina, a Spanish language website, had an article that I wrote on near-death experiences; the English translation of the title is "One Minute After Death." Some secular newspapers would run material. Personal websites and blogs, weblogs, would link to my articles. I didn't contact all these websites asking them to use my articles. Basically, content managers simply would find my articles on the web and use them, which I'm happy to let people do. We just have a simple permission sheet that we send to keep things appropriate with my publishers so that the proper credit line and publication information gets on there.

Remember, as Mary told the servants in John 2:5, whatever He—Jesus—tells you to do, do it.

As I mentioned yesterday, I even found one article linked to a porn site. I should clarify: the evangelistic article that I wrote was called "Dynamic Sex: Unlocking the Secret to Love." It presents a biblical perspective on love and sex, it's rated PG, not R, and certainly not X. But it's written to grab and hold the attention of non-Chrstians, and to move them to consider God and His ways. No, I did not find the article by surfing porn sites. I typed the title of the article, in quotes, into Google, and searched on there, and along with a lot of other crazy things that come up when you put "sex" in your search topic, I saw this specific title of my article, "Dynamic Sex: Unlocking the Secret to Love," The little descriptive blurb that it gave, I recognized as prose from my article. It was my prose. So I clicked on it, and fortunately there weren't pictures that came up, but it was just a link on this particular page on this porn site that had a bunch of other gross stuff in it. It had "Dynamic Sex: Unlocking the Secret to Love" and the descriptive blurb said something like, the way to have the most fulfilling love life is to focus on the total person: physical, psychological, and spiritual. I just figured God has a sense of humor, you know. Some people going into porn sites looking for porn might click on something like that, and might see something that they really need. God gets all the glory for this. Many of the seeker and skeptic-friendly articles are at my website, which is probe.org/rusty.

What can you do? This is what I want to focus on here as we get into some ideas and some conversation. Internet evangelism offers you a dazzling array of possibilities to communicate Christ. Writing articles is just one method. You may want to interact with believers and unbelievers in a chat room, or correspond via e-mail, or communicate on a blog/weblog, design your own website (or get somebody else to do it if you're like me), or pray for and support a web outreach financially. You can also encourage your church and your Christian group to participate in Internet Evangelism Day. It's just designed to help Christians learn more about the potential for the web. And the internet evangelism website, internetevangelism.com, explains how to create a short-focus program to include in church services or other activities on or near Internet Evangelism Day. The

important thing is to ask God what He wants you to do. Remember, as Mary told the servants in John 2:5, whatever He—Jesus tells you to do, do it.

Let's consider some of these options in greater detail. Maybe the Lord has some tasks for your hand, or hands, in this list, the possible areas of involvement in internet evangelism for the non-techie. Now, by way of introduction, it's important for us non-techies to understand some basic things about the nature of computers. The pastor of one church was previously a sailor, and he was, of course, very aware that ships are often metaphorically referred to in the feminine gender, as "she" and "her." He often wondered what gender should be used for computers. So, to answer that question, he set up two groups of computer experts. The first group was composed of women, the second group was men. Each group was asked to recommend whether computers should be referred to in the feminine or masculine gender and they were asked to give four reasons for their recommendation. The group of women reported that the computer should be referred to in the masculine gender because—and here are their four reasons: Number one, in order to get their attention, you have to turn them on. Number two, they have a lot of data but they're still clueless. Number three, they're supposed to help you solve problems but half the time they are the problem. And number four, as soon as you commit to one you realize that if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

Well, the men, on the other hand, concluded that the computer should be referred to in the feminine gender, and here are their four reasons. Number one, no one but the creator understands their internal logic. Number two, the native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else. Number three, even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later retrieval. And number four, as soon as you make a commitment to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

Well, I'm sure those results were not entirely unbiased.But as non-techies, what are some of the things that we can do in using the computer for outreach? One very simple one is e-mail. I suspect most people who've had any contact with the internet, even if they're not technologically oriented, have had some contact with e-mail. To give you some examples, I wrote some of my friends in the internet evangelism movement and asked them to send me their examples of non-techies who had used the internet. Joseph Chuks is a Nigerian who studied in Russia and lives in Mexico. I met him in Mexico a couple of years ago. He started off with a limited knowledge of Spanish, but with a strong desire to start an internet ministry. His site is Cristoweb.com. It focuses on helping struggling believers in Mexico. He mentions one lady in Mexico who was searching the internet for material on organizing a traditional Easter procession. She contacted Cristoweb for more information. Cristoweb assigned one of their partners to communicate with her, and by God's grace she opened her heart and received Christ, and later was directed to a local Christian church in her area.

As non-techies, what are some of the things we can do, using the computer for outreach? One very simple one is e -mail.

Marnie Renker works with Campus Crusade's Global Media Outreach and she tells her story. I believe she lives in the San Jose, California area but I'm not sure. She said, "I don't like computers or technology. I thought I would be the last person using the internet to reach people

for Christ. I have accepted a position in public relations with Global Media Outreach, with the understanding that my job was to go out and talk to people. I would never even have to look at a computer. But with the increasing number of e-mails coming into the ministry, I was asked to help by responding to some of these e-mails. The one thing I do know how to do on a computer is e-mail, so I agreed. Being an e-mail response volunteer has now become my favorite part of my job. It's amazing to see the huge impact you can have on someone's life by taking five minutes out of your day to send an encouraging e-mail."

Marnie tells of getting an e-mail from Neil, a lonely middle-aged man who was depressed at Christmas-time, and nearly giving up on his life. Even his grown children had neglected him at Christmas. Imagine the pain you feel if you're in that situation. Marine says, "This heart-wrenching e-mail from Neil gave me the opportunity to reply to him with encouragement and prayer. As we continued to correspond, I saw him begin to regain hope about life. And soon he was asking if there's a church nearby that I could connect him to. People are honest and vulnerable over the internet. Many are hurting and many are confused about God. I cannot encourage you enough to get involved in this wonderful opportunity to share Christ's love in such a simple and effective way."

Ephesians 6:10 International Ministries is an internet ministry that has an active outreach for Christ—just people on the street–and they use their website, e610.com, to supplement face-to-face evangelism. For instance, Lee Bloch is the director, and he tells of a young woman the staff met on the street, and as is their custom, they invited her to visit their website, e610.com. She read some materials there that showed some factual errors in a belief system that she'd been following, and she wrote to thank e610.com for providing answers to questions she'd had since she was a child. The staff continued to meet with her, and interact with her by e-mail to answer her questions. It turns out she had a boyfriend in Africa who'd been praying for her to find Jesus for years. God is using non-techies answering questions and providing information via the internet to help her begin to see the truth.

God is using non-techies answering questions and providing information via the internet.

Another gentleman, from Southern Wesleyan University, Chuck Neelix, sends this story about an e-mail outreach he devised. He said, "Several years ago, I started a daily 'thought for today.' I've gleaned inspirational stories from all over the place, edited them or used them as they were, and then sent them to family and friends all across the country, even some around the world. The feedback from this little effort was very satisfying. I know some of the contacts were with friends who were not all Christians, and this provided a daily opportunity for them to have some spiritual nourishment." The list grew to about 1500 people, and he said managing it became a challenge, but it was worthwhile for the four years he had it. In 2001 he was diagnosed with stomach cancer and was laid up for nearly a year, and unfortunately this ministry effort had to be cancelled. But, what a great opportunity—just by sending out a thought for today.

Now here are some ways you can use e-mail to touch people for Christ; and then I want to get some feedback from you or questions you might have about using e-mail. You can include an outreach web address as part of your e-mail signature. You know, the signature's the part that you have programmed into your e-mail when you click to send, or open up an e-mail composition site.

On mine, it has my name and then my address and phone and my website That's your signature. Include an outreach web address as part of your signature. You can link to your testimony as part of your signature. Truth Media, IMnex.com, and others of the Campus Crusade for Christ candidate sites encourage this approach. They can help you do that, too. You can counsel people who are inquirers to outreach websites. In other words, somebody clicks on a link on an evangelistic website and says I want to know more. Many website ministries are looking for volunteers who will interact and correspond with those inquirers.

You can send links to evangelistic or pre-evangelistic articles in your e-mails—a link to an article that somebody could read. I send out an update to my prayer partners, the people that pray for me, and I often will include links to some of my articles with little descriptive blurbs, just as an answer to their prayers about another article going online. I have one friend who will grab those that he feels are appropriate for members of his family or friends that don't know the Lord, and he'll just copy and paste that link in there and send it off to his relative or friend.

Send holiday e-mail messages to your friends. Christmas and Easter, of course, are great times to do that. You can include links to ATS, the American Tract Society. These are short online evangelistic articles. You can send ATS e-tracts via e-mail. Basically you just visit their website, locate the tract you want, fill out a simple form, add your personal message, and they will send the tract—the content itself of the e-tract, plus your personal message, to the person you designate. Those are just a few ways that you can use e-mail for internet outreach.

Let me pause here, as I want this to be interactive. If you have questions or comments about using e-mail for internet evangelism. Or maybe you'd like to share some ways that you've been able to do that, or some ways that you know of, that you've heard of.

Audience Member: We have a prayer page on a website that we just started this year, and on each prayer request there's a link. You just click on it and respond to the request. Just last week, a lady was going to the hospital, and asking for prayer about that. I sent back just four sentences, a little prayer. She wrote back a few days later and said every time she gets worried about the surgery she reads that and is encouraged.

Rusty: That's terrific.

Audience Member: A simple little few minutes it takes to do that.

Rusty: Well how great. Is that on a church website?

Audience Member: Yes.

Rusty: And is this a member of the church?

Audience Member: Yes.

Rusty: O.K. And it's not blind, you know each other's names?

Audience Member: Actually, anbody can go to that prayer page and put a prayer request, it just happens that this person goes to the church.

Rusty: Oh, O.K. So in other words, could a person put their request up without identifying themselves?

Audience Member: Yes.

Rusty: So it does have that protection if they want anonymity?

Audience Member: That's right.

Rusty: How wonderful. So in other words, they're opting in to put the prayer request on the site, because they want prayer, and if they want to do it anonymously they can; but they get the privilege of receiving the notice people are praying for them. Well, that's a great idea.

Audience Member: Yes, if they click "anonymous," then their e-mail's not available.

Rusty: Right. But if it's anonymous . . .

Audience Member: I couldn't respond to it.

Rusty: But, could they put their e-mail address without putting their name? In other words, if they have a coded e-mail address . . .

Audience Member: Yes, they could put that in their text.

Rusty: O.K. Great.

Rusty Wright is an award-winning author, journalist, lecturer, and Internet evangelist with Probe.org who has spoken to secular audiences on six continents. He also trains media professionals and other Christian leaders in communication with secular audiences. Over 100 websites —both Christian and secular—have used his outreach articles. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respectively. www.probe.org/Rusty

APPENDIX

How is evangelism changing in the 21st Century?

This seminar will discuss some of the innovative ways believers are doing evangelism around the world today.

21st Century Evangelism

- From the use of mini-CDs, Jesus DVDs, Palm phones, streaming media, reaching illiterates through cell phone technology, or digital playback media less than ¼" thick, etc. the evangelism world is offering a host of new options

However:

- There is a great need to blend in promotional communication marketing to both internal and external audiences; tracking results via stats with respective URLs; business plans, etc. After reviewing some history to give context, we will learn about different tools and strategies to use, how results can be measured, and what the future might hold.

Let's agree on one basic point …

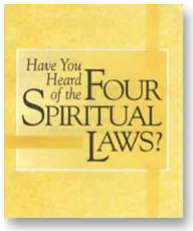
- We must always seek to accurately communicate the timeless truth of Christ's Gospel message … yet let's get hung up on the delivery method … whether its paper, audio cassettes, film, CD, DVD, via the Internet, cell phones, whatever … the issue is to get the Message out in a from that seekers are currently accessing.

Almost 35 years ago

- Dr. Bill Bright, at the urging of a businessman, decided to write down the basic presentation of the Gospel he had been sharing with everyone. We now know it as *The Four Spiritual Laws* →

The First of a String of Innovative Tools

- Most recent version



However,

- Printed tracts are becoming passé as the culture embraces the new digital world

In the late 70s, a Hollywood director walked into Bill Bright's office

- This director wanted to produce a film on the Old and New testament that was accurate to the Scriptures.
- Bill, realizing the possibilities to tell the story of Jesus around the world via film, immediately challenged a staff man named Paul Eshleman, who at the time was the U.S. Director of CCCI.
- Though initially skeptical, he quickly saw the potential of translating the film into many languages and dialects. Now at 810 languages translations, the film continues to make history, being the most watched movie ever in the world.

Sharing the Gospel via an Illusionist? You've Got to Be Kidding!

- That's what most staff of CCCI thought when Andre Kole gave his introductory performance at Arrowhead Springs.
- The vote of the staff was unanimous –NO!
- However, Bill's vote was "Yes!" Andre joined staff and literally millions of people in 60+ countries have heard the gospel through this intriguing presentation of illusion.

Music and Evangelism

- Most of you are way too young to remember the "New Folk. "
- They were the first touring singing group that presented the gospel on college campuses.
- Today's Christian music owes much to their pioneering work.
- And yes, most Christians initially gave it a thumbs down … except for Bill ☺

Of course, gradual improvements came along

- including records, 8-tracks, cassettes, RAM memory, etc.
- However, in the late 80 technology accelerated, and CDs came into vogue replaced by DVDs and eventually the Internet.

But the Lord gave us a new strategy

- 1988 – the Campus Ministry had plateaued
- The current V.P. Steve Douglass asked me to develop a system to start and maintain campus ministries long distance using the mail, fax and phones.

My problem was the paradigm I had been taught:

- I thought ministry could really only be done face-to-face
- Then the Holy Spirit nudged me and pointed out that the Bible I was reading was the result of long distance communication – written papyrus and quills with letters sent over 1000's of miles ... and copied and sent eventually to us via our Bibles.

Explosive growth

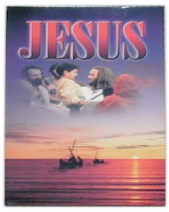
- The first six months- two part time staff with me in an office; and they had no campus experience! Yet God blessed and 25 campuses were started!
- Next year with two additional green staff we went to 50. The dam burst!
- Steve Douglass estimates that over 2,500 works have been started around the world as a result of the LINC (Leaders In New Campus/Community] ministry

To learn more ...

- About receiving free coaching to begin a ministry go to:
- www.linccoaching.org

Innovations: Jesus Film DVD

- Children's Version



A Ministry Devoted to Spreading the Gospel via Digital Means

- www.worldlinc.org

And along came the Internet

- I produced CCCI's first web site .. .standard brochure ware.
- One day, while viewing it the Holy Spirit gently nudged me and pointed out that we ere missing something ... an evangelistic opportunity for people to know Jesus. I said "Ooops, sorry Lord," and He indicated, "No problem, just put the *Four Laws* up."

To our amazement ...

- our webmaster began receiving 1-3 e-mails/day of people who had read the *Four Laws* on their screen prayed the prayer, and were asking, "What do I do next?"
- So we began a manual system of response along with adding more language versions
- at www.greatcom.org/laws you will find 150+ language versions .. check it out! And we see 4-8 people indicate decisions every day!

Next step ... a better site

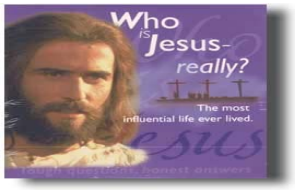
- Combined efforts with a world class designer with CCCI Canada produced the "Who is Jesus ... Really?" site at www.whoisjesus-really.org
- Within a few years, without little money spent on Internet promotion, to our surprise it became the #1 site in Yahoo and Google with 5-10 people making decisions for Christ every day.

Screen Shot of *Who is Jesus ... Really?* multilingual site

-

Simple Evangelism Idea

- Business Cards:

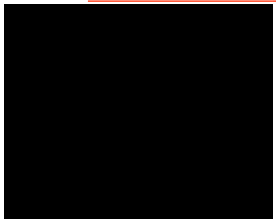


Next step: The "Who is He?" mini CD

- A mini CD the size of a business card containing 27 languages, links to online Bibles, an apologetics section, a flash version of the Four Spiritual Laws, the www.growinginChrist.com follow-up site, and links to online responders in many of those languages.
- Handouts + order at www.linc-store.org

Today's evangelism

- Version 1.5 www.linc-store.org



American Tract Society

at http://www.digitracts.com/

A new Twist: Google AdWords

- We have discovered that we can do more effective ROI evangelism on the Internet by using targeted advertising
- We purchase space on the right hand side of the Google page, develop a catchy title or question and link to the URL of our evangelistic site and purchase X amount of "clicks per dollar"

An example:

- For Easter evangelism:

What do we do about the rapidly growing number of people who are praying to receive Christ or have questions about the Christian faith?

- Answer: we need an "industrial strength" online response system.
- The two seminars I will deliver tomorrow will describe the ARC/ASSIST system … and how churches and Liberty students can get involved as online evangelists.
- www.responsecenters.org

Making real connections in the virtual world

TruthMedia

The reality of online evangelism and discipleship

TruthMedia

Everyone's deep need is to know God personally, but many times it is a person's felt needs that are the starting points to share the real and lasting solution in Jesus

TruthMedia

People seeking help

Closed Country: How can I get a true and real bible? i am living in an islamic country—Libya *(TheLife)*

Divorce: *My wife who I have been married to for 15 yrs. (we have 3 kids, 8, 4, and 2) wants a divorce. She wants out. Please advise.—US (WomenTodayMagazine)*

Seeking Spiritually: *How does one begin to believe? Faith seems like something people create so they don't feel alone or so they feel looked out for. My brain isn't wired that way and I'm not sure I'd want it to be.—Los Angeles—(WomenTodayMagazine)*

TruthMedia

Guide your readers to become interactive

TruthMedia

- Communities of evangelism and discipleship are built on a foundation of strong content.
- Every article is assessed from the perspective of:
  - Is this article meeting a felt need?
  - How can the reader of this article be connected with either chat or mentoring?
  - Where will the gospel be shared?

TruthMedia

Trivia on summer picnics

When a liquor company requested permission to link to an article on summer picnics on one of TruthMedia's women's sites, we said, "yes!"

http://www.womentodaymagazine.com/foodcooking/summerpicnic.html

•***Summer Picnic Food Ideas*** holds #4 spot in Google.

•The hot spot, *Look radiant this summer!* Is featured in a prominent place and links to *Learning to Love My Body* which is a lifestory that links to the Gospel. This lifestory has maintained a significant number of visitors.

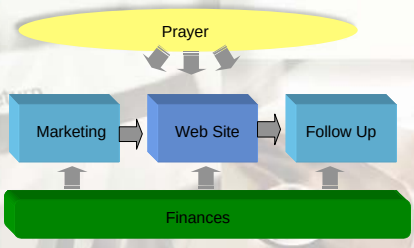
TruthMedia

Content draws visitors deeper into the ministry of each site by:

- **Meeting the immediate felt needs of the visitor.**
- **Providing an opportunity to interact and ask questions.**
- **Presenting the gospel or Holy Spirit message**
- **Creating opportunities for follow-up.**
- **Equipping readers with opportunity for a relationship with Christ.**

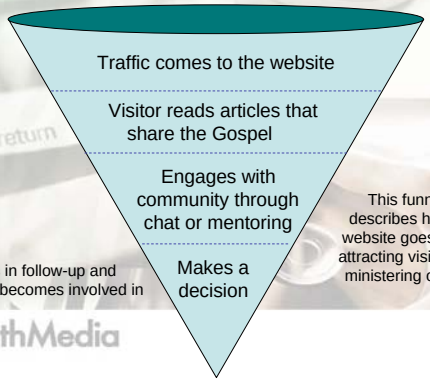
TruthMedia

Necessary Elements for Web Ministry



TruthMedia

The Web*Ministry* Process



This funnel describes how a website goes from attracting visitors to ministering online

Engages in follow-up and possibly becomes involved in ministry.

TruthMedia

Variety enhances interactivity

TruthMedia

Mariam & Abby

Mariam:

In a recent chat session, Mariam asked how to know Jesus personally. Someone shared with her how she could and then Mariam prayed the prayer to ask Jesus Christ into her heart . She was very clear on what she was doing which was encouraging.

Abby:

Abby wasn't really sure that she had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. She had never invited Christ into her life. When asked if she wanted to pray, she answered yes and then prayed!

TruthMedia

1. **Mentoring:** Come alongside and spiritually encourage those who write to your site.* Train volunteers to share the hope of the Gospel in their responses.
2. **Prayer Mentoring.** Praying in an email is a very effective way of presenting needs to the Lord while encouraging the person who has given the prayer request
3. **Discussion** (message) **boards:** Moderated boards give people the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas and hear about the Gospel.

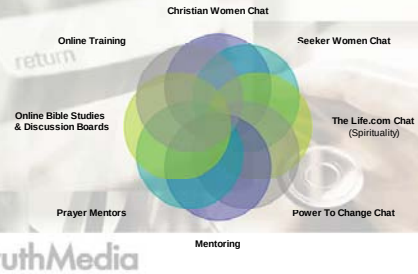
TruthMedia

** Partnering opportunities available with TruthMedia Internet Group*

4. **Follow-up strategy*:** TruthMedia has developed a strategy that enables online follow-up for offline events.
5. **Online Courses:** Topical and Bible study courses are designed to address personal and spiritual needs that one can work through at their own pace together with a personal study coach. The lessons provide opportunity to share prayer requests and personal needs.
6. **Chatrooms:** Chat rooms exist on the sites to provide an arena where Bible-based evangelism and discipleship can occur in a safe, welcoming community.

TruthMedia

Create lots of opportunities for interactivity



TruthMedia

Interactive Trivia

Norma:

- She couldn't type
- She didn't have a computer
- She caught the vision
- She learned to type
- She got a computer
- She's a leader in chat – helping reach the world for Christ

TruthMedia

Team building in a virtual environment

TruthMedia

Develop a team

- Clearly define each position with a job description and expectations.
- If you are recruiting volunteers, handle them in the same way as you would any paid staff by having them complete an application process complete with references.

TruthMedia

Equip your team

- Provide a reporting structure
- Supply ongoing training
- Take time to listen
- Provide opportunity for feedback
- Ask team members for their input
- Establish expectations

TruthMedia

Encourage your team

- Provide regular affirmation and encourage your team leaders to encourage their team members as well.
- Respect their opinions
- Share stories of what God is doing through the ministry.

TruthMedia

Provide community

- Incorporate regular times for the team to connect
- Provide opportunities to pray together
- Make a commitment to acknowledge special days
- Send thank you gifts and/or cards when appropriate
- Have fun!

TruthMedia

Communicate Communicate Communicate!!

- Regular communication systems need to be in place
- Minister to your team through volunteer newsletters.
- Don't let anyone on your team ever wonder if they have been forgotten.
- Regardless of the level of involvement, you want every team member and volunteer to understand that they make a difference
- Communicate office protocol for the virtual team.

TruthMedia

Real lives are being changed online every day

TruthMedia

Laurie

When Laurie saw a banner posted on a building advertising Powertochange.com, she never imagined that would transform her life.

Her online experience resulted in not only her coming to know Christ, but also her husband and children. She currently is serving as a part time staff member with TruthMedia.

TruthMedia

Ellie: a chat story

She discovered a reason to live:

"God has used this chat room in amazing ways. I have been given the privilege of ***watching people come to the Lord, watch them grow, be part of God's work.*** *My faith has grown so much.*

The chat room took away my overwhelming sense of loneliness. ***I don't think about taking my life anymore which brought me here in the first place****. I left the path which God intended for me, but He never left." Ellie*

TruthMedia

Christina

Christina was at a crisis in her life when she went to see *The Passion of the Christ* film. She went to buy a Bible, and then viewed an outreach website based on *The Passion* called www.thelife.com

TruthMedia

TruthMedia Internet Group

Vision: Give everyone on the Internet the chance to hear about Jesus

A network of 22 evangelistic and discipleship websites in 12 languages reaching various target audiences

Websites have over 800,000 visitors per month

Chat rooms have over 7,000 participants per month

Offers a vibrant mentoring community with over 400 volunteers

Thousands of relevant articles

Discover online ministry where lives are being changed for Christ

Go to www.TruthMedia.com

TruthMedia

AllAboutGOD.com

Greg Outlaw

Getting Inside the Seeker's Head

Internet Stats

1 Billion Surfers

12 Major Languages

The Mission Field of the 21st century is the Internet

- 85% of surfers use search engines
- Be at the top of the results with the Truth.
- GOD handles the rest.

http://www.google.com

All things flow from your relationship with GOD.

Prayer is the key...

- **"Align my heart with yours, Lord"**
- **"Break my heart for the lost, Lord"**
- **"Help me to be Jesus to them, Lord"**
- **"Make me a man of Issachar, Lord"**

Men of Issachar

- "of the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command;" (1 Chronicles 12:32)

Understanding of the times

- In the world, not of the world (John 17:11-16)
- Jesus met them where they were. He was called a drunkard and glutton (Matthew 11:19)

Knew what to do...

- Become all things to all people (1 Corinthians 9:22)
- I have much to tell you but you can't bear it all right now (John 16:12)

Paul was Strategic

- **Acts 17:16-33**
  - Paul spoke to the Jews
    - Believed GOD was creator
    - Believed HIS Word
    - Knew GOD based on HIS Word
  - Paul spoke to the Greeks

Intellectual Flow

- **Does God Exist?**
- **Is the Bible True?**
- **Who is God?**
- **Is Jesus God?**
- **Why Christianity?**
- **The Gospel**

I'm a "Christian" Flow

- **Worship**
- **Fellowship**
- **Discipleship**
- **Ministry**
- **Evangelism**

Emotional Flow

- **God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.**
- **Identify with the hurting person**
- **Testimony of victory**
- **The answer is Jesus.**

Popular Issues

- **Big Hitters on the Web**
  - **Marilyn Manson**
  - **1.4 Million Searches per month!**

Getting Tactical

- Keyword tools
  - www.GregOutlaw.com
  - inventory.Overture.com
  - www.WordTracker.com

Look for Action Words – Low Hanging Fruit Where GOD is Working

- **Coping with…**
- **Dealing with…**
- **Help with…**
- **Symptoms of…**
- **Searches Phrased as Questions**

No Technical Skills?

- Partner with others!
- We are all different parts of the body.
- GOD wants unity in the body… in fact the Great Commission will not be fulfilled until we have it!

Unity

- that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. [22] I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: [23] I in them and you in me. **May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me** and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:21-23)

I'm praying for Partners

- **Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. [38] Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38)**

Write Content

- **Compelling First Paragraph**
- **Short Over All**
- **Bullet Points**
- **Hook at the End**

Answer Emails or IM people

- **Personal Touch with Testimony**
  - **Most People Surprised**
- **Deliver Truth**
  - **Power of Salvation**
- **Winsome**

United States	Belgium	Kenya	Lithuania
Canada	Romania	Kuwait	Bulgaria
United Kingdom	Israel	Croatia	Slovenia
Australia	Jamaica	Malta	Venezuela
Singapore	Estonia	Barbados	Jordan
Philippines	Spain	Iran, Islamic Republic Of	Bahrain
India	Norway	Argentina	Qatar
Germany	Denmark	Chile	Panama
South Africa	Taiwan, Province Of China	Bahamas	Tanzania, United Republic Of
Zimbabwe	Finland	Czech Republic	Yugoslavia
New Zealand	Uruguay	Zaire	Iceland
Hong Kong	Turkey	Netherlands Antilles	Peru
France	Switzerland	Cambodia	Fiji
Netherlands	Nigeria	Costa Rica	Honduras
China	Slovakia	Guam	Guyana
Malaysia	Thailand	Colombia	Bermuda
United Arab Emirates	Puerto Rico	Ghana	Oman
Saudi Arabia	Portugal	Sri Lanka	Ethiopia
Japan	Pakistan	Cyprus	Uganda
Korea, Republic Of	Egypt	Zambia	Palestinian Territory, Occupied
Ireland	Austria	Dominican Republic	Ukraine
Sweden	Trinidad And Tobago	Lebanon	Bangladesh
Mexico	Greece	Hungary	Morocco
Indonesia	Russian Federation	El Salvador	Ecuador
Italy	Poland	Guatemala	Brazil

People…

"Hello! I stumbled upon your website this morning looking for information about Messianic Jews after a class discussion. I was amazed at how much easy to follow information is on your pages! Thanks for restoring my faith in my Lord and Savior – Christ Jesus."

--Margaret

People…

"I am a paranoid schizophrenic and have just come out of a prison for the mentally ill. I was depressed and was looking at suicide help sites when i stumbled upon one about physical death and spiritual afterlife. I read about how God loves me no matter how i had sinned in the past and felt elated and renewed. I realized I was about to make a huge mistake. I searched the web for information on becoming a Christian and found your site. I made the decision to turn to Jesus, renewed my faith, found my childhood Bible and have started my new life. Thank you." -- Grant.

People…

Let me tell you how I happened to stumble upon the website. I am currently attending college night courses, and my English teacher asked the class to start keeping a journal, and to write about various topics that she picks. Well, the first topic she happened to pick was "Why Am I Here?". I tried several attempts on giving an honest explanation of why I believe I am here but the problem I had was that I really wasn't sure. So, out of comic frustration I went online, opened up yahoo or Google. COM and typed "Why Am I Here?" in the search engine, and I happened to come across www.why-am-i-here.com. After reading through a few pages of the site, I felt like I struck oil. No kidding, it really helped me think about things in a new way, under a different light.

Anyway, I just want to say that I think this site, and all of the links are incredible sources of information. I especially like how it's all delivered. There is no force feeding opinions here. Just straight up facts of info, to take or leave. Very good stuff." -- Joe

Summary

- The Internet is a primary Mission Field of the 21st Century
- It All Flows from Your Relationship and Prayer
- Meet Them Where They Are
- The Tools: GregOutlaw.com
- Partnering

SEO By the Numbers – FREE
GregOutlaw.com/ SEOBTNv5.doc

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Greg@AllAboutGOD.com

AllAboutGOD.com
Greg Outlaw
Greg@AllAboutGOD.com

Leadership...

"ALL ABOUT GOD is an amazing apologetics and evangelism ministry that was birthed in the heart of Saddleback Church, by our members, most of whom came to know Christ at Saddleback. It grew from a small lay ministry to a worldwide work of God because God has placed his hand of blessing on this exciting outreach. I not only recommend this ministry to you - without reservation - but I also personally use ALL ABOUT GOD to assist me in research for my own messages. I love these guys and I'm proud of the way God is using them."

-- Dr. Rick Warren, Pastor, Saddleback Church; Author, *The Purpose Driven Life*

Leadership...

"I enthusiastically endorse the work and ministry of AllAboutGOD.com. Believe me, these guys are sold out to the Lord -- they are, each one, All About GOD. It is Kingdom builders like these that we need. They are using their spiritual gifts, talents and resources to serve us. It is a must that we embrace them and move forward with the Great Commission together."

-- Tom Youngblood, Vice President, International Bible Society

Leadership...

"Where do over 250,000 seekers a month come to find out about God? Not always to the bricks and mortar church in your neighborhood. Lately, they've been coming to AllAboutGOD.com -- except not in dribs and drabs, but by the tens of thousands! Imagine a new 'bricks and mortar' ministry having over 8,500 people show up every day to discuss the claims of Jesus Christ. I think we'd be amazed beyond belief. In fact, it's happening every day at AllAboutGOD.com! I am thrilled to see what God is doing at this virtual meeting place, where seekers and skeptics meet Jesus and are convinced and transformed into worshippers of the Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ!"

-- Greg Leith, Director of Business and Corporate Relations, BIOLA University

How do you reach a world of seekers and skeptics?

- By placing self sufficient groups of servers in seven strategic locations with fail-over and redundancy capabilities

Currently...

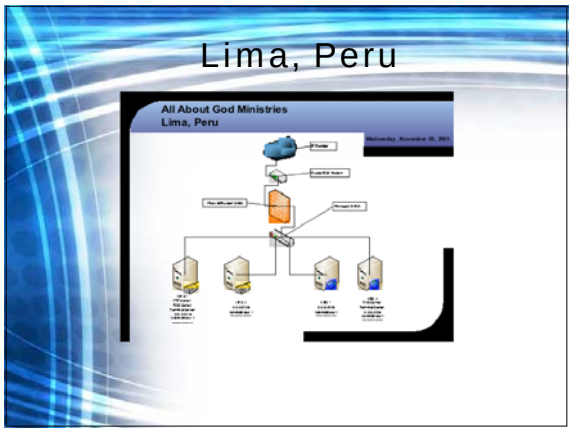
- Single location
- Fail-over protected
- Single DNS site
- Filtered by religiously challenged Countries?

The Plan...

- Seven separate self sufficient locations geographically placed for quality of service and internet saturation.

Colorado Springs, CO

East Coast, USA


Lima, Peru
All About God Ministries
Lima, Peru

South America
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
AFRICA
Guyana
Suriname
Venezuela
Colombia
Ecuador
Peru
Bolivia
Brazil
Brazilian Highlands
Paraguay
Chile
Uruguay
Argentina
Amazon Basin
Amazon R.
Galápagos Is. (Ecuador)
Islas Juan Fernández
Falkland Is. (U.K.)
Equator 0°
Tropic of Capricorn
1,000 Miles
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140° W
120° W
100° W
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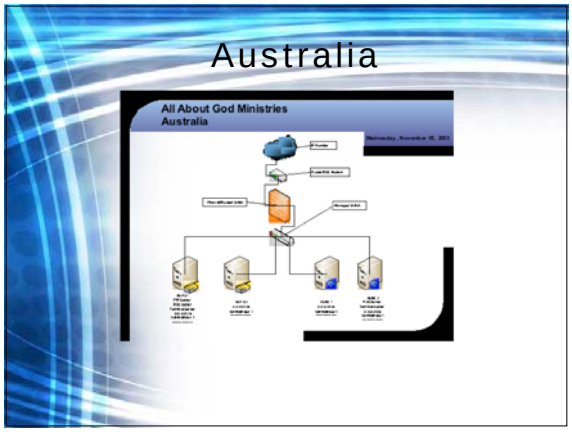
Australia
All About God Ministries
Australia

Australia
INDIAN OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
Timor Sea
Coral Sea
Tasman Sea
Great Sandy Desert
Gibson Desert
Great Victoria Desert
Simpson Desert
Great Australian Bight
Port Hedland
Dampier
Newman
Carnarvon
Geraldton
Kalgoorlie-Boulder
Perth
Mandurah
Bunbury
Esperance
Albany
Port Augusta
Adelaide
Melbourne
Sydney
Canberra
Newcastle
Wollongong
Brisbane
Gold Coast
Lismore
Rockhampton
Mackay
Townsville
Cairns
Normanton
Darwin
Katherine
Wyndham
Derby
Broome
Halls Creek
Alice Springs
Longreach
Cloncurry
Roma
Toowoomba
Bundaberg
Wagga Wagga
Kangaroo I.
Hobart
Mt. Kosciusko 7,310 ft. (2,228 m)
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250 Miles
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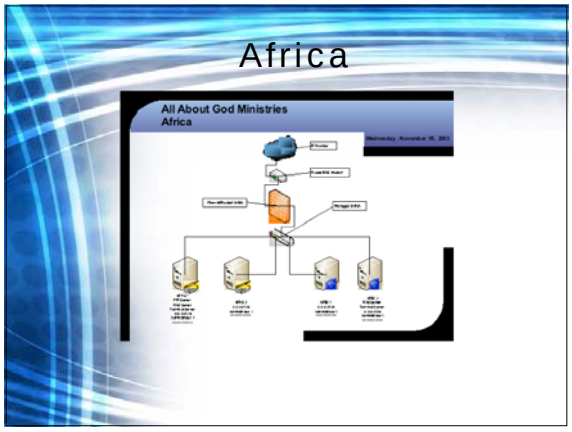
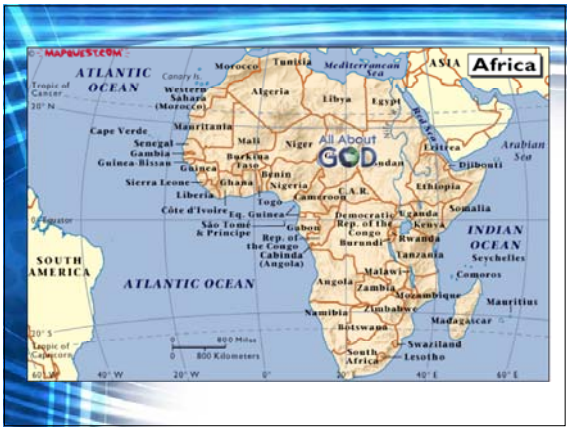

Africa
All About God Ministries
Africa


Africa
ATLANTIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
SOUTH AMERICA
ASIA
Mediterranean Sea
Arabian Sea
Morocco
Tunisia
Algeria
Libya
Egypt
Western Sahara (Morocco)
Mauritania
Cape Verde
Senegal
Gambia
Guinea-Bissau
Guinea
Sierra Leone
Liberia
Côte d'Ivoire
Mali
Niger
Burkina Faso
Ghana
Benin
Nigeria
Togo
Cameroon
C.A.R.
Eq. Guinea
São Tomé & Principe
Gabon
Rep. of the Congo
Cabinda (Angola)
Democratic Rep. of the Congo
Burundi
Uganda
Kenya
Rwanda
Tanzania
Eritrea
Djibouti
Ethiopia
Somalia
Seychelles
Comoros
Mauritius
Madagascar
Malawi
Zambia
Angola
Namibia
Zimbabwe
Botswana
Mozambique
Swaziland
Lesotho
South Africa
Tropic of Cancer
Tropic of Capricorn
800 Miles
800 Kilometers
40° W
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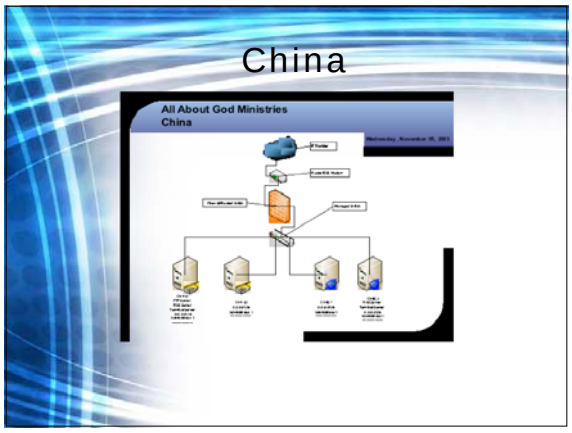
China
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China

China
RUSSIA
KAZAKHSTAN
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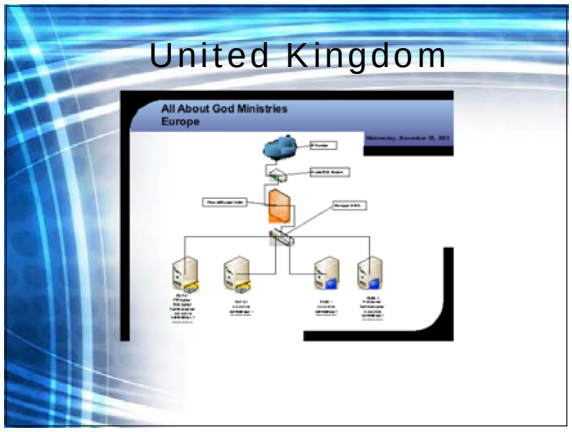
JAPAN
TAIWAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
All About GOD


United Kingdom
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Europe

United Kingdom
NORWAY
DENMARK
North Sea
ATLANTIC OCEAN
IRELAND
GER.
BELGIUM
FRANCE
GOD

The World
ARCTIC
ARCTIC OCEAN
EUROPE
ASIA
NORTH AMERICA
PACIFIC OCEAN
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CARIBBEAN
AFRICA
SOUTH AMERICA
OCEANIA
INDIAN OCEAN
ANTARCTICA
GOD

All About God Ministries
Greg@AllAboutGOD.com
All About GOD

How to successfully minister to your target audience

TruthMedia

Define your target audience

TruthMedia

Define your target

Define your target audience

Who are they? Consider their gender, age interests. Get to know them. What do they do? What kinds of issues are they facing?

- Family, marriage & relationships
- Community & health
- Home, business, finance, assets
- Sports, fitness

Do research on your audience

TruthMedia

What kind of website are you building?

- **Brochure**
- **Resource**
- **Evangelistic**
- **Discipleship**

Develop content and community for your target audience.

Market your content so search engines can find it.

TruthMedia

Connect and communicate with relevant content

TruthMedia

Partnership Trivia

Shepherd Pie:

When Shepherds Pie became our top article several weeks in a row, we asked the question: "How can we use Shepherds Pie to share Christ?"

Links were created to direct the Shepherd Pie fans to a Chef's Lifestory. The weeks that followed saw an increase in traffic to that particular lifestory and an increase in Gospel indications from that lifestory.

ALL because of a partnership with Company's Coming, a cookbook firm

TruthMedia

- Adapt existing content
- Locate free content sources online
- Share content with like-minded sites
- Write it yourself
- Convince colleagues, experts, friends to write for you
- Use or adapt information brochures and press releases
- Don't overlook hook articles

Relevant content: Develop articles that address felt needs. Link this content to articles that share Christ or encourage spiritual growth.

Life stories: Create personal stories that share the Gospel or Spirit-filled life.

Video stories: Create 4-6 minute video life stories to use online.*

Online newsletters: Send out devotionals and newsletters* through email to minister to your audience.

**** Partnering opportunities available with TruthMedia Internet Group***

Content Trivia

Control Your Frizzy Hair

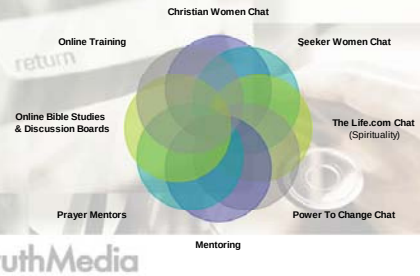
- ***Shows up as #4 in Google out of 134,000 results on a search for "Frizzy hair"***
- ***This has been one of our leading articles for the past 4 years. One woman came to chat and there was led to Christ as a direct result of this silly little article.***
- ***This article has a prominent link to a lifestory that has been in our top ten for the past 2 years.***
- ***God truly can use anything!***

Develop online community for a specific audience

1. **Mentoring:** Come alongside and spiritually encourage those who write to your site.* Train volunteers to share the hope of the Gospel in their responses.
2. **Chatrooms:** Offer chatrooms and and online courses* where the Gospel is shared through topical discussions.
3. **Discussion** (message) **boards:** Moderated boards give people the opportunity to share thoughts and ideas and hear about the Gospel.
4. **Follow-up strategy*:** TruthMedia has developed a strategy that enables online follow-up for offline events.

**** Partnering opportunities available with TruthMedia Internet Group***

Create lots of opportunities for interactivity



Interactive Trivia

Norma:

- She couldn't type
- She didn't have a computer
- She caught the vision
- She learned to type
- She got a computer
- She's a leader in chat – helping reach the world for Christ

TruthMedia

Carla: An Email Mentor to Barb

Barb:

If one were to take one's own life by committing suicide, and had - at one time - truly accepted Christ as their Savior and King, do you believe said person would go to Heaven?

Carla:

You are asking one of the hard life questions… If you want to keep in touch I would love to hear from you again. Your sister in Christ, Carla

TruthMedia

Barb:

Thank you so much for getting back to me. … It was I who was on the brink of self destruct when I wrote this letter to you.

It came about when I found out I am terminally ill and I had NO ONE to turn to…

I found your site. I studied. I began to pray. Then, I began to sob. I was broken before the Lord as I never had been before. I heard a voice tell me, "Your life isn't yours to take. Your life is mine.

… **never forget that you touched one life - this life** - and made a real and positive difference for the Lord.

TruthMedia

Team building in a virtual environment

TruthMedia

- **Develop a team**
- **Equip your team**
- **Encourage your team**
- **Provide community Communicate, communicate, communicate!**

TruthMedia

Market Smartly

- You may have the best website in the world, but if people don't know how to find your site, you will not be able to minister to them.

TruthMedia

Marketing Trivia

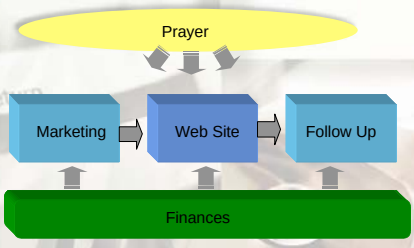
In response to the global SARS crisis, Chinese Women Today added SARS content and purchased search words to direct traffic to the site. In the weeks following we saw a 130% increase in traffic.

TruthMedia

Transform your website into a web*ministry*

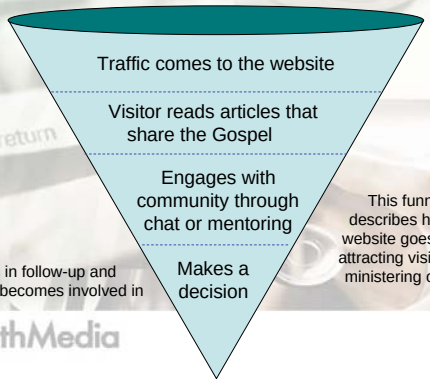
TruthMedia

Necessary Elements for Web Ministry



TruthMedia

The Web*Ministry* Process



Engages in follow-up and possibly becomes involved in ministry.

This funnel describes how a website goes from attracting visitors to ministering online

TruthMedia

Real lives are being changed online every day

TruthMedia

Christina

Christina was at a crisis in her life when she went to see *The Passion of the Christ* film. She went to buy a Bible, and then viewed an outreach website based on *The Passion* called www.thelife.com

TruthMedia

Tsunami Surgeon attends chat

- *An Indian surgeon who was helping with relief efforts came to the chat session on Thelife.com and shared how revival is happening in India. He shared that thousands of Christians are fasting and praying and many Muslims and Hindus are converting. They are seeing miracles and healings from disease.*

TruthMedia Internet Group

Vision: Give everyone on the Internet the chance to hear about Jesus

A network of 22 evangelistic and discipleship websites in 12 languages reaching various target audiences

Websites have over 800,000 visitors per month

Chat rooms have over 7,000 participants per month

Offers a vibrant mentoring community with over 400 volunteers

Thousands of relevant articles

Discover online ministry where lives are being changed for Christ

Go to www.TruthMedia.com

TruthMedia

Ministry Correspondence Centers, the Internet, and New Ministry Paradigms.

The WorldLINC Online Ministry Correspondence Centers

delivered at the IE Conference at Liberty University April 2, 2005
by Allan H. Beeber, Rev., PhD.

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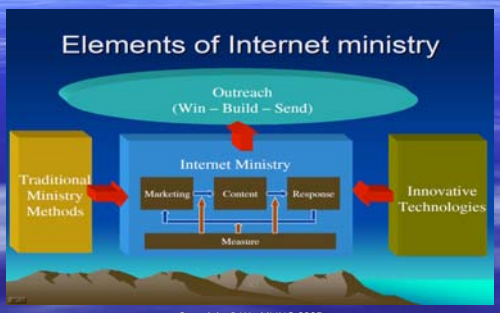
Metrics in Relation to Internet Ministry



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The Problem

- More ministries are creating evangelistic websites, yet few have adequate response systems.
- In fact, how many of you know webmasters who have deleted bunches of inquiries?

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What is the Proper Response to Internet Inquiries?

- *First, some response is better than no response.*
- *Second, just sending an automatic response is the minimum we should seek to do.*
  - *"People should answer people, not computers." – Walt Wilson, on the first team to build the Apple Computer*
- *Third, we need to integrate High Tech with High Touch (which is both an art as well as a science) seeking to involve growing numbers of online volunteers who can personally answer sincere seekers or believer's questions.*

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Our strategic Decision

- While WorldLINC will continue to develop some basic evangelism sites and improve others such as the top-listed "*Who is Jesus .. Really?*", we decided that the best way to help CCCI as well as the global Body of Christ would be to spend the time, effort and funds to develop a world class online response center

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Ministry Values

- We seek to develop a system which (rather than being 'competitive') simply allows each denomination and/or ministry to use a "good back end" response solution which **you** control for each of your sites, and which also allows ready access to essential measurements.
- We desire to see collaboration in the context of our functions.
- We are not here to 'sell' you something; we just want to show you both some tools and systems which might allow you to better accomplish the Internet ministries God is calling you to do, answer your questions, and prayerfully be a blessing to you.

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Concepts and Values

- *To enable ministries everywhere to accomplish more effective ministry w/o harming them or the traditional ministries*
- *Allow the church, denomination &/or ministry to maintain central control and structure of their 'community'; a system which provides "global functionality", a key value held by the WorldLINC team.*
- *Decrease the frustration level by incorporating simple administrative processes*

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Concepts and Values (contd.)

- Rules based; each community team leader has extensive control of functionality, language, routing of contacts, content, stats for measurement, volunteer assignments, training of volunteers, templates, aging limits, etc.
- Ability to use the system in Internet cafes as well as personal computers

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Intended Outcome

- *We would like to share something we've built which incorporates these principles, but first let's provide some global context for Internet Ministry.*

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GMO/WorldLINC Mission Statement

- To present the Good News of Jesus Christ to billions of people in fulfillment of the Great Commission in each generation by leveraging cutting edge communication technologies:
  - in native languages,
  - through cultural windows,
- while partnering with many online volunteers from many churches, denomination and organizations to:
  - Develop multiplying leaders to win the lost
  - Build them in their faith through discipleship
  - Connect them to local movements and churches, and
  - Send them into the world
- so that eventually everyone in the world will know someone who truly follows Jesus Christ.

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Mission Scriptures

"Those who have never been told about Him will see, and those who have never heard of Him will understand."
Isaiah 52:15 (NIV)

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Internet Overview

What Is Happening Now?

- Online Culture
  - There are currently 900+ million people connected to the Internet.
  - There are currently 128 million Americans hardwired to the Internet.
  - There are currently 256-290 million Americans connected to the Internet.
  - There are currently 90 million American households connected to the Internet.
- Demographic Culture
  - Women: 61%
  - Men: 66%
  - White, Non-Hispanic: 67%
  - Black, Non-Hispanic: 43%
  - Hispanic: 59%
  - Urban: 62%
  - Suburban: 68%
  - Rural: 56%
  - 18-29: 78%
  - 30-49: 74%
  - 50-64: 60%
  - 65+: 25%

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Internet Overview

What is Happening Now?

- World
  - There are currently 780+ million people connected to the Internet internationally.
- Geographical
  - German: 40.6 million
  - UK: 33.6 million
  - Italy: 26.2 million
  - Sweden, Finland, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Netherlands and Australia have the most mature Internet markets
  - US currently is 29 percent of the global market
  - Asia-Pacific is 14 percent
  - Latin America is 2 percent
  - North Africa & Middle Easter is 2 percent (and growing quickly!)

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Volunteer Overview

Where we are Today?

- GMO/WorldLINC + Alliance Partners such as Student Venture, JPO, EveryArabStudent.com, Evangelism Explosion, Amer. Tract Society, Need Him, BGEA with *My Hope India*, etc., combined results:
  - 12 million+ visitors per year
  - 21,000 decisions per year
  - 65,000 e-mails received per year
  - 550 volunteers trained overall
- Additional Breakdown
  - Web Site Breakdown
    - God Loves The World
      - 909 first time decisions for Christ
      - 1109 rededication or recommitments
      - Total: 52,727 visitors
    - The gospel message is presented every 31/2 minutes

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"We count people because people count" – Henri Aoun

- Metrics are becoming more important to the entire movement.
- Steve Douglass has publicly stated that he believes more ministry will be done in CCCI via the internet than through traditional ministries by 2010.
- Annual reports will now require Internet statistics as a line item.

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Measurements (contd.)

- Most of you know that 'hits' on a web page do not accurately measure the number of people who visit a site. For that latter metric we need to ascertain 'Unique visitors."
- In like manner, someone who just clicks a button which indicates they "Just received Christ" may not have: they may indicating a redecision, be a Christian wondering what's on the link, a webmaster, etc.

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Solution

- GMO/WorldLINC and its Alliance partners use forms modeled after Steve Douglass's six steps of ministry involvement integrated with a modified Engel's scale.
- Let's show you how it all works →→

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Response Forms

- The following slides show sample response forms from various web sites including:
- www.passionofChrist.com
- www.GodLovestheWorld.com
- www.meant4more.com

- GMO/WorldLINC and our partnership ministries place a similar form to submit a response on each of their Web sites.
- These response forms are the 'entry point' for contacts to enter the online MCC.

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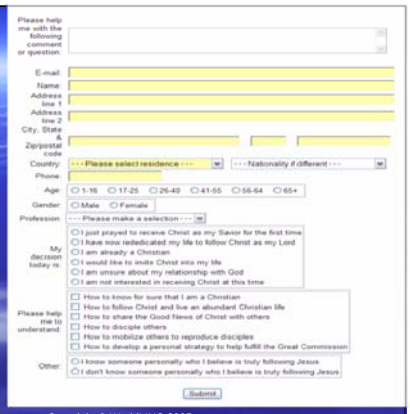
Web Response Forms – Long form



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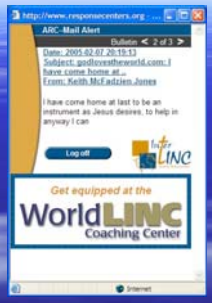
Web Response Forms - a shortened form

Copyright © WorldLINC 2005

ARC Active



Once the **Penname** and **Password** have been verified, ARC will communicate with the ASSIST software for the registration and assignment of any pending e-mails alerts.

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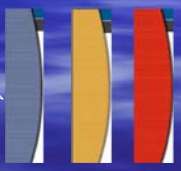
Elements of ARC – color bands

In the upper left of the ARC under the menu title "**File**" is a "**color band.**"

The "**Color band**" is your *Alert Status* indicator.

This status indicator will change color based on the level of the status (normal, high, critical).

The status change is driven by time. When a response has not been responded to within a certain period of time, the status changes.



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Elements of ARC – Bulletin

To the right of the "color band" is the "**Bulletin**" indicator.

The "**Bulletin**" indicates which e-mail you are reviewing out of the total received (those currently active in your open task list).

The "Bulletin" indicator gives you the ability to scroll forward or backwards through the number of open tasks which you have received.

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Responding to e-mails

- Important Note: You do not have to respond to e-mails in sequential order. You may skip over one or more e-mails from this "preview" by merely clicking on the arrow < or > to view the previous (or next e-mail) without REPLY-ing or REASSIGN-ing an e-mail.

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Elements of ARC – Subject area

Just below the "**Bulletin**" indicator and to the right of the "**color band**" indicator is the:

- **Date** & Time, **Subject**, **From**

This provides a quick glance of your open task, as well quick overview of the **Subject** matter.

This area is also a dynamic function. By selecting or clicking on the hypertext, it will open the full response submitted by a contact.

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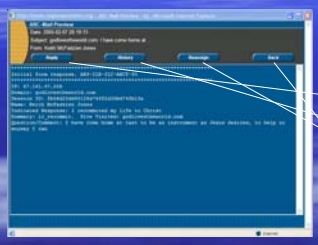
Elements of ARC -- Options



When you click on the hypertext of the small ARC-mail Alert window, you will be given an opportunity to preview the entire e-mail contents. Notice you now have four options:

- **Reply**
- **History**
- **Reassign**
- **Back**

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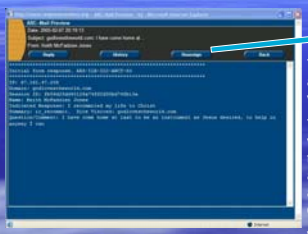
Reassign

Once you view the text, you may choose to **Reassign** a task.



The "**Reassign**" button is a quick and simple function, allowing a volunteer to reassign an open task.

This action is primarily taken by a volunteer when there is a response that needs to be processed by another volunteer. An example: an abuse situation, which you are not qualified to handle.

When the "**Reassign**" button is pressed, the task will be returned to the queue to be reassigned by a Team Leader.

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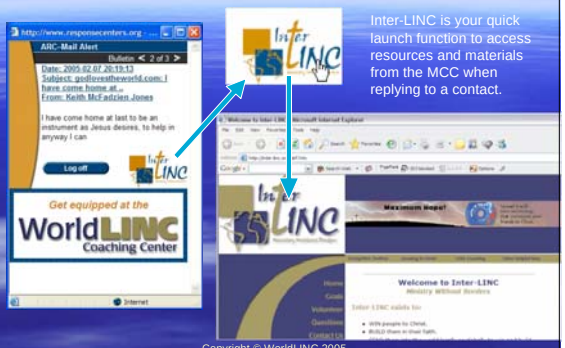
Inter-LINC button



Inter-LINC is your quick launch function to access resources and materials from the MCC when replying to a contact.

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Final Screen : ARC-Mail Reply - a quick overview

When you click on "Reply" to a contact, a third and final screen appears. Note: You are given six help buttons at the bottom of the screen. Each link may assist you in your response. Be sure to use the **BCC** option (Blind Carbon Copy) to copy yourself or your team leader, as needed. After you complete your response, click on Send (upper left). If you want to respond later, click the **Back** button.

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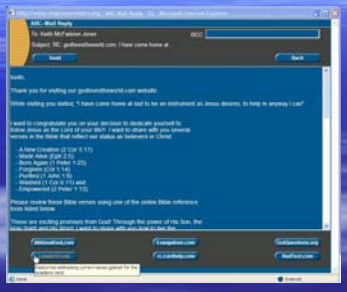
ARC-Mail Reply – Using C.A.M. → Leader U Hint



When you scroll over the six CAM (computer assisted ministry) buttons, you see a brief description of each site.

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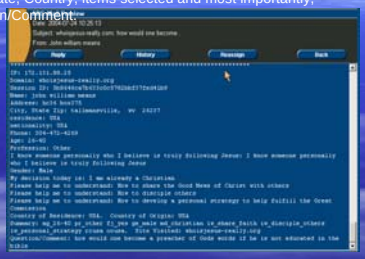
Reading the Submission Carefully

When you receive a submission from someone responding to a gospel presentation or web site, read the submission thoroughly: Name, Age, Sex, State, Country, items selected and most importantly, Question/Comment.



All of the information provides valuable insights about the seeker. Respond in the power of His Spirit and not in your own strength.

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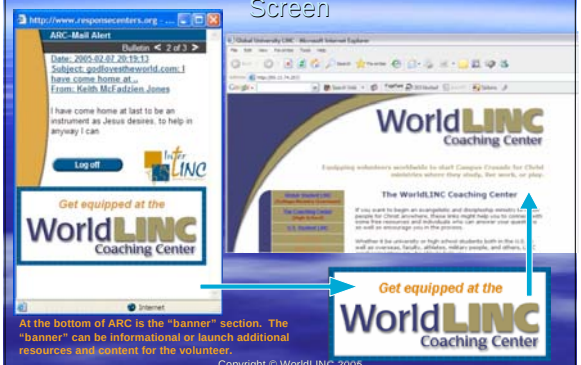
Additional Elements of ARC-Mail Alert Screen



At the bottom of ARC is the "banner" section. The "banner" can be informational or launch additional resources and content for the volunteer.

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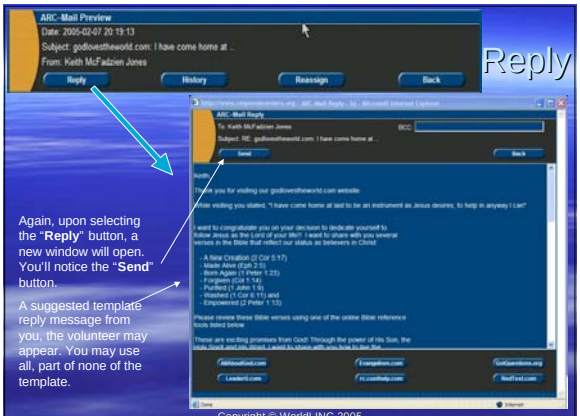
Reply



Again, upon selecting the "**Reply**" button, a new window will open. You'll notice the "**Send**" button.

A suggested template reply message from you, the volunteer may appear. You may use all, part of none of the template.

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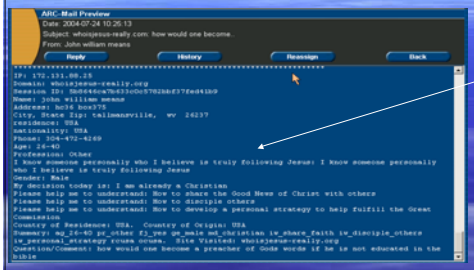
Reply (continued)



The original message including any 'radio buttons' they checked +demographic fields they filled out can be seen after the suggested template as you scroll down the Reply screen window.

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Next Steps

- Time for evaluation, questions, etc.
- Contact info.:

Allan.Beeber@ccci.org
Jim.Kalac@ccci.org
Tom.Dennen@ccci.org

www.WorldLINC.org
www.Inter-LINC.org
www.ResponseCenters.org

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Using Community Internet Cafes To Reach UPGs for Jesus

For security reasons no names or places are mentioned and all photographs are stock photos that are not directly related to the ministry.

The Vision

- To establish a network of Internet cafes among UPG communities - as viable Christian businesses run by missionaries who have an entrepreneurial outlook.
- The icafes can offer Internet access, computer courses, distance education, coffee, purified water, business services etc.

The Goal

The establishment of an incarnational church-planting movement in the UPG community.

The Community Internet Cafe

- 21 computers – one for firewall, 20 for clients
- Computers are donated from USA, Hong Kong, Australia – Pentium 1 & 2
- Located in UPG communities
- Also have a range of other services
- No games, no noise, Internet café to attract leaders, businessmen and students as clients.
- At 50c per hour, 50% occupancy, can earn $1,000+ a month net profit. (Third World missionaries are happy to live on $200 a month)

The Team

- At least an entrepreneur, a computer technician and a ministry expert. May also include a community development person.
- All team members must be mature Christian believers with a positive "get it done" attitude.
- Team elects leader.
- Being vulnerable to each other's strengths.
- Share revenues of icafe as income to support their ministry.

The Criteria

- Entrepreneurship / Leadership / Resourcefulness
- Mature faith in Christ and personal formation.
- Commitment to the project.
- Heart for UPGs
- Unity in the team
- Financial integrity
- Adequate technical skills
- Adequate start-up capital and good location.

Locations

- In or near a UPG community.
- Near school, college or business district.
- Preferably on the second-floor of a building with a security guard outside.
- Clean, cool, professional environment that will appeal to premier high-paying customers.
- Malls are an excellent location if the rent is reasonable.

The Process

- Select location
- Select team – entrepreneur, computer tech, ministry expert
- Take team to 6 week training course
- Develop business plan and ministry plan
- Test and check team
- Sign franchise agreement & reporting arrangements
- Set-up location – phone, DSL, etc
- Receive computers
- Coaching period (6 months) – solve problems, establish ministry
- Start a house church from icafe contacts.
- Attend annual icafe conference for upgrading and refreshing.

The Importation & Selection Committee (ISC)

This committee consists of high level national leaders who can assist with:
1. The process of importing the container load of computers.
2. Selecting the locations of the icafes and
3. Finding the most appropriate organizations to partner with.

ISC Operation

- Supervises the entire process in that nation – (see slide 9)
- Meets at least monthly for 6 months to a year then disbands if no further importations are planned.
- Makes the tough decisions about who gets what in the way of resources.
- Manages the setting up of the Internet cafes and resolves problems with partner organizations.
- Arranges for 6 week training course and the visit by a supervising staff member.
- Is accountable to international partners and funders and must produce a final report..

ISC Members

- National level Christian leaders with a heart for missions to unreached peoples and a positive “can-do-it” attitude.
- Members should include: someone with high level government contacts to help with importation, a expert on the state of the work in the UPGs, a ‘logistics and shipping’ person and an expert in computer technology.

Partner Organizations

- Christian missions and NGOs that apply to the ISC to receive an icafe. ISC selects from applicants.
- Should be organizations of integrity that have a known track record working among the targeted UPGs.
- Must supply icafe start up costs, location, phone, Internet connection etc. Need about $1500 per icafe in capital.
- Partners supply the staff for the icafes – an entrepreneur, a technical person and a ministry expert.
- It is compulsory for partners to send all icafe staff to the 6 week training course.

Selecting Partner Organizations

- Best to use invitation – that is quietly look around for good partner organizations then choose the most suitable.
- This avoids the rejection and loss of face of a "open" application process.
- Inviting people takes more time and needs to be done diligently and carefully but is more secure, low profile and generally less prone to error.

Qualities To Look For

- When selecting partner organizations you are seeking people with a heart for ministry who can also manage details well and run a small business in a sustainable fashion.
- Need experienced "get up and go" entrepreneurial types with a vision for the use of computers in ministry.
- Need to be focused on reaching the unreached, not on just extending local churches.
- Need to be highly incarnational and able to understand church-planting movements.

Common Mistakes To Watch For

- Insufficient start-up capital.
- Poor selection of icafe staff.
- Icafe staff not sent for training.
- Not businesslike/poor problem-solving skills.
- Over-concerned with status. Expect new computers.
- Not focused on UPGs – just a church program.
- Lack of computer maintenance.
- Forget to form bible study groups and house churches.

What Do The Supervising Staff Do?

- Supplies the computers.
- Helps find the funds for all importation and training costs. Does NOT supply rent or phone lines etc.
- Make initial shipping arrangements.
- Trains the ISC in managing the project.
- Trains the UPG missionaries in icafe operation.
- Reports back to funding agencies.
- Is there as a reference body to the ISC.
- Makes a field visit to check on the project.
- Makes online in-service training available for free to icafe staff to keep them technically updated and spiritually refreshed.

What Is The Icafe Training Course About?

- Icafe operation and computer maintenance
- Business principles & entrepreneurship
- Islamics / ministry to UPGs
- Developing a business plan.
- Developing a ministry plan
- How to establish a church-planting movement.
- Team-building

What Are The Expenses?

- Supervising staff supply computers, training and funding.
- Partners supply location, phone lines, Internet connection, utilities, furniture, staff.
- Icafe missionaries pay for their own food and lodging during training at a minimal cost-recovery level which will be negotiated.
- ISC pays for the cost of their board meetings etc.

What Is The Revenue From An Average Icafe?

- With 20 client machines, given at least 50% occupancy and 1 hour per customer at 60c per hour.
- 12 hrs x 10 clients per hour = 120 clients per day
- Income = 120 x 60c per hour x 25 days per month = $1800 per month

Profit & Loss

- Rent = $300 a month
  Internet = $100 a month
  Phone etc= $100 a month
  Deprecation = $150 a month
- **Total fixed costs** = $650 a month
- Missionary wages (4 indigenous missionaries) = $250 per month each = $1000
- This leaves $150 a month for "extras" and ministry expenses. If the icafe is run well it can achieve much more than 50% occupancy.

Extra Revenue

- Can be obtained from computer classes, VOIP, business services, purified water, coffee, books, stationery, computer disks, printing & binding etc.
- Extra services can be easily added and tailored to the cultural interests of the UPG.
- Can increase revenue by 50% plus.

Price Points

- Should be about the same as the well-known commercial rates for a high quality service.
- Do not compete on price - compete on quality and on atmosphere.
- Do not give away the services, people value what they pay for.
- Value the sustainability of your ministry.

Is It Christian To Charge Normal Rates?

- Paul, Priscilla and Aquila sold their tents!
- The icafe must appear to be a normal commercial operation.
- The gospel is offered free of charge through friendship evangelism.
- The icafe can offer free extras in literature etc.
- It is Christian to be wise!

Contact Us

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  Carson CA 90745
- Email: johned@aibi.ph
- Phone: 1-310-549-6791

Cybermissions

The Intentional Front-Line Use of Computers And The Internet To Facilitate the Great Commission.

The Use of "Means"

- Frontier mission is always an adventure and a calling, in the words of William Carey, to "use means" for the completion of the Great Commission.
- One of these means is the use of the Internet.
- The Internet has many unique features that make it suited for missions.

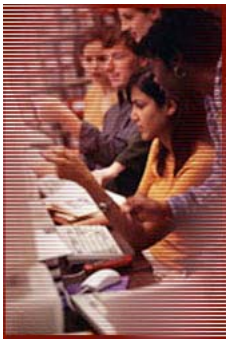
The Internet Advantage

The Internet reaches:

- Many people – about 1 billion!
- In many nations – simultaneously
- And can build community
- Reach a mass audience
- Or communicate just one-to-one securely
- Using text, graphics, ebooks, audio, video, email, conferencing, VOIP, forums, web pages, blogs….
- In a wide variety of languages
- And can be regionally or culturally targeted.

More Advantages…

- No airfares needed
- No visas required
- Less health problems
- Greater personal safety
- Enters "closed" countries
- Reaches community leaders
- Works even when you are asleep
- Very cost effective
- Ideal for retired missionaries



The BIGGEST Advantage

- People arrive at websites because of purposeful behaviour - they clicked on a link or used a search engine.
- Thus web visitors are there with a purpose and already have some interest.
- Thus you are not dealing with cold, apathetic people.
- You are ministering straight to the people you want to be ministering to.
- To be able to minister to people who are already interested in what you have to say is the BIGGEST advantage of Cybermissions.

Seekers Use The Internet

- People use the Internet to do private searching for information.
- Whether it be conspiracy theories or health information people go online to find what they are afraid to ask out aloud publicly.
- People considering adopting the Christian faith also use the Internet to find out information and to talk with Christians.
- "Religion seekers" are a major Internet phenomenon with 40% of Internet users regularly searching for religious information online.
- That is 400 million people seeking religious information. These are the people you want to contact!

The Religion Seekers

Religion seekers:

- Are not just "hits" or "visitors' or "statistics"
- Have names like Bob and Jane and Mohammed and Beng!
- Live in a real country and do real work.
- Are just as real as the people in the street!
- Come to a website seeking answers about their deepest questions.
- Are often very curious about Christianity.

Are We Seeker-Sensitive?

- Surprisingly most mission websites are not targeted towards "religion seekers"
- And do NOT answer key questions about Christianity asked by non-Christians.
- Often they are just tools for the corporate image!
- Some people think: "the harvest field is out there in Zimbabwe and this website is just where we put the pictures, and raise the funds for the real work."
- However the Harvest Field is also ONLINE!

Getting The Point!

- Christian mission agencies need to get the point - of 400 million people with spiritual questions who are just a mouse click away from salvation.
- Websites need to be Harvest Fields! Places of sowing and reaping for the gospel!
- The website is one of your most strategic tools for evangelism!
- Religion surfers can hear the gospel online just as they can hear it from a book, a tract or a pulpit and give their lives to Christ.

The Right Reason

- The right reason for a missions website is to get spiritual results for Jesus.
- You can explain the gospel, answer questions, exhort, reprove, instruct and disciple young people, train and counsel your workers and so much more!
- Ask: "What would Jesus do with this website to build His Church and expand His Kingdom?"

The Possibilities

- Web evangelism
- Bible teaching
- Online seminaries
- Discipleship in discussion forums.
- Online counselling and mentoring.
- City-wide Christian web portals.
- Target a specific people group.
- Target a particular interest group
- Offer practical help – such as how to purify water.
- Coordinate and connect Christians and non-Christians, teachers and students, problems and solutions…

More Possibilities

- Safely witness to Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.
- Language and culture exposure.
- Build friendships before going to the field.
- Use websites to follow-up after crusades.
- Tightly coordinate the website with your other outreach efforts - build relationships offline and put the information online.
- Network widely scattered missions specialists.
- Raise up informed intercessors by using websites and email lists.

EXAMPLE: Cybermissions And The Tsunami

- Online databases coordinated massive relief efforts.
- Millions of dollars were donated via websites.
- Theological questions about justice, tragedy and suffering were answered in blogs, web pages and emails.
- Short-term mission teams were pulled together using websites, emails and online recruitment tools.
- People and locations were prayed for on Internet prayer boards.
- The Internet made the Christian response to the tsunami far more timely and possible!
- Those who knew how to use the Internet best, responded best, when the crisis came.

Strategy Section

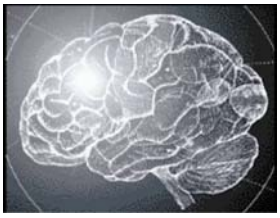
How to be effective
Good missiology
Appropriate technology

The Word In Cyberspace

- It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation – and not technology, methodology or personality!
- The gospel can be encountered on a web page or in a chat room and a person can give their life to Jesus.
- This can happen even when you are asleep!
- The important thing is to connect religion seekers with the word of the gospel in a way that they can clearly understand.

Missiology Still Applies Online

- You still need to think missiologically when doing online ministry.
- You still need to learn the language and the culture and understand the worldview of the people.
- The idea is to assist the implementation of a good missionary strategy by using powerful technology.

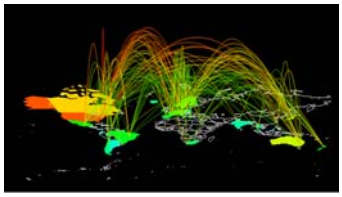


Thinking Strategically

- Who are you aiming to reach?
- What are they interested in?
- What do they feel they need?
- What sort of people do they want to meet online?
- What are their questions about God?
- What language do they use?
- What is their communication style?
- How can all these factors above be reflected in a well-designed and easy to use website?

More Questions..

- What security issues are there?
- What is their bandwidth?
- What is their level of technological understanding?
- How patient are they with technology?
- Are they group learners or individual learners?
- Are they oral learners requiring lots of audio and video online?
- How much time can you put in?



Meet A Pressing Need

- Start with ***the need*** then build the website.
- It is OK to have lots of different websites.
- E.G. Do your grass-roots national pastors need free theological training? Can they get to an icafe once a week and download what they need?
- Build a website to meet their basic training needs then follow up with occasional visits by trainers.

Use A Bridge Strategy

- Build a website around a secular interest.
- Then connect to testimonies and gospel presentations.
- E.G. To reach Iraqis - "History of Babylon"
- To reach Indians – "What Ghandi Learned From Jesus"

Tips On Strategy

- Language group / interest group is far more important than nationality.
- 2/3 of the Internet is non-English speaking.
- Learning style is "almost everything" !
- Aim for the 2% who are most responsive to the Holy Spirit.
- No one first visits a website because of the graphics.
- Word of mouth and viral marketing drive the Internet - so connect with those who can connect with others.
- The more specific the website is, the more visitors it often attracts. (For low to medium budget websites)
- Command a niche market for maximum impact.

Specialized Websites Get The Most Hits

- Specialized websites do much better in the search engines and so get many more hits.
- For instance a general website on "God" will be lost on page 43 of Google and get almost no hits.
- But a specific web page say on "A Christian Response To Human Cloning" will get many hits because it is a specialized website on a hot topic and will have few competitors.
- Generic websites generally fail unless they have very big advertising budgets.
- Specialized websites – rare books, vintage cars, specific medical problems are doing very well.
- Websites targeted at Third World cities or less known UPGs may be among the only ones on that topic and will rate highly in the search engines.

Designing With The Average End User In Mind

Basic Web Design

- The Internet is driven by seekers searching for information or for relationship (or both).
- They start either at a link or at a search engine.
- So you need to have:
  a) information that people are looking for
  b) relationships they can connect to
  c) many links pointing to your website
  d) be well-ranked in the search engines
  e) be clear, easy-to-use and to navigate

Be Clear!

- Many people are easily confused by computers and the Internet.
- You may need to train people in how to use your website.
- Provide plenty of cues and lots of help.
- Make it fast-loading, and not cluttered or unreadable.
- Use high-contrast – e.g black text on white background.
- Make links underlined, and avoid "junk" like rotating crosses that clutter the visual landscape.

Think Interaction Not Just Information

- Interaction builds loyalty.
- Interaction grows the relationship so you can ask the tough questions.
- Interaction must be carefully nurtured.
- Make numerous opportunities for people to respond, to contact you, to ask questions, to meet others, and to post their opinions.
- Use web forms, bulletin boards, email links
- When replying be **POP**: **P**rompt, **O**n-Topic, and **P**ersonal
- Do not commercialize the interaction unless given permission to do so.

Make It Easy To Spread The Word

- Make web pages and articles easy to print out and take home.
- Let them copy and distribute your materials for free.
- Make them easy to download in an icafe - have online resources able to fit on a single floppy disk.
- Use ebooks – they are compressed, download very quickly and can be emailed to others.
- Provide "tell a friend" forms where they can tell others about you.
- Have a web address that is easy to write down or remember.
- Use "bring-em-back" technology such as Inspired Text browser plug-ins that they can download.
- Give them an attractive screensaver with your website address on it.

Common Objections

But They Aren't Online!

- But their community leaders are, and often at least one extended family member is!
- If you can reach one key person you can reach a whole community.
- This is known as the "tunnel and blast" strategy. Use the Internet to "tunnel in" and find one "man of peace", then build a relationship, equip this person to win the community - and "blast" the gospel.
- Internet cafes also provide access for many people in developing nations.
- You are not just contacting a person, you are contacting that person's network.
- Use the Internet to connect with people who can connect you to still more people.

But It Won't Work Everywhere!

- The fact that you can't do something everywhere is no reason to stop trying it somewhere.
- Cybermissions works in the most surprising places e.g., Bhutan
- Cybermissions can work via both online strategies and through establishing Internet cafes and student centers.
- There is an enormous hunger for technology and free information in developing nations.

Doing Cybermissions

Set Up A Cybermissions Department

An ideal cybermissions department has four kinds of people:

- Technical staff, web designers, graphic artists
- Content editors, writers, video producers
- Field missionaries with language and cultural experience.
- Evangelists, bible teachers and intercessors

Missions Should Be The Focus

- Focus the team around the missiological objectives.
- Keep the technology appropriate to the average end user you are trying to reach - who may have limited bandwidth.
- Coordinate the goals of the Cybermissions team with the other objectives of the missions agency to create synergies.
- Have a Field Director - Cyberspace

Select A Major People Group

- Focus your efforts for maximum effectiveness.
- China, Japan and the Middle East have hundreds of millions of people that can be reached by Cybermissions and in each`case have just one main language you need to use.
- China has 90 million Internet users and is highly responsive to the gospel.
- India has many English speakers and is increasingly tech savvy.

Places Where Cybermissions Might Be The Main Strategy

- **If the nation is difficult to reach** by conventional missionary strategies.
- But they have **enough Internet connectivity** to see people saved and to start a church-planting movement.
- There are **43 nations** where cybermissions could be used as the **main** outreach strategy: Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Brunei, Burma, China, Cuba, Djibouti, Egypt, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan,Vietnam,Yemen

Dollars And Sense

- You can set up low-cost icafes in unreached people groups using donated recycled computers.
- Open source software can save you big bucks.
- Major foundations are starting to look at funding Cybermissions.
- Cybermissions is ideal for volunteers can work home.
- It is often possible to get free web hosting.
- On average Cybermissions costs less than $100 per new convert.

Final Comments

- Cybermissionaries can work alongside conventional missionaries to generate synergies that spread the gospel.
- The Internet is where many seekers doing their seeking and Christian missions needs to prioritize the 400 million relatively easy to reach religion surfers online.

EVANGELISM ON USENET NEWSGROUPS

Internet Evangelism for the 21st Century Workshop

(http://ie-21stcentury.com:/)

1. INTRODUCTION: Who are we?

For *Rowland Croucher* see

- the John Mark Ministries websites (jmm.aaa.net.au)
- (priscillasfriends.org) and
- Google!

Daniel 12:1-4, 2 Timothy 4:1-6

If you were to reach more people in the world via one communications medium, which would you use?

What would your message say?

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The world's largest-ever network of information

USENET NEWSGROUPS

Other groups - Web-based groups, blogs, chat-rooms
How many Usenet groups? 50,000 – 100,000
Ratio of 'lurkers' to posters – 10:1
'alt' (alternative discussion groups), *'comp'* (computer stuff),
'rec' (recreation, hobbies), *'sci'* (sciences),
'soc' (socializing, social sciences),
'talk' (for debates on a range of subjects), *'biz'* (business),
'k12' (teachers and students),
'misc' (topics that don't fit anywhere else).
Binaries (non-text).
Most unmoderated; some moderated (any retromoderated?)

'Best' religious newsgroups? Criteria: your interests/ expertise; ratio of 'signal' to 'noise'.
Highest quality: uk.religion.christian, soc.religion.christian.
Lowest: alt.atheism.
Most 'interesting?' – aus.religion.christian
(FAQ - http://jmm.aaa.net.au/arc/),
alt.christnet.christianlife (Regulars' testimonies – http://members.cox.net/christian_life/testimonials/testim.htm)

The Usenet Constituency:

(anarchy, not an ordered community).
Most (but not all): wealthier, well-educated;
many: lonely, searching;
some: attention-seekers, ego-trippers, nutcases (where else can one get an audience of thousands so cheaply/quickly?).

Netiquette

- lurk for a couple of weeks;
- read the group's FAQ;
- send a couple of posts to misc.test or alt.test;
- don't cross-post excessively;
- stay on-topic: find the most relevant newsgroup;
- include only original poster's relevant material in response – indicate with <> where material deleted

Netiquette... more...

- avoid top-posting;
- recognize spam/trolls/ego-trash – don't respond:
- if excessive, contact abuse@their isp;
- DON'T SHOUT;
- spelling flames aren't considered good taste;
- say more than 'I Agree' 'Amen!' etc.
- be careful with humor and sarcasm;
- pray over your posts: sometimes leave the 'hot' ones while you sleep!

Apologetics on Usenet

is not about winning arguments, scoring points, belittling others; good theology and hermeneutics

- moving from 'simplicity this side of complexity to simplicity the other side of complexity'
- concrete vs. formal thinking – Piaget);

- Google research;
- Don't use Bible texts-out-of-context as weapons;
- Use non-sexist language (without being a slave to 'political correctness!');

- be 'irenic' and teachable;
- 'what unites Christians is much more important than what divides them
- but we often have less patience with the one denying half our creed, than with another who denies the whole of it:
- learn to affirm Christian unity-in-diversity
- 'In things essential, unity; in things doubtful, liberty; In all things, charity.' Thomas a Kempis.

Tips

- OE – 'mark as read';
- view/current view/hide read messages;
- order: 'from';
- disguise your email address;
- master Google's Usenet archive – add a Google bar plus Browster on your browser;
- try to keep your lines of text to less than 80 characters

Biblical Principles for Online Communication:

- 1 Peter 3: 10,15,16;
- Proverbs 15:1;
- Matthew 12:35-37;
- Luke 6:27,28;
- Romans 12:14-21;
- 2 Timothy 2:24-26;
- Colossians 3:8; 4:6;

- Ephesians 4:29-31;
- Galatians 5:22-23;
- Philippians 4:8-9;
- James 3:5-10; 4:11-12.

Post unto others and you would wish them to post unto you!

1. Wisdom From Usenet friends

'Be careful of just how transparent you are, and above all, share nothing you wouldn't share with the entire world. :)'

‘On Usenet everything’s archived, unless you request otherwise. THINK before you post, and if you can't stand by it, don't say it.’

‘If you don't want your faith challenged, stay off the ‘Net.’

‘You cannot make any assumptions about the people. All you deal with is black characters on a white background. All you have is the text, and no context.’

‘People in most newsgroups are not here to truly listen, they are here to prove their point. For most, logic and reason are used for the first post or two, then when attacked (personally or ideologically) it reverts to name calling.’

‘This is not a place for the faint hearted or the easily upset!’

WHAT CAN ONE PERSON DO?

2. USENET RESOURCES

3. USENET HUMOR

4. 'THEOLOGY''/ QUESTIONS/ISSUES

4. SAMPLES OF USENET 'THEOLOGY''/ QUESTIONS/ISSUES

- * 'Was Hitler a Christian? He said he was.'
- * 'Were there Australian koalas and Antarctic king penguins in Noah's ark?'

Bishop Spong says 'Paul said "Christ appeared to me also", but almost certainly not in a physically resurrected body. Why couldn't Christ have appeared to the other disciples like that?'

* 'The Bible condemns some same-sex practices, but not homosexuality as an orientation'.

* 'You have your God. I have an Invisible Pink Unicorn. Same evidence for the existence of each!'

5. URBAN LEGENDS

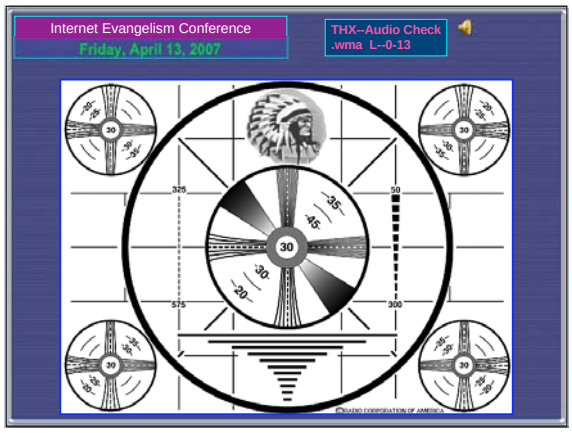
6. SAMPLES OF USENET APOLOGETICS

A: >Easter is a rip-off of the pagan spring equinox celebration.

B: It is not a 'rip-off', it is the new and improved version;)

1.

1.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Friday, April 13, 2007
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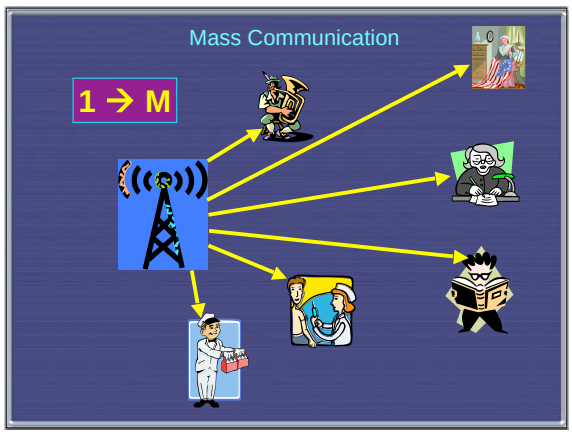
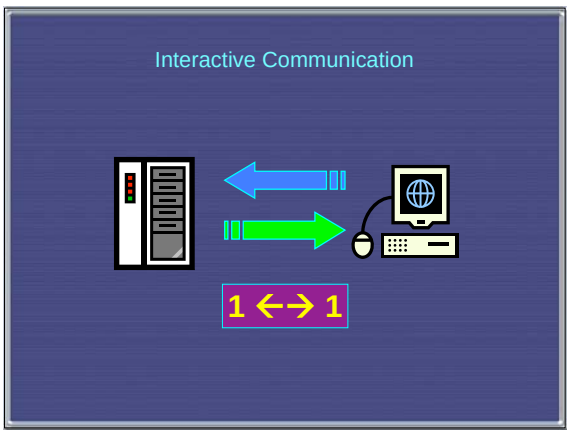
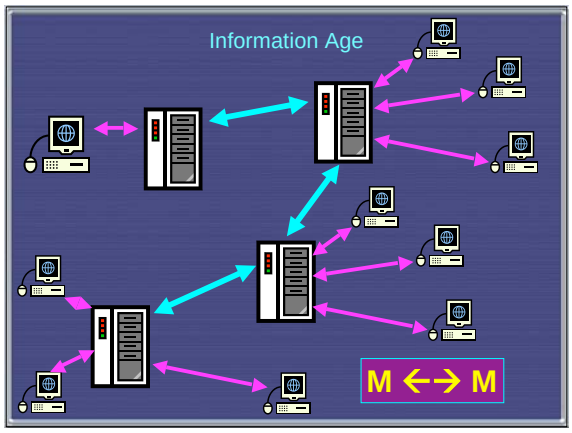
Friday, April 13, 2007
New Media
Technologies and Trends
Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org


Mass Communication
1 → M


Interactive Communication
1 ←→ 1

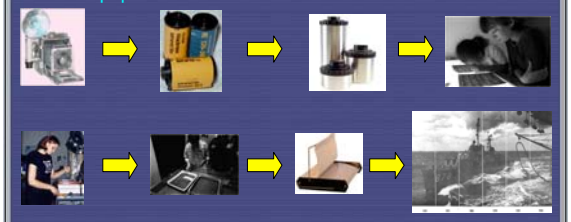

Information Age
M ←→ M

Internet Evangelism Conference
Friday, April 13, 2007
New Media Approach
Five Points to Consider
Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org

• Think Digital
--Not analog

Thinking Ahead

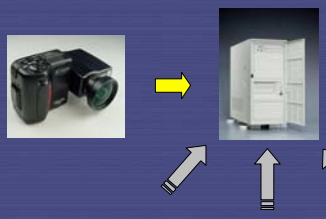
Old-newspaper



• Think Digital
--Not analog

Thinking Ahead

New Digital



Application A | Application B | Application C

Think Process
--it's not the technology
--it is what you're trying to accomplish

Create then Purpose
--create content
--then decide how to distribute

Own the Content
--Use DRM to build content inventory

Customer Determines Consumption
--By price, availability, format, lifestyle

Thinking Ahead

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Friday, April 13, 2007

Blogs
Citizen Journalism
Interactive Media

Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org

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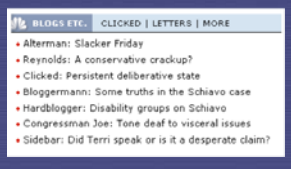
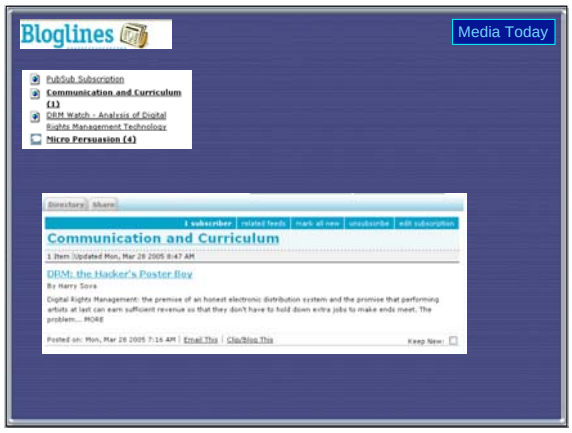
Blogs

Media Today

• Combination of *Web* and *Log*
--Started as online diaries
--Now replacing mainstream media: news




Bloglines
Media Today
PubSub Subscription
Communication and Curriculum (1)
DRM Watch - Analysis of Digital Rights Management Technology
Micro Persuasion (4)
Communication and Curriculum
DRM: the Hacker's Poster Boy

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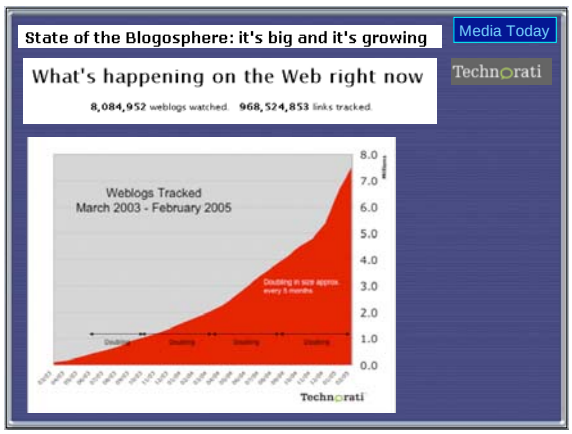
Communication & Curriculum
DRM: the Hacker's Poster Boy


State of the Blogosphere: it's big and it's growing
Media Today
What's happening on the Web right now
8,084,952 weblogs watched. 968,524,853 links tracked.
Technorati
Weblogs Tracked
March 2003 - February 2005
Technorati

What's happening on the Web right now
8,209,310 weblogs watched. 988,956,423 links tracked.
Media Today
Technorati
Top 100 Technorati
The most authoritative blogs, ranked by the number of sources that link to each blog. Last updated 8:06 AM Pacific Time.
1. Boing Boing: A Directory of Wonderful Things 20,045 links from 12,650 sources
2. Instapundit.com 15,215 links from 9,931 sources
3. Daily Kos 14,191 links from 8,537 sources
4. Gizmodo 10,952 links from 8,210 sources
5. dave.netics® 7,587 links from 7,417 sources
6. Talking Points Memo: by Joshua Micah Marshall 9,945 links from 7,107 sources
7. Binary Bonsai 6,858 links from 5,937 sources
8. Eschaton 8,179 links from 5,899 sources
9. Engadget - www.engadget.com 10,897 links from 5,653 sources
10. www.Andrewsullivan.com - Daily Dish 7,106 links from 5,580 sources
11. dooce 5,939 links from 5,057 sources
12. WIL WHEATON DOT NET 5,841 links from 4,943 sources
13. lgf: the fuad ramses of web design 7,800 links from 4,881 sources
14. Metafilter | Community Weblog 7,435 links from 4,866 sources
15. (In)formação e (In)utilidade 5,049 links from 4,779 sources

Media Today
Get Konked
CD Review - The Konks
CD Review: Will Smith - Lost & Found
Lisa Marie Presley appearing on Oprah Monday and Tuesday.
Stuff You Don't Learn in Engineering School - Brief Book Review
An Icy Adventure
TV: The Week Ahead for March 28, 2005
Closer
Review: New Dr. Who
Day By Day for March 28, 2005
RAZOR BLADE EXPRESS
Vinick for President
Black Conservative Compact For Values
The
Blogcritics.org

Associated Press
Sponsored by:
LEXUS
N.C. Newspaper Uses Blogs to Reach Readers
03.27.2005, 12:55 PM
Media Today
Forbes.com
It's a journalist's job to ask questions, but they're usually aimed at outsiders. At the News & Record, a 93,000-daily circulation newspaper in Greensboro, reporters and editors are asking tough questions about the paper itself. The biggest questions: If the paper needs to change to survive, what changes should be made? What can it do, especially online, to make itself the electronic equivalent of a town square?
Seeking the answers, the paper has launched an audacious online experiment.
The News & Record's Web site features 11 staff-written Web journals, or blogs, including one by the editor that answers readers' questions, addresses their criticisms and discusses how the paper is run.
That puts the paper way ahead of even much larger news organizations. The News & Record's blogs range from "just-the-facts, ma'am," to slightly spicy.
There's a page for reader-submitted articles, another for letters to the editor and an online tips' form. The Web site hosts online forums on 23 topics, including safety at a local high school, FedEx Corp.'s move to the area and cameras at local stoplights. Traffic cams monitor local road conditions.

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Blogs
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Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org

Media Today

The venerable newspaper is in trouble. Under sustained assault from cable television, the Internet, all-news radio and lifestyles so cram-packed they leave little time for the daily paper, the industry is struggling to remake itself.

Papers are conducting exhaustive surveys to find out what readers want. They are launching new sections, beefing up Web sites and spinning off free community papers and commuter giveaways in hopes of widening their audience. They even are trying to change the very language of the industry, asking advertisers and investors to dwell less on "circulation" -- how many papers are sold -- and more on "readership," or the number of people exposed to a paper's journalism wherever it appears, in print, on the Web or over the air.

washingtonpost.com

MSNBC

Hard News
Daily Papers Face Unprecedented Competition

By Frank Ahrens
Washington Post Staff Writer
Sunday, February 20, 2005; Page F01

U.S. newspaper industry struggling

Frank A. Blethen, publisher of the Seattle Times, said his industry has some breathing room left. But not much.

"The baby boomers are going to continue to drive print [sales] for some time," he said. "The problem we have are the . . . 18- to 35-year-olds. They're not replacing the baby boomers."

Others are more blunt, if hyperbolic.

"Print is dead," Sports Illustrated President John Squires told a room full of newspaper and magazine circulation executives at a conference in Toronto in November. His advice? "Get over it," meaning publishers should stop trying to save their ink-on-paper product and focus on electronic delivery of their journalism.

Media Today

Local net TV takes off in Austria

An Austrian village is testing technology that could represent the future of television.

The people of Engerwitzdorf are filming, editing and producing their own regional news channel.

The citizens of Engerwitzdorf are making their own news

The channel covers local politics, sports, events and anything that residents want to film and are prepared to upload for others to watch on PCs.

The pilot has been so successful that Telekom Austria is now considering setting up other projects elsewhere.

Pioneering project

"It's growing unbelievably fast," said Rudolf Fischer, head of Telekom Austria's fixed line division.

The trial of Buntes Fernsehen (Multi-Coloured TV) was started in late 2004 and creates a net-based TV station run by the 8,000 residents of Engerwitzdorf.

BBC NEWS WORLD EDITION

In the first four months of the project villagers have created 60 films and put together regular reports on local news items.

"They have adopted it very quickly," said Mr Fischer. "They like the possibility to create their own content and see what's going on in the area."

"It's kind of the democratisation of local TV," he said, "because none of the bigger broadcasters would ever do anything like this for that region."

The Buntes Fernsehen project has been such a success that Telekom Austria is now considering setting up other schemes in similarly rural areas.

Media Today

Unification Minister Clarifies NK Debate

[Opinion] Chung Dong Young has tried to counter emotionalism surrounding the North Korea issue

Regarding the assumptions behind Chairman Hyde's comments, there are many questions worth asking. For instance, does he think that the Roh administration's politically costly dispatch of 3,600 Korean troops to Iraq and... (Stephen Costello)

'War Is Impermissible On the Korean Peninsula'

U.S. Friendly Fire is Self-defeating

[Analysis] Bulgaria, Italy, Canada have had soldiers killed by American hands, marring solidarity

When U.S. troops shot at an Italian journalist who'd been held by an Iraqi resistance group and ended up killing her protector, Italians could not help but remember how a hot-rodding American pilot caused 20 skiers to plunge... (Michael Johansen)

'Italians Demand Justice for Dead Agent'

OMNI NEWS TRACKER

- Schröder Calls on German Firms...
- Ethnic Albanians Boycott Macedonian...
- UK firms caught in illegal waste dumping
- New Details on F.B.I. Aid for Saudi...
- New Kyrgyz Leaders Try to Avert Spl...

HOT SEAT

Harsh Words Hailed Over Anthem

Ealdal Ahn's grandson tells of his family's heartbreak at criticism about royalties...

- "Tough Times Require U.S. Trust'
- Korea's Top Diplomat Maps Out Sino-Korean Tensions, Outlook
- Japanese Lawmaker Urges Asia-centric Vision, Stronger Ties to Korea
- 'IR's Pandora's Box of Reform Is Open'

Poll

Which nation do you think is responsible for the current stalemate in the six-way talks? (If you would like to elaborate,

OhmyNews INTERNATIONAL

Media Today

Why 37,000+ citizens report for OhMyNews

Since OhMyNews was founded 5 years ago in S. Korea, more than 37,000 "citizen reporters" have filed for the grass-roots news site. For the past year the site has been working on an English-language international edition, and to get a better idea how to expand globally, OhmyNews met with some of its European citizen reporters in Brussels last month to get their ideas.

For those wondering why so many people would want to write for a site like OhMyNews, the editors asked the reporters what motivates them to participate. Here is what they said:

Sara Williams (UK): I heard about OMN from a friend (and citizen reporter) in Korea. I hope to produce a couple of pieces a month. My first piece was a travel article, and I'd like to have a harder focus in future pieces that affect people's lives.

Jina Chang (Norway): I write for journals related to photography but I don't really have much journalistic experience. I'm more of an artist than writer. I got into OhmyNews after writing a correction for a comment on an Iraq story. And then the editor contacted me about becoming a citizen reporter.

Park Young-shin (France): I'm a reporter for Korean radio and one of my producers introduced me to OhmyNews. I've been writing for two years. A year on, I asked myself why I continue to write for OhmyNews, because it is hard to find time to write. (But) "every citizen is a reporter" is about changing the world.

- Rise of the Citizen Journalist
  --Role reversal taking place
  --Journalists becoming managers
  --Average citizens becoming reporters

THE MEDIA CENTER AT THE AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE

Media Today

Ideas for news site as 'public square'

As promised, writer Lex Alexander delivered a detailed report to his editors at The Greensboro News & Record on how to make the newspaper's Web site more of a "public square."

CYBERJOURNALIST.NET

- Assign local bloggers to cover in depth some things that we don't -- e.g., community sports by team, business specialties, etc.
- Recruit a blogger for each neighborhood from among its residents, a la Waterville, NY, paper.
- "Get Me Rewrite!" -- readers re-write stories to emphasize what they believe are the salient points, or to highlight what they think was missing in the published story. Reporters and their editors review those comments to learn.
- Build wiki(s) (cf. en.wikipedia.com) on subjects, e.g., histories of Greensboro's neighborhoods.
- Interactive assignment editor: Readers suggest stories and a dedicated (e.g., this is a full-time beat) reporter does them, explaining how he did them, why he made certain decisions, etc.
- Structure Letters to the Editor as a blog, with each letter having its own permalink and comments.
- Invite area bloggers in to blog budget meetings. (Note for non-newspaper folks: "Budget meetings" aren't financial. They're meetings in which merit and play of stories for the next day's paper are discussed; a "budget" is a list of proposed stories, with information on what it's about, who's writing it, any accompanying art elements, and deadline.)
- Invite area bloggers in to blog editorial-board meetings.
- Regularly staff-blog budget meetings.
- Regularly staff-blog editorial-board meetings.

Media Today

New tool lets audience-stringers submit video news stories via the Internet

Feb 24, 2005 5:00 PM
News Technology Update e-newsletter

E-mail this article

News directors seeking to collect video clips from viewer-stringers via the Internet have a new alternative that cuts through the confusion and challenges surrounding competing formats for Web video.

A new, scalable video platform from KnowItAllVideo lets audiences interact and submit footage by uploading short-form video to any Web site.

Internet video remains one of the most challenging media for broadcast and search engine companies to work with effectively. KIAV platform removes such complications by enabling media companies to easily integrate audience-generated video content into their regular broadcasts and Internet programming.

TV talk shows can use the platform as a portal through which audience members can interact directly with a show's host and guests. Producers can choose to air the best audience-generated videos during television broadcast and can benefit from visitors spending more time watching videos on the show's Web site.

News directors can even invite audience members to submit local news stories to their Web sites. For more information, visit www.knowitallvideo.com.

Internet Evangelism Conference
Friday, April 13, 2007

Blogs
Citizen Journalism
Interactive Media

Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org

Media Today

Clear Channel To Embrace Podcasting

March 25, 2005
By Paul Heine

Clear Channel plans to take first steps toward extending its radio brands through podcasting, as part of a new coherent Internet strategy set to unfold over the next several months at radio's largest operator.

Radio's latest buzz phrase, podcasting is the computerized transfer of audio from the Internet to a portable MP3 player.

Clear Channel plans to make five-minute, ad-supported segments available for download from station sites. Morning show vignettes, content from air talent and bits like top 40 WHTZ New York's "Z100 Phonetap" are among the offerings the company plans to make available as downloads.

Podcasting, launching a Web-based performance series (see separate story) and committing 100 additional stations to online streaming are part of the company's new Internet initiative, spearheaded by executive VP Evan Harrison. Aiming for the 19 million people who listen to online streaming radio each week, Clear Channel says it intends to give consumers "what they want, when they want it," offering both on-demand and "appointment" content.

The company also has its eye on an online advertising market that is expected to reach $11 billion this year, an increase of 30% from last year.

Media Today

80,000 local photos in galleries by staff photographers and citizens

Site generated 21 million pages views in 2004

Strong boost to circulation

Internet Evangelism Conference
Friday, April 13, 2007

Wake-up Call

Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org

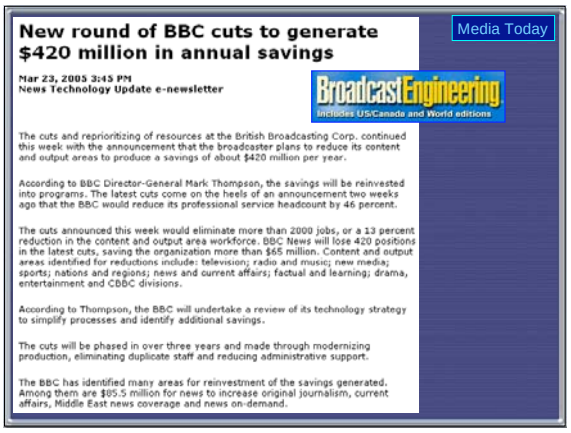
Media Today

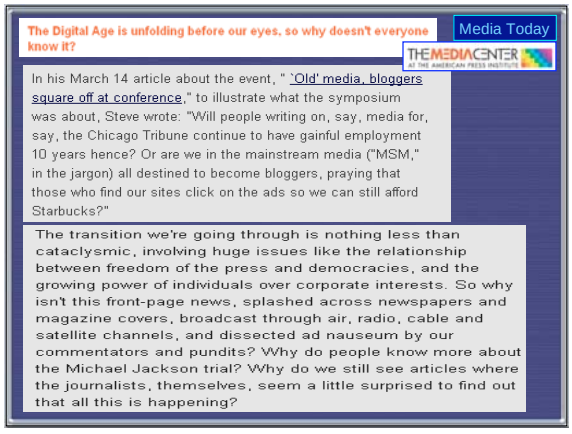
Why news industry is in peril and how participatory media can save it

In a report for the Carnegie Corporation examining how the young get their news, Merrill Brown says the news industry is in peril unless it dramatically rethinks it's approach to news.

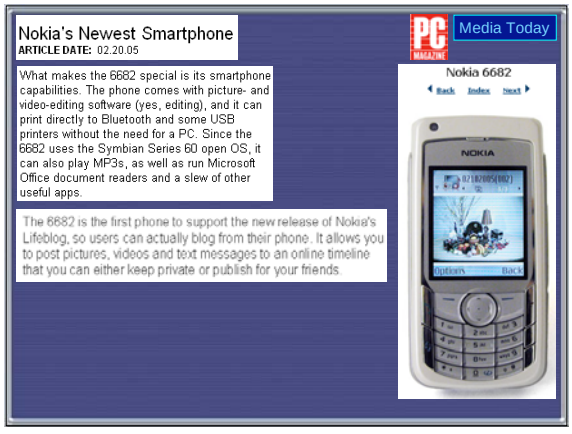
"News executives need to think about their products as participatory community institutions, not merely as distributors of their own creative output, and open themselves to input, feedback, ideas and journalism from outside their own organizations. In addition, news organizations must recognize the value of the one piece of technology that's in virtually every hand around the world—the cell phone—so that the mobile revolution is, in fact, part of a news revolution."

Media Today
Carnegie Reporter
STOP PRESS!
Abandoning the News
by Merrill Brown
What's the future of the news business? This report to Carnegie Corporation of New York offers some provocative ideas.
There's a dramatic revolution taking place in the news business today and it isn't about TV anchor changes, scandals at storied newspapers or embedded reporters. The future course of the news, including the basic assumptions about how we consume news and information and make decisions in a democratic society are being altered by technology-savvy young people no longer wedded to traditional news outlets or even accessing news in traditional ways.
In short, the future of the U.S. news industry is seriously threatened by the seemingly irrevocable move by young people away from traditional sources of news.


Media Today
New round of BBC cuts to generate $420 million in annual savings
Mar 23, 2005 3:43 PM
News Technology Update e-newsletter
Broadcast Engineering
Includes US/Canada and World editions
The cuts and reprioritizing of resources at the British Broadcasting Corp. continued this week with the announcement that the broadcaster plans to reduce its content and output areas to produce a savings of about $420 million per year.
According to BBC Director-General Mark Thompson, the savings will be reinvested into programs. The latest cuts come on the heels of an announcement two weeks ago that the BBC would reduce its professional service headcount by 46 percent.
The cuts announced this week would eliminate more than 2000 jobs, or a 13 percent reduction in the content and output area workforce. BBC News will lose 420 positions in the latest cuts, saving the organization more than $65 million. Content and output areas identified for reductions include: television; radio and music; new media; sports; nations and regions; news and current affairs; factual and learning; drama, entertainment and CBBC divisions.
According to Thompson, the BBC will undertake a review of its technology strategy to simplify processes and identify additional savings.
The cuts will be phased in over three years and made through modernizing production, eliminating duplicate staff and reducing administrative support.
The BBC has identified many areas for reinvestment of the savings generated. Among them are $85.5 million for news to increase original journalism, current affairs, Middle East news coverage and news on-demand.


Media Today
The Digital Age is unfolding before our eyes, so why doesn't everyone know it?
THE MEDIA CENTER
AT THE AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE
In his March 14 article about the event, " 'Old' media, bloggers square off at conference," to illustrate what the symposium was about, Steve wrote: "Will people writing on, say, media for, say, the Chicago Tribune continue to have gainful employment 10 years hence? Or are we in the mainstream media ("MSM," in the jargon) all destined to become bloggers, praying that those who find our sites click on the ads so we can still afford Starbucks?"
The transition we're going through is nothing less than cataclysmic, involving huge issues like the relationship between freedom of the press and democracies, and the growing power of individuals over corporate interests. So why isn't this front-page news, splashed across newspapers and magazine covers, broadcast through air, radio, cable and satellite channels, and dissected ad nauseum by our commentators and pundits? Why do people know more about the Michael Jackson trial? Why do we still see articles where the journalists, themselves, seem a little surprised to find out that all this is happening?

Media Today
Broadband killing off newspapers
Hold the front page
Iain Thomson, vnunet.com 08 Mar 2005
vnunet.com
US consumers with broadband used the internet rather than newspapers during the last presidential elections as their primary news source, a survey has revealed.
"The last election was a breakout event for the internet," said Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Internet & American Life Project and one of the authors of the report.
Just under 40 per cent of those with broadband at home cited the internet as their major source of political news, compared to 36 per cent who obtained their news mainly from newspapers.
"Every aspect of online politics grew quantitatively and many were wholly new, from the flood of online campaign contributions to the rise of political bloggers," explained Rainie.
Compared with a similar study carried out after the 2000 US presidential elections, online access to political news grew from 18 per cent to 29 per cent in 2004.
Over a third of the 2,200 respondents used the internet to research candidates, pick up political news, make online contributions and converse about political issues. Over half said that information helped them decide which way to vote.
Of those surveyed 53 per cent voted for Bush and 47 per cent for Kerry. But Kerry supporters were more likely to make online contributions, trade email jokes, check for endorsements from interest group websites, and register opinions in online surveys.


Media Today
PC MAGAZINE
Nokia's Newest Smartphone
ARTICLE DATE: 02.20.05
What makes the 6682 special is its smartphone capabilities. The phone comes with picture- and video-editing software (yes, editing), and it can print directly to Bluetooth and some USB printers without the need for a PC. Since the 6682 uses the Symbian Series 60 open OS, it can also play MP3s, as well as run Microsoft Office document readers and a slew of other useful apps.
The 6682 is the first phone to support the new release of Nokia's Lifeblog, so users can actually blog from their phone. It allows you to post pictures, videos and text messages to an online timeline that you can either keep private or publish for your friends.
Nokia 6682
Back Index Next
NOKIA

Media Today
USB Anyone?
USBポットコースター
Computing > Accessories > George Foreman USB iGrill
Main Description
Cooking For The Web Set
The low-fat, high-bandwidth solution to your networked cooking needs is finally here. The George Foreman USB iGrill conveniently connects to your home or office PC using USB 2.0 technology, and provides a sophisticated web-based cooking interface.
Download recipes, enter in the type of food, weight and desired degree of doneness, and the iGrill handles the rest. Did you know that a medium rare 1/4 lb. hamburger made from 80% lean beef takes 1 minute and 45 seconds less cook time than an identical patty made from 95% lean prime Black Angus? The iGrill does. As your meal cooks, the subtle glow from under the unit increases brightness and pulses faster until your meal is perfectly done.
Running late at work? Need to get dinner on the table? It is easy to warm up the iGrill from any internet connection. With a little advance planning, your meal can be ready when you get home!
Using the USB current to directly charge high voltage capacitors, the iGrill does not require any additional power supply, making it perfect for dorm or office cooking.

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New Media Technologies and Trends
Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
ccblog.org

Think Digital
Think Process
Create, then Copy
Own the Content
Recognize Customer is Your Client

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Friday, April 13, 2007
Your Questions and/or Comments
Dr. Harry Sova
Liberty University
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Podcasting
and
Internet Evangelism

Although it's new, I'm convinced podcasting will transform the way many people consume media, just as blogging and TiVo have. When you can program your own radio station, carry it with you anywhere and pause and restart it at will, who needs mainstream, advertising-supported broadcast radio?

Michael Bazeley
Knight Ridder Newspapers

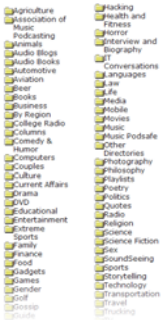
PODcasting will shift much of our time away from an old medium where we wait for what we might want to hear to a new medium where we choose what we want to hear, when we want to hear it, and how we want to give everybody else the option to listen to it as well.

Doc Searls

Podcasting = Syndicated Audio

Audio + RSS (XML)

Types of Podcasts



Brief History of Podcasting

Adam Curry

Dave Winer

What to do…

It's a conversation, really

How to make a Podcast

AudioBlogger.com

How to make a Podcast

Live to disk

How to make a Podcast

"Fix it in post"

Publishing your Podcast

Getting heard

Making money?

Some things I'd love to see happen

Fears

Q & A

Closing thought

"Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

St. Francis of Assisi
(Founder of the Franciscan order, 1181-1226)

VIDEOBLOG KILLED THE TV STAR:

The Emergence of the Vlog and What It Means for You and Me

Aaron Flores of theVoiz.com

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I. Videoblogging? Putting Myself Online? MMM, I Don't Know.

What's a vlog, how it came about, and how it's changing how we communicate

What's a vlog? Good question. Simply, a vlog is short for videoblog. That is video placed in a weblog as a means of communication or expression. The video can be a supplement or replacement to a text posting. Typically, most vlogs provide a brief introduction to the video, but others may include one to several videos in a post linked together by narrative text. Some vloggers also simply just offer their videos, allowing the viewer to engage the media a part from any pre-established understanding of the video post.

Currently, vlogs can fall into one or more loose categories:

Personal Journal
Artistic
Collaborative
Comical/Satirical
Etc., and Other

Citizen Journalism
Video Remixes
Editorial/Conversationalist
Shows/Programming

DIVERSITY IS KEY. NO VLOGGER IS LIMITED TO A CATEGORY. CREATE. AS VLOGGER, RYAN HODSON OF *RYANEDIT.BLOGSPOT.COM* SAYS, "WE ARE THE MEDIA." CREATE AND COMMUNICATE.

HOW IT CAME ABOUT

Really, no one knows how vlogging came about. Our only guess is that in the 90's, some people had an idea to start placing video online. With the advent of blogging, these same people probably had a revelation to put video in their blogs. It's not science. I remember when I became a blogger, I pondered, "Why aren't more people putting video in their blogs?" Long and behold there was a community of people called videobloggers who were asking the same question. Not only were they asking the question, they were creating personal media for public consumption. No one person invented vlogging. You and I invented it.

THE REVOLUTION OF THE INTERNET IS HERE : VIDEOBLOGGING

One of the reasons I became a vlogger was to escape the anonymity of the internet. I was tired of being a screen name and ip address. I wanted a voice, a face. I wanted to a be a real person online. I wanted to communicate with others my life, my thoughts, my feelings, my beliefs, etc. without being unknown. Funny thing was, there were others just like me who wanted to do the same thing.

I'm still imagining an Internet 2.0, where people have a harder time concealing their identities in social networks and online relationships. I'm imagining an internet where people can have face to face conversations in video. Where I can discover someone life's from afar and spend time with them virtually-physically.

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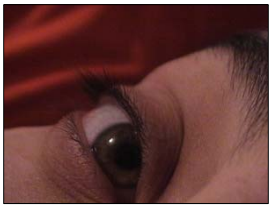
II. You Can't Do That On A PodCast

A look at the similarities and differences with emerging new media

Podcasting and Videoblogging are not the same! Similar, but very different in so many ways. Here's why:

Podcasting	Videoblogging
Deals solely with audio	Not limited to audio. Includes both audio and video.
Generally podcasts are longer in length (30 minutes to an hour)	Vlogs are typically 3-10 minutes in length. As bandwidth becomes cheaper and production software becomes available, perhaps one day vlogs will be as long as podcasts. Who knows.
Podcasts are marketed to mp3 handheld users who want to hear media on the go	Vlogs are viewed on computers through media aggregators, though I also watch videos on my pocket pc.
Podcasts are distributed through RSS 2.0 w/enclosures	Vlogs are distributed through RSS 2.0 w/enclosures
Podcasts are similar to radio broadcasts	Vlogs are typically different from television broadcasts, in length, content, appeal, consumption, and corporate sponsorship.
Podcasts are distributed daily, monthly, weekly, and irregularly	Vlogs are distributed daily, monthly, weekly, and irregularly
Podcasts are generally less intimate, allowing the podcaster to remain anonymous	Vlogs tend to be very personal and very intimate, disclosing fully who the vlogger is

Some things you can't do in a podcast:



You can't show a building in your neighborhood on fire in the rain.
The 05 Project: noservicecharge.com/videoblog/

You can't show your telephone conversation with a gentlemen sitting at a bar near a webcam.
Rocketboom: rocketboom.com

You can't show me you licking your girlfriend's eyeball.
Jay Dedman: momemtshowing.com

You can't show me a man on the street, guerilla style interview with one of the head honchos of FeedBurner and your outrage over censorship on public broadcasting.
Ryan Hodson: ryanedit.blogspot.com

You can't show me your emotions when your baby daughter is no longer a baby, but a full certified kid.
Aaron Flores: theVoiz.com

Political and social concerns of students in Tibet.
Students for a Free Tibet: tibetwillbefree.blogspot.com

Just a few things you can't do in a podcast.

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III. OK, I'm A Wanna Be Vlogger. Now What?

Steps to creating your vlog, including creating a free vlog, mass video distribution, and joining the vlogging community

Step 1 - Get A Blog Account

There are tons of blogging services and software. My preference is Typepad.com which is a paid service, but many also prefer others, including blogger.com (a free service). Choose one and set up an account.

The Free Way

Michael Verdi of michaelverdi.com and freevlog.blogspot.com recommends creating your own free website/blog, using Flickr (www.flickr.com) for free image hosting, and the Internet Archive (www.archive.org) for free video hosting.

Save a dime and get yourself a free Blogger blog. Go to blogger.com, create an account, set up your blog and make your first post. *A link is available at freevlog.blogspot.com to an online photo tutorial by Michael.*

Step 2 - Image Hosting

Many of the paid services have storage. With Typepad you are able to upload photos. You need to have storage space for images that will link to your videos and the actual videos themselves.

The Free Way

Michael shares a photo of Dylan –the youngest blogger (dylanverdi.blogspot.com), himself and Ryanne (ryanedit.blogspot.com) from Vloggercon. He uploaded it to Flickr and set up a Flickr account to post to the freevlog blog. Freevlog also provides an photo tutorial on creating a free Flickr account.

Step 3 - Upload Your Video To The Internet Archive (www.archive.org)

You might be wondering about bandwidth issues. Obviously the more people who watch your videos the more bandwidth you use. Not a problem with Internet Archive. I typically upload my videos to my server and the Archive, then after a week or so I switch the link from my site to the archive's link. Now videos will not use my bandwidth but the Internet Archives. The Archive will host your videos for free, forever! The Archive takes about 24 hours to approve a post and provide a URL to link to.

Ourmedia.org is also in alpha and you may want to give them a glance.

Log into your blog and post the link to your video, whether on your server or hosted at Internet Archive.

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More Tips From Freevlog
Freevlog also provides a tutorial on creating an account with Internet Archive, selecting a copyright by creative commons, etc.

Step 4 - Create An RSS Feed With Enclosures
This is a bold claim, but if RSS didn't exist maybe new online media, such as blogging, vlogging, and podcasting could not exist as we know it. It's an important part to the changes occurring online and evident in websites. Many people are confused by RSS technology, but there is no need to fear RSS.

What does it stand for? Who knows! The most common definition is Really Simple Syndication. Pretty much it means that you have the power to retrieve information from a site without visiting the site regularly. Using media aggregators, you are able to download straight to your computer updated media from a site. But before we talk more about that, you need a feed in your new vlog. Each blogging service is different, so RSS feeds vary per blogging service. To distribute your vlog, you will need RSS 2.0.

Tip
A simple way to get the RSS feed you need is through FeedBurner.com. Enter the feed your server provides into FeedBurner and it will generate an RSS 2.0 feed with enclosures. FeedBurner is valuable service with tons of options.

FeedBurner Tips
You need to select a few things to make sure FeedBurner is working properly:

- Make sure you select SmartCast. Whatever you select, be sure you select SmartCast, enabling your feed for podcasting and vlogging.
- Ping audio.weblogs.com. Now I know that this is for podcasters, but I get tons of traffic from sending a ping. Plus throwing a video to a bunch of audio fanatics, is sure to get some attention.

More About Enclosures
What's an enclosure? A fancy word for enclosing media in a link. FeedBurner will automatically do this for you, but if you like some extra work or want to help FeedBurner out, when you link to your video, you may want to add the following in the link:

rel="enclosure"

The FreeWay
Of course, freevlog.blogspot.com offers you a visual tutorial in case this text is hard to understand. I prefer the visual as well.

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Step 5 – Mass Distribution

We already spoke about RSS 2.0 with enclosures and pinging audio.weblogs.com. Well, here is a few more ways to get your videos out to the world.

- Ping http://www.videoblogging.info/ping/
- Add your feed to MeFeedia (formerly Me-TV) at http://mefeedia.com/add.php
- If you have a del.icio.us (http://del.icio.us/) account, tag your feed "antfeeds"

A Little Program Called ANT

ANT is an RSS video aggregator and media player currently available for Mac OS X 10.3 Panther. PC is in BETA.

With ANT, you can subscribe to any RSS 2.0 feed with enclosures. ANT will automatically download fresh audio and video content for you to watch and listen to. It can playback any media format, and syncs audio files with iTunes so you can easily add them to your portable MP3 player.

ANT has recently been featured on MSNBC and in the New York Times. It is an aggressive effort at mass distribution of video content in a media aggregator and bullies other media aggregators, including iPodder. Download for FREE, ANT at www.antnotv.org and encourage others to watch your videos using ANT.

Step 6 – The Videoblogging Community

IMHO, what makes videoblogging unique and set apart from other online media is the community behind it –the people. Not the technology! Not RSS! Not even ANT, the Archive, or OurMedia.org. The people make videoblogging a unique medium. Videos are personal and vlogging is very interpersonal. The talent, creativity, freedom of expression, and vision behind this trend in technology, is driven by the people –by people who see themselves as the media.

Join our Videoblogging Yahoo Group. Whether you are a new vlogger, interested to learn more, or want to see if all I'm telling you is legit or hype, join our community. Introduce yourself, give us your URL, ask us to subscribe to your RSS feed, and then show us the video goods. Oh, and let them know how you became interested in videoblogging.

Also, check out Videoblogging.info and complete an online form to get included on a growing list of videobloggers throughout the world.

Freevlog.blogspot.com Videobloggers Pledge

Lastly, you must recite the following: I _____ do solemnly promise to post video regularly. I promise to post video even if I don't really have time to or even if I really need to get some sleep. Also, I promise to teach others to videoblog or at the very least, point them over here when they get inspired from watching my videos.

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IV. Wait A Minute! What About Videoblogging Content, Conversations, Community, and Privacy?

Tips from a daily vlogger on media content, starting convo, developing relationships, and stepping out of online anonymity

First, this is not an attempt to get you to videoblog a certain way or to limit your expression/content. Simply this is to help you get started or give you some ideas from someone who posts video online just about everyday. As a vlogger, I'm more than sensitive and can appreciate that there are a lot of us who do not want someone other than ourselves controlling our vlog. With that said, let's look at a few things.

Content

Time: The average video is roughly 3 minutes long. Some of us post videos that last just under 10 minutes. Really, there is no established length of time. Do what you want. Understand though that videos have a great ability to be very TIVO'ish, meaning viewers will forward through half of what you are saying if it's not presented well or if it seems to be dragging on. If you don't mind that, post a 30 minute video if you like. **My Likes:** I like short videos but do not mind a video that is long with something worth the length. **My Dislikes:** Videos that drag on. Videos where someone is talking about nothing.

Subject Matter: That is entirely up to you. Most vlogger's are brutally honest. There is tons of freedom to say and do anything you wish. From showing your children online like itsakid.thevoiz.com (shameless plug for my 4 yr. and infant's vlog) to sharing your daily life to having a nervous breakdown to making a complete fool of yourself or sharing your views. Whatever you want to do, go at it. **My Likes:** Videos where the subject matter is authentic to the vlogger. **My Dislikes:** Videos where its obvious that the vlogger is trying to hard to get attention, make a dime (i.e., propaganda), or doesn't value the opinions of others.

Conversations

Videoblogs, much like blogs, are conversational. Many vloggers appreciate interaction and conversation. They are looking to connect to the outside world. Comment or better yet, make a video comment and post it on your vlog. theVoiz.com has been involved in many video conversations, actually meeting online and in person people throughout the world. **My Likes:** A Vlogger who can generate good conversation and keep that conversation going. **My Dislikes:** Videos that are one sided and closed to any conversation.

Community

We already discussed that videoblogging is powered by a community of vloggers passionate about video on the web. One mistake I've seen made by newbie vloggers is to take this fore granted in hopes to gain internet fame, recognition, financial gain, or to propagate or sell something to an audience. As much as I want to encourage freedom to use this medium for whatever, I also want to encourage participation in the videoblogging community and respect for what the people who are behind this medium.

Privacy

One reason as to why people are intimidated by videoblogging is the loss of being anonymous. Video is a powerful medium. You can write something shocking and get away with it. You cannot do something in video that is shocking and go unseen as easily. Online video has boosted people to online fame overnight. You joking around in a video posted to your vlog can easily be headline news not only in the U.S. but in any country with access to the internet. Also video has staying power. Do something in a video and it has the potential to stay with you the rest of your life. Scary? Not really.

Just be comfortable with what you are putting online. Be comfortable with your views, who you are, what you have to say. I'm an advocate for the real person online. I've shared very personal moments like the time when we lost our house and needed to move and times when I've been stressed, confused, sad to times when I'm joking with friends and making a fool of myself. People who know me away from theVoiz.com know that I'm a normal person, and the goal of theVoiz is for me to be just as real of a person.

I remember when I first started videoblogging. It was so strange to talk into a camera. Essentially I was talking to nobody except myself and a cold piece of technology. I thought I was out of mind. But as time went on and I did it more, I began to get comfortable with the camera and sharing my life, opinions, art, beliefs, commentary, family, etc. online. In some odd way, videoblogging has also been a spiritual experience for me as well as therapy. Play with the medium, understand its potential, understand the risks, and see where it leads. That's my advice.

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V. A-List Vloggers

I pick a few regular vloggers that I like and tell you why they are on my A-List

Here are my favorite vloggers in no order:

Ryan Hodson: ryanedit.blogspot.com
Ryan or Ryanne (whichever your prefer) shows the world everything, from getting large tattoos to what women go through monthly to her views on religion. Ryan's almost daily videos are some of the most entertaining, insightful, and conversation friendly.

RocketBoom: rocketboom.com
Hailed as The Daily Show of the vlogosphere, rocketboom provides satirical comedy and commentary on arts, technology, drama and whatever other quirky thing that want to tackle.

Scratch Video: crule.typepad.com
Typically artsy and a bit on the bizarre side (that's a compliment), Charlene at Scratch Video serves up a nice dish of creative juice.

Human Dog: human-dog.com
They don't come any more unique than Human Dog. Often comical, never boring videos outside of mainstream media.

Michael Verdi: michaelverdi.com
A mix of art, anarchy, and just good ol' film making. Michael and Dylan of dylanverdi.blogspot.com are my videoblogging saints who virtually led me into the vlogosphere.

MomentShowing: momentshowing.com
Jay Dedman! Come on! The man behind almost every videoblogging project to date. He's the self-professed vlogging evangelist and pastor.

Carol and Steve Show: stevegarfield.blogs.com
Seinfield-esque. Each episode has no meaning. Just Steve and Carol on some random adventure.

Eric Rice: blog.ericrice.com
Podcasting extraordinaire with an itch to videoblog as well. Culture, technology, and entertainment.

Ian Mills: The 05 Project: noservicecharge.com/videoblog/
One video everyday of the week all year long. One of the few vloggers who's dedicated enough to vlog every day.

Shannon Noble: This is Vlog: x.nnon.tv/blog
Mostly personal, occasionally purely artsy, Shannon's been taking us to coffee lately with M.E.N. (Marginally Employed Men).

theVoiz: www.thevoiz.com
It's my session and my A-List, so it makes sense that I put myself. Very personal, one of the only videoblogs with a religious edge, and often moving as I show you my life.

Get more vlogs at www.videoblogging.info.

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