



## ABSTRACT

# CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES RELATIVE TO THE EFFECTIVE USE OF INTERNET-BASED COMMUNICATIONS

by

Kenneth Lynn Lewis, Jr.

This research project explores mass communication-related dynamics in latter twentieth century America, reviews Christians' use of mass communications technologies up through the twentieth century, and examines select Internet experiences to offer suggestions to Christians seeking to employ digital communications tools in ministry in the twenty-first century.

The project encompassed a four-year period between 1998 and 2001 and included three-years of focused interaction with thirty-three flagship and representative organizations from fourteen states and twenty-six cities nationwide. It additionally incorporates the Internet-related interactions of the author with nearly eleven hundred people representing more than 450 organizations and forty states.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:  
PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES RELATIVE TO THE EFFECTIVE USE  
OF INTERNET-BASED COMMUNICATIONS

presented by

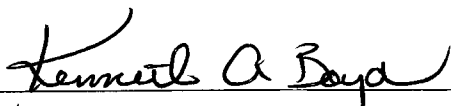
Kenneth Lynn Lewis, Jr.

has been accepted towards fulfillment

of the requirements for the

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at

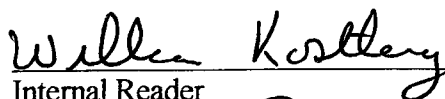
Asbury Theological Seminary



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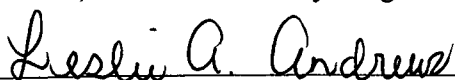
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CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:  
PATTERNS AND PRINCIPLES RELATIVE TO THE EFFECTIVE USE  
OF INTERNET-BASED COMMUNICATIONS

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Kenneth Lynn Lewis, Jr.

May 2002

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the following members and associates of my dissertation committee for their efforts on my behalf during my D. Min. endeavors:

Dr. Leslie A. Andrews, Dean of the Doctor of Ministry Program and Vice President of Academic Development and Distributed Learning;

Dr. Ken Boyd, Professor of Instructional Design and Executive Director of Information Technology;

Dr. Bill Kostlevy, Adjunct Professor of Church History;

Dr. Thomas Tumblin, Director, Doctor of Ministry Program;

Eric W. B. Aiston, Academic Coach, Doctor of Ministry Studies;

Monica Atha, Administrative Assistant, Doctor of Ministry Program; and

Judy Seitz, Editor, Doctor of Ministry Program.

I thank the following persons for sharing their lives, passions, and wisdom with my family during the Beeson Pastor program at Asbury Theological Seminary:

Dr. and Mrs. Dale Galloway, Dean of the Beeson International Center for Biblical Preaching and Church Leadership;

Dr. and Mrs. Ellsworth Kalas, Chairman of Preaching and Worship; and,

Mrs. Penny Ruot, Administrative Assistant, Beeson Center.

I thank my family, especially my wife, Wendy, and three children, Krista, Mark, and Scotty, for their understanding and support throughout this project.

Finally, I thank those who invested in me, this project, and our company, as well as the many persons who shared their experiences and dreams with me in anticipation of an exciting new century.

## PREFACE

Bob and Mary American live in Typical Town, U.S.A. at the dawn of the twenty-first century. They interact with media nine hours per day—at home, at work, and in the car. Their household includes two wired telephones, one cordless phone, one cell phone, two televisions, two computers, four e-mail addresses, one mailbox, five radios, a VCR, a cassette player, a CD player, and an answering machine. They subscribe to cable TV, Internet service, long distance service, one newspaper, and three magazines, and their annualized communications expenses average over \$250 per month, or \$3,000 per year (Clack; “Market Snapshot”; Schaller).

Though Bob and Mary’s communication equipment and services are optional (i.e., not necessary for survival), to live without them seems unfathomable. Intrinsicly “communi-holic,” Americans appear unable to function without the tools and services that continually connect them to each other, their community, their nation, and their world. A lost TV remote control discombobulates the entire family; they cannot watch TV comfortably without it. A misplaced cell phone disrupts their interpersonal communications network. An answering machine mishap leaves them lying awake at night wondering how many people tried and failed to reach them. A missing newspaper creates a fissure in their day. A computer crash creates way-of-life-threatening alarm. A power failure casts them adrift in an unnervingly quiet sea of uncertainty and impotence.

This is the American’s life, full of promise and fraught with pitfall. In the pages ahead, I explore their communications culture—from where it has come, where it is going, and ways Christians can minister within it victoriously without losing their minds, jeopardizing their souls, sabotaging their society, or shaming their Lord.

## CHAPTER 1

### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

#### The Problem

Communication enables the intricate functioning of any system. The human body, a team, a business, and a government all rely on adequate intercommunication among the parts for the whole to work effectively and efficiently together. This truth bears doubly vital import in organizations that exist to communicate, like the church.

For example, the church exists to communicate this message, “Jesus Christ is Lord.” Only in connection with Jesus the Christ—who claimed that he came to reveal God and make him known (John 17:6, 26)—does the church find purpose and meaning at all.

The church exists to carry out this mission, “Make disciples.” Jesus instructed his first followers and handpicked leaders to communicate his message by making disciples via baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching obedience to his commands (Matt. 28:19).

Christian Scripture claims it exists to communicate that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, so that by believing people may have life in his name (John 20:31). It also records many methods of doing God’s mission and proclaiming His messages. Varying by time and place, circumstance and opportunity, gifts and graces, the Scriptures and nearly two thousand years of Christian history reveal numerous ways godly people have sought to fulfill the mandate of communicating the gospel, or good news, of Jesus Christ.

Yet, history also evidences a mandate of communication quite regularly distracted and ambushed by conflict. The early disciples fought over who was greatest while Jesus prepared to die for their sins (Mark 10:35-40). Later they argued about the salvation of

uncircumcised Gentiles while their fellow disciples suffered persecution (Acts 11). One thousand years later, the Pope in Rome and Emperor in Constantinople argued over who was the real spiritual head of the church while Mongol hordes conquered Asia and much of Europe (Lamb 157). Bloody crusades, inquisitions, new world charters, and decimating acquisitions characterized the next few centuries. During the last century, Orthodox church leaders in Russia debated the color of clerical vestments while Kerensky and Lenin planned the Marxist revolution (Kallestad, Entertainment Evangelism 135). In recent years, common church arguments included speaking in tongues, acceptable forms of worship, even the lordship of Christ. Church factions have arisen specifically to promote or oppose a plethora of social and moral positions, including abortion, capital punishment, evolution, homosexuality, lotteries, the media, pornography, religion in public, religion in politics, and war.

Meanwhile, millions—disillusioned with churches and confused by the babble and dissension—stumble blindly toward the yawning pit of hell. This predisposition toward contention may have instigated Jesus, at the conclusion of his last supper and mere hours before his crucifixion, to pray: “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them” (John 17:23).

Some Christians in the latter part of the twentieth century did harness the tools of our culture to communicate effectively with the people of our culture. Even so, in spite of the work of an estimated 400,000 churches and thousands of parachurch ministries, the percentage of Christians in America has declined while the general population has grown. Between 1992 and 1999, average church attendance dropped by 12 percent; whereas, the population of America increased by 9 percent (Robinson; U.S. Census Bureau).



Additionally, in spite of multiple intercommunications networks and an abundance of effective, creative, model ministries and Christian resources available, much of American Christianity exists in virtual anonymity. The general public does not know that these people, organizations, and resources exist; neither do many Christians.

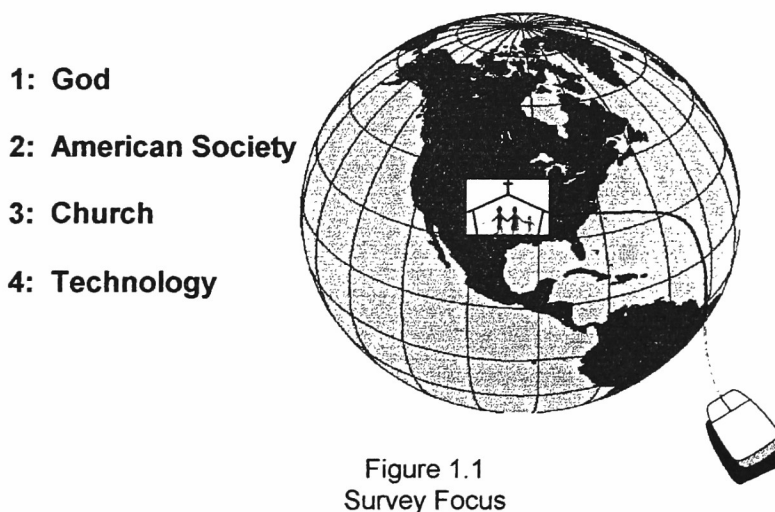
Mass media moguls—the powers that be behind movies, print, radio, television, and the Internet—typically lag in Christian commitment and incentive. Mainstream media personnel tend to view American churches as irrelevant, their media productions as poor quality and not financially viable in the marketplace, and their media superstars as manipulative, money-hungry philanderers with plastic faces and bad haircuts.

During the latter half of the twentieth century, Christians adjusted to public restrictions by developing their own communications channels—exclusively Christian magazines, newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and television networks. The 1990s evidenced an explosion of Christian Internet web sites and even Christian Internet networks. Many of these media avenues remain unknown to the general public as well as to other Christians, resulting a national body of Christians fragmented from each other and segregated from public life as a whole.

Many have petitioned the cloistered Church to actively build bridges into the marketplace, although a tactical problem exists in balancing reaching the world and remaining separate from it, between being “in the world” but “not of it.” Most Christians do not want to gain the world at the cost of their own souls, nor do they want to preserve themselves while watching the world perish from an unconcerned distance.

For American Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century, three dimensions deserve reflection in these matters—the Church, communications technologies themselves,

and American society. This particular study uniquely seeks to synthesize information simultaneously from each of these dimensions from within a biblically-based worldview. I begin with a wide focus on God and zoom in successively to American society to the Church and, finally, to Christian use of technology (see Figure 1.1).



The importance of this study lies in its potential contribution toward helping twenty-first century Christians live out Jesus' first century prayer and commandments. In the end, I offer practical suggestions related to helping a fragmented church employ the digital media tools of our culture to communicate effectively to its own members and to a nation in peril.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to research mass communication information and initiatives related to latter twentieth century American Christianity in an effort to find patterns and principles relative to utilizing the Internet to facilitate effective twenty-first

century communication. Although I reviewed and interacted with a large number of organizations and resources, the direct results of the study emanate from specific feedback from a small group of less than one hundred organizations.

### Questions

Questions guiding the research project include:

1. What experiences have various flagship and representative organizations across the country had with the Internet over the past few years?
2. What can Christians learn from these experiences and then apply toward carrying out the mission of the church?

### Definition of Terms

*American society* refers to the population and general culture of the people that live within the boundaries of the United States of America. *American Christians* refers to all Catholic and Protestant Christians in America.

*Communication* comes from the word *communis*, meaning “common.” As Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church, notes, “You can’t communicate with people until you find something you have in common with them” (Purpose Driven 294-95). Likewise, film Critic Ted Baehr defines communication as a bridge for thoughts, ideas, and information between individuals (6).

Cultures create their own genres of communication, and within a single time and culture people communicate in a variety of ways—orally, visually, and physically; through conversation, lectures, humor, movies, poetry, sermons, songs, or theater—each with its own set of rules and expectations (Long 14, 23).

Central to this study is *effective communication*, defined as the successful use of

appropriate genre and tools to convey an intended message to a particular audience in a particular time and place.

*InspireUSA* is the name of the private Georgia corporation I founded in 1998. A multiple media communications company, InspireUSA's vision includes Celebrating the Best of America® (our registered, copyrighted slogan describing our work to promote great events, people, places, organizations, and resources around America), connecting people through technology, and collaborating for maximum positive impact. Through our three web sites—www.inspireusa.com (see Appendix A), www.jubileenews.com (see Appendix B), and www.jubileekids.net (see Appendix C)—the company offers inspirational, educational, and entertaining Internet content, including subscription directories, news, posters, and quotes for other web sites. The company also offers Internet, graphic, and video production services.

*Internet-based communications* relates to my assumption that twenty-first century organizations will rely on interactive communication among a variety of communication platforms and devices. Unlike any other communication medium in history, the electronic global communications networks, protocols, and tools collectively called *the Internet* integrate almost every other form of communication within their media platform. Various tools—from radios and televisions to computers and telephones—can be accessed interactively by multiple persons in multiple geographic locations simultaneously in both archived formats and real time. However, the Internet does not replace all of these formats; rather, it facilitates intercommunication by acting as a stage or base station.

*Media*, as defined by Webster's, is a “medium, agency, or instrument; an intervening thing through which an effect is produced” (Webster's “Media”). Another

definition relative to popular usage denotes “a means of communication that reaches the general public” (i.e., “The media like this story”), including everything from print literature to electronic means such as radio, the Internet, and television. I generally use media in reference to the combination of tools and processes that facilitate communication.

*Mass media* likewise refers to the Internet, magazines, newspapers, radio, and television. *Mass communications technology* generally refers to an era’s standard systems and equipment that facilitate communication to large audiences.

*Mainstream media* refers to the secular-based media most read and watched by the American public. Examples on television during the 1990s would include ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, PBS, and CNN. As noted later in this study, although some Christian media networks have extremely large audiences, they are not typically considered part of the mainstream media.

### **Biblical and Theological Foundation**

How has God communicated with humankind? A quick survey of Scripture shows that God’s communication methods vary widely. God has communicated through his voice, Spirit, and Son; through dreams, visions, and revelations; through angels, people, animals, and things; through blood, fire, and water; literature, music, parables, and sermons. Sometimes God even communicated through strange phenomenon like burning bushes, plagues, rainbows, and stars (see Appendix D).

Of these methods, three stand out relative to this study. One was God’s use of literature, or media technology. Beginning with Moses, God’s people were directed to write down the stories of his interaction with people. They were instructed to share the

stories, hear them, and remember them (Deut. 6:4-9). Thus, events that happened before their birth became part of their collective memory.

God modeled the use of media technology by giving Moses tablets of stone inscribed by his own finger (Exod. 31:18). He later encouraged his prophets to write his words on scrolls (Exod. 17:14; Isa. 8:1; Jer. 36:2-3; Ezek. 2:9-10; Rev. 1:11), on tablets of clay (Isa. 30:8; Ezek. 4:1), and in books (Jer. 30:2). These and other writings eventually culminated in the collection we call Scripture—the mass literary medium of Jewish and Christian history.

Notably, these writings were not recorded in secret code. For example, the Old Testament writers wrote Scripture in the Jew's everyday language—Hebrew. Similarly, the written accounts that eventually formed the New Testament originally circulated in *koine* Greek, the friendly Roman street language of the first century. Luke vividly demonstrates his identification with his secular Greek audience by writing in Greek and in a lively and entertaining way (Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard 345). Jerome continued the trend in the fourth century, writing the Latin Bible in “vulgate,” or street Latin.

Even the revered King James Bible was an attempt to translate the Scriptures into the language of the people. At the Hampton Court Conference in January 1604, James I eagerly sided with the proposal for a new translation of the whole Bible. “I profess I could never yet see a Bible well translated in English” (qtd. in Bruce 96). Ironically, that very translation “that once put religion in the street later removed worship from the *lingua franca* of the people” (Miller 26-27).

A second of God's communication methods involves simply using available resources, whether a bush (Exod. 3:2), a donkey (Num. 22:28), or a wall (Dan. 5:5).

Jesus himself regularly used available resources as ministry and teaching aids:

- He turned water into wine (John 2:1-11);
- He used a little child to demonstrate welcoming faith (Mark 9:36);
- He took five loaves and two fish and fed five thousand (Matt. 14:15-21);
- He used an available coin to address tribute to sovereignty (Matt. 22:19); and,
- He mixed his own spit and mud to heal a man born blind (John 9:6).

Thus, Christians should consider using what is in their own hands. When Moses questioned God regarding how to do what God asked him to do, God replied, “What is that in your hand?” (Exod. 4:2) “A staff,” Moses replied. Thus began the journey in which Moses and Aaron’s simple shepherd’s staffs transformed not only into snakes occasionally (Exod. 4:3, 7:10) but into visible instruments for launching plagues (blood, Exod. 7:20; frogs, 8:6; gnats, 8:17; hail, 9:23; locusts, 10:13), parting the sea (Exod. 14:16), and bringing forth water from a rock (Exod. 17:6). Ultimately, Moses’ staff gained a place of honor in the ark of the testimony itself (Heb. 9:4).

Using what is available may include plundering the Egyptians. Prior to the Hebrew exodus from slavery in Egypt, God informed Moses that he would make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward them so that they would not leave empty handed (Exod. 3:21-22). Upon their departure, the Egyptians showered the Hebrews with silver, gold, and articles of clothing, “so they plundered the Egyptians” (Exod. 12:36). In this act, God models converting available resources—whether the gold and silver of Egypt or the world’s knowledge and technology—for his own purposes (Augustine 75).

Another, and most unique, of God’s communication methods was Jesus himself. In the ultimate example of cultural relevance, God became incarnate. He left his

heavenly place, made himself nothing, and took on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness (Phil. 2:6-8). Since humans could not grasp the magnitude and mercies of a loving God, he lowered himself into human form so people could more easily understand. As the Gospel of John relates, the Great Communicator not only communicated through words, he “was the word” made flesh (John 1:1).

In his incarnation, people did not readily recognize the carpenter from the hills of Galilee as the Son of God. Though some overlooked or misunderstood him, Jesus modeled culturally-relevant communication as he “walked among people, spoke *their* [original emphasis] language, observed *their* [original emphasis] customs, sang *their* [original emphasis] songs, attended *their* [original emphasis] parties, and used *their* [original emphasis] current events to capture their attention when he taught” (Warren, Purpose Driven 237).

The Jewish people among whom he embodied himself centered their religion on the temple and synagogue. Mark, accordingly, describes Jesus routinely teaching in the synagogue (1:21, 39; 3:1; 6:2) and temple (12:35, 13:1). What is unexpected, however, is Mark’s description of Jesus teaching and preaching by the lakeshore (1:16; 2:13; 4:1), in the streets (10:17; 11:20), and in homes (2:2; 3:20; 9:33). In doing so, Jesus modeled incarnating his gospel in the midst of changing cultural contexts without sacrificing his integrity. He adapted his methods to carry out his mission and communicate his message within the boundaries of his culture.

Furthermore, Jesus sometimes preached without referring to a single scriptural text. He often communicated God’s truth through simple stories related to his listener’s lives at home, at work, and in relation to the community. Ironically, not all of Jesus’



stories were readily understood by his hearers, although he did seek to explain them to sincere seekers who sought him out after the crowds dispersed. The evidence suggests that Jesus operated out of a dual purpose—he wanted to reach the crowds and nurture his disciples. What he tendered on one level publicly he rendered on a deeper level privately.

Jesus' early followers replicated his example of reaching people on their own turf. Whereas Peter quoted Scripture to the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2, 3), the Apostle Paul quoted Greek poetry to the Greeks in the Athens Areopagus (Acts 17:22-34). Paul based his sermon on an inscription from a nearby altar to an unknown god. He did much of his theologizing in the marketplace, where his belief and experience of God ran head on into the thought systems, religions, and everyday life of the people (Fee 2).

On other occasions we read about Philip's climb into a chariot with an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40), Peter's entry into the home of Simon the Tanner (Acts 10:1-48), and Timothy's circumcision for the sake of his target audience (Acts 16:3). Paul explained his own similar actions this way: "I have become all things to all people that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

Jesus' later followers continued to follow this pattern. St. Augustine freely adapted to Canterbury culture during his English missionary tenure. He destroyed the idols but did not dismiss all of the religious traditions. Rather, he "converted" the local temples and customs by infusing them with Christian meaning. He claimed biblical precedent, not his own authority, citing the Lord's commandment to the Hebrews to, as previously noted, "plunder the Egyptians" (Augustine 75, in reference to Exod. 3:22).

Martin Luther similarly encouraged Christians to embody Christ in the world.

“God has placed His church into the midst of the world, among an infinite variety of activities and vocations, so that Christians might not turn into monks, but might live in ordinary society and our works and practices of faith might become known” (Plass 279). Luther raised concerns that, separated from relevant contact with the embodied Word in priestly people of God, infidels might not come to faith in Christ.

John Calvin gave much of his life to reforming not just the Church but the entire city of Geneva. He believed Christianity should permeate society, and described his Maker and his Model’s attitude this way: “God bends down, and lowering himself, lisps that we might hear and understand” (qtd. in Morris 212).

John and Charles Wesley “agreed to become more vile” and preach in the fields and town squares of unchurched people’s turf (Hunter, Church 66). In their commitment to spread the Gospel and adapt their methods to more effectively reach the masses, the Wesleys wrote Christian words to familiar tunes, thus responding to God’s expectation that we witness to people on their own terms (Warren, Purpose Driven 159).

Since the Wesleys, evangelists like Billy Sunday and Billy Graham and pioneering pastors like Robert Schuller, Dale Galloway, Bill Hybels, Kirby John Caldwell, and Walt Kallestad have sought to find ways to meet people on their own turf—in stadiums, theaters, shopping centers, and recreational centers. Thousands more work in parachurch ministries and Christian businesses across this nation and our world, exhibiting an attitude similar to William Dyrness’ when he wrote, “If God came all the way down into our situation to redeem us from sin, can we do any less?” (143).

In conclusion, theological and historical precedent dictate that Christians should seek to both understand and effectively employ available resources for God’s incarnate

purposes. For American Christians, the available resources appear increasingly digital, indicating that digital tools will increasingly become means of communicating the gospel to other residents of our digitally-centered mass media culture.

### **The Project**

The research project involved Internet-based interactions with numerous leaders, organizations, and individuals from around the country over a period of several years. Most invited participants—including businesses, churches and ministries, educational, health, and sports and recreational organizations—were affiliated with InspireUSA’s web site or involved in InspireUSA events. By interacting with a variety of organizations, instead of exclusively Christian churches and ministries, the project sought to engage both the Church and organizations outside the Church, just as Jesus sought to communicate with the crowds and his disciples. While the project included a tactical approach toward using media technologies to facilitate effective communication among Christians, it also sought to compassionately move into the “vile” territory beyond the stained glass of the church and communicate with our society in terms they could understand and with tools they use. To do that, I interacted with others in a business and research context in an attempt to gain perspective on how they understood and used these tools themselves.

### **Context**

Based in Savannah, Georgia and administered by InspireUSA, Inc., the project primarily took place online with a limited, mostly nationwide, audience consisting of InspireUSA affiliates, associates, officers, partners, staff, and online visitors. Additional regional exposure and interpersonal interactions occurred in Savannah in conjunction

with InspireUSA events, marketing, and services. The project included some internationally-influenced feedback, since a number of participating organizations conduct their businesses or ministries internationally.

### **Methodology**

The project consisted of a qualitative research design that generally followed a modified analytic induction approach. The qualitative, exploratory study—began in early 1998 and concluded four years later at the end of 2001—included development, research, and data collection geared toward identifying practices and principles relative to effective use of Internet-based communications.

Project preliminaries included historical research related to twentieth-century mass communication. The project fieldwork involved establishing relationships with the organizations and then surveying select participants to learn from their unique experiences and perspectives.

### **Subjects**

The formal participants in the research project who functioned as data sources included representatives of participating organizations from the around the country.

Potential participants were selected relative to the following criteria:

- Organizational scope (local, regional, national, or international);
- Organizational type (business, church, civic, education, health, government, ministry, or sports and recreation);
- Organizational size (ranging from one to hundreds of employees);
- Internet content features (text, audio or video, e-commerce, etc.);
- Internet content focus (e-commerce, education, entertainment, inspiration);

- Internet content size (ranging from small web sites to large, multiple sites); and,
- Length of Internet presence (ranging from recent to several years).

I initially compiled a list of approximately one hundred potential participating organizations based on the above criteria. I specifically sought interaction with what I considered flagship, innovative, and representative organizations. I added to the list during the course of the project, eventually interacting with over 450 organizations. I then narrowed my concluding survey invitation list back down to approximately one hundred potential responding organizations.

### **Variables**

Variables of the research design included the format and content of each web site. This exploratory survey did not include specifically defined dependent variables.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

Data collection occurred through an exit survey consisting of organizational demographic questions using interval ratings and Internet experience questions utilizing interval ratings, checklists, and open-ended questions. An overview of the project accompanied an e-mail link to the survey offering respondents the opportunity to respond online. Initial results were compiled online in real time.

### **Delimitations and Generalizability**

Project research occurred in association with a variety of planned interactions. The study was not a pure and statistically random sample of nationwide industries, even though organizations representing a number of the continental United States were invited to participate. Rather, the study emanated from the context of a single individual in a

single company in a single, local community—all digitally connected nationwide.

This study was not an attempt to reform society in cyberspace but rooted in the perception that “the Internet’s exponential growth certainly make it a cultural and political force to be reckoned with” (Hooten 20). I concur with Clayton Griswold and Charles Schmitz’s observation that mass communications technologies may be “God-given miracles of communication” that require our attention and use (8). I also believe that church leaders have a responsibility to recognize a wave of God’s Spirit and ride it. “It is not our responsibility to make waves but to recognize how God is working in the world and join him in the endeavor” (Warren, Purpose Driven 14).

Ultimately, this study attempted to raise a digital banner for Christians by seeking to understand ways God might be working in our society and to suggest plausible ways for American Christians to join him in the endeavor. Michael Slaughter underscores the critical nature of riding this particular wave: “It might seem too strong to say that there is no alternative for the viability of the future Church, but I mean to be even more bold in claiming that the Media Reformation is a life or death issue for the Church” (25).

Peter Drucker has claimed the major task of leadership today is to do something in a different way rather than just trying to do better what is already being done (ref. in Kallestad, Entertainment Evangelism 35). In that sense, this study aimed to learn from the experiences of various quality organizations and then suggest some collaborative principles relative to translating the Gospel into the multimedia languages of our culture and pioneering unique, innovative missionary outposts on the technological frontier.

### **Overview of What Is to Follow**

Included in the overview in this chapter were biblical and theological reflections

relative to God's methods and purposes of communicating with humankind. Rooted in these observations, I review and interact with literature in Chapter 2 that addresses two questions:

- What major, mass communication-related dynamics exist in America at the close of the twentieth century?
- How have Christians specifically employed mass communications technologies up through the twentieth century?

I begin with context and move to concentration, starting with a general review of major mass communication-related dynamics in America at the close of the twentieth century. I then focus on how the church utilized mass communications technologies up through the twentieth century, and consider some issues relative to the use of communications technology by twenty-first century Christians.

Chapter 3 contains a detailed design of the research project. The chapter identifies what I studied, observed, and collected by whom, when, and how. The chapter includes pre-project information as well as our post-project intentions at the beginning of the study. Chapter 4 includes the results of the study—a description of the actual project itself without interpretation. Chapter 5 summarizes my major findings and conclusions, including the strengths, weaknesses, and major contributions of this project as it contributes to the stream of research related to developing and evaluating innovative approaches to ministry.

## CHAPTER 2

### PRECEDENTS IN LITERATURE

#### **Major Mass Communication-related Dynamics in America at the Close of the Twentieth Century**

A quick overview of our nation at the end of the twentieth century will provide sociological context crucial to understanding this study. In this first section, I survey three interrelated areas of American culture as they relate to mass communication: society as a whole, technology, and the Church.

#### **Society**

The following snapshots review three core components of American society that influence our communications culture: the economy, our ideology, and social relations.

**Economy.** The twentieth century dawned with an America firmly entrenched in the Industrial Age, but the fading twilight reveals a nation experiencing a megashift from an industrial to an information society (Naisbitt 1). This shift is foundational. Naisbitt, who labels knowledge our “primary industry” and “the life channel of the information age” (7, 17), suggests “we need to reconceptualize our national and global objectives to fit the new economics of information” (3). Futurist Joel Arthur Barker concurs, calling the combination of information and ideas “the lever of the twenty-first century” (11). John Kenneth Galbraith observes that while money fueled the industrial society, knowledge is the fuel and power base of the information society (qtd. in Robbins 6).

The rapid increase of information-related jobs from 17 percent in 1950 to 65 percent in 1984 has already had a huge impact on our national economy (Naisbitt 4). It has also modified the way people work; we use our muscles less and our brains more.



Experts projected that 50 to 75 percent of factory workers would lose their jobs during the last two decades of the twentieth century due to information-related changes, such as the installation of microprocessor-controlled equipment (23). As a result of this ongoing national restructuring, people already think and act differently.

This shift impacts people's manners and methods of communication. Maybe love does make the world go 'round, but for most people, money foots the bill. Kevin Kelly, Executive Editor of Wired magazine, stresses this new interdependence of money and communication when he states unequivocally that communication is not just a sector of the economy, but "communication *is* [original emphasis] the economy" (Kelly 5).

Christians especially, who comprise an institution with a command to communicate within their own time and culture, need to recognize this fact and reconceptualize their methodologies to accommodate the new economics of information.

Christians are not alone. Michael Slaughter notes the reformatting of NBC Nightly News to a more populist magazine-show approach. He quotes NBC News president Andrew Lack: "The mission of the program remains identical. That is to bring the best execution journalistically of the most important news of the day" (69). NBC changed its approach, not its mission or core values. In order to reach its audiences NBC stories are now more likely to "go for the gut and the pop-cultural hot button" (69).

Ultimately, the economics of transmitting information underlie NBC's methods. "Precisely because Hollywood's movers and shakers are more committed to saving precious metals than to saving souls, they cannot afford to neglect the available clues to the mystery of mass interest" (Gitlin 224). Neither can the Church, which is interested in saving souls and which has the most important news of all time.

**Ideology.** America's information-centered economy naturally predisposes many citizens toward the engaging and enjoyable communication forums popularly called entertainment. Whereas survival formerly occupied the minds of the masses, Americans live in a relatively bountiful, mostly safe culture that affords us many recreational luxuries. Even in the face of extreme national tragedy, such as the terrorist attacks on America on 11 September 2001, our entertainment psyche demands the show go on.

We export our luxury, too. In terms of dollar value, the number-one export from the United States to the rest of the world is entertainment (Schaller 86). In essence, America shapes the world by exporting both our images and values around the planet.

In any given month, 90 percent of Americans watch TV, and 47 percent go to a movie theater (Barna, Barna Report 126). The average adult spends nine hours a day receiving messages from media such as radio, television, motion pictures, newspapers, music, videotapes, magazines, and billboards (Schaller 18).

People especially like television. Easily accessible, television transmits both entertaining information and the viewer (Morris 25). Perhaps because it can bring people together under an enormous electronic blanket (Peyser 64), survey respondents indicate they would rather spend their spare time with television than with friends and family (Roper 1). Respondents also rate television as "doing a better job" in the community than churches, police, newspapers, schools, or local government.

American families watch television together more than they engage in any other shared activity except eating. The typical high school graduate has viewed 500,000 commercials and logged sixteen thousand hours of television, more time than students spend in classes from kindergarten through the twelfth grade (Fore 17). Conversely, even

if a high school senior spent two hours every Sunday from birth until high school graduation in church, the church's direct influence would amount to a little under 1,800 hours (see Figure 2.1).

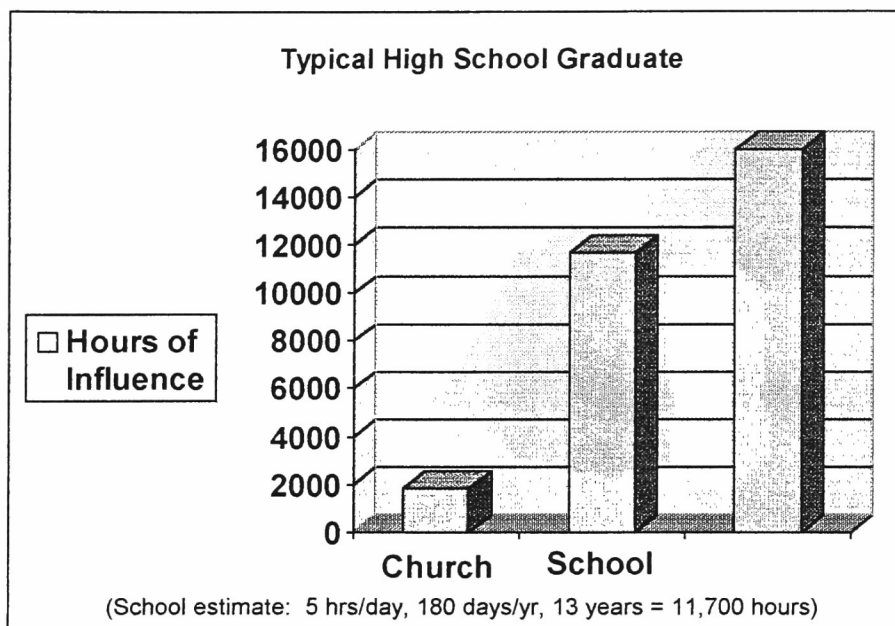


Figure 2.1  
Influence on High School Graduates

Marshal McLuhan's groundbreaking work in 1964, Understanding Media, helps clarify why. He argues that society has always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which people communicate than by the content of the communication itself (i.e., the medium is the message). He categorizes three stages of civilization: Tribal, Individual, and Retribalising. He believes that while print detribalized society by moving people from the public square to the library, from shared communal experiences to separation experiences centered on each person's individual print copy, the electronic media retribalize us. Thus, global electronic networks actually serve as an extension of

our central nervous system, reconstituting an oral tradition that engages multiple senses and allows us to approach, process, and store information more natural for our brain.

On the other hand, in doctoral studies on the social and neuro-physiological effects of television at the Australian National University during the early 1980s, Merrelyn Emery concluded that television is “a maladaptive technology” that “inhibits consciousness and purposeful behaviour,” thus injuring the health of the user (Emery 727). Using PET (positron emission tomography) imaging that lights up areas of the brain according to specific activities, Emery mapped brain wave responses during various activities to show that the emotionally flattened effect of TV viewing appears as ill health in respect to normal brain function.

Defining normal brain function seems elusive. Researchers at the University of Iowa using personality tests and PET imaging to compare cerebral blood flow and personality found conclusive signs of different brain activity between introverts and extroverts. Introverts showed higher brain functioning without stimulation than extroverts (University of Iowa), a factor not apparently considered in Emery’s research.

Zingrone clarifies the scientific underpinnings of Emery’s work in terms of the “Chaos theory,” which states everywhere chaos exists, self-organizing lines of nonlinear dynamic structure can be found. Microwaving food is an example. The seemingly chaotic movement of excited electrons is actually a structured activity that warms our food. In the brain, the stimulation of chaotic disequilibrium crucial to communicating complex meaning appears in PET mapping in the higher frequency range known as Beta waves; whereas, lesser activity associated with drowsiness and lower brain function produces more Theta waves (Zingrone).

Emery's research showed that activities such as reading televised text, watching TV, and watching a televised interview are all noticeably downscale in the range of the slowest and least chaotic of brain wave activity (Emery 627); whereas, literate activity—reading, writing and talking—tend to speed up the brain. Thus, radiant light technologies themselves (i.e., television and computer screens), no matter what the programming or content, produce a dramatic downscaling of all brain activity associated with high energy, alert, healthy, disequilibrium and take from the brain the best features of its highest non-passive functioning (Emery; Zingrone).

Media producer Stephen Muratore summarizes further that the flicker rate and luminosity of TV screens have a measurable effect on the nervous system that some call “TV epilepsy.” In the “TV stare,” our eyes stop the normally rapid scan of our environment and become fixed on plane a few yards away. “While we fill their heads with information, the tube itself steals their ability to use it. They lose more than their wallets to TV; they lose their minds” (168). He suggests that media producers should remain wary of their tools; they will not save the world.

Neil Postman calls the ascendancy of the Age of Television the most significant cultural fact of the second half of the twentieth century (Amusing Ourselves 8). He refers to Lewis Mumford's writings in Technics and Civilization describing how the invention of the clock in the fourteenth century turned people into timekeepers, then timesavers, and now timeservers. Postman similarly argues that television has dramatically and irreversibly shifted our way of thinking, the content of culture, and meaning of public discourse (8,13). He notes that the spirit of our culture is one in which all public discourse increasingly takes the form of entertainment, and warns,

Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death. (3-4)

Sir Arnold Toynbee, the 1940s postmodern scholar who studied the rise and fall of world civilizations, labeled this type of retreat into entertainment escapism truancy. He observed that most societies disintegrate slowly from within, suffering a “schism of the soul,” in which this truancy surfaces in a pattern of cultural suicide (qtd. in Veith 44).

However, in spite of the challenges, some Christians suggest we capitalize on TV technologies and lead truants to truth and realism through entertainment—the very means by which they seek escape (Baehr; Briner; Kallestad; Morris; Slaughter; Veith).

Spirituality is prevalent in latter twentieth-century America, but there is a general malaise related to the institutional church. Roger Finke and Rodney Stark chronicle this apparent oxymoron by showing a long, slow, consistent increase in American church membership over the history of our nation. Contrary to the popular moans bewailing America’s increasing secularization, they call the Christianizing of America the “master trend of American religious history,” and credit “upstart sects” with contributing to this growth (274; see Figure 2.2).

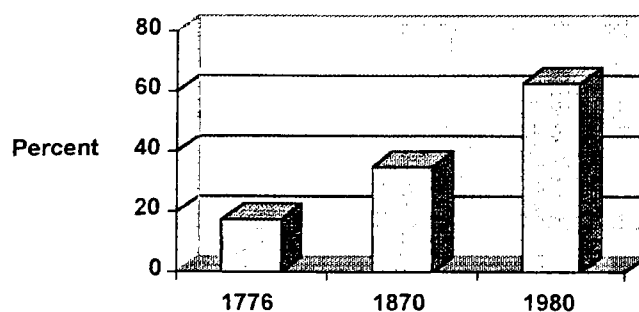


Figure 2.2  
Church Membership in America

On the other hand, Finke and Stark document a historical pattern of mainline denominational decline. They argue that this characteristic is a normal societal pattern—as the new becomes institutionalized, it loses its fervor, requires less of its adherents, gets richer and worldlier, and begins to die. They claim that once upstart sects become mainline they always head for the sideline (275).

George Barna's research offers insight. He found that 91 percent of non-Christians said Protestant, mostly mainline, churches were not sensitive to their needs (Barna Report 69). A majority of unchurched men in particular felt that involvement with a church did not offer anything of value to their lives ("Battle" 41). His surveys also show that 85 percent of unchurched men were previously church members, indicating that most men base their views on their actual church experiences. "Millions of unchurched men are more inclined to attend a concert, a social gathering, a community service project or a useful seminar sponsored by a church than to visit a Sunday service" (42).

Tim Celek and Dieter Zander, pastors of primarily "Buster" congregations, agree. Busters, defined as persons born between 1965 and 1976, are not resistant to spiritual matters or to the concept of God, but "they are resistant to the Christian church. They view the church as being separatist, segregated, institutional, irrelevant, judgmental, holier-than-thou, controlling, authoritarian" (88). Busters see more roadblocks and detours than access points or paths to empowerment in the church (91), viewing "the church as a castle surrounded by a moat; and the people inside are not interested in lowering the drawbridge" (93).

George Hunter calls this the "stained glass barrier" (qtd. in Kallestad, Entertainment Evangelism 68). He purports that secular people are essentially ignorant

of basic Christianity, feel awkward or embarrassed upon entering a sacred building, and may never even consider being part of a congregation (67). Many who do enter a church find the experience culturally alienating (68). Thus, in the last quarter of a century, we have lost almost an entire generation of young adults who regard the church as irrelevant. Kallestad warns that we are in serious danger of losing the next generation as well (24).

Colin Morris observes that when the church is antipathetic to its outside environment, the result is a closed system with little interaction between the two. “The Church’s life is static,” he writes, “its structures fossilized and its impact on society virtually that of a museum exhibit behind glass” (184).

One root of this problem derives from people’s tendency to equate their cultural religious practices with the gospel. “Their witness to Christ is frozen into cultural forms which are irrelevant or unintelligible to most people. They become museum churches with period lifestyles, music, dress, and vocabulary. The only way to the cross is through the door of their traditions” (Bakke 57).

Along with the church, many view the clergy as out of touch with reality. Even though church members often regard their pastors with respect, they also ultimately interpret the clergy’s cloistered lives as evidence that religion does not fully work where it matters (Ogden 66). Most people concern themselves not with Christianity’s truth as much as with whether Christianity works and proves relevant (Logan).

Some argue that Christians have become a segment of society, “a ghettoized subculture,” rather than an integral part of the culture (Veith 148). Christians have their own bookstores, music, television networks, and schools. “The average American buyer of books never goes into a Christian bookstore and very rarely visits the religion section



of the bookstore he does visit” (Briner 121). Len Sweet parallels Morris when he summarizes the net effect: “When the culture speaks to you and you can’t speak to the culture, you are rendered basically voiceless” (“Movies” 2).

Even so, spiritual yearning appears central to the essential nature of American society; our nation exhibits spiritual thirst (Anderson 19). Although the percentage of people who attend church weekly matches the same level as ten years ago (see Figure 2.3), people in general look for integrity and meaning, even if they do not look in church. They look “for clarity and guidance to know what is right, and for motivation and power to do the right. They hope to be lifted above themselves, to see a vision of a better world, of themselves as better people” (Bast 67).

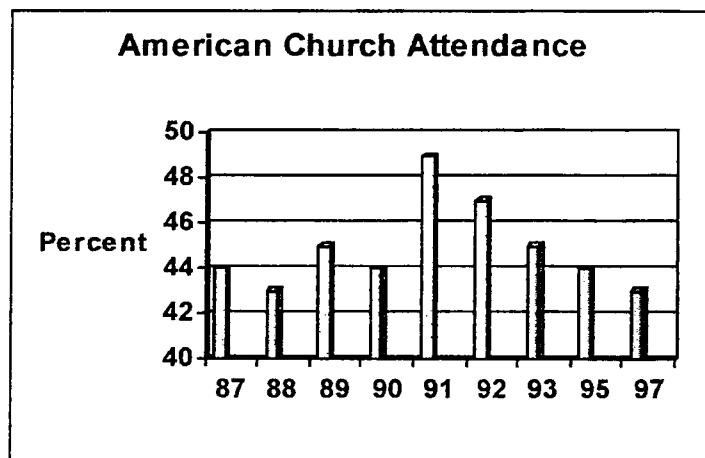


Figure 2.3  
American Church Attendance

In a USA Today interview, Bill Anderson, the head of the CBA (formerly “Christian Booksellers Association”), commented on the soaring \$3 billion-plus Christian retail industry.

“For decades,” he replied, “society was taught to segregate the spiritual from the rest of life. It was looked at as unsophisticated and irrelevant to daily living. Today, people are waking up and saying, ‘I am a total person, and there is a spiritual dimension to my life.’” (qtd. in Grossman 2)

The successes of several generations of knock-on-door church planters, like Dale Galloway, Bill Hybels, Robert Schuller, and Rick Warren, offer evidence of tremendous spiritual hunger nationwide.

The media reflects this hunger. Len Sweet writes, “God’s hot. You see this on television with angel stuff, you see this on the movies. God is hot on the best-seller list. He is hot on the Internet. You look out there and God is hot” (“Movies” 2). He suggests that we are in the midst of a “God rush,” a “massive soul search,” and “one of the greatest spiritual awakenings in American history” (2).

For example, Hollywood collaborated with religious leaders on the DreamWorks Prince of Egypt (story of Moses) animated movie. One industry insider wrote, “It’s an intentional strategy of taking advantage of the yearning for spirituality, whether its CBS’s ‘Touched By An Angel’ or Bill Bennett’s ‘Book of Virtues’” (Cooper 62). A poll conducted for TV Guide Magazine confirms this yearning—61 percent of those questioned wanted to see more references to religion in prime time. Unfortunately, many television executives do not know how to respond to that market (O’Hara A4).

Research offers some statistical background. The Barna Report indicated that 57 percent of non-Christians said religion was very important (Barna 26). Barna quantified an increase in openness to the value of religion and the Bible among Busters, Boomers, and pre-Boomers (31). Research published in 1993 revealed that 88 percent of Americans claimed to be Christians, 65 percent claimed to be born again, and 40 percent claimed a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and believed they would go to heaven

(78). George Gallup, on the other hand, reported nearly three years later that only 41 percent claimed to be born again (45), a drop of more than one third.

Some argue that Americans are not less spiritual than before, just less Christian. “The problem is not that our culture believes nothing, but that it believes *everything*. [original emphasis] Syncretism, not skepticism, is our greatest enemy” (Warren, Purpose Driven 353). Slaughter summarizes, “Spirituality is in. Specific claims about spirituality are out” (33).

Ultimately, most people do not seek entertainment or informative presentations about God; they seek to experience God (Slaughter 38). Yet, that is precisely one reason why many people disregard churches and Christian programming—they have not experienced God there. “People want to experience the supernatural. They want to feel God. And they are looking everywhere” (L. Anderson 19).

They certainly look in bookstores. Religion and spirituality books were the fastest growing trade book category in the 1990s, with spiritual seekers turning out in droves to investigate a wide variety of spiritual expressions. According to Matthew Gilbert, editor of a magazine for the nation’s six thousand metaphysical retailers, “Sales are driven by the boomer bubble, the children of the 60’s” whose idealism leaves them open to new ideas (qtd. in Grossman 2).

People also look into other religions. The rapid growth of Mormonism—doubling in membership between 1981 and 2000 (D. Anderson)—and Islam—by 1998 surpassing the combined total of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Unitarians in the United States (Blank 22), the fervent embracing of psychics, eastern mystic religious practices, and other alternative forms of spirituality, including ahistoric

interpretations of Christianity, give credence to these yearning assessments.

Widespread spiritual thirst can prepare people to receive Christ. “In an increasingly secular culture, we must be able to lead seekers to an authentic encounter with God, or they will look somewhere else” (L. Anderson 20-21). Hence, Christians should view the current spiritual climate as an opportunity instead of a problem.

The explosion of interest in near-death experiences, “angelic” visitations, Native American spirituality, goddess worship, yoga, Tibetan meditation, and New Age basics such as channeling and crystals may strike a Christian observer as an unmitigated disaster for western societies. Yet empowered evangelicals can find here a powerful opportunity for evangelism and renewed cultural influence. (Nathan and Wilson 253-54)

One source of American ideology is the mass mainstream media, which both reflects and creates our values and attitudes (Fore 44). This dynamic characterizes the mass media in any era, given that the Hebrew psalms, Celtic poems, and minstrel songs played a similar role in more primitive societies (Morris 26-27).

A new development in our era is the prevalence of an institutionalized and predominantly secular mass media presence at or near the center of nearly every home. Fore suggests that the media is the major nurturing institution of our society, ranked above families, schools, and churches. Americans tend to look to this secular media, not the church, for information (Davis 6). As a result, “the person coming into church to worship is bringing along more than anything else a moral vision that’s been nurtured by the mass media” (Duduit 4). Then again, Mark Twain echoed similar sentiments in 1871, when he commented that Americans no longer got their religion from the “drowsy pulpit” but got it filtered down through plays and novels (qtd. in Moore 147).

America’s twentieth century cultural omphalos—the rounded stone in Apollo’s temple at Delphi anciently regarded as the center of the world—is television. Ferre argues

that commercial television is our most important public negotiator of meaning and value (xiii). Dean George Gerbner calls it the “cultivator of our culture” (qtd. in Fore 21). Television “shapes our souls” and determines what we think, how we think, and who we are (Novak 22). It competes for our souls, not just our attention or money, and is the source from which a majority of Americans derive their worldview (24). Comedian Bill Cosby has quipped, “The networks say they don’t influence anybody. If that’s true, why do they have commercials? Why am I sitting here eating Jell-O pudding?” (Cosby).

Former president of PBS, Larry Grossman, asserts

Television is the frame in which we view the dimensions of our society. It reflects the quality of our culture and the character of our priorities. It is a determining influence on our politics, our economics, our ethics, our aesthetics, as well as our psychological and social perceptions. (qtd. in Cole v)

To minister within this frame, Christians should realize the latent power of this medium to influence thinking, shape opinions or communicate truth (Stewart 8), and seek ways to capitalize using this tool.

Some people derive their understanding of religion itself from television (Schultze 16). Wherever televangelism has served as “the flagship of American religion” (12), televangelists have helped shape popular religious faith and practice worldwide (16). Just as earlier generations of Americans were shaped by religious entertainers— itinerant evangelists and circuit riders who mastered oral communication—so the televangelists of the latter half of the twentieth century set “the style and tone of local and denominational church life” (12). However, this direct influence appears to have declined by the year 2000, when the number of viewers and contributions dropped by almost three-fourths compared to televangelism's peak in the early 1980s (Winzenburg 88).

Therefore, television is more than technology; it is an entire economic-political-cultural system (Fore 194). Fore argues that while organized religion continues to lose much of its cultural influence, television commands more of people's time than almost anything else, except work or sleep, and generally offers an instantly accessible, enormously appealing alternate worldview (199).

Not everyone accepts this argument. Mike Trout contends that America is really a "grassroots" nation, with opinions broadcast from national media centers

often not broadly accepted (or even welcomed) among the men and women living in the nation's heartland. These people care deeply about their families, about their churches, about their communities. They treat issues of faith seriously and strive to walk humbly with their God. They want their children to grow up in a land where Christ is honored and worshiped and where his name is invoked reverently, not as a term of profanity. (Trout and Holiday 197)

Even so, the "electronic hearth may not be much of a sacred place, but it's the only one many people possess" (Morris 21). Therefore, Christians and Christian institutions must not eschew involvement in the mass mainstream media "unless they are prepared to abdicate their role as the place where people search and find meaning for their lives" (Fore 25). Christians should maintain an informed interest in its development (Churches of Christ 7) and consider involvement in it as "a life or death issue for the Church" because electronic media is the language of our culture (Slaughter 63) and "the arena in which the Word of God must be incarnate" (Benson 142). Skeptical Christians should consider its use possible, since the mass mainstream media environment that envelops us like a blanket is within the range of God's sovereignty (Morris 9,14).

Finally, in a nation where mainstream media, not the gospel story, shapes moral vision, Christians should contribute not complain; proclaim not protest; and present

positive alternatives in media forums outside the walls of the church (Briner 143, 170).

It's time to go on the offensive—to unleash this army of supporters in creative campaigns that produce something good to plug into the mainstream of American culture. In my circles, Christians are thought of as people who are against things. I want to be known as people who are *for* [original emphasis] things good, wholesome, creative, wonderful, and fulfilling. That's the message of the Gospel and it ought to be the message in all that we do. (146)

**Social relations.** Our increasingly technical society, although retribalising in some respects, also has the potential to isolate people. The choice of individual vehicles over public transportation, television over conversation, and air conditioning over sitting outside has separated people, creating consumers of culture rather than participants in culture (Myers 13). In facilitating cocooning, technology can become more of a problem than a solution to reaching people for Christ (Kallestad, Entertainment 29).

This bears significant import for the door-to-door-evangelism generation. Many people cloister themselves after work in artificially controlled environments behind closed doors and in gated communities. They abhor unwelcome phone calls, unsolicited mail, and uninvited visitors. Barna notes that men in particular do not like official church visitors or unsolicited gifts coming into their home (“Battle” 42). Indeed, the only open avenue into many homes these days is through television and the Internet, and these are only welcome because people can control them.

A corresponding reaction to a cocooning and high-tech-oriented society is a need for personal or high-touch relationships. “Modernity may be high-tech, but people have found that it is depressingly impersonal and does not answer our relational and spiritual needs” (Nathan and Wilson 251). In Carl F. George’s list of eight major felt needs of people, the need for personal touch tops his list, and he comments that with each new

wave of technological advancements people seek a compensatory human touch (15). Perhaps that explains the predominance of relational psychology and why talk shows abound. “We live in a ‘let’s talk about it’ day and age” (Miller 72).

Sweet conceptualizes this social phenomenon in terms of “double-rings”—opposite dynamics that work in concert with each other to provide balance in our lives. He describes our “high-tech, high touch” tendencies as a dualistic combination of “in your face” and “get out of my face” relational desires (SoulTsunami, 27).

Our trivial pursuit, knowledge-based game show culture in which information overload can hinder relationships does require delicate social balancing. If true communication is self-disclosure (Morris 209), then sharing bits and boatloads of historical and cultural intelligence will not necessarily meet people’s relational needs.

Some suggest that computer literacy and media savvy risk hazards of isolation, since “even the friendliest of chat rooms can’t replace the human touch, and that is what this generation ultimately lives for” (Celek and Zander 66). I think this is one factor that needs to be considered in teleconferencing and distance learning. We need to facilitate high-touch as well as high-tech, perhaps forming distance learners into regional groups with periodic onsite facilitators (electronic circuit riders?) so people will not have to learn alone. This might also address the concerns of community-oriented faculty and administrators who recognize these high-touch needs.

In spite of these concerns, the Internet does appear useful as a tool for vigorous social engagement. In one survey, 26 percent of online Americans claimed they used the Internet as a means of intensifying connections to their local community, even across typical economic, generational, and racial boundary lines (Pew, “Online Communities”).



Most people long for fellowship, community, and a sense of family, virtual or otherwise. “Advertisers have discovered that independent-minded baby boomers are suddenly longing to be connected as they enter middle age” (Warren, Purpose Driven 315). People like feeling like they are part of a team, and “networking” is one the buzzwords of the 1990s.

The business world offers ample evidence of this social dynamic. As noted previously, DreamWorks studio gathered religious leaders from across the country to form a broad coalition of consultants in preparation for their December 1998 animated feature release, Prince of Egypt. Hollywood and religious leaders such as Talmudic scholar Burton Visotsky, religious broadcaster Jerry Falwell, and former Christian Coalition director Ralph Reed came together to collaborate on the theological accuracy and potential social dynamics of the film (Cooper 62).

Cable in the Classroom offers another example of national networking. A \$320 million public service consortium of over 7,200 local cable companies and thirty-two national cable programming networks, Cable in the Classroom partners in learning with teachers and parents by providing commercial-free educational programming to schools across the country at no cost. Launched in 1989, the array of programming is provided free to over seventy thousand public schools and reaches 80 percent of all U.S. students. A free monthly magazine lists the schedule of upcoming programs, and teachers tape any of the 525 hours of monthly programs to use at their convenience. The program seeks to match available resources with the needs of public school educators with a goal “to help teachers provide their students with both an expanded view of the world and with the skills they’ll need to succeed in the twenty-first century (“Cable” 2-3).

Christians could launch a similar project to help network the resources of America's nearly 400,000 churches and thousands of Christian organizations with the approaching 300,000,000 individuals in our nation who long to belong to a family, perhaps even God's family.

Communication tools are just devices unless used for some enduring purpose. Morris references the biblical story of the lepers who discovered and began to enjoy among themselves the treasures of a recently abandoned enemy camp. "We're not doing right," they eventually said to each other. "This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves" (2 Kings 7:3-11). To those who likewise have good news but who may be tempted to keep it to themselves, Morris asks, "Who better to address persistent truths than the Church?" (207). What better way to do so than together through mass media avenues that are already shaping people's hearts, minds, and souls anyway? If Slaughter is correct, "whoever controls the media controls the values and direction of the post-modern culture," then Christians cannot afford to sit on the sidelines with our good news and let Cable in the Classroom, Disney, and Hollywood exert unparalleled influence on our society.

### **Technology**

The technological shifts impacting communication in America at the close of the twentieth century invigorate and perplex. While technology improves our lives, the changes also affect us in other, sometimes negative and unpredictable ways. "Modern technologies that add efficiency, power, and wonder to our lives inevitably deliver the same benefits to evildoers" (Levy, "Tech's" 65), leading some to question whether the changes are good or bad and whether they should be welcomed or feared.

Postman underscores the critical nature of understanding technology, since “the clearest way to see through a culture is to attend to its tools for conversation” (Amusing Ourselves 8). Christians, in particular, should avoid treating technology as a mere tool to accomplish some other end and not pay enough attention to the nature of the tool (Myers 11-12). Additionally, communications tools often transcend their devices and become cultural institutions (i.e., radio, television, the Internet). Understanding these tools helps us better understand ourselves and culture, as well as minister more effectively.

Technological transformation is part of a larger process—“a continuation of waves of change that have taken place throughout history” (“Technorealism” 2). In that these waves usually bring both intended and unintended social, political, and economic changes, technology is not neutral (2). “To be unaware that a technology comes equipped with a program for social change, to maintain that technology is neutral, to make the assumption that technology is always a friend to culture is . . . stupidity plain and simple” (Postman, Amusing Ourselves 157).

However, technology alone is not society’s primary panacea or problem. According to Christian Scriptures, sin owns the latter category, Jesus Christ the first. Technology is a tool, and in spite of claims that any technologies are evil, most tools can be used for good or bad depending on who uses them and how (Silk 1016). Even though “all the communication technologies we’ve ever invented—the telephone, movies, the Internet—have eventually been used in the service of lust” (Chang 71), that is no excuse for not employing them in God-honoring services.

I’m not as concerned about the technology as I am with how we will use it. There are brilliant people from companies like George Lucas’ Industrial Light and Magic that are working to create the technology. My

interest is how we as Christians will embrace the medium and use it to change the world. (Cooke 8)

St. Augustine made a similar argument concerning rhetoric during fourth century. He argued that eloquence is as much a tool of Christians as it is of non-Christians and if not learned and used, eloquence will become the province and tool of heathens. The same is true of communications tools in our time.

Our generation possesses opportunities that can extend beyond most people's wildest dreams. Technological advances . . . are opening up a future unlike anything previously encountered. Our responsibility for wise stewardship of today's possibilities must drive each of us to our knees. (George 220)

Therefore, as we zip across the millennium border experiencing one of the steepest curves of technological transformation imaginable, Christians need to understand technology enough to consider how to best "ride the wave" and properly use the communication tools at our disposal.

**Digital technology.** As we journey forth on a generation-long march toward a digital culture (Lombreglia 3), the most fundamental difference between information as we knew it in the past and as it will be is that almost all information in the future will be digital (Gates, Road Ahead 22). Already digital technology has changed the way we do just about everything (Harshbarger 62). Right now whole libraries, music collections, picture galleries, and movies are being stored digitally, which means they can be accessed conveniently by almost anyone who has the proper equipment.

A major component of this revolution is convergence—the morphing of television, computers, and communications. Digital high-definition television (HDTV), developed in 1990 by The General Instrument Corporation, bypassed the Japanese industry-standard analog technique of storing and transmitting information and promised an eventual

merging of video and computing (Ward 222). The end of 1996 finally brought an interindustry agreement that set the digital, high definition standards for the next generation of television sets, making them compatible with computers. By the turn of the twenty-first century, powerful media companies like AOL Time Warner were convinced that convergence would succeed, in part, because they owned the platforms (Roberts 41).

According to Reed E. Hundt, former chairman of the Federal Communication Commission, “everything will be different. The change is so extreme that many people have not grasped it” (qtd. in Brinkley). Over the next decade, every home will have to replace existing TV sets or buy converter boxes in order to watch television. Though some have compared this technological shift to the shift from black and white to color TV, others think it is more fundamental, like the shift from radio to television.

The significance of this change is that it affects the whole communications industry, not just television.

Our society is on the brink of a cultural explosion which will be centered on the television screen but linked to a whole supermarket of gadgetry . . . an electronic nervous system through which will pass a virtually infinite quantity of information. (Morris 11)

**Fiber optics.** Information must have a good delivery system, and new technology has improved delivery drastically. While our information is digital, the emerging standard delivery system is fiber optics. Made from glass or plastic, fiber optic cables are so smooth and pure that if you looked through a wall of it seventy miles thick, you could see a candle burning clearly at the other end (Gates, Road Ahead 33). Fiber optic cables, transmitting information at the speed of light, profoundly impact every communications industry—television networks, cable, office communications, the entertainment industry, publishing, and education (Barker 173).

**Interactivity.** These changes in communication technology—particularly as they relate to the global interactive network—will alter our society as much as electricity and the printing press (Gates, Road Ahead 22). The major factor in this change is the shift from one-way mass transmission of information to two-way interactive communication. Both Fore and Logan argue that real communication is generally a two-way process. Yet, most mass media has operated on the “hypodermic needle” model, which transmits information but does not necessarily communicate (Fore 71). Supposedly, with the new interactive technology, real communication can now begin to happen.

Consider the videogaming industry, which expects its highly realistic interactive games to eventually replace movies as our culture’s most advanced form of entertainment. Not only does the level of individual interactivity in these games engage the emotions of audiences better, networked games via the Internet create community around the country, even around the world, by incorporating real-time communications with real people that impact the game during the game (Stevenson 94-95).

Interactivity often includes elements of choice or real-time interpersonal communication. Much of the current interactive technology relates to choice. In the mid-1990’s, companies like Philips Magnavox began offering WebTV via an on-top-of-the-TV box with a monthly subscription rate. According to their ads, “Now, getting on the Internet is so easy, even an adult can do it” (Phillips ). According to Watson, WebTV is the latest icon in interactive programming “from video movies on demand to virtual television communities” (76). Web users will soon be able to download HDTV movies into their homes to watch at will, although movie critics like Roger Ebert argue that no form of in-home movie delivery will ever seriously affect movie attendance (40).

Many recent hotel travelers have probably enjoyed the interactive services of On Command Corporation and WebTV on their hotel television. Now, Bell Atlantic and On Command Corporation are working together to distribute an interactive TV-based multimedia city guide called InfoTravel®. In 1997 the companies were distributing a combination of pay-per-view movies, interactive entertainment, information services, and traveler information in nearly one million hotel rooms nationwide (“Bell Atlantic”).

Other players in the interactive movement are CD-ROMs and DVDs (Digital Video Discs), which provide interactive information including books, encyclopedias, music, and movies. For example, The Complete National Geographic is a thirty CD-ROM set that includes all 108 years of the National Geographic magazine—every issue, every article, every picture, every page. As technology continues to develop, users will not have to physically buy CD-ROMs or DVDs; they can access them online if they are made available. National Geographic already offers online Internet adventures—virtual education and travel with Lewis and Clark, David Livingstone, and others (National Geographic).

When Focus on the Family released its CD-ROM, “Jesus: The Man, the Message, the Messiah,” the ministry intentionally targeted home and school users, rather than Internet users. “For some, surfing the ‘Net for solid, detailed information on Christ is either too time consuming, too costly or too much trouble” (S. Stevens).

On television, in the Fall of 1997, Microsoft helped fund and produce several interactive TV shows, including Moesha on UPN, the WB network hour-long thriller F/X, the Sunday-night USA Network California beach cop drama Pacific Blue, and the New Orleans cooking show The Essence of Emeril. Interactive screens relegated the TV

shows to a rectangular area in the upper right corner, leaving an L-shaped space along the left and bottom of the screen for chat-room and e-mail capabilities, information about people and products associated with the show, and ads. Viewers had the option of watching the shows normally or interactively. These shows were some of Microsoft's trial projects working on ways to integrate cable, computer, telephone, and TV communications (see Figure 2.4).

According to Microsoft's chief operating officer, Bob Herbold, "Our goal is to create the next mass media" (qtd. in Annette Hamilton 53). Microsoft is partnering with others to create a living room computer/TV combination where viewers can download programs via cable, digital satellite, or modem to watch at their convenience.

Living a Web lifestyle will mean you rely heavily on the interactive network to gather and use information. You'll take the network completely for granted, turning to it instinctively without a second thought . . . I think it's safe to say that within 10 years the majority of all adults will be using electronic mail and living a form of Web lifestyle. They'll be using the Internet to file their taxes and communicate with their doctors, at least some of the time. (Gates, "Banking" 2)

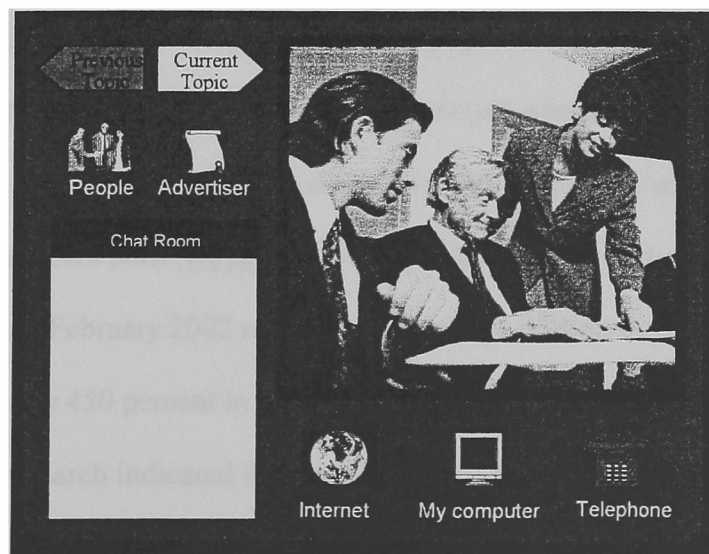


Figure 2.4  
Simulated Internet-interactive TV screen



**Internet.** Another central component of the technological revolution is the Internet. Initiated among defense and research scientists as a collection of computer networks interconnecting via standardized communications protocols, the Internet was designed to help physicists organize and access research data, as well as to provide a multiple portal defense and information network accessible even if part of the network collapsed. Perhaps symbolic of their naiveté that this tool might become a pop cultural icon, the first e-mail on the Defense Department's Arpanet in 1971 read "qwertyuiop"—the top line of letters on a keyboard (Stone 48).

Tim Berners-Lee and a programming team at CERN, the European Particle Physics Laboratory in Switzerland, eventually launched the public Internet with the introduction of the World Wide Web (www). The first public web site, [www.symbolics.com](http://www.symbolics.com), went live on 15 March 1985. Since then, the Internet and World Wide Web have created "a vast intersection of commerce, technology, academic information and entertainment" (Ottenhoff 929). "The Internet may simply be one more source of information, yet it is a source that rivals all the others in immediacy, thoroughness and—as the technology continues to improve—ease of use" (Hooten 20). Bill Gates has predicted that most everyone in the developed world and many in undeveloped countries will be users before long, and also warns that companies in most fields ignore the Internet at their own peril (Road Ahead 263). Nua research statistics confirm Gates' perceptions in their February 2002 report indicating 544 million users online worldwide, an increase of nearly 450 percent in less than four years ("How Many Online?").

In 1999, research indicated that nearly two thirds of Internet users online three or more years viewed the interactive medium as a necessity to their lives. More than two

thirds reported that if they were stranded on a desert island, they would rather have a computer with an Internet connection than a telephone or a television (Case).

One trial dimension of Internet use is online entertainment programming. With a November 1997 count of 9 million members, making it the largest online audience in the world at that time (“AOL” 1), America Online launched “Entertainment Asylum” in 1998—a live celebrity interview program with extensive animation, video, and audio clips. Developed and produced in less than eight months, the program sought to provide immersiveness, ease of navigation, quickly accessible information, and a sense of community among users (2).

However, in a 1998 Jupiter Communications report, entertainment did not even make the list when people indicated why they accessed online services. E-mail topped the list with over 90 percent, while search, research, and news were also dominant, leading to the title “An Information, Not Entertainment Driven Medium” (Jupiter).

**Searching.** With the vast amount of information available, a variety of information-gathering techniques surfaced during the 1990s. Search engines are still one of the most popular. Yahoo!, the largest in 1998 with over 725,000 cataloged sites, has been surpassed by Google.com, which claimed an index of over one billion web pages by the end of 2001. Yet search engines can respond with “a daunting tangle of hundreds of links, many of which have only fleeting value” (McCracken 158). I once looked up the word “Christian” on Yahoo! and received a list of 128 categories and 6,246 sites. Another search engine, Infoseek, responded to my query with a list of 1,076,439 sites. Such listings generally include a direct link to the site, as well as a brief description of what one might expect to find on it.

An alternative search technique is push, or Webcasting, technology, where an information provider gathers information into broad category channels. Users then select the channels and categories of information they like, and the provider delivers the information periodically over the Internet to the user's computer (Cahlin 166). This technique is also gaining popularity in the form of mailing lists or online newsletters. Users sign up according to their interests and then receive regular e-mails.

**Narrowcasting.** Most mass media consists of a conglomeration of focused media initiatives. Producers select target groups and aim their productions at the consumers they hope want their product. Unlike in print, where potential subscribers can choose between eleven thousand different magazines, television viewers for many years were pretty much limited to the big three broadcast television networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC), PBS, and perhaps one other, small local broadcast station.

However, in recent years, nearly five thousand cable systems supplanted the networks' share of the total national television audience. Called "narrowcasting" (Naisbitt 272-73), as opposed to "broadcasting," this system proves viable only when sufficient-sized audiences can be created and retained, and often creates fierce competition among the thousands of audience-hungry providers. Even so, this movement continues to grow, with some cable and satellite providers offering more than five hundred channels to the average consumer. These stations and networks continually seek programs to air, allowing many individuals and organizations access to a television audience.

Practically, Christians should note that an effective television show is not necessarily a videotaped church service. Documentaries, movies, children's programs,

news, animation, music, and other formats merit consideration (Cooke 14). If we do not even watch our own services, or those of our neighbors, we should not expect others to find them appealing either. Christians should find other formats that have a broader appeal and seek to make them available.

**Wireless.** Wireless communications recently exploded as the most recent technological phenomenon. Based on WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) language and wireless broadcast technology, wireless allows intercommunication among a variety of communication tools and platforms, all without the necessity of physical connections.

The deletion of physical interconnectedness allows for increased technological mobility and expansion, particularly in underdeveloped third world countries, as well as overdeveloped high-density population areas and war or natural disaster-ravaged areas. In some areas of the world, like China and Japan, mobile phone devices already surpass personal computers as the Internet access method of choice (EMC, “Content”).

Mobile phone subscribers worldwide grew from 136 million in 1996 to 941 million by the end of 2001, with expectations of surpassing one billion subscribers in 2002, or nearly 20 percent of the world's population (eMarketer). In conjunction with the Internet and the proliferation of personal computing, wireless communications will contribute to the creation of more information in the two years between 2002 and 2003 than over the entire history of humanity (EMC, “About”).

## **Church**

Christian churches generally engage in both teaching members and reaching non-members. In the following section, I review societal elements relative to Christian education and marketplace sensitivity relative to mass communications technologies.

**Christian education.** For some reason, numerous church members at the end of the twentieth century seem unable to identify well or define accurately the central truths of Christian teaching. Some blame pastors, claiming this is “arguably due to a serious default of pastoral leadership” (Oden 142). When pastors do not teach, the entire congregation feels the effect. Others attribute biblical and theological ignorance in part to the “trickle-down” theological educational system. In this system, extremely good theologians teach in seminaries “with the hope that they will get enough theology into their students, and they, in turn, will preach and teach enough into the lives of their congregations so they can get by” (Mead 56).

A number of leaders have responded by calling for local churches to be the new training centers for theology, i.e., the seminaries of tomorrow (e.g., Hybels; Mead; Oden; Ogden; Slaughter; Warren). Only the local church, they claim, can teach Christian education as it ought to be taught, and they ought to do it well (Oden 148).

Indeed, an “equipping church” should be a training center (Ogden 115). Churches should not only reach people but teach them, since the Church’s responsibility is to help people develop to spiritual maturity (Warren, Purpose Driven 106). Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in California, claims his church dreams of working with seminaries to establish church-based training programs for pastors (364). David Allan Hubbard, president of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, agrees. “We need a revolution in theological education, which leads to more networking with the church” (qtd. in Brushaber 46).

Some think our educational systems for training clergy are outdated, aimed at producing pastoral leadership for a “Christendom Church” rather than a twenty-first

century church. Mead suggests focusing on developing tools and resources to constantly retrain clergy after seminary, offering long-distance attention and support training (54).

The future church demands a new locus of theology, a change from the library and university to the place where the baptized person encounters the world, the place I have called the missionary frontier. The future church demands a new actor in the work of theology: the baptized lay person. The future church demands a new kind of training center for theology: the local church. (57)

Mead also encourages the design of a delivery system to transmit resources to the missionary frontier. “The national and regional structures designed to send resources far away must change to face the thousands of local situations where the mission frontier touches each congregation” (59). He challenges the nearly two hundred accredited theological seminaries to successfully address options for the future by using their clusters of imagination, leadership, and financial resources to find a vision of new ways to contribute to the emerging church (65).

Currently, most churches do not have the money, professional expertise, or study resources to literally become local seminaries. However, developing technology can play a major role in assisting churches precisely in these areas of need.

Asbury Theological Seminary (ATS) is one worldwide leader working fervently to address these needs. The seminary began establishing a virtual theological training campus for clergy during the 1990s. By the summer of 2000, ATS President Maxie Dunnam unveiled a new initiative dedicated to training and equipping laity for ministry, explaining:

Ministry in the future will shift more and more from professional clergy to laity. There will be more and more bi-vocational ministers, especially in our urban areas. With the growth of secularism and a multi-religious culture in the United States, the need will grow for laity to be equipped biblically and theologically. (Dunnam 3).

Social and technological changes precipitated this shift in Christian education. Old one-way technologies primarily entertained viewers; new interactive technologies appear destined to turn viewers into users who will avail themselves of more and more opportunities for self-improvement. A study of religion on the Internet, commissioned by United Methodist Communications (UMCom) and presented at the National Council of Churches Communications Commission in Indianapolis in February 1998, found that people appear more interested in religion-related information than in online sermons or dialogue. According to project manager Ken Bedell, “People wanted resources for personal study, not the text of a pastor’s sermon” (DeMichele 3).

This shift can be described as moving from teaching to learning. According to Robert Barr and John Tagg, the traditional teaching paradigm aimed to provide instruction; whereas, the emerging paradigm aims to produce learning with every student “by *whatever* [original emphasis] means work best” (13). As this shift sweeps the nation’s higher institutions of learning, the nation’s representative communities of the highest institution of learning—the Church—should seek appropriate ways to respond.

Ultimately, Christians need a strategic vision that organizes and instructs every step toward a clear goal (Naisbitt 98). If Christians aim to educate through the use of technology, they must do so without undue preoccupation with the technical means divorced from questions of a final purpose (Dyrness 55). Following “The Law of the Situation,” Christians should ask, “What business are we really in?” (88). Then, by reconceptualizing our task of communicating the gospel and considering Christian education in light of our culture, we might find that “technological discoveries are not only instruments of our own pleasure, but also are means to glorify God” (55).

**Marketplace sensitivity.** According to Carol Childress of Leadership Network, we live in the dawning of a new day—the sunrise of missions—when the twenty-first century will be more like the first century than any of the previous centuries. In our increasingly secularized and paganized world the logic of basic Christian beliefs and morals is not widely understood or accepted (qtd. in Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard 358). The obvious challenge is to avoid abandoning our theology while at the same time making it accessible to the uninformed (Barna, “Battle” 43).

This effort, popularly labeled “marketplace sensitivity,” is almost always accompanied by church growth. Finke and Stark credit the rapid growth of the upstart Methodists and Baptists early in our nation’s history to their marketplace sensitivity. Methodism in particular offered a strong centralized direction with local control during its early years, allowing frontier Methodists to tailor their mission to a pioneer audience where 94 percent of Americans lived on farms in 1800. Utilizing such marketing tactics as circuit riders, camp meetings, enthusiastic (as differentiated from scholarly) preaching, and the distribution of religious literature, Methodism grew rapidly (see Figure 2.5).

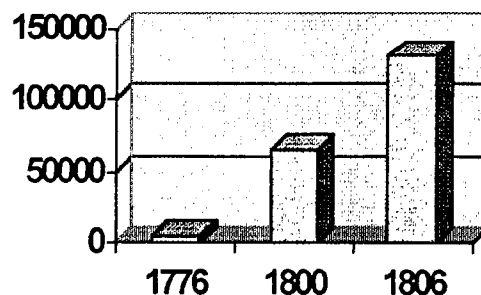


Figure 2.5  
Methodist Membership in America



Recent evidence of marketplace sensitivity includes the pioneering ministry of Dr. Robert Schuller in Garden Grove, California. In some ways the nation's twenty-first century mission station grandfather, Schuller set forth in 1955 to reach out to unchurched persons in his community, county, region, nation, and world (Crystal). Along the way, he influenced a host of successful marketplace sensitive pastors.

**Passion to reach people.**

Let's ask ourselves some painfully specific questions. How open are we to people who drink, or smoke? How open are we to "hard living" people with addictions and soap opera values? How open are we to young men who ride motorcycles, who wear jeans, long hair, left earrings, and leather jackets with the words "Life Sucks." How open are we, really, to illiterate people, to homeless people, to people with AIDS? How open are we to people with dirt under their fingernails, or unshined shoes, with bad breath or body odor, who might belch or break wind or split an infinitive in the church building? (Hunter, Church 63)

Marketplace sensitivity is rooted in a passion to reach people for Christ. Willow Creek's slogan—"lost people matter to God"—encouraged the fast growing Church of the Resurrection in Kansas City to employ every method at their disposal to spread the gospel. According to their pastor, Rev. Adam Hamilton, "We want to help irreligious and nominally religious people know and follow Jesus Christ; we will do whatever it takes to be their church" (Hamilton). Jerry Falwell calls this "saturation evangelism"—using every available means to reach every available person at every available time (qtd. in Warren, Purpose Driven 201).

Hunter clearly states this perspective of many Christians: "It is God's will that his church grow, that his lost children be found" ("Legacy" 517). In response, many have set out to build mission centers to connect with people who were important to God but who had no commitment to a church.

People must be reached with the message of the gospel and given an opportunity to receive answers to their questions and objections. This must be done in a culturally relevant way, while recognizing that it generally takes unbelievers a period of time to go through the process of coming to the point of trusting Christ. (qtd. in Hunter, Church 155)

Marketplace sensitive churches like Willow Creek have been labeled “apostolic congregations”—the kind of churches who would rather play on the opponent’s field because, as Coach Lou Holtz once explained, “It presents the greater challenge to our commitment, our character, our courage, and our community” (qtd. in Hunter, Church 168). At the root of this sensitivity is love—loving others within their culture just as Jesus loved the disciples in theirs and loves us in ours.

**Penetrating the culture.** Kallestad challenges Christians to “become serious about penetrating the heart of the culture with the heart of the gospel” (qtd. in Hunter, Church 74). Our commission is to penetrate the world with the gospel (Fox and Morris 99; Sweet, Communication 5; Warren, Purpose Driven 196). Indeed, Martin Luther had a two-conversion expectation of every Christian. “The first conversion is to respond to God’s call to come out of the world”; the second is to go back into the world to penetrate it with the message and model of the kingdom of God (Ogden 200).

Some congregations have proven quite culturally flexible in order to reach people. “When a church employs the language, music, style, architecture, art forms, and other forms of the target population’s culture, Christianity then has a fair chance to become contagious within their ranks” (Hunter, Church 58). These churches do not change their theology; rather, the Bible determines their message, but their target determines when, where, and how they communicate it (Warren, Purpose Driven 157).

One apparent rationale behind marketplace sensitivity is that “to Christianize a whole people, the first thing *not* [original emphasis] to do is to snatch individuals out of it into a different society” (McGavran 10). Unfortunately, new people visiting churches may have just such “alien society” experiences. Most are not atheists; they just go away feeling that church is irrelevant to what they need (Warren, Purpose Driven 193).

In our “post-Christian” age the Western world seems indifferent, apathetic, or hostile to the biblical God, and “we need other forms of witness to build bridges of contact to the unbelieving world” (Ogden 202). These “bridges” are many, ranging from bridge events (community-wide events designed to make connections between churches and their communities) to bridge friendships (believers developing relationships with unbelievers) to bridge ministries (community-based outreach ministries).

Kallestad challenges people to find new bridges between the gospel and the secular mind-set (Entertainment Evangelism 23). These bridges can take the form of “mezzanine” events that serve as “fishing pools” for new contacts, since “bridging occurs whenever outsiders find relevance in what is happening in ongoing meetings” (George 160). Helpful strategies that bridge the truth of the gospel are those that address felt needs in people’s lives (Slaughter 69). In order to do that, Christians need to understand their missional territory. Sometimes our failure to communicate is not because we do not know the gospel but because we do not know the people (Fox and Morris 98).

We will reach many more people when some of us are willing to “become kosher” and adopt enough of their culture to identify with them, and communicate through their culture’s forms, creating whatever new units and ministries that are necessary, and thereby helping them discover the gospel as good news for people like them. (Hunter, Church 79)

Just as Jesus came and adapted to a specific culture, “we are called to unwrap the

gospel's meaning from the cultural forms in which we received it and rewrap it in the cultural forms of the target population" (Hunter, Church 65). Yet, the Church's cultural blindness and inability to distinguish between the gospel and its cultural forms is responsible for a great deal of the church's failure to make a significant impact on society (qtd. in Hunter, Church 62).

Ultimately, Christians should remember "we are engaged in a battle for the souls and minds of people" (Kallestad, Entertainment Evangelism 9). If our central mission is to express God's truth to his creatures (Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard 389), we need to find as many ways as possible to "contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3).

Helmut Thielicke once referred to the need to continually forward the gospel to a new address "because the recipients are continually changing their place of residence." In the next section, I review how the Church has done that—in ways that are rooted in Scripture, informed by tradition, adapted to the context, and suited to the giftedness of those involved (Seamands).

### **The Church's Use of Mass Communications Technology up through the Twentieth Century**

The precedent for church use of communications technology goes back almost to the recorded beginning of time. Whether or not the first humans used technology in addition to their innate bodily abilities to communicate, we do not know. However, we do know that by the time of Tubal-Cain, eight generations after Adam, people were using all kinds of instruments and tools made from wood, bronze, and iron to help them communicate in sign, symbol, word, and song (Gen. 4:21-22). Presumably charcoal,

drums, horns, paints, sticks, maybe even pens, were in use by then, certainly by the time of Joseph (Gen. 37-50). By the time of Moses, inscribed rock tablets were in vogue (Exod. 31:18), along with baked clay tablets. God's people also used Egyptian papyrus and Roman vellum scrolls to communicate (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1  
Communication/Technology Shifts

<p>Oral Storytelling: Jesus-4th Century          Manuscript: 4th-15th Century          Mass Print: 15th-20th Century          Electronic Media: 20th Century</p> <p>Adapted from Slaughter</p>
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The early Christians were the first to use Codex—vellum sheets folded into sections—to spread the gospel. That “brilliant innovation in communication”—the first century paperback epistles—helped extend God’s message across the world (Morris 221).

In 1453, goldsmith Johannes Gutenberg developed the first moveable type in Europe, launching one of the greatest cultural revolutions of all time. When he used his printing press to print 180 copies of the Bible several years later, about thirty thousand hand printed books existed in all of Europe. Within fifty years, over nine million books were reproduced. This prolific distribution of knowledge and opinion fostered sweeping cultural changes, including both the expansion and undermining of the institution whose book served as the centerpiece of the revolution—the Church (Woreck and Zora).

The pioneering continued, as evidenced in the following ventures by God’s servants who employed various methods and tools of mass communication.

## Literature

Books, newspapers, pamphlets, tracts, and flyers have long been a favorite method of Christian communication. Biblical translation and dissemination bolstered Martin Luther's Reformation era (Ottenhoff 933), just as John Wesley and others' mass distributed writings impacted all of England.

American Christians have a strong history of publishing and distributing Christian literature. Early Methodist circuit riders aggressively sold books and tracts, as well as subscriptions to the most widely-circulated periodical in the nation in 1830, the Methodist weekly Christian Advocate and Journal (Moore 19). Intended to exist as "a good, virtuous well-conducted newspaper," the paper offered departments for parents, youth, and children, sections on "Domestic Economy," "Medical Intelligence," "Foreign Intelligence," and information such as bank-note tables, New York prices, and advertising. The appeal and success of this paper attracted the attention of both religious and secular publishers and helped set the "tone and style of mass communication in the United States" that continues to this day (qtd. in Sweet, Communication 37).

Sweet further notes that religion and the postal service forged a symbiotic relationship during the early 1800s (Communication 36). Since then, Christians have published and the postal service delivered in such concert that most Americans have probably received some type of Christian literature in the mail.

Additionally, it is worth noting that some of the greatest Christian writers—St. Augustine, Dante, John Bunyan, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lew Wallace, Catherine Marshall, C. S. Lewis—wrote for the world. They were not so much interested in telling stories to each other but to those who did not believe. "Their impact was enormous.

Entire societies were changed, the histories of sovereign nations were affected, lives were turned around” (Briner 119).

## **Telegraph**

Though seemingly primitive today, the telegraph was one of the pioneering forces that helped usher in the age of modern communication. Literally meaning “writing from afar” or “far writer,” the telegraph evolved from various ancient optical and audio long distance relay communication practices.

As early as 500 BC, Persia’s King Darius I sent news from the capital to the outlying provinces via a line of shouting men positioned on heights, a system thirty times faster than normal couriers. The Greeks used a system of dual water jugs containing marked vertical poles on hilltops to send messages. By the late eighteenth century, the British had devised a series of six-frame wooden boxes built on poles. The French used Claude Chappe’s ninety-eight position optical code system based on a long bar with two shorter bars on each end, which, used in conjunction with a ninety-two page code book, could transmit as many 8,500 different words (McKenzie).

Other societies sent messages over long distances using drums, smoke signals, flags, and various light systems. For example, most Americans are familiar with Revolutionary War hero Paul Revere and his famous directive to post lanterns in the north bell tower of Christ Church in Boston to convey the method of British assault on the independence-minded Americans: “One if by land, two if by sea.” (qtd. in Edwards)

At the end of this long train of primitive distance communication technologies is Samuel Morse, son of Congregationalist minister Jedidiah Morse and inventor of the electronic telegraph. Although a prominent painter in his own time with little training in

electricity, Samuel realized that pulses of electrical current could convey information over wires. His electronic alphabet, or “Morse code,” helped shape the foundational logic behind modern day electronic communications. In the very first long distance electronic communication ever, sent on a forty-mile wire strung on poles between Baltimore and Washington on 24 May 1844, Samuel transmitted this coded message from Numbers 23:23, “WHAT GOD HATH WROUGHT!” In other words, in a message that revealed his own sense of wonder that God had chosen him to reveal the use of electricity to man, he exclaimed, “Look what God has enabled us to build, and benefit by” (Samuel).

### **Radio**

Wireless electronic broadcasting emerged on the world stage sixty years later when Dr. Lee de Forest, the son of a another Congregationalist minister, won the grand prize at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis for sending a wireless message three hundred miles to Chicago. In 1906, Dr. de Forest invented the “audion tube,” which allowed transmitted sound to be amplified. Even though he insisted that “some day, news, and even advertising will be sent to the public on the wireless telephone,” those who sold stock in his invention were indicted and imprisoned for fraud (Tollin). His three-electrode vacuum tube, or triode, laid the groundwork for the development of practical radios, telephones, televisions, radar, and computers, eventually proving to be one of the most useful and influential inventions in history (Naughton).

The first radio broadcast ever went out to ships at sea on Christmas Eve in 1906. Reginald Aubrey Fessenden, a Canadian experimenter in code and voice radio, read a portion of Luke’s Gospel, had a woman sing Handel’s *Largo*, then he read a poem,



played a violin solo—Gounod’s “O Holy Night,” and gave a short speech (Ellens 15).

No one really took radio seriously until Westinghouse launched the first commercially licensed station nearly fifteen years later in 1920. In six years, by 1926, broadcasting grew into an \$800 million a year business with fifty million listeners in the U.S. Over the next two decades, Americans experienced national camaraderie as they gathered around the “marvelous talking furniture” to listen to the great stars of vaudeville, “the thrilling days of yesteryear” on The Lone Ranger, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s fireside chats, and Edward R. Murrow’s riveting accounts of World War II (Tollin).

In 1925, six hundred radio stations populated the United States, with sixty-three owned by churches (about 10 percent) “as tools for reinforcing and strengthening the image of local ministries” (Ellens 16). By 1985, Christians had their own USA Radio Network, established by Marlin Maddoux as “the first American news radio network to deal with key issues from the conservative standpoint.” By 1996, nearly fifteen hundred radio stations—one out of every ten, about the same percentage as in 1925—offered religious programming (Hawkins 34). At the close of the twentieth century, millions of Americans were more conservative and greatly sustained in their faith because of this third most common radio format in the country—religious radio (Kalas).

## **Television**

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the emergence of television moved people from a remote singular sensory experience (Print—“reading about it,” and Radio—“hearing about it”) to a remote dual sensory experience of “seeing and hearing about it.” This radical paradigm shift primarily occurred between 1945, at which time over 80 percent of

Americans had never even seen a TV, and 1955, by which time over 32,000,000 American families had installed television sets in their homes (Masoff 4). By the 1990s, more American households owned at least one TV set (98 percent) than had indoor plumbing (97 percent), and many owned more than one TV

**Television programming.** The first nondenominational worship service seen on television was preached on New Year's Day in St. Louis in 1948 by Walter Maier of the gospel radio program, The Lutheran Hour (Ward 83). Maier had become the voice of religious radio after he thundered onto the airwaves in 1930, and his popularity quickly transferred to television. By the time of his death in 1950, he had preached the gospel to more people than anyone else in history (Hawkins 34).

Evangelist Billy Graham filled the void left by Maier. Skyrocketed to national prominence in 1949 following William Randolph Hearst's national newspaper coverage of his Los Angeles crusade, Graham quickly began to use the mass media to proclaim the gospel. He started a worldwide radio program, The Hour of Decision in 1950. He also established a World Wide Pictures unit of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association that year, which eventually produced dozens of documentary and dramatic films and became the largest producer of religious films in the world. Graham's filmmaking efforts were the last consistent quality effort of the church to use this "powerful, important, uniquely American medium to bring the salt of the Gospel to the world" (Briner 77).

Graham developed his own unique approach to using television. Instead of attempting a weekly program, he televised his crusades during prime time on major stations three or four times a year, with his audiences growing bigger and communication techniques more sophisticated every year. In the March 1995 Billy Graham Puerto Rico

crusade, the message was the same, but it was translated into 116 languages with culturally-appropriate music and testimonies dubbed into the broadcast. Amazingly, over one billion people, one-fifth of the world's population, heard the gospel in languages, music, and testimonies matched to their particular group (Martin).

The man who originally hired Billy Graham as a full-time evangelist started his own religious television series on ABC in 1949, Youth on the March. Percy Crawford, founder of Youth for Christ, originated his show live from New York on Sunday nights. Featuring top-notch musicians and speakers, it continued as a popular show up through 1951 (Ward 84).

Another ABC series, I Believe, began airing on Tuesday evenings in 1949. The show featured noted theologians discussing religion as it affected everyday life. A television puppet series also began that year, dramatizing well-known biblical stories.

This Is the Life was a dramatic show depicting the lives of people saved by Christ. During its prime season in 1952, it was the most widely telecast religious program of the day with a network of five hundred stations and five continents (Ward 84-85). The Catholic Hour Broadcasts, featuring Bishop Fulton J. Sheen in 1951 on CBS, was also a popular show (85).

The Answer was another popular show that began in 1954 and continued until 1970. The producer, Paul Stevens of the Southern Baptist Convention, was so creative that he often acquired free time nationwide, including network prime time (Ellens 36). Head of the Radio and TV Commission (RTC) for Southern Baptists, Stevens viewed himself as a “broadcaster who produces mainly religious material” with an objective to teach the doctrine and ethics of Christianity in a way that was attractive and believable.

“The enemies of Christ are not silent,” he wrote. “They are employing the mass media to reach people with ideologies that are non-Christian and spiritually destructive” (2).

In 1958, Stevens initiated the program Televangelism, which involved Christians inviting unchurched and non-Christian people from their community into households and church parlors to view and discuss films that were televised according to a preannounced schedule. The objectives included fostering Christian insight, understanding, and faith commitments. The program ran for five years and was one of the most successful programs ever undertaken by RTC. The United Methodist Church tried a similar approach called Breakthrough, which included fifteen-minute films of panel-documentary type for home and in-church use.

During the 1960s, the RTC produced a dozen, one-hour specials in conjunction with the three major networks, including interviews, dialogues, biographies, arts presentations, and musicals. According to Stevens, “We try to discover what it is to which the public is listening and design our programs within the framework of that mindset or lifestyle” (qtd. in Ellens 108). Along with others, Stevens believed that “there is no *better* [original emphasis] context in which to inform humans than that of relaxed entertainment” (qtd. in Ellens 108). Good programming creates “a subconscious as well as conscious disposition in favor of the certainty of the gospel” (135).

Another pioneer of this type of television programming was crusade evangelist Ford Philpot, who launched The Story in 1963—the first religious television series ever produced in color. He was concerned that masses of people did not attend church and, if they were going to be reached at all, would have to be reached through some means other than the usual church service (Bowdoin 59). Philpot’s program included music,

outstanding guest stars, and a gospel message. Fast-paced, it shunned religious symbols in an attempt to reach an audience that would not normally watch religious programming. Philpot distributed his show aside from network television through direct contact with station owners across the country. This methodology fit in with his crusade evangelism strategy of meeting in neutral sites to avoid identification with any single church or denomination (120).

Other major television shows included

1. The 700 Club, which began in 1966 with host Pat Robertson. This was the first religious talk show on TV (Ward 156);
2. Old Time Gospel Hour with Jerry Falwell. The nation's top broadcast show in 1976 with 251 stations, it far surpassed the next-to-largest show on television, The Lawrence Welk Show, which aired on only 191 stations. Within two years of his launch, Falwell aired on 327 stations in North America, 102 more than the entire CBS network (106);
3. Rex Humbard World Outreach Ministry. During its season, this was the largest independent TV network in world, with 237 stations in the US, 228 in Canada, and 113 more in dozen different countries (106);
4. Oral Roberts and You, which featured top musical and celebrity guests and was the highest-rated religious program in 1970s (106);
5. The Jimmy Swaggart Telecast. Begun in 1973, this television ministry featured music and preaching from Swaggart's Baton Rouge, Louisiana ministry headquarters and reached record audiences during the 1980s;
6. The Hour of Power with Dr. Robert Schuller. Began in 1970, this televised

worship service from the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California offers inspiring music, positive preaching, and interviews with high-profile people. In 1997, it was the most widely-viewed religious program in America, airing on 181 stations in the United States and Canada, as well in 154 different countries around the world (Crystal); and,

7. Praise the Lord. The flagship production of Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), which was founded by Paul and Jan Crouch in 1973, and is currently the world's largest Christian network available on 2,500 television stations, seventeen satellites, the Internet and thousands of cable systems worldwide ("About").

One other show aired in Britain by the British Broadcasting Company (BBC), bears mention at this point. Songs of Praise included Christians who gathered in local churches to sing well-known hymns. The hymns were chosen by members of the community who were then interviewed about their choice and encouraged to share their stories of faith and trials. Millions watched who never would have dreamed of attending church on Sundays (Morris 31). Emphasizing comfort rather than conflict, unity rather than division, and extolling the virtues of formal Christianity without dwelling on its weaknesses, the show seemed to stir up society's collective memory. "It is important that somewhere in our society traditional values should be affirmed, corporate identity reinforced and the robustness of folk religion celebrated" (31).

Religious television in the 1980s generally fit this image of the electronic church: a thirty to ninety minute program, nationally syndicated, that purchased time from a network, with a highly visible charismatic leader, a high budget, "slick" production, solicitation of money over the air, and extensive use of telephone and computerized "personalized" contacts with viewers (Fore 85). Due to the high cost involved, these

televangelists typically used tactics that were psychologically ingenious but, according to some, deemed harmful to viewers in the long run (86). During one survey of forty leading religious shows in 1987 by Robert Abelman, professor of Communications at Cleveland State University, viewers were asked to donate an average of \$328 during each average hour of programming (90). Even so, as Naisbitt writes, “You may dislike their morals and methods, but more than most, evangelical preachers have recognized the opportunities of the high tech information age and applied them to their field” (280).

Winzenburg notes, in his 2000 study of how religious broadcasters used their airtime, that the “commercial” portions of religious broadcasts (combining fundraising and promotion) averaged 19 percent, compared to network television’s 28 percent use of prime-time programming for advertising and promotional announcements.

Though pleas for money and thinly veiled political agendas have become synonymous with televangelism, we should remember that many souls have been touched for the good by TV ministries. Rather than tune them out, we should pray that God uses them, keeps them honest theologically and fiscally, and inspires them with a fresh vision to stay relevant in a media-saturated culture that, like or not, is more inclined to sit in front of a television than a pulpit. (Winzenburg)

By the mid-1980s, syndicated religious broadcasters had faded from secular TV, driven by rising costs to either radio or Christian-owned TV that could deliver consistently supportive evangelical audiences. Cable and satellite technology promised unprecedented geographic outreach and twenty-four hour coverage. Unfortunately, the viewing public began to fragment, leading to concerns that “gospel programs might be consigned to a ‘religious channel ghetto’ seen only by Christians” (Ward 166).

Shows like Christy were marketplace attempts to re-mainstream television based on Christian values. The two-hour pilot on Easter Sunday 1994 (thirty million viewers)

and the ensuing Thursday night series generated more positive mail and phone calls to CBS than any series premier in the network's history ("Acclaimed" 115). However, although its timeslot had the highest rating for more than six years, the network cancelled the show. Ken Wales, the executive producer who gave nearly a decade of his life to getting the show aired, explained that for a show to be a success, the network must be convinced that more than Christians will watch the show. Demographics were weakest in urban areas and among viewers aged eighteen to thirty-five ("CBS" 64). Even so, Wales is convinced that viewers want stories like Christy about people with convictions and values confronting real problems (qtd. in Bendis).

Another hit show launched in the 1990s is the CBS fictional drama Touched by an Angel. Independently produced by Martha Williamson, a professing Christian, this show has surprised industry insiders with its huge success. By December 1997, it was a top 10 ratings hit, was being syndicated for reruns at nearly \$1 million per episode, and had already spawned another successful Christian-based series, Promised Land. Although a religiously generic show on a secular network, Touched by an Angel nevertheless portrays people who believe in a personal God who cares for us (Knight 8).

Approaches like these are not new. One well-known Presbyterian minister, whose cumulative viewing audiences surpass Robert Schuller's or Pat Robertson's, remembers watching television in the early years. After watching people throw pies at each other, he went home and told his family that he was going to look for a job in TV. When they tried to dissuade him on the premise that he did not know enough about it, he replied, "I've seen enough to know it could be a lot greater than it is!" (Belcher-Hamilton 383). This patron saint of children's television, Fred Rogers, is currently watched by



more than eight million children between the ages of two and five on Mister Roger's Neighborhood every day. Rogers, who retired in 2001, recently reflected on his more than forty years in television:

I certainly remember how good it felt to be ordained with a call to work with families through the media, because that could bring together many of the interests God had given me. . . . I couldn't possibly have known how I would be used. I've simply tried to be open to the possibilities God has made available to me. (384)

Other television program styles include documentaries like Bill Moyer's PBS special Amazing Grace and newsworthy shows like the PBS half-hour Religion and Ethics.

The video market has exploded in recent years. In addition to previously-aired television shows, this market offers thousands of never-before televised quality productions ranging from short teaching videos to full-length movies. This market also includes music videos and unique presentations like the Sports Outreach America series, evangelistic videos distributed for use at Super Bowl and World Series parties that show interviews of athletes talking about Jesus ("TV Halftime" 86). Some of these videos are excellent and are not only worthy of national airing, but the usefulness and quality of their content far exceeds that of some mainstream media productions.

**Television issues.** Who watches religious television? (see Figure 2.6). Barna's 1993 report claims 64 percent of all adults say they tune into Christian radio or religious television, with 51 percent of Christians and 49 percent of non-Christians reporting that they watch religious television broadcasts (Barna Report 101-102).

Peter Horsefield's research for the 1950-80 period in America indicates:

- 24 percent of adults watched at least one hour of religious TV weekly;

- Twice as many women watched as men, with two-thirds over the age of fifty;
- Few people in higher social and educational brackets watched, and few adolescents; and,
- Worship was high among Protestant fundamentalist groups and highest among the converted (Morris 196).

On the other hand, a national Gallup poll funded by the Annenberg School of Communications claimed that the actual viewing audience for the electronic church was much smaller. They reported

- Only about 2 percent of Americans watched one or more hours of religious TV per week;
- Religious television is not effective evangelism, but is an effective reinforcer of existing religious beliefs of viewers (77 percent of viewers were church members);
- The two mainstream groups included heavy viewers of religious TV who attend church and general TV viewers who do not; and,
- Churches' principle competition is not TV ministries but general TV (Fore 102-109).

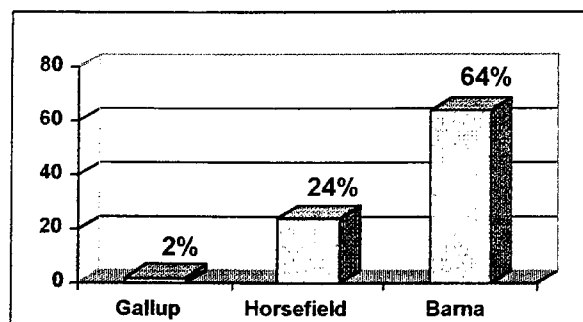


Figure 2.6  
Christian TV Viewing Audience

Despite the large discrepancy between the above research statistics, these figures suggest that although televangelists may claim to be converting the world to Jesus Christ, they preach largely to the existing flock of believers (Schultze 20).

If the audience is an issue on one side of the screen, cooperation among programming providers is an issue on the other side. Ted Baehr relates the following story of churches working together in Knoxville, Tennessee in preparation for the 1982 World's Fair to build a gospel-based exhibit called "The Power." As executive producer, Baehr utilized a wide range of top craftspeople from the electronic media and show business to create the most technologically sophisticated exhibit at the fair. The churches asked the following valuable questions:

- What do we want to communicate?
- What is our forum and marketplace?
- Who is our audience?
- What is the appropriate genre (or format)?
- What is the appropriate medium? and
- What is the grammar and language of the appropriate genre and medium?

Rather than produce the exhibit themselves, the churches decided to combine their talents with the appropriate professional talent. Together, they decided to translate their message into the appropriate language and place it in the appropriate context so that their audience was able to hear and understand it (Baehr xv). Baehr summarizes,

The good news is that he gives each of us our own unique combination of motivations, talents, and gifts, which, when discerned, will help each of us discover how we can best communicate what we want and what genre and medium is appropriate for us. All too often, we become frustrated by trying to use a medium that does not suit our unique motivational talents. (xviii)

This type of cooperation in Christian communication is critical. Religious broadcasting is adjunct to the work of churches; it does not supercede it (Morris 96). Philpot explained it this way: “My preaching must be church-centered. It isn’t enough to go into a place and get a man converted. You need a church to take care of him and nurture him and work with him” (qtd. in Bowdoin 112). Additionally, the mass media can offer no relevant message if the story of Jesus is not evident and alive in local churches (Engel 28).

Dyrness laments, “We have focused so exclusively on dominion and control that we have lost sight of other biblical emphases of cooperation and interrelationship” (59). Warren concurs, explaining that “no single church can possibly reach everyone. It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. Together we can accomplish what no single congregation, strategy, or style can accomplish by itself” (Dyrness 156).

Christians should remember that technology is not an elixir for the ills of society, a magic potion for saving souls, or the secret to world evangelization. Neither is televangelism, which has been accused of “de-Christianizing” the nation (Schultze 20). Rather, technology is a complementary tool to one-on-one witnessing—the bedrock of evangelistic strategy throughout history (Engel 27).

Ultimately, neither technology, the church, the clergy, nor individual lay Christians will single-handedly reach the world for Christ. They will all need to work together to communicate the gospel in meaningful ways, remaining constantly aware that the Holy Spirit is the one that convicts and leads to conversion, regeneration, and holiness.

A third issue relates to money. John Gallo’s Sunday Morning show on WCCO-

TV, owned by CBS in Minneapolis, recently ended after thirty-one years on the air. Devoted to religious news and issues, the show aired as an unsponsored public service program. After its replacement with a commercially supported show, Noel Holston commented in his column in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, “Money is the root of all TV” (Holston 192).

Money is crucial in television, if not central. Gitlin explains that network executives want to air the shows best calculated to accumulate maximum reliable audiences. “Maximum audiences attract maximum dollars for advertisers, and advertiser dollars are, after all, the network’s objective” (25).

Since 1962, the government has allowed people to pay money to reserve public service slots; therefore, those who have enough money get on the air. Morris describes the result as a televised “lucky dip” for viewers into a variety of Christian traditions which does not serve up a theologically balanced diet but rather a crude denominational spread preferential to those with the most money (105).

Christians do need to address financial strategies for getting quality programming on the air. Most television shows are commercially sponsored. Christians may likewise need to consider financing their programs via commercial sponsors who support their vision and mission.

Presentation is a critical issue. Peggy Wehmeyer, the first religion news correspondent on any major network news team, writes that her employers at ABC recognize that to ignore the religious dimension of culture and society is to leave a huge hole in the picture. They hired her to help them grapple with the religious dimension of life, even though it is personal and abstract and hard for journalists to visualize.

Wehmeyer relates that in our visually-oriented culture, the communication challenge is to “take the important spiritual issues and find visual vehicles through which to tell them” (qtd. in Neff 16).

Christians have got to learn how to work *with* [original emphasis] the media and to understand how television works. They need to learn why you must have visuals, how to say things in a minute and a half, and what is significant to a secular audience. If you can’t learn to play this game, you may be left out of the game. (16)

Television will not make any concessions until religious programming shows it can compete (Spargur 3). According to Walter Cronkite, the media does not trivialize religion; they do not pay attention to it at all. “Religion has frightened away reporters and editors from time immemorial . . . and they don’t think religion is a broad-based interest among readers and viewers” (1201).

Schultze suggests that “churches, denominations, and lay leaders combine their talents to produce and fund new programming devoid of the negative aspects of contemporary televangelism, from personality cults to perverted gospels” (246). Fore suggests further that the church find sophisticated and creative ways to work with and encourage people in the secular media (117). Morris concurs, reminding Christians that television is “broad-casting” in that it aims to reach a vast public and must generally hit the center of public taste (143). Sincere Christians who want to communicate the gospel in that marketplace must tailor their methods to their audience.

Warren addresses presentation in terms of advertising. He suggests that churches stop complaining and start finding ways to communicate on the unbeliever’s wavelength. “No matter how life-changing our message is, it won’t do any good if we’re broadcasting on a different channel from the unchurched” (Purpose Driven 189). He laments that

although the church has “the *real* [original emphasis] secret to meaning, significance, and satisfaction in life,” we often present it in a bland, unattractive way (346).

Others caution that while the use of mass media can be good, we do not want the Great Commission to become the great ad campaign or televangelism to turn the gospel into mere entertainment. Lawrence Moore observes that many public Christian activities come across as “selling God.” In his book by that title, he chronicles the history of American Christians marketing God. He admits their success, but questions promoting salvation as a commodity, particularly through entertainment .

A number of authors address the issue of entertainment. Warren points out that to entertain means to “capture and hold the attention for an extended period of time (Purpose Driven 231). Sweet suggests Christians should “edutain”—combine education and entertainment. He also makes a distinction between “amusement,” which literally means “not to ponder,” versus “entertainment” meaning “to hold the attention of” (SoulTsunami 213). Therefore, truly Christian entertainment should lead people to entertain Christ and Christianity, deliberately aiming to catch and hold people’s attention long enough to stir interest in hearing the claims of Christ.

Kallestad labels such activities “entertainment evangelism.” He refers to Martin Luther’s three foundational witnessing principles—make it simple, relevant, and entertaining—to argue that entertainment is not the gospel. Rather, entertainment helps make connections (Entertainment Evangelism 10). Others suggest that entertainment evangelism is not new. Rather, the eighteenth and nineteenth century revivalists connected to their public using this communication technique long before televangelists entered the American religious scene.

Contemporary Christians should likewise find ways to entertain and whet mainstream television viewers' spiritual appetites. If we want to reach people outside the confines of formal worship and traditional televangelism, we need to reach them where they live, meeting them on their level just as Jesus humbly met us on ours.

Christians should also consider prevenience as it relates to video and television programming. Mass media can and does influence people for Christ. Briner writes that movies like King of Kings and The Robe were the first real, meaningful presentations of Christ that impacted his life. Afterward, he found himself more open and objective when the claims of Christ were presented directly from Scripture (76).

Other concur that mass media can help sow seeds of awareness and stimulate interest. Fore views the mass media as “technically ideal for the task of helping prepare people to hear and receive the gospel” (51). He calls the use of television “pre-evangelism,” since it can help prepare people to ask the right questions, understand the claims of Christianity better, sensitize them to spiritual issues, and enlarge their vision (122). Kallestad explains, “There is such a thing as high-quality, substantial Christian entertainment that can deeply touch lives in ways that traditional approaches to ministry never could” (Entertainment Evangelism 21).

Conversely, the mass media can influence people against Christ, hindering attraction and commitment. The Jim Bakker scandal caused visitor flow in many churches to dry up almost overnight and visibly hampered it in many churches for over a year (George 35). Within ninety days after Bakker's scandal erupted, Falwell and Swaggart reported an income decline of \$2 million per month and Robertson \$12 million for the quarter (Fore 175).



The sheer plethora of channels and program selections can be confusing, too.

Many people do not reject Christianity in favor of other claims upon their allegiance, but are so bewildered by all the options open to them . . . they suspend judgement and walk quickly past the great gaggle of street-corner messiahs bawling their wares in the electronic marketplace. (Morris 169)

This factor is aggravated by the “relational distance” of mass media, not real physical distance but rather perceived distance (Fore 50). The electronic church as we have come to know it: (1) separates people from their own communities, (2) is not quality evangelism in and of itself, and (3) is captive to the commercial broadcasting system and its demands (111-13). We, therefore, err if we expect too much from the mass media and not enough of the church.

Television can play a public, prevenient, salvific role “as a part of the whole life and witness of the church” (Fore 195). However, Christians should take care that their electronic witness is “characterized by biblical fidelity, true relevance, genuine contextualization, and full accountability” (Engel 28).

### **Internet**

The close of the twentieth century witnessed an online revolution with Christians participating in record numbers. A December 2001 Pew Internet & American Life Project report indicated that 28 million Americans had used the Internet for religious nurture and connection, more than “have gambled online, used Web auction sites, traded stocks online, placed phone calls on the Internet, done online banking, or used Internet-based dating services” (“CyberFaith”).

Many churches, parachurch ministries, and individual Christians have their own web sites. Three of the largest online church directories included a total of over five thousand church websites in early 1998, and over nine thousand listings by 2001.

Individual church web sites often include basic information such as a church's name, affiliation, address, phone number, meeting places, and times. Others post sermons, information about staff and members, newsletters, bulletins, calendars, directories, and prayer requests online for both member communication and outreach.

A number of denominations have their own computer networks. In early 1998, the Lutherans hosted "RELIGION-ONLINE," the Presbyterians "Presbynet," the United Church of Christ "Christnet," and the United Methodist Church "UMCOMM Teletalk," and now simply "UMC.org." Other sites, like the "World Christian Internet Resources" offer vast collections of resources across all denominations.

Christian educational institutions, such as Asbury Theological Seminary, use the Internet for everything from interinstitutional communication to distance learning. Asbury launched a new educational initiative in 1997, the ExL Program—for credit courses over the Internet—at extension sites and by simultaneous broadcast. The seminary advertises that users are "only a computer, modem, and telephone away from experiencing powerful classroom lectures, insightful biblical commentary, and stimulating theological discussion. All in the comfort of your own living room" (ExL). Asbury currently offers numerous online courses that can allow almost virtual attainment of a degree without ever physically setting a foot on campus.

Asbury has also moved toward the creation of a virtual library accessible through the world wide web. According to Leslie A. Andrews, Vice President for Academic Development and Distributed Learning, this will afford Asbury an opportunity to broaden theological knowledge sharing. Asbury has developed one of the most technologically advanced seminaries in the world and is committed to "communicating the unchanging

Truth of historic, Wesleyan Christianity through the most dynamic means available” (Asbury Witness 6). Asbury also utilizes technological advances to link a second campus in Florida with the existing campus in Kentucky, capitalizing on the “opportunity to take theological education into a highly accessible and growing market” (Burson).

The Roman Catholic Church is online, too. In early 1995, IBM announced a cooperative venture with the Vatican Library to help get its 1.5 million books and 150,000 manuscripts online. With an average of only two thousand scholars visiting the library yearly, Leonard Boyle, the prefect of the Vatican Library, commented, “All these wonderful books are only of use if they’re read” (qtd. in Lohr 1).

IBM’s involvement came about as part of its IBM Digital Library technology initiative, focusing primarily on large corporations, universities, and cultural institutions. They are currently involved in a number of projects assisting companies and institutions in transforming text, art, films, and music into digital form. According to Steven Mills, general manager of IBM’s software solutions division, “This isn’t a vision. We’re not pointing toward the stands. These software tools are all available now” (qtd. in Lohr 1).

When asked about the marriage of the church and technology, John Cardinal O’Conner, eighth Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church’s Diocese of New York, replied, “I believe the Church can use anything that helps us talk to the people. . . . We’re not talking to machines, they’re helping us talk to the people.”(qtd in Kellner 76).

Organizations like Christianity Today, Inc. have partnered with companies such as America Online (AOL) to facilitate access to their web sites. Other companies offer religion areas within their own site. Microsoft Network (MSN) called theirs the “Involved Christian Network” and offered “a place for seekers of fellowship, truth, and

other things that really matter in life, like spiritual growth, helping the needy, strengthening your family, and more” (Involved).

Other initiatives include the “Christian Community Network” (CCN) and “Goshen” web sites that aim to build Christian community on the Internet. One of the fastest growing sites was iBelieve.com, which closed down within a year due to lack of operating capital. These sites, and others like them, tend to include links to other sites as well original articles relevant to Christianity. Unfortunately, many Christians are unaware of their existence and most non-Christians will never visit them.

Some organizations, like CCN, are for-profit, religious corporations that derive their income through advertising, stock investors, and the sale of products. Others are strictly outreach ministries of their sponsoring organization(s), paid for through nonprofit income such as tithes and offerings, special gifts, and grants from foundations.

Similar to television and other mass mediums, the quality and effective use of Internet technology often comes down to several key issues: Cost, Development, Maintenance, Marketing, Personnel, and Technological infrastructure—hardware, software, and services. As Daichendt and Johnson point out in I-Operations: The Impact of the Internet on Operating Models, “great technology is ineffective unless there is an alignment of the core of the organization behind a focused purpose” (68). Plus, they suggest effective organizational Internet integration requires a high-level technology advocate who leads the technological integration and implementation (67). Someone with authority in an organization has to take the lead in seeking realistic and relevant Internet-related solutions, and then oversee the refining process of implementing and evaluating each initiative as it relates to the organization as a whole.

## **How Twenty-first Century Christians Can Employ Mass Media Technologies to Communicate with American Society**

Easum and Bandy suggest that the most significant question confronting Christians on the brink of the twenty-first century is this: “What exactly have Christians been ‘called out’ to be and do?” (10). Walter Wilson suggests a partial answer in The Internet Church when he theorizes that, just as God used the Greek empire and Roman government to position a common worldwide language and network of roads for use by early Christians in helping spread the Gospel, God has similarly positioned the common language and worldwide network of virtual Internet roads for use by Christians in this century. He even suggests that “Christians not view the Internet as technology, but as God’s moving to bring the gospel to every man, woman, and child upon the earth” (15).

Lipnack and Stamps drive this point home in the The Age of the Network when they insist that the purpose of networking technology is to connect people (158). Since networks define the social design of the twenty-first century (38), Christians should view technological networks as a means to connecting not only people with people, but people with God.

Sweet claims the defining question for the church today is what to do about the future (SoulTsunami 24). He observes that successes in America’s religious marketplace have been partly due to the ability of religious groups to “use popular forms of communication to reach the widest possible audience” (Communication 25). Time and again, the mastery of new communication forms has facilitated the spread of evangelical Christianity in America (30). As noted earlier, Christians have historically been among the first to utilize new mass communication mediums to proclaim the gospel.

So have the servants of Satan. Shortly after the Bible rolled off the printing press in the sixteenth century, pornography followed close behind. While some in their day, as in ours, used that development to denounce the technology itself as well as the evils perpetrated through it, others continued to use the technology to promote Christ and Christianity. They recognized that consumers tend to consume anything made readily available. In our day, pornography is accessible at the touch of mouse button. People do not have to order it, leave their home for it, search for it, or even pay for it. All they have to do is “click here.” According to author Jason Baker, “Cyberporn is enormously popular, highly profitable and easily accessible. Playboy’s World Wide Web site alone receives five million ‘hits’ online visits—every week” (21).

Similarly, easy access is one critical factor in the challenge to Christians to employ mass media technologies in communicating effectively with American society. Christians should earnestly seek to provide attractive media options that are at least as easy to access as pornography. Both the question and possibilities are on the table: “Will gospel broadcasters find a place as the electric church goes interactive? Should the Lord tarry, the prospects for reaching the world through interactive Bible studies, on-demand Christian music and video, and many more innovations are limitless” (Ward 191).

A companion factor is relevance, i.e., “attractive media options.” As noted previously, many do not view the church as relevant to their daily lives. Therefore, they will not call, visit in person or online unless they perceive some immediate relevancy. Innovative approaches do exist. For example, The New Inspirational Network offered a home shopping club on its cable channel reaching into more than seven million homes in 1998.

Christians should note that the computer and television are not stained glass (Morris 219). Christians should not simply and exclusively use technology to reproduce or distribute the kind of content, including worship, with which church members are familiar. Relevant content will tap into the felt needs and issues common among most people; it will attempt to sensitize viewers “to the deep mysteries of existence that underlie and swirl through all higher religions” (107). This does not mean promoting non-Christian behaviors or teachings but rather finding common emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual ground that will help people begin explore the concept of God and of establishing a relationship with Jesus Christ (117).

Relevant programming helps open doors to peoples’ lives. It does not slight certain aspects because they might be contentious but offers opportunities to examine politically and ethically sensitive areas of society. Relevancy addresses Christian principles although it may not necessarily promote specific cultural policies that flow from them (Schultze 119). Relevancy raises issues that become part of the public discourse and provides positive ways for people to respond. Even religious news should not seek to present the religious view, but present news in a way that generates discussion and debate about the significant issues of the day from religious perspectives (119).

Ken Myers sees a lot of great possibilities for what Christians in mass media could do. “I don’t see why you couldn’t have a channel like the History Channel or Learning Channel filled with programming oriented by a Christian worldview” (12). He suggests that we basically need to publicly present what Christians believe in ways that non-Christians will watch. After all, as Paul Tillich declared, better that people reject the gospel for the right reasons than for the wrong reasons (qtd. in Fore 49).

Target audience merits consideration. For example, some churches offer separate worship services, classes, media resources, even separate web sites, for believers and seekers. Online, most Christian web sites offer links to Christian resources through their sites. Note, however, these offers come from within the “Christian camp,” not outside of it. The question Christians should continually ask themselves is this: “Who do we want to reach, or need to reach, with this information?” Then, they must target their media endeavors accordingly.

Vision is a critical factor. The combined audience of television and the Internet will comprise the largest marketplace in the world. This single radical change in communications technology is not simply of interest to the Church but may profoundly affect its structure and methodology because the Church is a communications system (Morris 208). Therefore, ignorant church and ministry leaders may miss the significance of the issue altogether—how to effectively employ the most popular communication tools of the day in life-changing ministry. Many are sold on using printed Bibles, the most widely distributed mass media tool in the history of the world, but not other mass media formats. Pulpit preaching is a “given” and should be; however, Christian leaders need to clearly understand that one of the most significant twenty-first century changes is the tectonic shift away from a print-centered, pew-sitting culture. Mark Kellner laments, “For Christians to neglect the Internet . . . is akin to giving up on a segment of society” (20). The same could be said for other forms of mass media. Books may not disappear, as some claim (Levy, “It’s Time” 96), for without electrical power our virtual worlds would cease to exist at all. However, twenty-first century Christians should not restrict the corpus their mass communication visions to printed literature and pulpit preaching.



Implementation requires availability. God will use those who are “sensitive to his call, ready to step out in faith, to take risks, and to trust him for the result” (Ward 199). Believers should find encouragement that God is looking for availability more than ability. Like some famous inventions and discoveries, some of the most cutting-edge ministries involve people with no real experience or knowledge in areas in which they eventually excel. God is pleased when people honor him by devoting “themselves to learn and practice the highest standards of both business and ministry” (200). Whether we are “Here am I, send me” people (Isa. 6:8) or “Who am I? Please send somebody else” people (Exod. 3:11,4:13), God may have a mission with our name on it.

Balance will prove a necessary control factor. Charles Henderson, Presbyterian minister and organizing pastor of the First Church of Cyberspace, reminds us that web sites are not substitutes for the local church where people gather together to worship Christ (McCulley 4). Television is not a substitute either. TV may be our “electronic bard”—addressing us from the center of our culture and gathering us together to influence and reinforce the way we perceive ourselves, but neither television or the Internet can replace the local church (26-27). Rudolf Arnheim predicted in 1935 that television would turn life into a spectator sport and lead to a cult of sensory stimulation for its own sake (qtd. in Morris 74). Even as we employ mass media tools in ministry, Christians should remain aware that these tools can offer an “alarming surrogate for community living, . . . a pop down rabbit-hole into Wonderland without leaving our chair—for work, sport, entertainment, and education” (72).

Mass media communication challenges also raise a consistency, or integrity, factor. Ghandi once lamented that he was attracted to Jesus Christ, but, in his circles,

claimed he never met an attractive Christian—someone who actually lived out Christ’s claims and teachings. Publicly identifiable Christians utilizing mass media technologies to communicate Christian teachings and principles in any form must take extra care to live consistently godly lives in the midst of our society (Burnett 228). As Christians working to improve life in both the real world and the virtual world (Morris 80-81) and to identify with Christ and our culture in ways that do not adapt to ungodly forms, our lives must evidence a consistent witness such that we are salt and light and catalysts of conversion (Bavinck 179). Otherwise, we become stumbling blocks to the faith and callous the spiritual sensitivity of the masses.

A final critical factor involves execution. Vision, goals, and plans without execution is profligate. Cloistered behind the stained glass windows of our sanctuaries, real and imagined, we risk God’s mission in our generation. Just as Moses stepped out of the tabernacle, Isaiah stepped out of the temple, Jesus stepped out of the synagogue, John Wesley stepped out of the pulpit, and Billy Graham stepped out of the sanctuary, Christians need to balance their invitations to come inside and make a decision with initiatives to go outside and make disciples.

Hunter defines a mission’s main objective as one of reaching cultural groups “by planting indigenous self-propagating churches in every population within the earth’s rich mosaic of peoples” (“Legacy” 520). Christians should view institutions, including the media, as target cultural groups.

Briner has challenged Christians to venture out into the culture-shaping professions of our world, particularly communication professions. “I’ve always wondered why we could be so quick to sacrifice our children to become missionaries but

stand in the way of their becoming broadcast journalists, film and television actors, photographers, and painters” (31). Instead of running from the world or hanging around the fringes of our culture, we need to intentionally step into the center of it. Genuine Christians should be vitally involved in the overall moral and cultural discourse of our nation, an activity in which the mass media play a strategic, if not dominant, role. “Without our strategic involvement in the culture-shaping arenas of art, entertainment, the media, education, and the like, this nation simply cannot be the great and glorious society it once was” (32).

As the millennium dawns and spiritual fervor increases, The Receptivity paradigm—which purports that receptivity ebbs and flows—dictates that we should endeavor to “‘win the winnable’ while they are winnable” (Hunter, “Legacy” 521). The challenge ahead may not center on whether our society is more receptive to Christ but whether Christians are more receptive to reaching people for Christ in the center of our society. The following section outlines some general strategies toward that end.

### **Adjust to Ministry in the New Public Square**

Once a vibrant and central space of community life, most Western cities no longer have an actual physical, centralized location where people hear the latest news or hear visitors publicly greet the town (Klein 408). If Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the church door today, no one would notice until Sunday, the only people talking about them would be the ushers, and they would be more concerned about the hole in the door. Our public squares are now more fragmented and, in many ways, virtualized. They exist, in components, in the local newspaper, on local radio stations, on television on the city cable channel and local and national news, on bulletin boards, billboards, in bulletins, e-

mails, newsletters, memos, at public events, and on the collective web sites of numerous local organizations. Ministry in the public square is no longer a downtown, soapbox occasion but a multiplex of virtual ministry opportunities in print, radio, television, and the Internet.

Sweet defines the web, in particular, as a “post-modern cathedral” (SoulTsunami 32) and our “global third place—a city square, café, cocktail lounge and social club” (193). Along with the reminder that the web is not about content but connectedness (193), he suggests that relevant churches in the twenty-first century will fervently seek to stimulate and shape online communities that are as vibrant and real as virtual communities (219-21).

### **Embrace New Paradigms for Ministry**

As chronicled in this literature review, the traditional paradigms of society, technology, and the church are changing. Christians will need to adapt to these new paradigms by changing some of our methods without changing the gospel. Just as Abraham Lincoln once quipped, according to popular folk lore, that the best way to get rid of an enemy is to turn them into a friend, one way to turn some twenty-first century changes into friends is to embrace them.

### **Use What Is Available**

Just as the Lord told Moses to use the staff he had in hand (Exod. 4), God calls us to use whatever we have available to communicate his message. Without whining and procrastination that is always “waiting until,” Christians should consider the tools, gifts, people, and opportunities they have available and seek ways to employ them in ministry. Lift what you have up to God and see what he will do.

Consider the humble beginnings of Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN). Pat started with no money, no experience in the field of television, and no television set of his own. Yet, on 1 October 1961, with a television signal that barely reached around the block from the WYAH-TV (from Yahweh, the Hebrew name for God) UHF station in Portsmouth, Virginia, The Christian Broadcasting Network was born. During the first broadcast, a film jammed in the projector and the equipment broke down twice (Robertson, flyleaf). Eventually reformatted and renamed the 700 Club and on air continuously since 1966, the show has become one of the longest-running programs in broadcast history and reaches an average daily audience of more than one million viewers. CBN itself has evolved into an international, multifaceted institution with programs airing in ninety countries and forty-six languages.

### **Strive for Excellence**

Barker suggests these three keys for any organization that wants to participate fully in the twenty-first century—anticipation, innovation, and excellence (11). In particular, excellence will not only be a worthy goal but the necessary price for entry to even play in the game (12). In our attempts to broadcast and narrowcast the Good News of Jesus Christ, Christians can learn from the founding father of the BBC, John Reith. His general mandate for all broadcasting was to inform, educate, and entertain, and offer “the best of everything.” Good things, Reith believed, are enhanced when transmitted with integrity and skill (qtd. Barker 97). Poor quality is no more inviting or representative of Christ than shoddy character.

### **Keep It Simple**

More information is not always merrier. Sometimes, very little of the tidal wave

of information washing over us is actually usable (Morris 165). Besides, “Jesus taught profound truths in simple ways. Today we teach simple truths in profound ways” (Warren, Purpose Driven 233).

Kalas reminds us that the greatest stories in history have come to us through the simplest of vocabularies. Even Albert Einstein believed that people did not really understand something unless they could communicate it in a simple way (Warren, Purpose Driven 233). Perhaps Christians can take a cue from the giant Microsoft Corporation who chose simplicity as their theme for the late 1990s.

### **Tell Stories**

Because storytelling communicates the reality of God so effectively to this post-modern generation (Celek and Zander 67), it promises to be one of the hottest professions in the future (Sweet, “Movies” 5). But, storytelling is nothing new. From the beginning of time, God has communicated his story through the examples of real people and their real responses to the challenges of faith, meaning, and worth (Fore 124). Christians should likewise continue to tell his story as it relates to their stories, and they should multiply their storytelling via print, television, film, video, and the Internet. Electronic storytellers in particular can cope with religious narrative in ways that far surpass traditional literary forms (Morris 141).

Stories create impact by setting forth a slice of life—sometimes confirming our worldview and other times challenging it. Long explains:

To relate a part of our story to another person is not only to tell what happened but also to reveal how we make sense of life, how and what we decide is important and not important, and how we respond to the ethical decisions arising from events. We are curious about other people’s stories not only because they are interesting but also because they have the power to suggest possibilities for our own lives. (73)

## **Collaborate**

Every church and Christian organization should develop its own strategy for positively engaging the cultural dimensions within its sphere of influence (Briner 71). However, Christians should also seek ways to collaborate for maximum positive impact.

One critical area of collaborative need and opportunity is content. Synchronizing religion and media with the work of the churches without a privileged relationship—as in the few, the proud, and the rich enough to pay (Morris 128)—has proven difficult. However, content is available. Christians across America offer valuable ministries, incredible resources, have great stories to share, and they often produce literature, tapes, videos, and online content that assist in communicating these messages within their own circles. Unfortunately, much of this content ends up gathering dust on shelves or taking up space in forgotten computer files.

Ginghamsburg UMC in Ohio has their own media team that writes and produces videos, with between three and four thousand people every weekend in 1997 benefiting from their work. Some of what they and other similar ministries produce could be of interest to and benefit millions across the country. Organizations such as Group Publishing, Navigators, Willow Creek Association and Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, similar to many denominational entities, have successfully implemented model networks that produce and distribute hard copy content. The emerging opportunity for soft copy, or online, distribution offers great potential for exploding quality resources availability, affordability, and marketability.

## **Observe**

Christians should collaborate with other Christians and consider how we can work

with, share resources with, and learn from other dimensions of society, such as businesses, educators, government, the general media, and others. In order to utilize the tools of the twenty-first century, cross-disciplinary observation of those using the tools well can be very beneficial. Even though our underlying missions may differ (i.e., they want to make money/educate/inform and we want to nourish the soul and facilitate divine-human interaction) our common goal is to use the tools of our time to interact beneficially with the people of our time.

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, people need to establish a relationship with Jesus Christ and each other, not with a television or computer or any other mass communication medium. Where technology can facilitate people-to-people and people-to-God contact, the use of communications technology will prove redemptive.

Toward that end, this review has sought to examine the foundational context of recent American mass communications from a Christian perspective. Whatever new millennium strategies twenty-first century Christians pursue to fulfill our first-century vision, we should neither “retreat into the irrelevancy of purity” nor “embrace uncritically the tools and powers of society” (Fore 114). We must work together to find an appropriate balance and effectively employ these tools in avenues of ministry. The pages ahead focus on one of the newest and most culturally revolutionary tools of all time—the Internet.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PROJECT DESIGN**

#### **Restatement of the Problem**

The institution with the most critical information necessary for our spiritual health—the church—often struggles to communicate adequately with both members and non-members. The twenty-first century offers promising assistance via developing communications technologies; however, many ministries need culturally relevant, scripturally sound, and technologically adept guidance to effectively integrate these emerging digital tools into their ministry cultures.

#### **Restatement of the Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to research mass communication information related to latter twentieth century American Christianity in an effort to find patterns and principles relative to utilizing the Internet to facilitate effective twenty-first century communication.

#### **Questions**

The project sought to answer the following questions pertinent to Christians' use of the Internet:

1. What experiences have various flagship and representative organizations across the country had with the Internet over the past few years?
2. What can Christians learn from these experiences and then apply toward carrying out the mission of the church?

#### **Assumptions**

I assumed the following at the outset of the project:

1. A positive, tangible media project will elicit involvement and commitment from public and private enterprise, non-profit organizations, and community citizens;
2. Meaningful local interaction during development will help maintain a realistic grassroots perspective;
3. Christians of all denominations will be attracted to a positive, family-friendly media project seeking to uplift what is good and right across America; and,
4. Some organizations will pay for beneficial, web-related services.

### **Participants**

I served as the overall project leader; other participants are outlined below.

#### **Planning Participants**

These participants included the InspireUSA Executive Board, Advisory Board, and my Asbury Theological Seminary dissertation committee. These participants provided background leadership for the project as a whole.

My Executive Board consists of a small group of professionals that oversee the legal and financial aspects of InspireUSA, as well as any matters pertaining to facilities and equipment. They help constitute our organization, review, refine, and select priorities, and set policy and budget. Board members include Larry Daniel (Accounting and Finance), Ross Freeman (Media), and Rick Monroe (Marketing).

My Advisory Board consisted of leaders of nationally representative ministries and businesses who agreed to invest their wisdom, expertise, and honorable reputations into this vision. These board members worked with our organization from afar and provided some general insight, input, and evaluation regarding the project components in relation to their field(s). Advisory Board members included:

- Lee Cantelon—Film director, author, director of Pennyhead Films;
- Lindsey Davis—Bishop of the North Georgia Conference of the UMC;
- Michael Guido—Evangelist, author, radio and television personality, and

Founder of The Guido Evangelistic Association, Inc.;

- Gregg Lewis—freelance author or coauthor of more than thirty books;
- Calvin Miller—pastor, artist, author of more than thirty books, and now

professor of communication and homiletics at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary;

- Ralph Reed—former Executive Director of the Christian Coalition, now

President of Century Strategies; and,

- Rick Shaw—Television producer and Managing Director of Z Post, also a

contributing editor for DV and Video Systems magazines and an industry specialist in computerized digital non-linear editing.

The Dissertation Committee consisted of three persons—my advisor (Ken Boyd), my internal reader (Bill Kostlevy), and the Vice President for Academic Development and Distributed Learning at Asbury Theological Seminary, Leslie Andrews. They helped guide the doctoral project according to seminary policy.

### **Prayer Participants**

These were individuals and groups who agreed to pray for this project and for me.

### **Financial Participants**

These participants included investors who provided the seed money to help make this project a reality and clients who paid for InspireUSA products and services or to participate in InspireUSA events.

### **Technical Participants**

These included companies whose products and services were used in the project.

### **Internet Participants**

These participants included two groups whose participation in the project was designed to create opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and to avoid the “all Indians walk single file; at least the one I saw did” trap.

The first group of primarily online participants included organizations that agreed to work with InspireUSA during the development phase of the trial project. Most had their own web sites and offered digital resources for Internet interaction. Some organizations paid fees to InspireUSA in order to place their link(s) and highlighted information on InspireUSA’s web site. I interacted with organizations of all sizes and scope from across the nation, including businesses, civic and government groups, churches and parachurch ministries, as well as education, health, recreation, and travel organizations. I invited local, regional, national, and international organizations headquartered in numerous states and ranging in size from one employee to hundreds.

The second group of Internet participants formed a Research Reflection Team (RRT). I originally coalesced separate groups representing a variety of people or organizations associated with InspireUSA events and projects. These included college students, active professionals, seasoned executives, and events participants. Nearer the end of the project, I convened a consistent group of individuals that met four times.

### **Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The research in Chapters 1 and 2 contain a broad sweep of mass communication as it relates to Christians’ potential twenty-first century use of converging media

technologies. The instrumentation and data collection process outlined in this chapter sought to address the stated problem through synthesizing information gained through direct interactions and surveys as described below.

### **Preliminary Baseline Survey**

In order to establish some firsthand baseline data and background understanding for this project, a single self-administered questionnaire was distributed by hand to pastors and church leaders on two separate occasions during the winter of 1998. The two-page “Christian Communication in the Twenty-first Century” questionnaire (see Appendix E) was first distributed during the 1998 Asbury Theological Seminary Minister’s Conference in Wilmore, Kentucky, and then distributed at a Beeson Pastor Institute at Frazier Memorial UMC in Montgomery, Alabama.

The cross-sectional questionnaire design included twelve forced choice questions and three open-ended questions. I pilot tested the questionnaire individually with three students and two faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary prior to making final adjustments and distributing the questionnaire.

Of 156 questionnaires returned, 87 percent were filled out by pastors, 89 percent of which were by males. The average age of the respondents was forty-four, and the average size of their congregations was 321. Just over one half (52 percent) were United Methodists, with a total of sixteen denominations represented (see Appendix F).

Televisions were the number one visual media in use in participants’ homes (94 percent), computers second (80 percent), and cable television third (68 percent). Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) were connected to the Internet at home. Very few had home web sites (6 percent) or a satellite downlinks (5 percent).

Of the media technologies in use at their churches, computers were first (84 percent) and televisions second (52 percent). Nearly half (47 percent) used the Internet and one-third (35 percent) had their own church web site. Few churches had cable television (6 percent) or a satellite downlink (3 percent). A number used slide and video projectors at their church (41 percent).

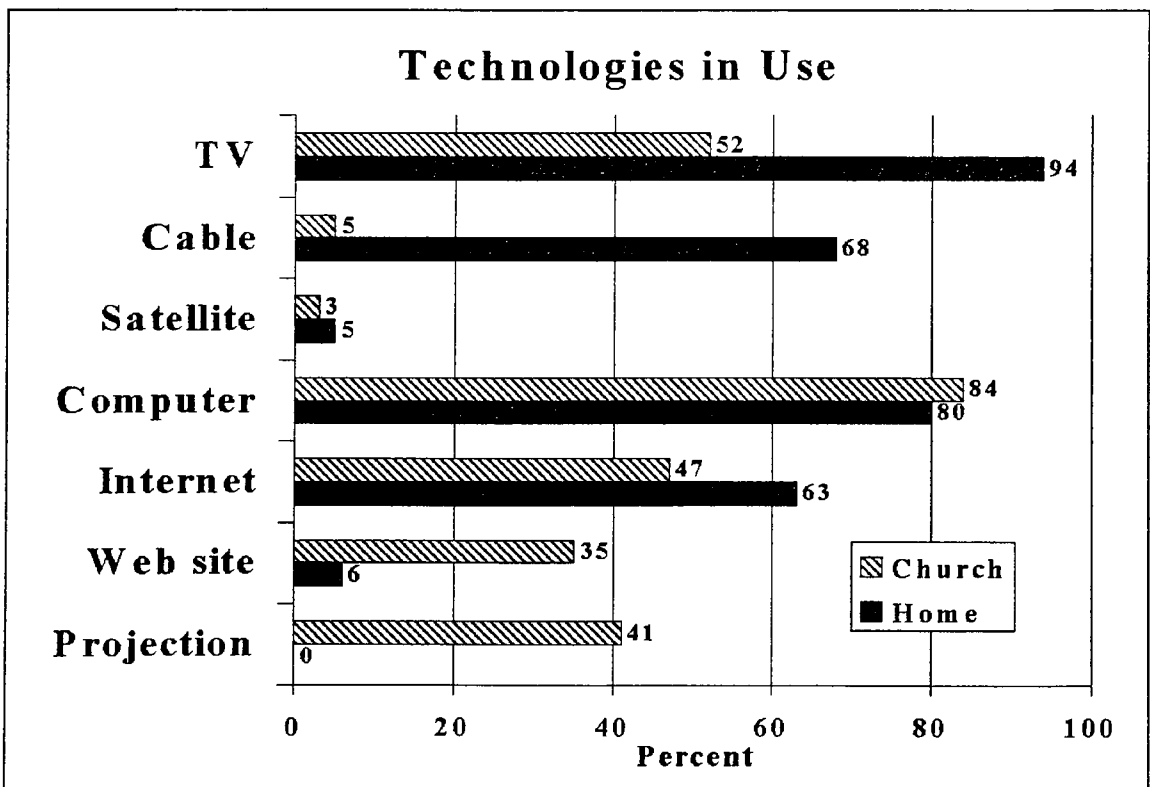


Figure 3.1  
Home and Church Media Technologies

When asked how they kept informed regarding Christian news, events, and resources, these leaders reported that Christian magazines, denominational literature, Christian radio, word of mouth, and secular TV were their top five communication

avenues. The last two categories were Christian newspapers and Christian television (see Figure 3.2). Only 24 percent reported watching any Christian television at all, a figure correlating with Horsefield's 1950-1980 research referenced earlier (see pp. 78-79).

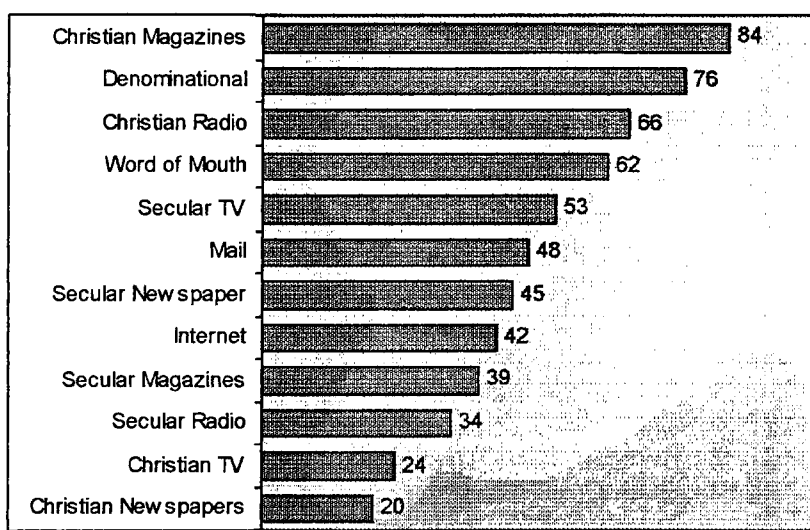


Figure 3.2  
How Christian Leaders Get Their Christian Information

Respondents were asked to select options from a list of features they would most like to see in a weekly network television show that celebrated the best of American Christianity. Of the main features offered, stories about people ranked first, documentaries of effective, creative model ministries in churches ranked and reviews of Christian resources tied for second, and summaries of Christian organizations ranked third. Additional features were also selected (see Table 3.1).

Asked when they would most likely watch such a television show, most respondents (85 percent) indicated nights were preferable, and almost twice as many preferred a weekday as opposed to a weekend show. The most popular times were

between 7 and 11 p.m., with a 9 or 10 p.m. starting time most desirable.

Table 3.1  
TV Show Features Desired

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) People (97%)</li> <li>2) Churches and Resource reviews (94%)</li> <li>3) Organizations (89%)</li> <li>4) Excerpts from effective preachers, teachers, movies, TV shows, books, etc. (83%)</li> <li>5) Education—Cristian history, on location teaching, and religious information (78%)</li> <li>6) Comedy—stories, bulletin/newsletter bloopers, video bloopers, jokes, top ten lists (77%)</li> <li>7) Music (72%)</li> <li>8) News relative to major Christian events (65%)</li> <li>9) Internet interactive option (48%)</li> </ol> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Features most desired on a companion Internet web site included, in descending order, church ministry highlights, access to other Christian resources online, directories, news, humor, music, a devotional, prayer, video conferencing, and resource reviews.

The respondents were provided an open-ended opportunity to record what excited them about this idea, register their concerns, and offer additional suggestions (see Appendix G). Many were excited about the networking access to resources and outreach possibilities. They also registered excitement about the positive and unifying characteristics of such an endeavor. Concerns raised included the production quality, remaining focused, potential heresy, misuse, and funding. Some expressed concern about the impersonal nature of media itself when Christianity is a personal relationship.

One problem appeared in the design that affected the partial results of about ten percent of the responses. Page one of the two-page questionnaire did not indicate a page number or instructions to turn the page over, resulting in sixteen respondents who failed to notice that the questionnaire included a second page.



A second problem in tabulating the results occurred in the format of part of question 11. The last part of this question related to respondents' time preferences for a show. The format was open-ended; whereas, a forced choice design would have provided more consistency in the answers.

In summary, male United Methodist pastors would most likely tune in on a weekday evening to watch a television show providing inspirational stories about exciting people and churches, offered "best of" excerpts, religious education and news, and presented quality entertainment in the form of humor and music. They would also enjoy a companion web site highlighting stories and providing links to other resources.

### **Primary Survey**

In order to identify some Internet-related communications patterns and principles, as well as to compute averages and percentages, compare groups, and look for relationships, I wanted to create a cross-sectional survey that could be self-administered online or conducted by telephone interview. I sought survey respondents representing personally selected organizations across the country, mostly InspireUSA affiliates or participants in InspireUSA's Internet-related projects or events. I expected the survey to include mostly fixed choice, quantitative, demographic questions and a mixture of fixed choice, quantitative and open-ended, qualitative questions describing each organization's Internet experiences.

**Reliability, validity, and data analysis.** I developed the survey over several years. The final form used guidelines in Fink and Kosecoff's book How to Conduct Surveys and followed the format of sample survey questions from Feedback Express, a professional Internet company specializing in online surveys.

I used pilot testers to help establish the reliability and validity of the survey by independently filling out, submitting, and offering feedback on the survey form and process prior to distribution. I additionally sought to establish the reliability and validity of responses from open-ended questions by engaging at two additional persons in independently interpreting the data.

**Intentions.** Although I embarked on this project to facilitate the mission of churches and ministries, I intentionally sought responses from a wider spectrum of organizations with diverse missions, some of which had nothing to do with Christian ministry, per se, at all. In casting a wider net, I hoped to glean culturally relevant information that would assist ministries in harnessing the power of converging media technologies. I specifically sought to identify Internet-based patterns and principles that could assist twenty-first century American Christians communicate more effectively both with each other and with the millions outside the Church.

### **Origin**

The seeds of this project were planted during the United Methodist North Georgia Annual Conference meetings in June 1997, where I began to envision collaborating with others nationwide to utilize a combined Internet and television media platform to promote what is good and right about America—exemplary events, people, places, organizations, resources, and services worthy of admiration, imitation, respect, and use.

Provisionally, within a few short weeks in July 1997, I planned to enter the Beeson Pastor Doctor of Ministry program at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky. This program required a research project, and I opted to pursue twenty-first century communications as my topic.

After months of research, prayer, and discussions with numerous Christian leaders around the country, I applied for and received proposal approval in the spring of 1998. At the time, I intended to pursue developing both a web site and pilot television show simultaneously. I founded InspireUSA, Inc. in August 1998 and began inviting organizations to participate in the project. I launched InspireUSA's initial web site in February 1999 and secured pioneering participation from about twenty organizations. During this early period, I determined that the proposed television show was beyond our financial and organizational means at the time and began to focus my efforts almost exclusively on the Internet portion of the project.

### **Development**

I eventually interacted with more than 1,100 people representing over 450 organizations in over forty states nationwide. These interactions included hundreds of one-on-one conversations, seven small group meetings of five to twenty-one people, nine speaking opportunities to business and ministry groups of between twenty-five and two hundred people, and five public display events including a regional conference (FamilyLife Marriage Weekend), a church ministry fair (Savannah Christian Church), a business forum (Coastal Venture Investment Forum), and two regional expos (Inaugural FutureFest at the Savannah International Trade Center and the Savannah Internet Expo).

The Savannah Internet Expo, in particular, helped refine the actual content of the survey. Produced by InspireUSA and held in Savannah, Georgia on Saturday, 10 June 2000, the one-day expo at a large regional mall included:

- Vendor booths exhibiting computer and Internet-related educators, retailers, and service providers;

- Free seminars by local professionals on a variety of Internet-related topics;
- Used computer exchange facilitating the donation, purchase or sale of used computer equipment;
- Videotaped interviews highlighting local Internet experiences for an InspireUSA Internet documentary; and,
- Web site competition offering rewards for best regional web sites.

The web site competition portion of the Expo proved helpful for my research project. We received entries from seventy regional organizations in nine major categories, including business, church and ministry, civic, education, health, government, media, sports and recreation, and travel. Category winners received InspireUSA's "Eagle Awards for Internet Excellence and Technological Leadership." Entries were judged by a panel of community volunteers selected from a pool of applicants. The judges included male and female computer professionals and amateurs ranging from high school age to senior citizens. Web sites were judged on attractiveness, ease of navigation, originality, utility, and technical aspects (link and html quality, browser compatibility, and load time). Judges also offered comments regarding the best features of each site, what made it unique, and suggestions for improvement (see Appendix H). Some of the judges also participated in one of my Research Reflection Team small group meetings. Their shared insights and opinions throughout the judging, Expo, and during our meeting helped refine the finalized survey questions and response options.

### **Administration**

To prepare, post, and manage the finalized survey (see Appendix I), I decided to capitalize on InspireUSA's professional affiliate relationship with ChamberBiz.com—an

Internet portal that assists small businesses with news, information, educational content, resources, and tools. The ChamberBiz web site is a joint project of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation, representing nearly three million companies, three thousand state and local chambers, 850 business associations and eighty-seven Chambers of Commerce abroad, and Telcom Ventures, a venture capital company specializing in the information and communications industries. The ChamberBiz survey feature seemed attractive because it offered a survey tool with the ability to easily create surveys and track results in real time. Although limited to only twenty questions and a small selection of survey templates, my intended survey fit comfortably within these restrictions.

In July 2001, I posted my tentative survey online (see Appendix J). I pretested it in three of the most commonly used Internet browsers at the time—AOL, Internet Explorer, and Netscape. I also asked several other individuals to participate in the pre-testing, including full-time Internet managers from Asbury Theological Seminary as well as a local Savannah business. The pretesters appreciated the short length of the survey, as well as its easy access and simple administration. The only real suggestion for improvement was that bigger text boxes might result in longer responses. However, this suggestion was not implemented, since the size of the text boxes was preset by the ChamberBiz survey program and not alterable.

I narrowed potential survey respondents down to one hundred organizations varying in size, scope, purpose, and location. After a thorough review, twelve were eliminated because their organizations either no longer existed for one reason or another, or the contact person familiar with our company or the project no longer worked for the

organization or was unreachable. Of the remaining eighty-eight organizations, I expected a 40-50 percent response rate and hoped to close the survey within six weeks.

I officially launched the survey on 15 August 2001 with an e-mail to the potential respondents. I included a project reminder, invitation to participate, a hot link to the online survey, and a choice to opt out. In addition, an easily accessible hotlink entitled 21st Century Communication was placed on the inspireusa.com home page, with directions to this link also included in the e-mail (see Appendix K).

The first responses, including survey submissions and opt outs, were received within a few hours of sending out the initial e-mail. When one potential respondent indicated a problem submitting the form online, I discovered that the use of single or double quotation marks within the text of the answers caused an error in the online form processor. I quickly notified the other potential respondents and provided instructions on how to avoid this problem.

Over the next three months, I sent additional e-mails and made some phone calls. I contacted several organizations repeatedly before they followed through, while others never did. A total of five potential respondents indicated submitting online forms that I never received. I contacted these five and some other potential respondents and offered to administer their survey by phone or e-mail, and some accepted.

I officially closed the survey on 15 November 2001 after thirteen weeks. Of eighty-eight potential respondents, thirty-three organizations completed the survey (see Table 3.2). These respondents represented fourteen states and twenty-six cities from Delaware to California and Michigan to Florida (see Table 3.3).

At least one organization submitted a survey I never received, and eleven returned

replies opting out—an overall response rate of 51 percent, a participation rate of 39 percent, and a net response rate of 38 percent. I did not follow up on any of the opt outs regarding their reasons for selecting not to participate.

The following chapter contains a summary of the actual survey results (see Appendix L).

Table 3.2  
Survey Respondents

- |                                          |                                    |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| • Asbury Theological Seminary            | • New Beginnings UMC               |
| • Bryan Bank & Trust                     | • North GA Conference              |
| • Callaway Gardens                       | • Olan Mills, Inc.                 |
| • Camp Winshape                          | • Ply Marts, Inc.                  |
| • Christian Motorcyclists Association    | • Portable Church Industries, Inc. |
| • Christianity Today International       | • Priority Insight                 |
| • Church of the Resurrection             | • Savannah Christian Church        |
| • Crown Financial Ministries             | • Savannah Christian Class of 1979 |
| • Epworth By The Sea                     | • Savannah Electric                |
| • Focus Adolescent Services              | • SavannahQuote.com                |
| • Food for the Hungry                    | • Wabash Valley Power Association  |
| • Georgia Methodist Federal Credit Union | • Walk Thru the Bible              |
| • Hope Unlimited                         | • West Georgia Christian Academy   |
| • J.C. Lewis Ford                        | • Whitworth Inn                    |
| • Jews For Jesus                         | • Wycliffe Bible Translators       |
| • Leadership Network                     | • Z Productions                    |
| • Mission Society For United Methodists  |                                    |

Table 3.3  
Location of Respondents

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arkansas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hatfield</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Arizona               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scottsdale</li> </ul> </li> <li>• California               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hollywood</li> <li>- San Francisco</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Delaware               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wilmington</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Florida               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orlando</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Georgia               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Atlanta</li> <li>- Flowery Branch</li> <li>- Gainesville</li> <li>- Kennesaw</li> <li>- LaGrange</li> <li>- Marietta</li> <li>- Mount Berry</li> <li>- Norcross</li> <li>- Pine Mountain</li> <li>- Richmond Hill</li> <li>- Savannah</li> <li>- St. Simons Island</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illinois               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carol Stream</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Indiana               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indianapolis</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Kansas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leawood</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Kentucky               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wilmore</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Maryland               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salisbury</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Michigan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Troy</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tennessee               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chattanooga</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Texas               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dallas</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

14 states and  
26 cities



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The thirty-three survey respondents represented fourteen continental U.S. states from coast to coast and twenty-six cities (see Figure 4.1). As a group, they manage forty-two web sites, over 23,000 web pages, and have a combined total of 142 years of organizational Internet experiences (see Appendix M). A couple of organizations were Internet pioneers in their industry and among the very first organizations to launch web sites on the world wide web. As one noted, “We were on the Internet before most people even knew it existed.”

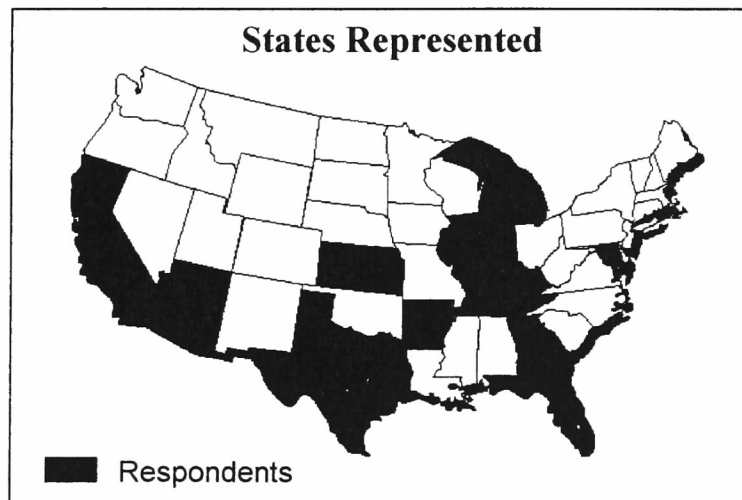


Figure 4.1  
States Represented

The combined estimated monthly Internet audience of the respondents represented approximately 2.4 million unique visitors generating approximately twelve million page views per month. These statistics indicate that an average visitor views five

web pages on these organizations' web sites per month. Nearly one-half of respondents generate traffic of less than one thousand unique web site visitors per month, while the largest receives over one million unique visitors monthly (see Figure 4.2).

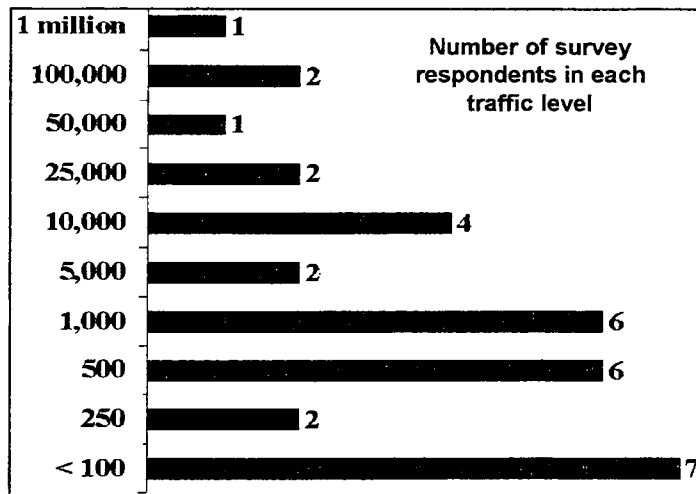


Figure 4.2  
Unique Visitors per Month

The combined estimated non-Internet audience—persons with whom organizations maintained regular contact—totaled more than twelve million people. The largest organization had four million clients per year, the smallest one hundred alumni. Some organizations were unsure how to answer this question, and some did not, including those with media resources that reach undocumented millions, those who do not maintain regular contacts, and those with a primarily Internet audience (since these numbers were reflected in the Internet statistics).

Unfortunately, adding the Internet and non-Internet audiences together does not provide a total combined estimated audience, since I assume

- 1) Many of the Internet visitors are also part of the non-Internet audience;
- 2) Visitors to the web sites are not the same 2.4 million people every month, and;
- 3) Duplicate visitors may have visited more than one survey respondent's site.

We cannot validate any of these assumptions via this survey. Even so, with an average estimated U.S. population of 275 million people during the experiential period represented by these organizations, the responses probably represent the experiences of 1 percent of the U.S. population, and perhaps as much as 4 or 5 percent.

On the other hand, given the geographical scope of the responding organizations, with slightly more than half carrying out their respective missions within the borders of the U.S. and nearly half also doing work internationally, the survey certainly incorporates some experiences of people worldwide (see Figure 4.3). I felt that the strong international scope of the respondents lent credibility to the survey at large, while the nearly one-third local scope offered a corresponding grassroots balance.

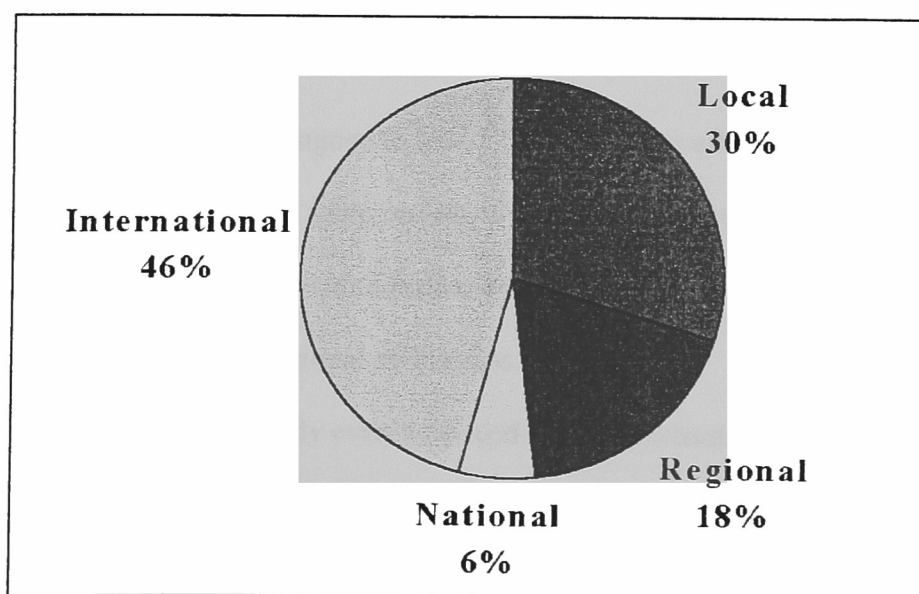


Figure 4.3  
Geographical Scope

Businesses and ministries were the largest type respondents, followed by churches and educational organizations (see Figure 4.4). Several of the businesses and ministries were travel/retreat oriented and perhaps could have been categorized under a “Sports/Recreation/Travel” category. I felt that the balance and variety of types of responding organizations strengthened the survey by offering a healthy combination of similar and cross-discipline responses.

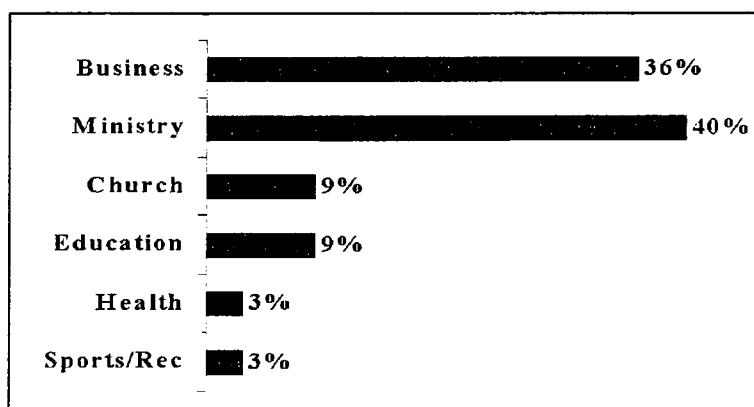


Figure 4.4  
Types of Respondents

I do think a survey designed to help Christians more effectively utilize the Internet should have included more responses from Internet-savvy churches. Perhaps this survey could be adapted and used to further research the Internet experiences of churches varying in size and denominational affiliations.

Respondents were fairly evenly divided on the spectrum ranging from small organizations with five employees or less to large organizations with more than five hundred employees. Although over half of the organizations employ more than fifty people, nearly one-quarter employ five or less (see Figure 4.5). Once again, I felt this

balance strengthened the survey results by providing insights into the experiences of tiny, small, large, and huge organizations.

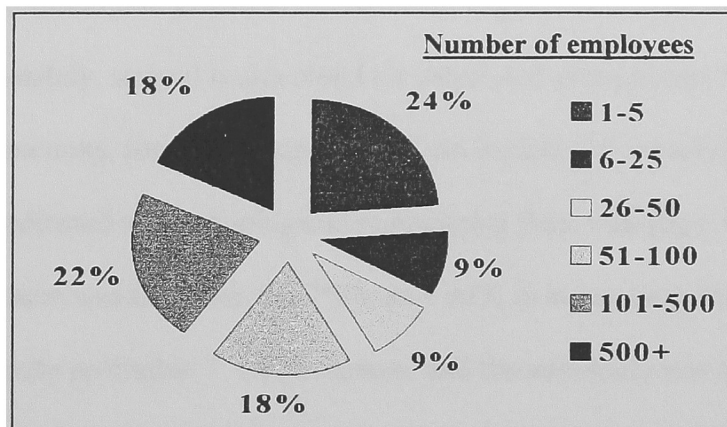


Figure 4.5  
Organizational size

Respondents reported investing an estimated combined total of more than \$14 million dollars in their web sites. Unfortunately, the survey did not allow for direct correlation of organizational size or web site size with the amount of money invested. However, comparing the amounts of money invested with the number of web pages, one notes an indirect correlation. The largest percentage of organizations had web sites up to twenty-five pages in size, and the largest percentage of organizations reported spending between \$1,000 and \$10,000 on their sites. The top 21 percent in both categories correlates to a web site size of five hundred pages or more with expenditures of \$100,000 to \$10 million dollars, while the lower 79 percent in both categories correlates to web sites of five hundred pages or less with expenditures of up to \$100,000 (see Figure 4.6).

We could try to derive a total cost per web page by dividing the total estimated

investments by the total number of web pages. For example,

All:  $(\$14,125,500 \text{ invested}) / (23,183 \text{ web pages}) = \$609 \text{ per web page}$

or 21 percent:  $(\$13,750,000 \text{ invested}) / (21,250 \text{ web pages}) = \$647 \text{ per web page}$

and 79 percent:  $(\$433,500 \text{ invested}) / (1,948 \text{ web pages}) = \$223 \text{ per web page.}$

Unfortunately, several issues cloud the simulated average-cost figures. In spite of the survey instructions, some organizations did not include all or part of the salaries of staff persons dedicated to developing and maintaining their web sites. One particularly revealing comment was the claim that “We do it ALL in house-huge cost savings and makes it extremely profitable.” This comment and the extremely low dollar figure associated with it, especially given the large size of the organization and the number of web pages on their site, reveal a perception that paying in-house staff to develop and maintain a web site does not really constitute a financial cost to the organization.

An organization with non-productive employees on their payroll could productively reallocate them to web site development and maintenance. But, the web site still cost the organization money—specifically the amount of salary corresponding to the amount of time in-house staff spends on their web site. For example, at the end of a year it may seem cheaper not to have paid an outside vendor \$8,000 for web development and maintenance, even though the web site actually cost \$25,000 in staff salaries and benefits plus any losses related to productive work time taken away from other in-house projects.

Second, the survey responses do not differentiate between original development and maintenance costs over time, nor do they factor in web site growth over time. Therefore, the cost per web page estimates offer no real developmental or annualized cost per web page. Otherwise, the following example of an annualized estimate would make

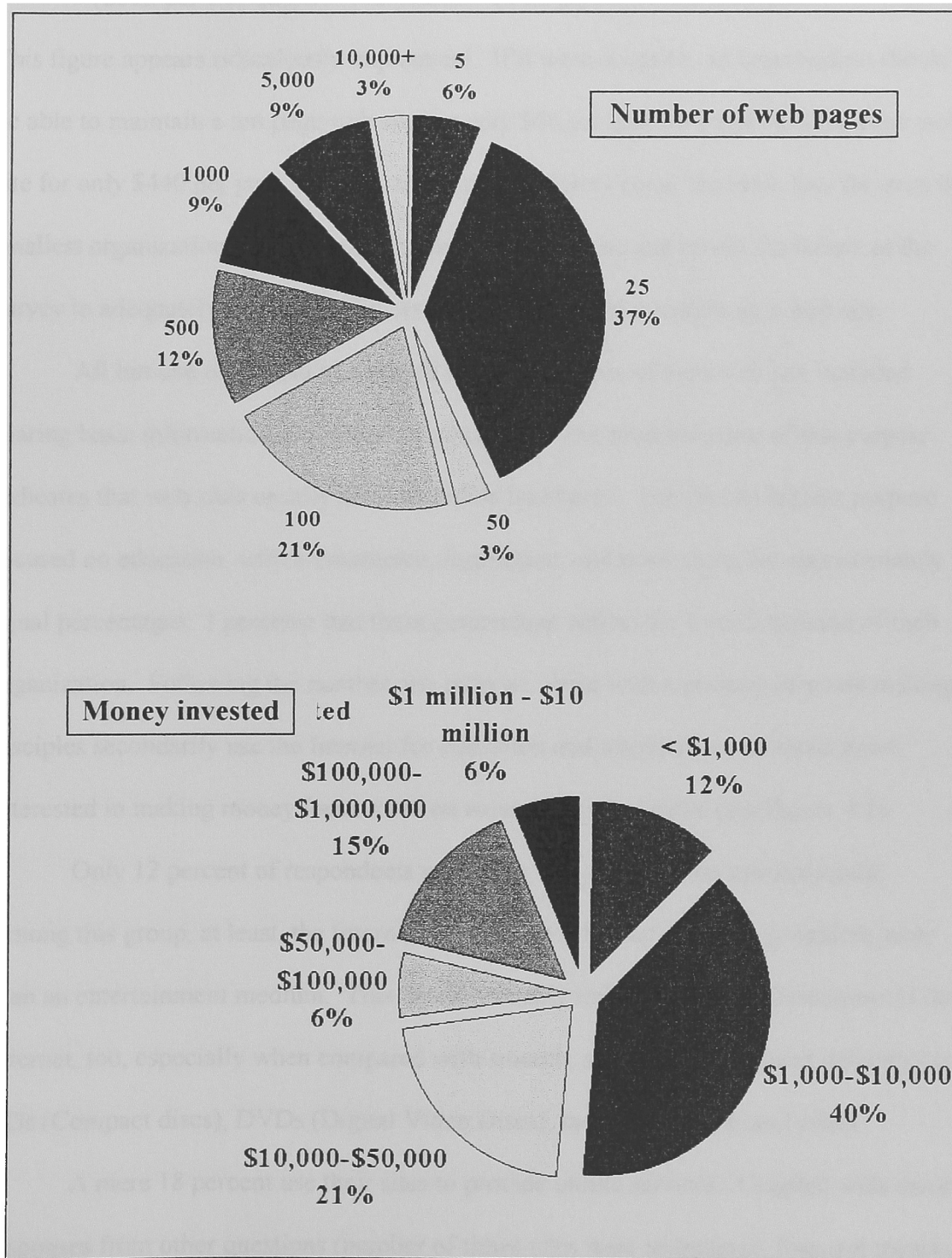


Figure 4.6  
Web site size vs. Cost comparison

sense, dividing the total cost per page by the total number of years online:

$$(\$609 \text{ per web page}) / (142 \text{ years}) = \$4.29 \text{ per web page per year.}$$

This figure appears ridiculously impractical. If it were accurate, an organization should be able to maintain a ten page web site for only \$44 per year, or a one hundred page web site for only \$440 per year, amounts that probably barely cover the basic fees for even the smallest organizations. These calculations make no sense and reveal the failure of the survey to adequately assess cost factors in developing and maintaining a web site.

All but one organization reported that one purpose of their web site included sharing basic information about their organization. The predominance of this purpose indicates that web sites usually serve as online brochures. The second highest purpose focused on education, with e-commerce, inspiration, and news vying for approximately equal percentages. I perceive that these percentages reflect the overall mission of each organization. Following the number one purpose, those with a primary focus on making disciples secondarily use the Internet for education and inspiration, and those more interested in making money focus more on news and e-commerce (see Figure 4.7).

Only 12 percent of respondents used their web sites to offer entertainment. Among this group, at least, the Internet serves as an information-sharing medium more than an entertainment medium. This figure probably reflects technical limitations of the Internet, too, especially when compared with smooth, speedy entertainment delivery via CDs (Compact discs), DVDs (Digital Video Discs), radio, television, and video.

A mere 18 percent use their sites to provide online services. Coupled with survey responses from other questions (number of times sites were redesigned, frequent mention of updating, and plans to add online services), this statistic reflects a perception in how



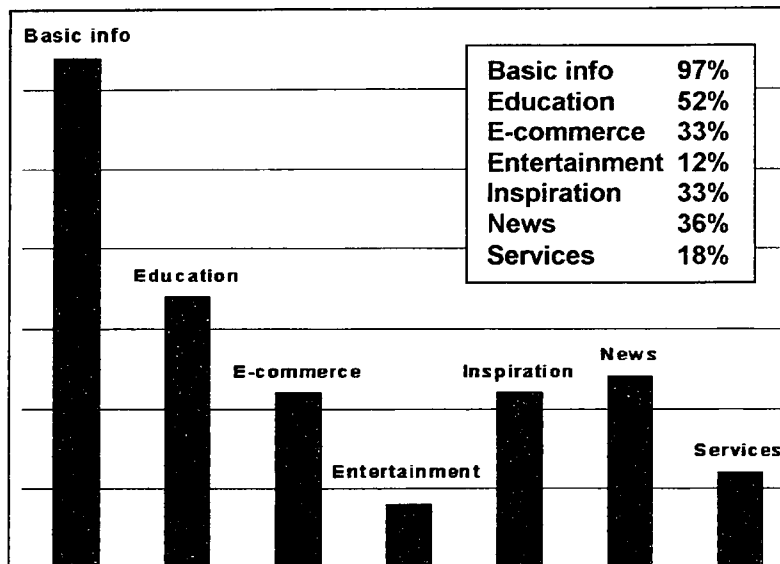


Figure 4.7  
Purposes of web site

organizations view using the Internet. Initially, organizations perceived the Internet as a direct extension of print and standard broadcast communications: Stage I—a one-way, static, information model. However, as organizations gained experience and knowledge, they began to realize that the Internet was more dynamic, and they moved to Stage II—a one-way, dynamic information and news model. Then, with even more experience, organizations began to realize that the real power of the Internet was in interactive communication and services, leading them to Stage III—a multiple-way, dynamic news, information, and online services model (see Figure 4.8). This slow adaptation toward using web sites for business use applications may also reflect the wariness of many end users to share personal information or engage in financial transactions online, often critical components of online services.

More than half of the survey respondents were online by 1996, the year in which the largest percentage of respondents launched their initial web site. Other than 1997,

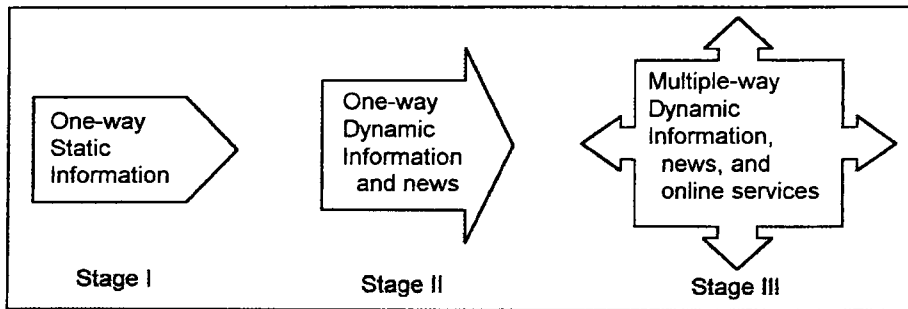


Figure 4.8  
Perceptual Stages of Internet Use

which seems to represent either a “wait and see” year or a statistical gap in respondents, the response graph almost identically matches the percentage ratios graphically represented by “The Diffusion of Innovation” Bell-curve trend line: the Innovators were online in 1993, the Early Adopters in 1994, the Early Majority in 1995 and 1996, the Late Majority in 1997 and 1998, and the Laggards in 1999 and 2000. Again, other than the 1997 figure, this graph validates the statistical representation of the survey respondents in comparison to known patterns of cultural innovation and adaptation (see Figure 4.9).

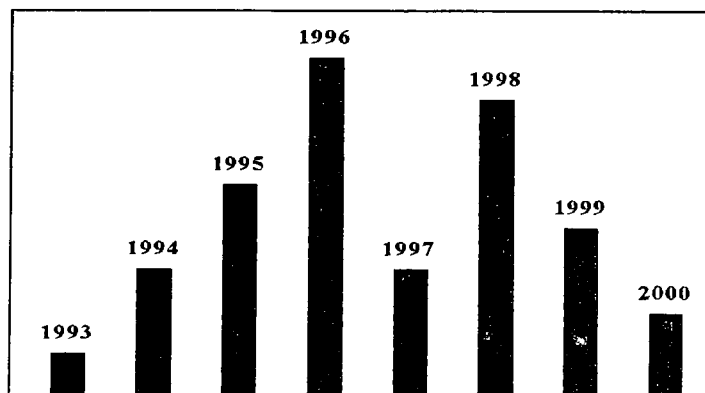


Figure 4.9  
Date first posted a web site online

Nearly 80 percent of respondents redesigned their web sites at least twice. Over 50 percent redesigned their web sites at least three times, perhaps reflecting the Perceptual Stages of Internet Use noted above. Adding the total number of years online and dividing by the total number of times organizations redesigned their sites, this group redesigns their web sites approximately every twenty months (see Figure 4.10).

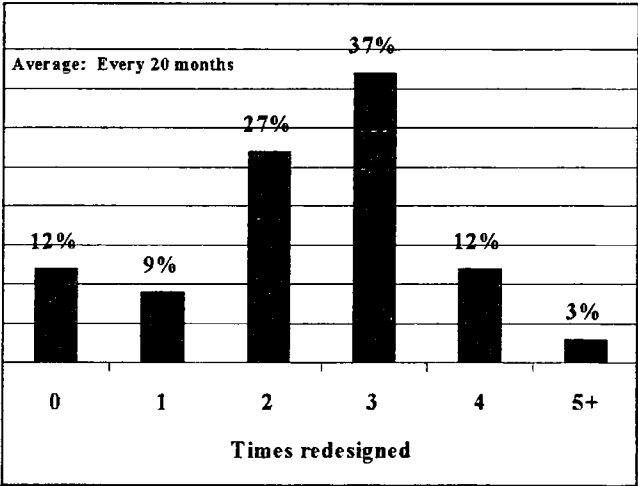


Figure 4.10 Times redesigned web site

Apparently, a web site is never done, and a web style does not satisfy for long. This most likely reflects the fast evolutionary pace of Internet-related hardware and software, improving organizational understanding of how to use these digital tools, and the relative technological ease that makes changing web styles on par with changing fashion styles. In this respect, the Internet is characteristically an incredibly dynamic, evolving medium.

Among the most popular features and uses of each organization’s web site, information—about the organization, messages, news, and directories—was most

frequently mentioned. The second most popular features related to money—coupons, online payments, rates, and shopping.

At this point in the survey data, I began to perceive a distinction between organizations that have a web site, those that use a web site, and those that depend on a web site. Some organizations appear to have their sites more out of novelty than necessity, with the progression appearing to follow a path of



Even as a novel toy, a web site serves most usefully as a source of information, but its use does not seem imperative, just new, fun, or nice. However, several respondents clearly utilized the Internet as a core tool for exchanging timely, vital information and facilitating core transactions. These respondents also clearly benefited from using the Internet and indicated success corollary to adequate resources allocation.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I summarize perceived patterns and principles derived from the research, as well as the strengths, weaknesses, and major contributions of this project as it contributes to the stream of research related to developing and evaluating innovative approaches to ministry.

#### Patterns

The following section identifies various patterns and themes.

##### Content

Numerous organizations made references to updating content, keeping it fresh, and maintaining their sites. A web site is apparently unlike a book, game, movie, song, TV show, or video, which users enjoy in the same form over and over again. Web content is not viewed as entertainment but news and information, where old news is bad news and old information is not worth another visit. Evidence indicates that organizations as a whole did not initially realize the challenges associated with keeping content updated. Organizations often equated web site success with offering fresh designs, timely content, eliminating unnecessary content, and even relaunching and renaming a site. Frequency of content updates seemed related to how often organizations expected persons to visit their site (i.e., weekly visits would require weekly updates, etc.).

##### Design

Design relates to what users actually see online and how they interact with it.

The following were considered crucial design factors:

- *Appearance*—professional, appealing, clean;
- *Balance*—simplicity without clutter; useful information without too many graphics; relevant photos and content that answer typical questions;
- *Features*—should match the desires and technical capability of average users.

Basic access or use should not utilize features requiring extended capabilities; complexity should appear as a selectable option (i.e, a quickly loading page might offer a choice to enter a standard HTML site or a Flash site);

- *Navigation*—should allow for web site growth and change while remaining navigationally simple and consistent. A number of organizations addressed this by integrating a consistent component navigational bar, frame, strip, or index that shows up on most pages on their web site. Locating this navigational feature in a single, separate index file accessible from every page—instead of built into each page individually—allows for easy navigational changes immediately reflected throughout the site;

- *Placement*—place content and links in order of importance starting with the home page. Whatever is at the top of the home page, easily seen, and basically handed to the visitor gets the most use and attention;

- *Planning ahead*—anticipate current and future user actions, responses, and requests. Some were not prepared for what happened when people actually used or responded to certain features or content; and,

- *Speed*—if information loads too slowly, many visitors will leave.

## **Development**

Successful web site development includes consistency, user input, and technical savvy. Disorganization, usually evident in unclear processes for input, hampers

consistency. Organizations need to address who can contribute what to their web site, how content should be contributed, and to whom content should be contributed. Most organizations want consistent organizational messages and a consistent look and feel throughout their web sites, as well as the organization as a whole. Overall, an Internet-based communication system may be similar to a train—all the parts need to be connected, on the same track, and headed in the same direction.

Technical savvy relates to web hosting, software, support, trained personnel, and vendors. Several respondents used the term “compatible” in reference to these issues. Although options abound (i.e., web page building software is abundant and supposedly anyone can build a web page), what organizations need are people and technology compatible with their vision and mission. Respondents sought a balance between sinking “really professional work into it” and hiring designers who understood their organization. Building a nice looking web page is much different than building a web site that facilitates the mission of an organization and meets the needs of its target audience. On the one hand, organizations want people who understand their organization from the inside out and, yet, they also need people who understand the technology well enough to integrate the two. Some organizations find this in third party vendors, while others hire in, train existing staff members, or find adequate solutions in a mixture of all three. Unfortunately, a major technical dilemma is the rapid pace at which Internet technologies improve and change. As soon as an organization gets used to a person or vendor or software, they leave, get bought out, or get updated. Characteristically, the inherent nature of the medium is constant change.

User input appeared crucial to success and seemed best obtained

- Internally—via team management based on a clearly defined organizational production system for creation, distribution, posting, and updating; and,
- Externally—from visitors via monitored or scheduled chats, e-mails, forums, and online forms.

### **Marketing and Promotion**

Search engine listings and opt-in e-mail databases/newsletters are helpful tools. However, although most would assume that more and wider exposure is desired, one regional organization made the mistake of getting listed on a lot of search engines, which generated numerous out-of-region responses that essentially wasted their time. This organization also marketed its web site heavily on the Internet but, along with other respondents, indicated more success through cross-promotion in print media, radio advertisements, etc., that included their web site address.

The plethora of search engines and directories complicate promotions; there were over 1,500 major search engines and thousands of minor ones online in 2001. Many require individual registrations and some require paid listings. Therefore, it should surprise no one when people report not finding a web site on a particular search engine. The key is to find out which ones are most likely used by an organization's target audience(s) and get listed on them, while keeping in mind that a successful Internet-centered communications strategy will include carefully targeted, multiple media marketing rather than untargeted, tagged balloon releases solely into cyberspace.

### **Money**

Numerous organizations reported success in attracting new clients, generating income, or processing financial transactions via their web sites. Online stores, bill



payment, donation, and registration options, as well as financially investing in a web site were viewed as critical components of current or planned financial success.

### **People**

Respondents reported numerous positive and “vital” interactions with people via their web sites, including receiving new clients, members, and volunteers. Efficient, fast, and relevant customer services were improved with one large respondent indicating a reduced customer service workload of 50 percent directly attributable to their web site.

### **Resources**

Developing and maintaining a web site requires resources such as equipment, money, people, and time. Lack of adequate resources stood out as a major obstacle, and failure to allocate adequate resources viewed as a major organizational oversight. Some respondents expressed frustration with their inability to acquire enough resources to begin properly, while others expressed frustration with the lack of resources to continue once they got started. For all of a web site’s possible simplicity on the user end, quality web development and maintenance can be technically demanding, financially draining, and time consuming on the organizational end.

### **Target Audience**

Web site content, design, and promotion all factored in target audience. Some organizations divided their sites into separate channels for different audiences, including themselves (i.e., intranet), while others offered separate web sites altogether, either branching off from a single web address or promoting under completely different web addresses. Some offered general information plus password protected areas for subscribers, employees, or select clients.

## **Termination**

Organizations mentioned issues ranging from terminating a hosting or development arrangement to terminating certain features or content to terminating their entire web site itself. Ecclesiastes 3:1 is probably a helpful reminder that “there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven,” including everything that has to do with a web site. Any alpha may eventually lead to an omega.

## **Vision and Understanding**

One respondent described the need for organizational vision and understanding as “funding Organizational Buy-in.” Another commented that “senior management was unwilling to spend freely on web development,” while another expressed a need to educate others within the organization about the potentials of the site. Apparently, getting leadership and organizations as a whole to realize the potential of a web site, catch the vision for it, and then actually use it, is difficult. Integrating web site functionality into an entire organization is probably similar to running a twenty-first century spaceship, where everybody working together following clearly-defined protocols and within clearly-defined roles contributes to a successful mission. Flying such a mission requires in-depth planning, rigorous training, and constant monitoring. The complaint that many web sites are not utilized to their full potential suggests that organizations that invest in a web site clearly need to invest in training their leadership, personnel, and audience in how to use their site effectively.

## **Principles**

The organizations participating in this survey offer evidence that the Internet is clearly an electronic catalyst transforming cultures worldwide. The Internet is

transforming their own organizational cultures as well, offering new challenges and opportunities. Bigger than print and fixed-format electronic media, it allows them to engage remote visitors in continually expandable, interactive, timely, and virtual experiences. It expands office productivity by allowing inexpensive and less time-consuming information sharing, including remote meetings, paperless submission of forms, and shared database creation, manipulation, and distribution. At the same time, it asks for more money, more personnel, more hours, more foresight, and more patience.

The respondents also indicated that our society is clearly in what Paul Saffo of the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park, California describes as an “implementation phase after a burst of remarkable breakthroughs” (qtd. in Rivlin 4). Although some of the best successes reported were simply having a web site and taking advantage of the latest media tools, the paramount issue in this implementation phase is not simply having a web site any more than it is enough to simply put up a sign that says, “This is a church.” Nor is the foundational issue one of how to build a web site; which is more akin to focusing on how to build a church building, when the substantive issue is how to build a church (i.e., Christian community). Rather, the current core issue revolves around how to use Internet-based communications to help fulfill an organizational mission.

In summary, these particular survey respondents indicate that twenty-first century Christians and Christian organizations should:

- Factor Internet-based communications into all of their organizational plans, not as an afterthought but as a central communications network component;
- Consider how Internet-based communications can assist people and groups inside their own organization, as well as those outside that comprise their target audience.

- View Internet-based communications as a virtual office complex with a welcome area, offices, classrooms, meeting rooms, archives, files, library, production and distribution centers, mail room, break room, and more, according to each organization's own unique structure and needs;
- Understand that Internet-based communications involves three dimensions—the organization itself, the web site itself, and users (see Figure 5.1);

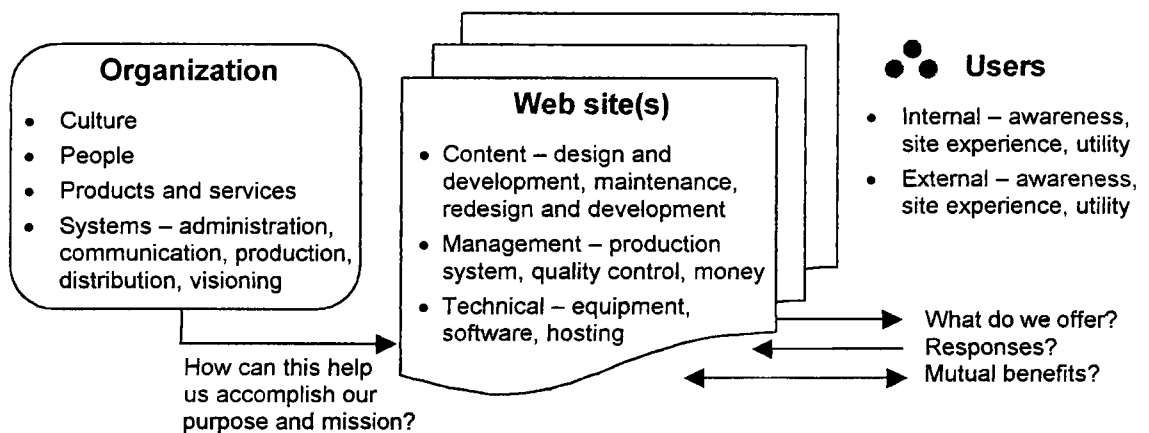


Figure 5.1  
Dimensions of Internet-based Communications

- Ask the same questions about their web site that people ask about a church:  
Why? What is it for? What can it do for us? What can it do for others? Why would anybody come? How do we get there? What do we do when we get there? Is there any reason to come back? Who is charge of what? How is it organized? How is it funded? How can people get involved?

- Develop their web site content and design with the realization that everything

may change in 20 months;

- Determine and declare the organizational priority level of Internet-based communications and then allocate the necessary resources—money, equipment, people, and time—required for development, maintenance, and training. A high priority in this area would also include installation of networked communications equipment and services. Some organizations consider themselves cutting edge but do not even provide basic Internet access, equipment or consistent software platforms for their employees;
  - Evaluate cost-effectiveness in terms of the organization’s mission and purpose. Many sites will never pay for themselves because that is not why they exist or how they are designed, while others will pay for themselves many times over;
  - Recognize that unique issues, opportunities, responsibilities, and unintended results may come with Internet-based communications. It is still a relatively new communications medium and a continually changing one that requires flexibility without fear, courage without chagrin, and prudence without undue prohibition;
  - Realize that the Internet and an organization’s web site are not independent communications tools but central components in a multitudinous relational array. As evidenced in my preliminary research that ranked Christian magazines, denominational resources, and Christian radio as the top three resources of Christian information among Christian leaders, web sites may not be primary sources at all but adjunct sources for those who want to know more. At the same time, web sites can serve as preliminary sources for people who are “just looking”; and,
  - Remember that, while the Internet may be the only way to reach some people, it will never reach others. The Internet is not an all-or-nothing but a many-and medium.

### **Strengths of This Project**

I conducted this project during a unique period in history. When I started, the Internet had just begun to explode into widespread public consciousness as an accessible, affordable communication tool. With this explosion came varying predictions and expectations, not only about the Internet but about all of American society and the roles and impact of digital communications tools on our culture. The project spanned public moods ranging from frenzied optimism to doubtful dismay and allowed me time to explore and better understand the various dimensions of the Internet through the experiences and writings of numerous people and organizations as well as my own Internet experiences through our company.

Bookending my interactions with most of the eventual survey respondents helped, too. I contacted most in the beginning and discussed the project and their Internet experiences. I then interacted minimally along the way to maintain our relationship, and returned at the end to communicate more in-depth through the survey itself, e-mail, and telephone conversations. This allowed time to get to know their organizations, prepare a relevant survey, and to process the information from a larger experiential context.

The ultimate simplicity of the survey instrument itself stood out. Most respondents completed it in ten to fifteen minutes, although some took as long as an hour. A related key strategy included finding the right person within each organization who knew or had quick access to the right information; they amplified the survey's simplicity.

Another strength related to the balance in variety and cross disciplines of the organizations involved in the survey. For the most part, survey respondents were not too heavily weighted in any survey category, and the varying scope of their organizations and

variety of experiences helped provide a validating balance to the survey responses.

Overall, I think the greatest strength of this project lay in the diversity and quality of the people who served as resources for the literature review, the Internet interactions, and the survey formation, responses, and interpretation. Although Internet-based communications garnered the attention, these people made the project.

### **Weaknesses**

As noted previously, the survey instrument itself did not adequately assess the financial aspects of developing and maintaining an Internet presence. More adequate questions would probe exact costs as separate questions, inquiring about domain name fees, hosting, original design and development, maintenance, and redevelopment costs as well as in-house and outside personnel costs. This particular area of questioning is not welcome by some organizations. Others did not seem to know the answers to the financial questions; they do require more detailed research than other types of questions. For example, web site statistics require detailed record keeping, but most web sites include administrative programs that record this information automatically and provide easy access to the data.

I think more survey respondents, including more church respondents, would prove helpful. Interestingly, I probably could have elicited more and better responses just by interviewing people on the phone. Different respondents exhibited different response preferences: some preferred the online survey, some preferred e-mail, and others just wanted to talk. I think the best data collection process in this instance might include a combination of interactions—perhaps a preliminary phone call, e-mail, or online interaction, and then a follow up meeting or call to provide for a full range of data

collection opportunities. Furthermore, technical interactions do not allow for as much intuitive collection of data by the surveyor. Telephone and face-to-face interactions are better for gauging emotional dimensions and compiling fuller stories.

The time factor seemed a strength and weakness. Several potential respondents seemed more open during our initial interaction than they were when I re-contacted them two or three years later. I think the survey could generate helpful data via cold calls to organizations without any prior contact or relationship.

The online survey instrument itself proved flawed in two respects. One, the Chamber Biz programming error that either rejected or did not record some responses inhibited response rate. Also, the suggestion to make the qualitative survey response boxes larger could have generated more detailed responses. It did keep response lengths manageable and challenged people to carefully choose highly descriptive words. If a person wrote too much, the program responded with this obnoxious note, "Don't be so long winded! The text must be smaller than 512 characters." Yet, some people shared their most revealing data implicitly in the midst of longer responses.

### **Contribution to Future Research**

This study offers but a momentary scan across the communication landscape at the horizon of a new millennium. I hope the historical and experiential markers noted herein can assist future researchers in their evaluations and projections. Some of the foregoing patterns and principles appear generically applicable not only to the Internet, but to any culturally-central communication technology.

We have learned that the fast pace of change challenges anyone attempting research in technology, which pervades almost every single area of life. Some of the



organizations and resources referenced in this study no longer exist; some even arose and fell between the start and finish of this project. In a few cases, observation must happen quickly, before the target disappears. On the other hand, technology-related research can prove overwhelming because new and exciting resources emerge even faster than new technologies. The vast informational benefit some of our new technologies provide can at the same time tidal wave the researcher.

The future clearly seems headed toward more convergence of technologies as well as their integration into everyday life. The advance of portable wireless communications tools, in particular, invites significant research over the next decade. One challenge for Christians will involve understanding and using these tools to convey Christ without becoming too attached to the tools and processes by which Christians witness. Jesus Christ may be the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8), but our society is always in flux.

Overall, the broad sweep of the literature review in this project offers a solid foundation for understanding why and how Christians have been involved in using mass communications tools to facilitate the mission of the church. Its relative succinctness, scope, and depth of pertinent information and challenges should prove attractive to some who seek to use communications technologies to facilitate effective ministry in America during the next generation.

The above patterns and principles should prove beneficial to organizations seeking to develop an effective online presence. I think many churches and ministries can benefit from this information, especially since most are focused, rightly so, on their

specific missions. They do not really have the time or interest to probe deeply into Internet-based communications and prefer quick, helpful, and relevant guidance.

As noted previously, I think this project could serve as the basis for further research exclusively focused on the Internet and on various churches' Internet experiences. I would eliminate question twenty and add more questions relative to the financial aspects of web sites. Depending on the size of the target groups, I would adjust some of the quantitative response categories and provide appropriate increments in ranges in which responses are expected.

This survey might also encourage future researchers to intentionally seek input outside the target boundaries of the end focus. History is replete with examples of beneficial accidents (penicillin) and brilliant innovations by industry outsiders: the printing press, developed by a goldsmith; the airplane, first developed successfully by a couple of bicycle shop owners; the telegraph, developed by a painter; and television, developed by a fourteen year old farm boy from Idaho.

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, I believe this project can facilitate a healthy transition from former twentieth century Christian communication practices to fulfilling twenty-first century possibilities. Our recent past is instructive, but replicating it in a new era could prove obstructive. Our future societal framework is intricately electronically networked, and organizations should neither ignore nor limit their focus to specific tools themselves, but view everything they do in light of Internet-based communications as a whole.

Everyone will continually have to grapple with how to best function within their unique technologically fraught sociological contexts. Like it or not, an adventurous

journey lies ahead. Therefore, even as Christians' message and mission remain the same, this project can hopefully inform the methods of American Christians as they seek to employ the digital media tools of our culture to communicate effectively to the Bobs and Marys of the new millennium.

## APPENDIX A

## InspireUSA.com: Home page

**InspireUSA**  
Celebrating the Best of America™

An Internet directory specializing in quick access to the resources and services of select, quality organizations across America



Alphabetical ▾

Categorical Index ▾

Regional ▾



- Inspiring stories
- Heroic Christians in history
- Great quotes, good books
- Great Americans
- Verse of the Day; beautiful posters

InspireUSA's subscription mini-portal with inspirational, educational, and entertaining news, quotes, posters, resource links, and highlights from hundreds of sources across America.

Organizational subscribers receive special coding so that their visitors can access all of these incredible resources quickly and easily from

your own web site. Plus, we manage the links, news, and highlights so you don't have to! And, best of all, we provide your visitors hundreds of reasons to return to your site!

Review some subscriber's web sites:

- Grace UMC
- Northwest Haiti Christian Mission
- Priority Insight
- Savannah Christian Church

Subscription information



Clean, safe, and family-friendly web site designed to help kids begin to enjoy and explore Internet-based inspiration, education, and entertainment. The subscription site includes interactive stories, fun facts and funnies, games, and links to other online resources.



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**APPENDIX B**

JubileeNews.com

**The Jubilee News**  
*A mini-portal Celebrating the Best of America®*

Monday, April 29, 2002

News, highlights, and links published weekly by InspireUSA, Inc.

**Verse of the Day**

I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

Job 19:25/NIV  
 Verseoftheday.com

**News Links**

- AgapePress
- Associated Press
- Baptist Press
- Business Wire
- Citizen Link
- CNSNews.com
- Family News in Focus
- PR Newswire
- Religion News Service
- Reuters
- USA TODAY
- Video Newswire
- The Wall Street Journal

*Headlines*

Last Updated: 4/29/2002 9:52 A.M. CST  
 Provided by AgapePress

- Bush, House Republican Members May Differ on Support to Israel
- Homosexual GOP Group Appears to Have an 'In' with White House
- House Votes to Deport INS, Divide Duties
- City Officials Drop Charges Against Pro-Life Grandma
- Kicking Around Ethiopia, Delivering the Gospel

**Entertainment**

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- Network Executives

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**American**



Today In History

American Library of Congress

**Christian**



**Religion Today™**  
crosswalk.com

**RT Feature Stories**

- Convictions Prompt Jewish Group to Help in Bethlehem
- GMA Awards Reflect Christian Music's New Mood
- Northern Ireland "A Powder Keg," U.S. Ministry Leader Says

**RT News Summaries**

- Gender Issues, Lawyers Profit & Chinese Persecution
- Cardinals' New Plan, No Ransom for Burnhams, Moonies & more
- Church/State Separation, OT Ban, Abortion Case & Malawi
- Bethlehem, Rome, Burnhams and Muslim Garb Case
- Bush's Scary Speech, Catholic Lobbyists & HoJo Protests

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Apr 26, 2002

- Land, others call on Bush to denounce anti-Semitism

**April 15, 1892:** Dutch devotional writer Corrie ten Boom ([The Hiding Place](#), [Hiding Place](#)) is born. She also died on this date, in 1983.

### Humor

Cartoons and funnies

### Inspiration

Devotions and more

### Radio

Programs

### Jubilee Posters

#### Grace

Cheap grace is the grace we bestow upon ourselves.  
 Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance.  
 baptism without church discipline.  
 Communion without confession.  
 absolution without personal confession.  
 Cheap grace is grace without discipleship,  
 grace without the cross,  
 grace without Jesus Christ,  
 living and incarnate.

[View full sized poster](#)

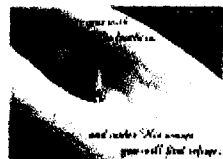
### Jubilee Quotes

"The Church cannot save, it cannot heal, it cannot baptize with the Holy Spirit, it cannot lead us into all truth. Only the Lord can do these things. When our emphasis becomes the Church more than the Lord, we have been reduced to worshipping the creation instead of the blessed Creator, and our faith has been reduced to a form of godliness which denies the very power of the gospel. We are not changed by beholding the Church; we are changed as we behold the Lord (II Corinthians 3:18)." - Rick Joyner, *There Were Two Trees in the Garden*

[More quotes](#)

### Postcards

**HEARTLIGHT®**  
 Heartcard of the Week



or choose a category:

- MercyMe, Third Day, Smitty at 2002 Dove Awards forefront
- If Bethlehem negotiations fail, Israelis to weigh military option
- SBC Executive Committee, boards, ERLC, committee nominees announced
- Committee on Committees, resolutions panel appointed
- Children's welfare must prevail over clergy restoration, Land says
- FIRST-PERSON: Pedophiles, Catholic response, media hypocrisy & Boy Scouts
- Senate committee approves homosexual rights measure
- Author Beth Moore teaches hope at national women's convention
- Moore's life statement: God's gift of freedom
- Speaking in another's love language restores relationships, author says
- FIRST-PERSON: Karen Hughes' priceless choice

## Highlights

### More than gold

Read 100's of athlete's stories at [www.thegoal.com](#), including post-2002 Winter Olympic perspectives.

### Church Video License

Legal coverage for churches and other organizations to show home videocassettes and videodiscs of motion pictures for a variety of activities. Use can include showing a full-length feature using the original video or even playing a 30-second portion of that original video.

InspireUSA  
**Salutes**  
*Americans doing good*

### Find Somebody Doing Something Right

We are always looking for people doing something right - people and organizations who represent the best of America, who are helping make this country great. If you have a highlight suggestion, please e-mail

\* Select \*

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### Today's Quote

"It is not the objective proof of God's existence that we want but the experience of God's presence. That is the miracle we are really after, and that is also, I think, the miracle that we really get."

—Frederick Buechner

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Time of Day



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Maps and weather

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We invite submissions of news, highlight, link, and salute suggestions. Submissions must be family-friendly, of regional or national interest, and inspirational, educational or entertaining. Submit no more than *one item per month* to news@inspireusa.com.

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## APPENDIX C

## JubileeKids.net: Home page

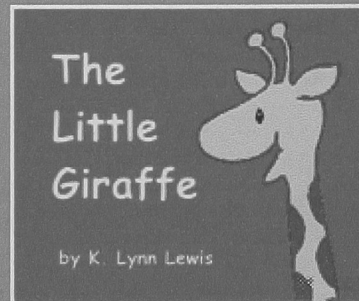


Subscriber entry

Inspiration, education, and entertainment for children

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Inspiration, Education, and Entertainment  
for children!

Preview The Little Giraffe to see an example of what we offer on our subscription site. Kids and adults will enjoy this jungle journey with some of the world's most fascinating animals. Travel along with the giraffe who is so little that all of his friends think he is too little to be a giraffe as he tries to find out just what else he can be.



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## APPENDIX D

### Ways God Communicated in the Bible

#### A. Himself

1. Walking/voice in the Garden (Gen. 3:8-19)
2. Voice to the boy Samuel (1 Sam. 3:1-21)
3. Still small voice to Elijah (1 Kings 19:12)
4. Voice to Jesus (Matt. 3:17;17:5)

#### B. Angel of the Lord

1. Appeared to Hagar (Gen. 16:7)
2. Called out to Abraham (Gen. 22:11-18)
3. Appeared to Gideon (Judg. 6:11)
4. Appeared Samson's mother (Judg. 13:2-5)
5. Appeared to Zechariah (Luke 1:11)

#### C. Angels

1. Three men to Abraham (Gen. 18)
2. Commander of the army of the Lord (Josh. 5:14)
3. Angel Gabriel to Mary (Luke 1:26)
4. Peter in prison (Acts 12:7)
5. Paul on ship (Acts 27:23)

#### D. Spirit

1. Set apart Paul and Barnabus (Acts 13:2)
2. Kept Paul and companions from going to Asia (Acts 16:6-7)

#### E. People

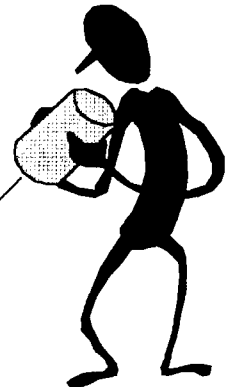
1. Jesus (John 1:1-2, Phil. 2:5-11, Heb. 1:1-3)
2. Rebekah, in answer to Abraham's servant's prayer (Gen. 24:12-15)
3. Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

#### F. Animals

1. Ram (Gen. 22:13-14)
2. Donkey (Num. 22:28)

#### G. Dreams

1. Jacob (Gen. 28:12, Bethel; Gen 31:10, goats)
2. Joseph (Gen. 37:5,9)
3. Cupbearer and baker (Gen. 40:5-22)
4. Pharaoh (Gen. 41:1,5)
5. Gideon (Judg. 7:13)
6. Solomon (1 Kings 3:5, 9:2)
7. Joseph (Matt. 1:20, 2:13, 19, 22)
8. Wise Men (Matt. 2:12)



## H. Visions

1. Abraham (Gen. 15:1-6)
2. Peter (Acts 10:9-17)
3. Paul (Acts 22:17)

## I. Revelation (Dan. 10:1; Gal. 1:12; 2:2; Rev. 1:1)

## J. Literature

1. Scriptures
  - a. Testify about Jesus (John 5:39; 20:31)
  - b. Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:32-34)
  - c. God breathed (2 Tim. 3:16)
2. Tablets of stone (Exod. 24:12; 21:18)
3. Tablets of clay (Ezek. 4:1)
4. Scrolls (Ezek. 2:9-10)
5. Books (Jer. 30:2)
6. Handwriting on a wall (Dan. 5:1-30)

## K. Stories

1. Nathan's rich man and poor man—confronting David (2 Sam. 12:1-14)
2. Rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

## L. Parables

1. Sower (Matt. 13:1-9)
2. Weeds (Matt. 13:24-30)
3. Mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32)
4. Yeast (Matt. 13:33)
5. Hidden treasure (Matt. 13:44)
6. Pearl (Matt. 13:45-46)
7. Net (Matt. 13:47-50)
8. Lost sheep (Matt. 18:12-14)
9. Unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:21-35)
10. Workers in the vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16)
11. Two sons (Matt. 21:28-32)
12. Tenants (Matt. 21:33-44)
13. Wedding banquet (Matt. 22:1-14)
14. Ten virgins (Matt. 25:1-13)
15. Talents (Matt. 25:14-30)
16. Sheep and the goats (Matt. 25:31-46)
17. Growing seed (Mark. 4:26-29)
18. Rich fool (Luke 12:16-21)
19. Lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)
20. Lost son (Luke 15:11-31)
21. Shrewd manager (Luke 16:1-13)
22. Persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8)
23. Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)

**M. Nature**

1. Rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17)
2. Burning bush (Exod. 3:2,4)
3. Dense cloud, pillar of cloud (Exod. 19:9, 33:9-11)
4. Urim and Thummim (Exod. 28:30)
5. Fire (Dt. 4:36, 1 Kings 18:38)
6. Plagues (Exod. 7-11)
7. Blood (Exod. 12:13)
8. Brilliant light
  - a. Bright cloud around the disciples at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:5)
  - b. Flashed around Paul (Acts 9:3)
9. Star
  - a. Abraham (Gen. 15:5)
  - b. Wise men (Matt. 2:1-12)

**N. Events**

1. Lost battles (Josh. 7:4)
2. Devastation, tumors, falling idols (1 Sam. 5:1-6)



11. When would you most likely watch? \_\_ Day \_\_ Night; \_\_ Weekday \_\_ Weekend; Time \_\_\_\_\_
12. If you could design a companion Internet **website** to go along with the television show, which of the following features would you include?
- Christian-related news
- Church ministry highlights of effective, creative, model ministries
- Crossword puzzle
- Daily devotional
- Digital access to other Christian resources available on the Internet:  
 \_\_ Church services \_\_ Distance learning \_\_ Literature \_\_ Movies \_\_ Radio \_\_ Seminars  
 \_\_ Seminary library resources Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Digital access to previous television shows
- Directories of:  
 \_\_ Christian individuals \_\_ Churches \_\_ Resource Providers  
 \_\_ Christian organizations \_\_ Denominations \_\_ Sermon resources Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Education highlights (see "Education" under number 10 above).
- Humor: \_\_ Jokes \_\_ Cartoons \_\_ Stories \_\_ Film clips
- Music
- Prayer – general focus
- Prayer – specific requests
- Resource review highlights
- Schedule of information about the upcoming television shows
- Screensaver
- Scripture reading
- Video Conferencing
13. What excites you most about the possibility of a combined interactive television and computer communication hub for American Christianity?
14. What concerns you most?
15. Other suggestions, comments, and ideas:

## APPENDIX F

## Preliminary Survey: Forced-Choice Results

156 Number of Surveys				
15 Laity	136 Pastor		5 Student	
44 Average Age				
139 Male	17 Female			
321 Average Size of Worship Attendance				
Technologies Used at Home				
107 Cable TV	125 Computer		98 Internet	9 Website
147 TV	8 Downlink			
Technologies Used at Church				
9 Cable TV	130 Computer		73 Internet	55 Website
81 TV	65 Slide/Video		5 Downlink	
How do you currently keep informed regarding Christian news, events, and resources				
131 Xtn Mag	32 Xtn Papers		103 Xtn Radio	37 Xtn TV
74 Mail	65 Internet		61 Sec Mag	71 Sec news
83 Sec TV	96 Word of mouth		119 Dnmtrl	53 Sec radio
TV Show Features				
146 Churches	139 Orgnztns		152 People	146 Resources
TV Show Features Ranked				
	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Churches	41	54	28	14
Org	2	12	48	43
People	92	34	10	8
Resources	12	36	52	38
Additional Features				
120 Comedy	68 Bulletins		59 Videos	56 Jokes
122 Education	60 Histories		51 Teaching	48 Summaries
129 Excerpts	99 Effective		94 Relevant	72 Stories
74 Interactive	27 Access		36 Hotlinks	35 PP access
41 Live aud.	52 Top Ten		64 Items?	
113 Music	74 Choirs		63 Pros	
101 News	48 Town meetings			
Time				
7 Day	132 Night		53 Weekday	29 Weekend
Computer				
86 News				13 Either
96 Churches				
9 Crossword				
58 Devotional				
93 Digital	30 Churches		38 Distance	34 Lit
	46 Seminars		41 Library	33 Movies
38 Previous TV Shows				
91 Directories	27 Individuals		46 Org	44 Churches
26 Den	56 Resources		56 Sermon resources	
26 Education				
83 Humor	47 Jokes		40 Cartoons	48 Stories
82 Music				36 Film clips
41 Prayer - general				
37 Prayer - specific				
37 Resource Review				
35 Schedule of TV shows				
23 Screensaver				
24 Scripture Reading				
40 Video Conferencing				

<u>Ages</u>	<u>Worship Attendance</u>	<u>Denominations</u>	<u>Times</u>
28	35	80 United Methodist	2 6
28	40	10 Baptist	7 7
29	45	7 Lutheran	10 8
29	45	7 Presbyterian	21 9
31	50	4 Christian Church	20 10
31	50	3 Disciples of Christ	3 11
32	50	4 Nazarene	5 after 6
33	50	2 Pillar of Fire	9 7 - 9 p.m.
33	70	2 Reformed Church of America	10 8-10 p.m.
34	70	1 Independent	8 Prime
34	70	2 CMA	
34	75	1 Non-denominational	11 on Sat.
34	75	5 Wesleyan	3 early a.m.
34	80	5 Free Methodist	1 afternoon
34	80	2 United Brethren	1 Lunch
34	80	1 Salvation Army	
35	85		
35	88		
35	90		
35	95		
35	100		
35	108		
36	110		
36	120		
36	120		
36	125		
36	125		
37	125		
37	130		
37	130		
37	130		
37	130		
38	135		
38	140		
38	150		
38	150		
38	150		
39	150		
39	150		
39	150		
39	150	45	300 57
39	150	45	300 57
39	155	45	300 58
40	160	45	300 58
40	160	45	300 60
40	160	45	315 60
40	160	46	320 64
40	160	46	325 64
40	165	46	330 65
40	165	47	340 67
40	170	47	350 68
40	170	47	350 69
41	170	47	360
41	175	47	370
41	186	47	400
41	190	48	400
41	200	48	400
41	200	48	400

43.99 Average

41	200	48	400
41	200	48	400
41	200	48	400
41	200	48	400
41	200	48	420
41	200	49	430
41	200	49	450
41	200	49	500
41	200	49	500
42	200	49	500
42	200	49	507
42	200	49	530
42	210	49	550
42	215	50	560
42	215	50	600
42	220	50	600
42	221	50	620
42	225	50	650
42	225	50	750
43	230	51	800
43	230	51	800
43	230	51	1200
43	230	52	1300
43	250	52	1400
43	250	53	1600
43	250	54	5500
44	250	54	320.6 Average
44	250	55	
44	275	55	
44	280	55	
44	290	56	
45	300	56	



## APPENDIX G

### Preliminary Survey: Open-ended Comments

#### What excites you most?

##### **Access**

More access to info for preaching and teaching.  
 Linking places of need with people power and resource power to meet needs, and bring Jesus glory.  
 Idea exchange.  
 Stories of how the Word is embodied in persons.  
 The ability to have access to church-related information at one central location.  
 The range of accessibility.  
 Tremendous resource possibilities.  
 Availability in the home.  
 Access to information with ease.  
 Access to current resources and events without having to travel to various sites.  
 Immediate info available. More accurate.  
 Unlimited references for info.  
 Growing, nurturing each other in the faith. Spread the Gospel.  
 Deal with people's spiritual concerns and questions.  
 Resource for more effective church workers.  
 Immediate feedback from viewers.  
 Instant access to presenters in regards to the ability to ask questions and contact further.  
 It seems we have the way of keeping in touch.  
 Accessibility, quality.  
 Put more people in touch with life-giving resources.  
 Gives a forum to ask the questions that the TV program stimulated. It allows for ministry and education to continue after the TV program.  
 Availability of all resources.  
 Greater availability of information.  
 Access to cutting edge people/ideas/resources.  
 Networking. Information availability.  
 Access for the body as well as seekers and curious.  
 Central resource and clearinghouse of information.  
 Networking and info.  
 Availability of a variety of resources.

##### **Outreach**

Outreach.  
 Captivate interest of non-Christians.  
 The idea of reaching out to others.  
 The encouragement to Christians and avenue for planting seeks in pre-Christians not behind the times. I also like news and programming from the Christian perspective.

On possibility of gospel throughout the world.

It keeps “the faith” and Christianity in front of the world—tells and shows we’re cutting edge. Using technology to reach people for Christ.

More people are using these technologies and more people can be reached.

The world looks at the Church as old-fashioned, out-of-touch. This will fly in the face of that.

Would catch the mind and heart of young folks.

Another format for reaching people, especially high tech kinds of folks.

### **Positive**

Presenting the Gospel in a positive manner.

Proactive use of media.

### **Society**

It speaks to the multimedia society we live in.

It’s the future.

### **Unity**

Encourage Christian individuals and groups that feel isolated.

Strength of unity to affect (sic) change in culture.

Tie the Christian community together.

The pulling together of the Christian body.

### **Other**

Not having Internet capabilities I cannot comment.

It doesn’t excite me (2).

Not really excited. Would be a good thing if it is useful.

I don’t feel like I know enough about the Internet and interactive TV to answer the questions.

I need information.

The range of possibilities.

The endless possibilities.

Creative possibilities.

Mainline churches communicating the gospel and love of Jesus’ grace—concerned about social justice ministries.

The need to bring new models to laity who are caught in the 1950’s mode of doing ministry.

Why should the devil have all the good tools?

I would rather see it used for good than evil. It is going to be a reality!

### **What concerns you most?**

#### **Bad**

So much Christian TV stinks.

That is would be “quality” and 1st rate.

It’ll be done poorly.

Poor quality.

### **Focus**

Possibility of losing focus and becoming entertainment instead of ministry and possible takeover by secular company (i.e., CBN, Family Channel now owned by secular company).

It would be market driven, it would be programmed for people with money, and geared toward sensationalism.

That we let personal, traditional preferences (evangelical or liturgical) overshadow the ability to reach the lost.

In the media it's always a challenge to remain true to mission.

That it remains a ministry and not become profit-driven.

Getting people away from improper subjects.

### **Heresy**

Intrusion by wackos who attempt to inject heresy.

Authentic evangelism based on Word.

Uncensored content that could masquerade as orthodox Christianity.

False teachings, individualism, feelings/experiences vs. Bible.

Possible narrow sectarianism.

Heresy unchecked and getting into the hearts of the uninformed.

Purity of Christianity (w/o slants).

### **Just something else**

Looking like everything else out there.

Losing personal ministry/content.

Get too denominationally focused.

It will degenerate into just another spot/place.

Is it just one more thing?

The glut on pseudo-Christian and Christian information.

Balance.

Need for integrity in programming.

People will buy into it just because it's "Christian" while it may just be another "Christian" activity.

### **Misuse**

Trivialize major issues.

Antagonize theological differences.

Misuse of the resource (irresponsibility on divisive issues).

The possibility for misuse.

Pushing doctrinal issues that increase division.

Abuse by those wanting to only elevate themselves and ministry above the rest.

Use and abuse.

Watering down.

### **Money**

Where do financial resources come from?

Cost.

Funding resources to do it?

**Non-relational**

That Christians will move to a depersonalized form of church for convenience and lose the effectiveness of relational fellowship.

The fear that people will use it to replace personal interaction-relationship.

Bringing persons to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

The church and the “lost.”

The lost, justice, the oppressed, racial reconciliation, seductive materialism, and being so consumed by technology that we no longer build the relationships we are called to build to communicate the gospel. Jesus didn't propagate information, He gave Himself away in order that people may know the Father.

Relationships of laity and pastor in ministry for Christ working together in mission to those in need.

Will this take the focus from the local church as a community of believers?

Less personal intervention.

**Other**

Nothing.

How will it mature the Christian and reach the lost? Is it worth the money? Is the kingdom better served some other way?

What most people perceive about God.

Access availability.

My martyrs (current day) Education of young children (like nursery).

Ease of use.

That it wouldn't take up too much time.

Privacy.

How would this work with the hubs already available.

I won't have time to use it much, I'm afraid, but as a resource for info it could be good.

The need to educate and motivate the Christian laity to drive the church by guidance of the Holy Spirit into a reformation of new thinking about “doing” church.

**Other comments**

As a parent, I appreciate any quality Christian children's programs.

Thanks.

Interactive learning and games. Chat rooms. On-line Bible studies. Also youth ministry resources. Teaching on healing and spiritual warfare.

What's the purpose?

We need to be witnesses of what the Lord has specifically done for us instead of dogmatic defenders of the faith. We must show others the very presence of God.

I am not anti-cognitive. I love to read C. S. Lewis et al, but it can be less effective in initial evangelism. That is why *Guidepost* sells; its tells what God is doing.

Needs a balance of all faiths represented.

A PTL without demands of building an empire or spiritual compromise.

Much admiration for your efforts.

With all the Internet problems, I think that one should be a Christian Internet provides which would be a way that one could financially facilitate a ministry like this (the computer side of this idea).

Please find a creative way to spread the Gospel via the Internet.

## APPENDIX H

### WEB SITE REVIEWS

#### Savannah Internet Expo Web Site Competition Selected Judges' comments

##### What they liked about the web sites entered in the competition

- The wonderful look and appealing design. Very tight and sharp.
- They give you admin and stat access right on the home page ... very impressive.
- The technical design of website seemed faster than most.
- Seemed fast. Attractive with clean layout.
- Simplicity and useful information.
- Overall a great looking and user-friendly site.
- The sharp corporate look. Great graphics.
- Awesome graphics, great use of colors and large navigation buttons.
- Excellent use of graphics and color. Very simple to navigate. No banner ads.
- The navigation. Especially the graphical appeal. The layout is good.
- Great site. Does the job and looks great.
- Simple, attractive & easy to navigate.
- Unique: easiest to navigate.
- Excellent layout—very user friendly.
- The look and simplicity of navigation and use.
- The overall style of the site is very appealing. The logo header is professional.
- Overall I like the site, informative and to the point. Very user friendly and open, inviting people to browse.
- Excellent fit of Logo to rest of the page.
- Very clean and well defined layout.
- The look and feel. Very corporate but warm. Sounds artsie doesn't it.
- A great site. It has a lot of a great information, works well and gets the viewer interested in the site.
- Graphics are wonderful. Layout and design are good.
- Nice font, simple.
- The colors on the site are really eye-catchers. The explanation of services was good.
- This site is very informative. I liked the explanations of services and the comparisons with other providers; The explanations of services were excellent.
- The site loaded fast and looked appealing.
- Simple, straight to the point.
- The image map on the main page is very professional looking and load quite fast for the quality.
- This was a really versatile site and seemingly very useful. The form was easy and made sense.
- I thought this was a really useful, informative site. It was attractive and easy to use too; useful and creative.
- Simple, professional looking.
- Site map on subpages is a unique and useful feature.

I like this site because of its clean and simple pages that go to the point without any tricks.

This was a very well planned website. The colors looked professional and matched well with the pictures.

This page is very well suited to this company. The information is well planned and the navigation is easy to use and find.

This site is attractive and provides a good explanation of services.

I liked the layout and navigational ease here.

The forms and javascript to allow mortgage calculation and the like.

The payment and mortgage calculators are unique.

Very helpful site if you are moving into the area.

This site was very informative and attractive.

I liked the fact that both specific and general information was provided. The layout made navigation easy.

The font is clear easily readable and in pleasant colors.

This is a nice simple text site. It serves its purpose well.

The information here was well presented.

I liked the instant quote feature.

This was an attractive, informative and useful site.

The creativity on this site is something to applaud.

The philosophy behind the services was delightful and the site was easy to use and enjoy.

Very professional, constructive and attractive.

Very creative, dynamic site. Rich graphics and movement. Very professional, attractive.

The basic layout was nice. Not too much information and yet I knew exactly the purpose of the site.

This site has a clean-looking layout design and seems to load quickly. I like the 3-D quality of the side and top navigational bars. Nice shadows.

The web site complements its main purpose of selling with additional areas of interest like recipes, lighthouse pictures from around the world, and fish "jokes." This type of extra information is what keeps the customers engaged.

Has great color concept, and a clear purpose.

The basic look of the site was very nice and I was instantly aware of why the site existed.

Very simple, CAN'T get lost, links all work, a child could navigate this site, I LIKE that.

Strange though it may be, I really liked the "sincerity" of this web site. The owner seems to have put a lot of herself into it, which shows through. The site's main purpose is definitely clear: to keep kids and families safe with a tailor-made product. Nice rollovers and use of Javascript in the scrolling heading.

This site was well-planned. All of the links worked and gave me meaningful information.

Professional e-commerce site—detail button, quantity dropdown java menus listing prices,

Site looks expensive, not a ma and pa's store site.

Good layout, easy to navigate, and even offers an online ordering security policy link right on the home page, very professional, a large picture of every product that can be ordered.

The popup menus were nice and I knew it was e-commerce and exactly what they sold instantly.

The popup menus were unique in its category.

This was a nice site. I was not a fan of the green background but it was easy to use and very clear with its navigation. This was given a lot more time than most of its competitors.

I liked the excellent picture quality and graphic continuity of the site. The shopping cart has some nice features including the running total in the upper right-hand corner.

I was glad to see some unique navigational elements: the non-traditional link bar along the bottom of the page, and the nice drop-down product links along the top.

Had many links but they were spread around the site well so you do not realize there are that many.

It was cute, simple, colorful, and they made their own gifs, a great site.

The navigation bar was in a separate frame and was a different color (eye catching), original gifs.

Pictures of each item, has a clear promotional purpose and tells you where you can buy, very professional

The site is laid out very well. It includes informative content as well as interactive content. I liked the chance to give my input for new "peaceables." Nice non-traditional frames usage.

Great job with the graphics finding the balance between quality and load time. The site also balances text with pictures very well.

This web site offers information in a very straightforward intuitive fashion. I love the rollovers and the simplistic nature of the graphics.

The site has a great compendium of external links to guide its users where they need to go, and offers multiple online services such as auctions, chat rooms.

The Navigation was great. I had plenty of options on each page and it was easy to browse the site laterally and vertically.

I liked the color. Bold and vivid but not too strong.

This was a nice site that I believe clearly represents the product and would attract the proper audience.

Site got its info across, looks good, professional, no confusion, no original art, is very browser nice, fills browser in AOL and IE. Doesn't overflow.

The site is graphically consistent on all pages. The gif animation really adds to it and the layout is quite upbeat.

The intention of the site is well played. Especially the map and the newsletter for those who are a little too shy to participate in the forums.

Tight, simple, clear purpose and eye direction.

Standard modern info page, good enough as any ISP's info home page, can run with the big boys.

Good site, very modern info template.

I thought the color pallet was very nice and the gifs and banners were very well done.



The site was to the point. It was there for a purpose and did it fast and well.

This was a nice site. It was professional and easy to understand.

This site is clean, unobtrusive graphics subtly simplify the complexity of the auction.

It is straightforward and useful.

Good choice of colors especially in carrying out the rollovers. Thorough color management even down to the alinks and vlinks.

This site balances text and graphics well and does not bombard the viewer with too much information at once. It appears to cater well to both the buyer and the seller (2 very different viewpoints).

Nice layout, simple, tour slideshow nice, wish had more control over though.

Nice site. Has a clear purpose, leaves few questions.

I liked the background and color palette. The impression the site gave was fitting for the company.

Very nice detail on the images to really show off the business.

The navigation was great and the pages had little fluff text.

Great job on integrating the pictures into the theme with the addition of magnolias and plaque-like descriptions. A lot of tempting photographs!

The site includes a slide show tour of the house which is very nice.

Overall, elegant, consistent and to the point.

The amount and variety of pictures really helps to sell the adventure. They show you how many things there are to see as well as the happy faces of previous customers.

The navigation is good and the colors are bright and friendly. The site is not technically complex but does a very good job of representing the company.

Easy to navigate and information was readily available.

The site of the month feature was a great idea.

Nice color scheme. Very clean and simple design.

The site achieved the means of being informative; Scroll bars were a good idea

The worship schedule was right on the home page; picture of the church on the home page.

I liked this church web site the best, because it was very attractive and informational.

There are nice photos throughout and there is an up-to-date calendar.

Tons of information at my fingertips.

Accepts online donations, very convenient for customers.

Very informative site, great maps.

What a well-organized, well thought out site. It was very informative and attractive.

The site gave a wonderful explanation of what the organization does and is, even if it isn't finished yet.

I found the site attractive, informative, and well presented.

The photographs of smiling faces won me over.

Colors match the theme of the site (flowers).

The photographs on this site are just wonderful.

Everything on the site had a smile. It was charming.

Simple and non-complicated; video clips.

The photos and music were alluring and professional, but I was unable to access it all.

The site itself was absolutely beautiful and very informative. The photography was gorgeous.

I loved the photo of the beach and the various maps available on the site.

The communications utilities here will be particularly useful and the up to date satellite photos are surely appropriate and will be very much appreciated SOON.

What a wonderful effort to inform the public! Thank you.

This is probably one of the more useful sites that I have come across. Out of all of the sites that I have reviewed this is the one I would use and have bookmarked!

The purpose of this site is not clear. It depends too heavily on links to community sites instead of focusing on the school.

I liked the links that lead children and parents to educational resources!

I really liked the animated graphics and the use of the school mascot throughout the site. As a teacher I was very excited to find the web resources that the designer came up with. I would like to have a similar page for MY school!

Well-organized, good graphics, the purpose was clear and to the point.

The on-line catalog using Acrobat was a positive feature.

I appreciated the links being listed at the bottom of each page that prevented me from having to go back to the home page each time.

I liked the photographs and the testimonials. I didn't even know this school existed.

It was technology oriented and loaded with links and graphics.

PowerPoint file and other down loads available.

I liked it. Its purpose was clear and there was a great deal of information.

Simple online brochure, straight-forward, not too many frills.

Basic info with simple set-up is refreshing.

The sound effects and images gave the site an interesting, up-to-date feel.

Nice local community section as bonus.

It has an interactive survey as well as places where you can order their products online.

Clear, eye-pleasing; a lot of information.

Design very useful and professional.

A+ This is the model layout and design for websites. Almost looks like a template.

Clean and simple. Navigation is very easy. Information is very direct and useful.

I liked the general site design. There were several ways to navigate the site also, aiding the ease of finding your desired information.

I am intrigued by the patient link, which has great potential although it is currently under construction. This could be a very helpful area in the future.

The site is well organized.

I like the site and it is very user friendly.

The site is very easy to navigate, and features a topic of the month in addition to the regular information.

The site was well designed. I found the online chat with their doctors a definite plus for future and current patients.

If you need to find out something about area-business, housing, churches, etc. this site has it!

This was a wonderful site full of great information and resources! I was able to follow links to my church's web site, as well as to other local stores I know. What a great site! I will recommend it to my friends!

I thought (x) was great until I saw this site! What did I like best? Everything! This site seemed more personal than (x).

I thought the link to see the daily comics was really super!

What a really neat site. This one really gets to the heart of everyday life! The links here were more "daily living" than the other site I visited. Both have their merits, but to find out events etc. on a DAILY basis, I would choose this site.

The look and feel. Wonderful layout and great content! Makes you want to listen to that station.

The 'on-the-air' now feature is a very neat touch.

I like the 'box' style and the checkered background. A+

Loads of current news and stock reports. Will visit often

The sky cam link is awesome! This was a very impressive site.

Great idea with online stats and recaps.

Very good use of color. Not too much and not too little.

Information was current. Links section was well done.

The pictures and descriptions gave a very good idea of what the place looked like if you were interested in staying there a few days.

The site gave a small bit of Savannah's history that caught my attention.

It was a classic, simple site.

Another good, inexpensive (hopefully), template-style site.

The background music and pictures made it fun and very visual.

Map is clear and easy to read.

Good logo graphics.

Site provides complete information needed to make a decision about visiting the property.

The colors used in web site compliment the logo and photographs.

Good use of color and background graphics.

Background music played quickly and is a good choice (Mercer's Moon River) for a Savannah inn.

Rollovers on navigation bars are a nice feature.

A good introduction to area. Music is cheesy, but appropriate for the homepage. Site designer had the good judgment not to use this music on every page.

Site builder's enthusiasm for topic is apparent throughout the site.

### **Suggestions for Improvement**

Site gets an "A" for information and navigation. Give it a "D" for design.

Calendar of events contains outdated information.

Button rollovers worked inconsistently.

Good idea to offer a newsletter. (Note: I did not see a copy of the actual newsletter).

Still Loading. Events link navigates to the wrong website. Still Loading. Some people will go to the other web site and never return because there is no return navigation provided. Still Loading. Still Loading.

It was simple, but not overly interesting. It could be more original.

The home page was too wordy and too long.

Not much on programming and features but it has a great appeal to it.

Other pages much faster than home.

Site may be a little too busy. Simple is better.

The color hurt my eyes. The site is too "busy."

Site seemed a little too busy. Needs to be more user-friendly.

The page was narrow, not covering my screen.

I like the layout but nothing special in content or programming.

Very poor design, especially in graphic choices. Too much info and none relevant to the organization.

Needs a little attention to style sheets and background images.

This site does the job but could use a little design help. A little lengthy in the text area.

Serves its purpose well, but little interaction with the visitor.

This site is designed very poorly. It has no redeeming qualities.

Good site, but doesn't have any extraordinary artistic elements.

The main page is appealing. However, it takes a while to load, even on a dual channel ISDN.

The site is very difficult to navigate. There are no clear directions as to how to find information.

After playing around for about 2 minutes I found where to go to see more. The information is not organized and needs much work.

As the site is made with Flash, the user must first download Macromedia to view it.

Add application online, small map.

The page links went down below the bottom of my screen and there was no way to scroll down to see and get them, which was rather annoying.

Some pages were slow in loading.

I wasn't immediately sure of the purpose of this web site. The home page did not clearly give adequate information.

I would like more color and some variety in graphics.

The music notes were nice, however, the sound did not work.

An okay site; however, I really didn't see the purpose of it. The links she had were to common areas of the web that most people know how to get to.

Too link based for me.

I had a lot of trouble loading this site. The link that was sent to me did not take me to the site. I eventually located the site using my search tool.

The web address is MUCH too long!

The page was too wide for the screen. I had to keep going back and forth to view things. As I scrolled down on the page containing the pictures, they "folded" with each click and I had to wait for it to "smooth" out.

All in all I was NOT very impressed with the site. It still needs a LOT of work.

Yes, the individual teacher web sites were very nice. It would be better if all the teachers had one, and that those who do made better use of it.

I will have to come back a look at this site again when everything on it works.

URL may be a bit to long.

There is a run-on sentence on the photo album page.

On the photo page "consecration" you have to go back to the home page, because it doesn't link to the other pages.

Cookie cutter site. No information on how to get to the church.

The site had a cookie cutter look to it.

Certain links took me away from the site, perhaps it would be better to keep the viewer inside the site. Could not find a map telling me how to get to this church.

Could use more graphics to hold interest.

No forms customer has to call to sign up.

The only thing I personally did not like is the cutesy talk in the copy.

Some of the links are confusing like the "Come to the Party" link that shows up often but always leads to a new party. And the slide show, even though it is very nice, needs some forward and back buttons for people with slow connections (they end up missing some pictures and can't get back to them without restarting the whole show).

The home page was a little large but very nice after it opens. The text formatting could be handled a little better for readability.

Many categories without items. Maybe they should be hidden if empty.

Yet another site that does not realize how long it takes to load their front page. There is good information on the site but I would not have waited to see it.

Templates are not very original and no original art work here, seems to load kind of slow when going to other links.

Navigation is a little tricky: too many options in too many ways.

The incorporation of more graphics like the one on the first page would complement the site well.

WOW, this site has a huge homepage that took forever to load. If I was not on a T1, I would have hit the back button for sure. Also, the site is simply packed with links, images, and unrelated bit of information. I am unsure what the audience and purpose of this site is.

A lot of info, yet is a bit cluttered. Less is more, says things like "the financial advisor," or "the doctor is in" when could just say "finances" and "Health," which would make the page more compact. See other info home pages like www.msn.com, the page fits IE well but it overflows in browsers like AOL. It has potential and I like it, but the first time I saw it there was some confusion. I think because 2 columns were broke in half, & one half was on each side of the page, which leads to eye hopping.

Makes me want to buy the little guys; but I clicked on about 10 states and could not find a single dealer. Think about adding online purchasing options. And as for the purpose; I couldn't decipher whether the site was pushing selling or finding dealers. Neither option gave a direct course of action.

The site was nice and well organized but I really got sick of the bold colors. I would have to ask who they are marketing to.

From the aspect of a younger customer, I like the use of colors and flashing images.

However, as an adult customer, I thought it might be a bit much.

Home page a little cramped in aol browser, but perfect in internet explorer.

The shopping cart does need to be worked through—some missing links lost my sale.

Table and image sizes need to be preset for quicker loading.

It would be nice to see links included on all pages so that it's not necessary to return to the home page for everything. Also, turn the request application into a form which can be submitted online. There are many options to do this even without a secure certificate.

Looks like used Microsoft Publisher to create, inexpensive site, gets the job done, no online ordering done all done thru mail order, not to be considered e-commerce more like advertisement.

1. The navigation links that are so clear on the main page are removed on all other pages, which does not allow for lateral navigation in the site.

2. The order form looks a bit cheesy and should be an HTML form at a minimum.

3. The code is full of small errors and browser issues. This will drive away traffic.

NAVIGATION problems, all links open in a separate window, this can get annoying quick and confusing to internet illiterate, links in site should open in same window, links out of site should open in separate window, even products button opens in separate window leaving the only option to close the window to get HOME, the HOME button on the products page simply loops you to the products page again, site still needs a little work but has great professional potential.

Although the site alludes to bringing its customers “the highest quality products,” there were no real products displayed and therefore its main purpose was not fulfilled. I have already mentioned the addition of other areas of interest, which is a bonus to any e-commerce site. With further development, this site will show some promise. The pictures on the site add a lot to it, but the image quality should be either consistently good or bad on every page, with load time compromises taken into consideration.

They have a shopping cart feature up but only one test product in it. This gave a poor impression that they really do not expect traffic or do not care if the site is complete. Also, some of the font selections were hard to read.

Flash opening page needs bypass so don't have watch all the way thru opening every time.

I am afraid this site needs some work. First, they have the domain name hosted someplace but the site is located at a free personal website company. Every page has the ad banner at the base of the page for the host company, which makes it seem amateurish. Next, on every page, the navigation is in a different location on the page. This site needs a major overhaul for continuity. I would not classify this site as professional.

I would like to see a like more variety in color.

There was so much information available that it may have been a little overwhelming, but the photos and usefulness of the site made up for it.

This site is a little confusing with some links to different domains but the information is worth the confusion.

It would have been nice to see some specific details about properties managed by the company.

The homepage looks nice and the form is easy to read. However, I am curious why the domain name is (x) when you are promoting relocation anywhere in the US.

(Domain name) is a misleading name—this site contains all 50 states. I would be looking for more information on line; this site just lets people order a Relocation Guide for some cities in each state.

The site was to the point and does not cloud the facts with filler but, the blue horizontal bars are not very professional.

A few more graphics would really be an improvement; made the pages more interesting and eye-catching. The text is interesting, but most people probably would not read it all.

I would like to have seen some photos or graphics here. A client list would have been nice too.

Would lose the frame at the top and incorporate the logo with the center nav. But, that's just my opinion. Horrible load time.

The navigation buttons are a bit big and the text at the bottom is hard to read. Should use a different color text or background.

Could also take all of the text on the home page and create an “About” navigation that people could access instead of having to read it all up front.

A very large database of information; maybe too much (easy to get lost)

Dull appearance. There are a few buttons that do not have the link attached.

Some misleading pages. When I clicked on “File a claim” it just took me to a page that showed the phone number that was already on the home page.

Out of date. Itinerary goes from April 1st to April 12th, and that is all.

The idea of grabbing good domain names and selling them for huge profits is appalling. Thumbs down for this site.

I thought the site was nice at first but then I tried to browse and see what they had to offer. The site only has 1 link and that refers to a different domain name. This begs the question, why spend the time to make this page.

## APPENDIX I

### PRIMARY SURVEY: PRINT VIEW

#### 21st Century Communication

Welcome! This survey concludes InspireUSA's 3 year cooperative project to begin developing a combined Internet directory and television show *Celebrating the Best of America*<sup>®</sup>. The twenty questions below include organizational demographics, as well as questions relative to your organization's Internet experiences over the past few years. Our goal is to correlate information from a variety of organizations nationwide to help identify principles and practices relative to effective use of the Internet. If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Lewis at 912-925-5225 or [lynn@inspireusa.com](mailto:lynn@inspireusa.com).

**1. Your organization:**

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Geographical scope of your organization:**

- Local
- Regional
- National
- International

**3. Number of employees**

- 1 – 5
- 6 – 25
- 26 – 50
- 51 – 100
- 101 – 500
- 500+

**4. Estimated audience:** (members or constituents, number of clients, student body, subscribers, etc. Do not include web site visitors here.)

**5. Classification:**

- Business
- Church
- Civic organization
- Education
- Government
- Health
- Ministry
- Sports/Recreation



6. **Web site address:** (if you own more than one site, please include addresses of all sites referred to in your responses below):
7. **Date your organization first posted a web site online:**
- 1993 or before
  - 1994
  - 1995
  - 1996
  - 1997
  - 1998
  - 1999
  - 2000
  - 2001
8. **Current average number of page views per month:**
- < 100
  - 101 +
  - 1000 +
  - 10,000 +
  - 50,000 +
  - 100,000 +
  - 1 million +
  - 10 million +
  - 100 million +
9. **Current average number of unique visitors per month:**
- < 100
  - 250 +
  - 500 +
  - 1,000 +
  - 5,000 +
  - 10,000 +
  - 25,000 +
  - 50,000 +
  - 100,000 +
  - 1 million +

**10. Current approximate number of web pages on your site:**

- < 5 web pages
- up to 25 web pages
- up to 50 web pages
- up to 100 web pages
- up to 500 web pages
- up to 1000 web pages
- up to 5,000 web pages
- up to 10,000 web pages
- 10,001 +

**11. How much money have you invested in your online presence to date (include domain name registration costs, hosting, design and development, maintenance costs, personnel, education, equipment, outsourcing)?**

- < \$1000
- \$1000 - \$5000
- \$5000 - \$15,000
- \$15,000 - \$25,000
- \$25,000 - \$75,000
- \$75,000 - \$250,000
- \$250,000 - \$750,000
- \$750,000 - \$ 2 million
- \$ 2 million - \$ 10 million
- \$ 10 million - \$ 25 million
- \$ 25 million +

**12. How many times have you implemented a major redesign of your site since the date of your initial launch?**

- None
- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- Four times
- Five +

**13. Purpose(s) of your web site: (check as many as apply)**

- Basic information about your organization
- Education
- Entertainment
- E-commerce (selling products online)
- Inspiration
- News
- Online services

- 14. Describe the most popular features or use of your web site:**
  
- 15. Describe any significant obstacles or pitfalls you have faced in developing or maintaining your site:**
  
- 16. Describe your organization's biggest mistakes or oversights relative to your web site (i.e. What have you done wrong?):**
  
- 17. Describe your organization's biggest successes relative to your web site (i.e. What have you done right?):**
  
- 18. Describe any benefits to your organization attributable to your web site:**
  
- 19. Describe any major shifts in your organization's Internet plans/strategy over the past few years:**
  
- 20. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Please check below if you would like more information about:**
  - Please send us a summary report of this survey
  - Publish our experiences in aggregate form only
  - You may publish our experiences in personal form
  - Tell us more about InspireUSA products and services

**APPENDIX J****PRIMARY SURVEY: ONLINE VIEW****21st Century Communication**

Welcome! This survey concludes InspireUSA's 3 year cooperative project to begin developing a combined Internet directory and television show Celebrating the Best of America. The twenty questions below include organizational demographics, as well as questions relative to your organization's Internet experiences over the past few years. Our goal is to correlate information from a variety of organizations nationwide to help identify principles and practices relative to effective use of the Internet. If you have any questions, please contact Lynn Lewis at 912-925-5225 or [lynn@inspireusa.com](mailto:lynn@inspireusa.com).

**The Survey**

**1** Contact information:

Name:

Company:

Address:

Address 2:

City:  State:  Zip:

**2** Geographical scope of your organization:

Local

Regional

National

International

3

Number of employees:

- 1 - 5
- 6 - 25
- 26 - 50
- 51 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 500+

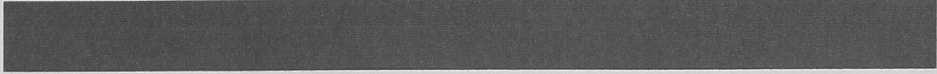
4

Estimated audience, members or constituents, number of clients, students, subscribers. Examples: 200 clients; 1000 members; 3000 guests per year; 400 students/10,000 alumni; 2 million subscribers, etc. (Do not include web site visitors here.)

5

Classification:

- Business
- Church
- Civic organization
- Education
- Government
- Health
- Ministry
- Sports/Recreation



6

Web site address (if you own more than one site, please include addresses of all sites referred to in your responses below):

7

Date your organization first posted a web site online:

- 1993 or before
- 1994
- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001

8

Current average number of page views per month:

9

Current average number of unique visitors per month:

10

Current approximate number of web pages on your site:

11

Estimate how much money have you invested in your online presence to date (include domain name registration costs, hosting, design and development, maintenance costs, personnel, education, equipment, outsourcing, marketing).

- < \$1,000
- \$1,000 - \$10,000
- \$10,000 - \$50,000
- \$50,000 - \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$ 1 million
- \$ 1 million - \$ 10 million
- \$ 10 million - \$25 million

\$ 25 million +

12

How many times have you implemented a major redesign of your site since the date of your initial launch?

- Never
- Once
- Twice
- Three times
- Four times
- Five +

13

Purpose(s) of your web site:

- Basic information about your organization
- Education
- Entertainment
- E-commerce (selling products online)
- Inspiration
- News
- Online services



14

Describe the most popular features or use of your web site:

15

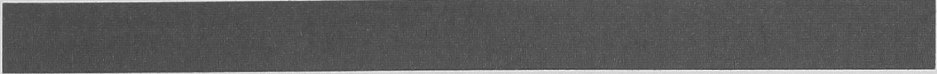
Describe any significant obstacles or pitfalls you have faced in developing or maintaining your site:

16

Describe your organization's biggest mistakes or oversights relative to your web site (i.e. What have you done wrong?)

17

Describe your organization's biggest successes relative to your web site (i.e. What have you done right?)



18

Describe any benefits to your organization attributable to your web site:

19

Describe any major shifts in your organization's Internet plans/strategy (over the past few years or upcoming).

20

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Check any preferences below:

- Please send us a summary report of this survey
- Publish our experiences in aggregate form only
- You may publish our experiences in personal form
- Tell us more about InspireUSA's products and services

**APPENDIX K****PRIMARY SURVEY: E-MAIL NOTIFICATION****Subject: Dissertation project survey**

Hello from Lynn Lewis and InspireUSA!

I will complete my doctoral project soon (with your help) via this 20-question survey, "21st Century Communication: Patterns and Principles Relative to the Effective Use of Internet-based Communications."

You were selected to participate along with more than 80 organizations from over 20 states that have been associated with InspireUSA's activities in some way over the past three years. We are excited about the survey and its potential for helping all of us more effectively utilize the Internet to accomplish our respective goals and missions.

Survey note: Be as detailed as you want in the free form answers toward the end of the survey. No trade secrets or anything, just helpful summaries of your organization's Internet experiences.

Thank you! Use the link below, or access online using the "21st Century Communication" link at the bottom of [inspireusa.com](http://inspireusa.com).

[21st Century Communication](#)

Lynn

K. Lynn Lewis, President and CEO  
InspireUSA, Inc.

P. O. Box 61176

Savannah, GA 31420

Phone: 912-925-5225

Fax: 912-927-3467

E-mail: [lynn@inspireusa.com](mailto:lynn@inspireusa.com)

Web sites: [inspireusa.com](http://inspireusa.com), [jubileenews.com](http://jubileenews.com), [jubileekids.net](http://jubileekids.net)

**Our Purpose**

Celebrating the Best of America®  
Connecting People Through Technology  
Collaborating for Maximum Positive Impact

P.S.

1. If, for some reason, you feel you have received this email in error or would like more information about the project or survey, please contact me.
2. If you do not wish to participate, please reply to this email and include "Opt Out" in the subject line.

## APPENDIX L

### PRIMARY SURVEY: RESULTS

The following represents the raw data compiled by the survey. For the sake of clarity and privacy, I alphabetized the list of participating organizations and rearranged the order of submissions to avoid easy identification.

#### 1. Contact Information

**Asbury Theological Seminary**, Jeff Groeling  
204 N. Lexington Avenue  
Wilmore, KY 40390

**Bryan Bank & Trust**, Barbara Thureson  
P. O. Box 1299  
Richmond Hill, GA 31324

**Callaway Gardens**, Kathy Tilley  
U.S. Hwy 27  
Pine Mountain, GA 31822

**Camp Winshape**, Chris Lewis  
P.O. Box 49009  
Mount Berry, GA 30149

**Christian Motorcyclists Association**, Meri Brock  
4278 Hwy 71 South  
Hatfield, AR 71945

**Christianity Today International**, Judith Gill  
465 Gundersen Drive  
Carol Stream, IL 60188

**Church of the Resurrection**, Chuck Arlund  
13720 Roe  
Leawood, KS 66224

**Crown Financial Ministries**, Greg Rowland  
601 Broad Street, SE  
Gainesville, GA 30501

**Epworth By The Sea**, Ann T. Pierce  
P. O. Box 20407  
100 Arthur J. Moore Drive

St. Simons Island, GA 31522

**Focus Adolescent Services**, Linda Lebelle  
1113 Woodland Road, #1000  
Salisbury, MD 21801

**Food for the Hungry**, Karen Randau  
7729 E. Greenway Rd.  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

**Georgia Methodist Federal Credit Union, Keith Pritchard**

P O Box 6448  
 Marietta, GA 30065-0448

**Hope Unlimited, David Cushworth**

PO Box 5891  
 Wilmington, DE 19808

**J.C. Lewis Ford, Tharon Lambert**

J.C. Lewis Ford  
 P.O. Box 60759  
 Savannah, GA 31420

**Jews For Jesus, Rich Robinson**

60 Haight Street  
 San Francisco, CA 94102

**Leadership Network, Colleen Hager**

2501 Cedar Springs Road LB-5, Suite 200  
 Dallas, TX 75201

**Mission Society For United Methodists**

6234 Crooked Creek Road  
 Norcross, GA 30092

**New Beginnings UMC, Dale Babcock**

2925 Mack Dobbs Rd  
 Kennesaw, GA 30144

**North GA Conference UMC, Rev. Mark E. Nugent**

159 Ralph McGill Blvd, Suite 102  
 Atlanta, GA 30308

**Olan Mills, Inc., Richard Restiano**

4325 Amnicola Highway  
 Chattanooga, TN 37406

**Ply Marts, Inc., Chris B. Mahaffey**

4955 Buford Hwy  
 Norcross, GA 30091

**Portable Church Industries, Inc., Rob Cucheran**

1923 Ring Drive  
 Troy, MI 48083

**Priority Insight, John Crosby**

P.O. Box 11193  
 Savannah, GA 31412

**Savannah Christian Church, Brian Jobe**

401 Tibet Ave.  
 Savannah, GA 31406

**Savannah Christian Class of 1979, Wendy Lewis**

6 Davenport Lane  
 Savannah, GA 31419

**Savannah Electric, John Kraft**

600 E. Bay St.  
 Savannah, GA 31402

**SavannahQuote.com**, Kenny Sellers

321 Commercial Drive

Savannah, GA 31460

**Wabash Valley Power Association**, Laura Matney

722 N. High School Rd

Indianapolis, IN 462124

**Walk Thru the Bible**, Jason Hand

4201 N Peachtree Road

Atlanta, GA 30341

**West Georgia Christian Academy**, John Cipolla

1904 Hamilton Road

LaGrange, GA 30241

**Whitworth Inn**, Kenny Jonick

6593 McEver Road

Flowery Branch, GA 30542

**Wycliffe Bible Translators**, Kirsten Cruzen

P.O. Box 628200

Orlando, FL 32862-8200

**Z Productions**, Rick Shaw

5959 Franklin Ave

Suite 105

Hollywood, CA

2. Geographical scope

Scope	No.	Percent
Local	10	30%
Regional	6	18%
National	2	6%
International	15	46%

3. Number of employees

Employees	No.	Percent
1-5	8	24%
6-25	3	9%
26-50	3	9%
51-100	6	18%
101-500	7	22%
500+	6	18%

#### 4. Estimated audience

- 1200 students, 4000 alumni
- 100,000+ clients/subscribers
- 125 members
- 2,400 plus
- 650
- 4 million customers yearly
- Hard to answer this one
- In 2000, Epworth served 866 groups, representing over 125,000 guests.
- 5000 clients
- We are a production company. The number of people who see our projects depend on the individual distribution of that project. In some cases it has been millions, in others, a few thousand.
- 24 member systems (200,000 customers)
- 260,000 people in coastal Georgia
- 100 alumni
- 200,000 subscribers 2,000,000 radio program listeners 50,000 small group alumni 10,000 donors
- Approximately 1800 average weekly attendance
- 5000 customers
- We are an outreach program to children, so reach tens of thousands each year worldwide.
- Visitors only
- 14,000 guests total, 1400 per year
- (blank)
- 600,000 visitors per year
- 6000
- 1500 newsletter distribution to current year campers and staff
- 300,000 receive our flagship magazine (represents all donors, prayer partners and people interested in Wycliffe.) Approximately 130,000 Christians in the US are actively receiving our newsletters and other mailings, plus another 1600 internationally. Note that Canada, the UK and South Africa branches of Jews for Jesus maintain their own mailing lists which would be over and above these figures. In addition approximately 18,000 non-believing Jewish people receive our regular evangelistic publication ISSUES.
- 480students/100churches/
- A regular mail list of about 20,000
- 1.2 million magazine subscribers, 2.4 million readers
- 4000 customers, 2000 churches
- 80,000
- ?
- ?
- 300 clients

5. Classification

<b>Classification</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Business	12	36%
Church	3	9%
Education	3	9%
Health	1	3%
Ministry	13	40%
Sports/Recreation	1	3%

6. Web site address

asburyseminary.edu  
 bryanbank.com  
 callawaygardens.com, callawaygardens.org  
 campwinshape.com  
 ChristianityToday.com, PreachingToday.com  
 cmausa.org  
 cor.org  
 crown.org  
 epworthbythesea.org  
 fh.org  
 focusas.com  
 gamethfcu.org  
 inspireusa.com/scps79.html  
 jclewisford.com  
 jewsforjesus.org - is the front door to two sites:  
     jewsforjesus.org/index.htm - for Jewish seekers  
     jfjonline.org - for Christians  
 leadnet.org, ltn.org, terranovaproject.org, urbannetwork.org  
 msum.org  
 nbumc.org  
 ngumc.org  
 olanmills.com, olanmillsidrectories.com  
 plymart.com, imagedesignkitchens.com  
 portablechurch.com  
 priorityinsight.com  
 savannahchristian.com  
 savannahelectric.com  
 savannahquote.com  
 sidewalkssundayschool.org  
 walkthru.org  
 wgcations.org  
 whitworthinn.com  
 wvpa.com  
 wycliffe.org, wycliffe.net  
 zpost.com



7. Date first posted a web site online

<b>Date online</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1993	1	3%
1994	3	9%
1995	5	15%
1996	8	25%
1997	3	9%
1998	7	21%
1999	4	12%
2000	2	6%

8. Page Views per month

<b>Page Views</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
< 100	3	9%
101+	4	12%
1,000+	10	31%
10,000+	5	15%
50,000+	3	9%
100,000+	6	18%
1 million	1	3%
5 million	1	3%

9. Unique visitors per month

<b>Visitors</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
< 100	7	22%
250	2	6%
500	6	18%
1,000	6	18%
5,000	2	6%
10,000	4	12%
25,000	2	6%
50,000	1	3%
100,000	2	6%
1 million	1	3%

10. Number of web pages on site

Web pages	No.	Percent
5	2	6%
25	12	36%
50	1	3%
100	7	22%
500	4	12%
1000	3	9%
5,000	3	9%
10,000+	1	3%

11. Money invested in online presence

Money invested	No.	Percent
< \$1,000	4	12%
\$1,000 - \$10,000	13	39%
\$10,000 - \$50,000	7	22%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	2	6%
\$100,000- \$1 million	5	15%
\$1 million - \$10 million	2	6%

12. Number of times major redesign

Redesign	No.	Percent
Never	4	12%
Once	3	9%
Twice	9	27%
Three times	12	37%
Four times	4	12%
Five +	1	3%

13. Purpose of web site

Purpose	No.	Percent
Basic information	32	97%
Education	17	52%
E-commerce	11	33%
Entertainment	4	12%
Inspiration	11	33%
News	12	36%
Online services	6	18%

#### 14. Most popular features or use

- It is basic info on our business. We do have a loan and investment calculator available and links.
- Events
- Store locator, coupon options.
- Flash intro. Avid info.
- The most popular use of our site is to find out basic information about WVPA and to link to our member systems.
- E-bill pages for viewing and paying bill online.
- Alumni used this web site to obtain contact information on other alumni, to receive information regarding upcoming events, and to participate in a bulletin board.
- Information about the seminary, prospective students, online resources
- Daily Devotion
- Weekly information
- Research, looking for involvement opportunities (prayer, giving, going)
- Message boards are popular, as is the apologetics section. Frankly, whatever we highlight on the front page is the most popular. People like to click through to what they see at the top of the site. On the Christian site, the basic information About Us and our Publications area have also been high-ranking for popularity. And of course it can depend on what is timely. After the events of September 11, we had quite a lot of interest in reading our response to the tragedy.
- School promotion tool
- Church and Clergy ASP locators that pull real time data from DNS News and Information Pages
- Photos of our facilities interest potential groups considering Epworth for a visit or gathering.
- Online billing and pricing systems
- Online tools articles Q & A Forums Shopping cart
- Registration online, e-mail post office, prayer center
- Internet Banking, Online Mortgage Pre-qualification
- A "how to" manual that people keep referring to
- State Directory of Family Help
- That it provides basic information about our ministry.
- Our web site has been up for a couple of years, but for the most part, it is not anything we publicize frequently because we have not been too proud of it and it is rarely (if ever) updated. Only now are we in the process of developing a "real" website. We are expecting to have it go live by the end of the year. So even though we have operated almost as if we have no web presence, we do get responses from our web site--even as is. So evidently people have found some helpful information about us on our web site.
- Daily news from Christianity Today magazine; articles for women, men, teens, church leaders, singles, seniors, marrieds, parents, and kids from our 11

Christian magazines; preaching and other resources for pastors; online Bible studies, chats, and boards; daily sports news from Sports Spectrum magazine; Christian college and seminary guides; stores from top shopping providers; Music, Home School, and Jobs & Careers channels.

- E-commerce and newspaper online
- Inventory
- Sermon guides, Calendar View information about lodging and area activities
- Child sponsorship and donations
- Travel Discounts and Special Events
- Rate quotes for health insurance
- Daily update for parents to check on kids; photograph gallery of camp activities; basic info about camp
- Purchase products, obtain valued information
- Downloadable video/brochure

#### 15. Significant obstacles

- Political control of the site; content consistency and quality
- Getting people to realize the potential of the Internet over the cost to produce a site.
- None
- InspireUSA has been wonderful. No major obstacles.
- None
- Finding qualified programmers to develop web-based applications; keeping the site up to date
- Funding Organizational Buy-in
- In the first year, updating was not handled in a timely manner
- None
- Time, material content, accessibility
- Copyright infringement
- None
- Search position, resources to improve site.
- As the web site grows the navigation demand becomes great. trying to make the site easy to browse due to size
- Keeping the size of video files within reason
- It is sometimes difficult to actually find out what features our members will actually use vs. what they say they will use. Also, finding a compatible vendor has been a problem.
- The only major obstacle we faced was when our webmaster resigned a few years ago. His departure slowed us down a bit, but I am not sure we were ready to grow any faster than we did, anyway.
- None really
- Programming costs continue to rise
- Not enough time in the day to do it all.

- Following-up personally with visitors after initial online interaction.
- Site is maintained out of Atlanta; keeping homepage updated and making small changes in coordination with offsite maintenance function an occasional challenge.
- I simply do not have time to maintain the site.
- 1) Getting our recruiters to use the Web. 2) Getting our staff to see the Web as a prime communication strategy in their work. 3) And these two obstacles have made the planning and strategy behind the content for our Web site a real challenge for those in charge of it.
- With the expansion of ministry made possible by the website has come challenges such as handling the influx of e-mail. This has not so much been an actual pitfall, but the potential could be there for being overwhelmed by the increase in communications. One obstacle is that we have not been able to devote enough time to online publicity of the website. The web is a come not a go medium - people need to be able to find us if they are going to visit the web site. I have wanted to really step up our publicity in the areas of linking, search engine submission, etc. including drilling down to publicize particular areas of the site, but we have not had the resources for that to date. Another obstacle has been that, not having the resources to develop a large web department, we have been one to two people with help from other departments who are learning as we go. We are not as proficient in streaming media, Flash, etc. etc., as I would like us to be. Without the resources of more personnel, we just cannot do everything we would like to do otherwise.
- Manpower to update
- Software and server company were not compatible.
- Trouble with web site host; communication between staff - I don't always get all the information I need from everyone before posting things, and after it is posted, they want it changed. Really, an internal communication issue. Also, starting a new project without thinking it through - We had a new idea to allow parents to send emails to campers every day, but we started getting 300 emails a day and having to print those off for the kids. We also found that parents were not addressing the emails properly (they were all routed through a couple of accounts and parents thought they were emailing their kids directly so when we got one that said, "Hey Bill!" and signed "Mom and Dad" we did not know who which Bill to give it to.
- Consistency in message; we initially had too many cooks in the kitchen. We trusted each different division in organization to put up good information. Organizational clarity with how information gets online.
- Significant obstacles were of a third party nature, e-commerce banking and tech support
- None
- Lack of information gathering from others in organization to build content
- Keeping it current

## 16. Biggest mistakes or oversights

- Turned control of site over individuals who have no understanding of electronic versus print media.
- We waited too long to really sink some professional work into it.
- None
- Not updating info as fast as we should.
- Not stayed on top of needs to redesign
- Lack of funding and corporate buy-in.
- Nothing wrong, but some things were not needed. Devotional pages and such were not needed or wanted as much as information and resources.
- None
- Thinking everyone uses the latest technology.
- Web security
- Difficult to find enough time to do all the cool things we would like to do with the website. Work takes precedence.
- Third Party Contracts
- Designing a site for what we think our member want vs. what they really want and will use.
- Slow to add e-business capability like online bill payment, etc.
- Rated as above average by the head of the Marketing Department of Georgia Southern University, our site has been highly regarded. Guests often request even more photos of facilities. I would not make major changes, however, we do plan to add additional photos.
- No real consistent look and feel from various pages/applications on the site. This is b/c Senior Management was unwilling to spend freely on Web development
- Not utilized its full potential
- I should have gotten volunteers to help maintain the site.
- Educating others within the organization to understand the potentials for the site.
- Experimentation is always good, and I cannot think of much that I would say we would do differently. Though we have had chat and message boards for some time, I think we were a long time in developing a cadre of people who could serve as chat hosts and help maintain the boards, and we should have done that earlier, but that has been changing. Moishe Rosen, the founder of Jews for Jesus, recently held a training week in San Francisco to train volunteers in online evangelism through the chat rooms. So we will be doing better in that area. We did not properly anticipate reactions when we placed banner ads in the main search engines, sometimes in the Jewish sections. There was an upcry from some Jewish people who were upset, and they more or less spooked the search engines into declining to run or declining to renew our ads. But we have tried since then with more general placement with some good results.

- Because we had someone else make the page, we did not ever learn how to maintain it
- 1) Our unique web "needs" and expectations were not well inventoried before building the web structure or design. 2) General confusion: At first, which staff person (or persons) "in charge" of our web presence was not fully defined. 3) The designer hired did not interpret our ministry in a way compatible with the ministry's understanding of itself. The executive overseeing the designer had no previous design/web experience and moved the process along very, very quickly without thoroughly inventorying needs. 4) Software and server company were not compatible.
- Perhaps we would have grown a little faster if we could have invested more in development early on, but our mode of operation is crawl, walk, run in all we do. So, actually, we have been very happy with our rate of growth and development.
- We designed and built it ourselves, but did not complete the site when we first posted it. A process of trial and error
- We tried to host our own site for too long -- programming costs got too expensive to remain "leading edge."
- E-Commerce. Very hard to maintain and keep fresh - very expensive without significant rewards.
- We received alot of hits off of search engines from around the world, when we were a regional site. Probably should not have even listed our site on search engines. Also, we were a trial and error site launched just to see what would happen and if it could be done on a local level. We probably let the site run too long. We also did not factor in the cost of marketing the site outside of Internet advertising. We should have marketed through direct email advertising instead of online on other sites.
- I occasionally post incorrect information without checking it closely. I also redesigned the site in frames when that was popular, but it took too long to load that way, so I changed it back.
- We did not have a good quality control system, and we did not keep information fresh. For example, links headlines "Hot news" or "What's Happening" might be days, weeks, even months old. Another thing we tried to do is move too fast; we did not give enough time for preparation of new web site, new information, and new projects.
- That would be simply a lack of education on our part when dealing with third party e-commerce entities.
- Not updated the site enough
- We have done a lot wrong but it was all a growing process. Number one is letting information get outdated
- Went with the wrong company to design it

## 17. Biggest successes

- Minimum copy...large numbers of photos. Basic facts about size and use of each facility, etc. and answering anticipated questions in clear and concise fashion has proven to be appreciated. It also saves many questions traditionally presented to our reservationists.
- Site is relatively easy to navigate and there are some applications that actually help our customers do their jobs better (with more information)
- Establishing a large consistent following on the web.
- New web master, increased accessibility and use-ability
- Set up a web team for site management. Gave input to other individuals within the institution.
- We have presented customers with discounts for buying on the web. We have set up communication areas where our instructors could communicate with each other and with our dean.
- Updated often
- Getting the information out to our members. We also were lucky and blessed to have the opportunity to sign on with InspireUSA. It has saved us money and gave us the chance to have a website sooner than we would have been able to otherwise.
- Basic info on ministry
- 250,000 opt-in email database
- Constant updates and frequent redesign. Immediate contact resources and implementation of browser requests and comments
- In 2 years, we have almost 1000 internet banking customers.
- Made a lot of useful information freely available.
- Internet presence, acknowledged authority by government and medical professionals
- Balance cool graphics with important info without too many graphics
- Learned from our mistakes and with this newest redesign solicited more member input.
- Professional look; wealth of INFORMATION tailored to areas our customers might need; also, excellent response time to customer emails.
- The discussion forum (bulletin board) enabled alumni to participate interactively on the site and provided the motivation for people to return to the site often.
- Cross promotion with our print media.
- I think we have been creative in making our content web-ready and developing new pieces to post online. Just the availability of material on the web and the speed at which some timely content can be posted helps. Probably though the single best success has been simply having a web site, taking advantage of the latest media in evangelism. It is a commonplace in the business world that every company should have its own web site but it was slower in coming to the world of Christian ministries, many of whom by now, of course, have some truly excellent sites. I think we have done well at



gaining new contacts, both among Christians and among inquiring Jewish people. We have yet to make a full scale comparison of the results from the web vis a vis results from other venues, but in some years we have seen about 3000 new contacts coming in from the web, including places where we have no branches. As a follow-up to the previous question, I think we have done well with banner ads after our initial setbacks. Run of site and general banner ad placement has generated interest, especially when we offered something free (e.g. a free e-book; the person had to fill out a form with their information and we emailed the URL where they could go to download the e-book.) For instance, when we ran a banner ad in July of 2000 for a free e-book of our book Testimonies, we received 722 contacts worldwide who filled out an online form.

- People from other states find our page and inquire about the school when moving here
- Our site was well designed, appealing, and generated alot of traffic.
- The daily update for parents helps keep everybody in touch and actually creates an nice extended camp community. Also, our camper emails were hugely successful, even though they were hard to manage the first year.
- Getting first online store. With our newest site, we hired incredible web designers on staff, and created really good production system - getting info from departments, getting it written right, then getting it online in a quality, balanced format.
- We're now in the process of developing a new web site. We have taken considerable time discussing target age, expectations, and needs, and sketching out the web structure--before making any attempt to design. Our designer is young and very experienced in web design. He has been integral in ever phase of discussions. Most--if not all--major departments have had input in the web structure.
- Our biggest success came with the relaunch and renaming of our Web site in October 2000. We changed the name from Christianity Online to incorporate our corporate name in ChristianityToday.com, totally redesigned the site and launched with top quality servers, hosting service, and chat technology. At the same time, we dropped our AOL site and began funneling all traffic to our Web site. This significantly decreased production time and provided a better user experience to all our visitors.
- Touch people out of state very easily; they can access us anytime, they don't have to call and we don't have to send out literature, so it saves us times and money. We have directions posted on the site, too, which is a big benefit because almost all of our guests come from out of town.
- We keep it updated and fresh. People like that.
- We do it ALL in house - huge cost savings and makes it extremely profitable.
- Simple pages with fresh designs, easy to navigate, stayed the course with e-commerce
- Take Internet customers seriously
- Hiring of a web person rather than have the site be developed by volunteers
- Information form to request a video/brochure

## 18. Benefits to organization

- Provides a quality web presence. Represents the institution fairly well.
- We have seen our name recognition increase as well as our sales of resources because of the web.
- New members established from the site!
- Members can view rate information all day long.
- Multi language options.
- Making a positive difference by helping others
- More people find out about us
- Increased communication avenues.
- Demonstrates company is up to date on technical issues, which is supportive of broader image. Able to leverage messages and extend information to interested parties. Now able to process orders, power outages, bill payments, etc. through site as well.
- Because of the web site, we had an excellent turn-out for our 20th reunion.
- Incoming recruits with an increased knowledge of Wycliffe. Online giving options for our donors. Advertisement of events and happenings.
- We have been able to gain more exposure, to speak to more people over a greater geographic area, and in a number of languages. For example, we have set up a Hebrew language web site with a good amount of content, even though we probably have not generated as much Hebrew-language material in print as we have online. Also, there is a timeliness factor. We can post breaking news, prayer requests, anything, on the web in short notice. So there is a turnaround in the time it takes to communicate. One example would be a couple of years back when we attempted to place paid banner ads on some of the major search engines and some of them refused. We were able to e-mail a large segment of our newsletter readers and let them know the situation, and give them suggestions for helping us to respond. So there is a huge savings in time and postage costs as well. This greater exposure has helped us in the area of developing our contact base; recruitment of staff; and greater exposure for nonbelieving Jewish people. We can also do new types of media. We have done up a number of our testimony booklets -- which have an evangelistic focus -- as free e-books in both Adobe Acrobat or in Palm OS formats. They can be downloaded in a few seconds or so and we've been publicizing them in the search engines and e-book directories.
- Exposure
- People can access basic information about the Mission Society.
- Development of a top quality Web site has increased our corporate visibility internationally, enabling us to minister to people around the world. Soon we will launch an International channel in cooperation with Christian sites from various countries. The Internet has also been a significant source of magazine subscriptions and product sales for our company.
- Business, business, and more business. 20% of our business comes from web site. There are some in our industry, like in Charleston, SC (that cannot

advertise outside of their establishment), who get 90% of business through web site. We get a lot of inquiries. We have also noticed an advantage over big businesses because most people are not drawn to their web site; they see us online and look us over because we are unique.

- Easy for people to find us and connect
- Currently online sales pay for site costs. 20,000 portrait sittings generated from site alone.
- The calls for information have reduced by 50%. People now go to the web site to gain information, print reports, and even fill out online asp forms which electronically transmit to conference office
- A significant increase in weddings and special events related to weddings has been credited to the site. We believe groups coming for the first time have made their decision to use Epworth after viewing our facilities.
- Increased sales, better perception of our organization (forward thinking)
- Increased Sales Broader Exposure New name acquisition Online donations
- People have made vital connections with our church staff and have attended due to info gained from site; also sign-ups are easier
- Convenience to our customers.
- The site is the number 2 source of new child sponsors and number 1 source of leads for volunteers. It also raises cash. Many people mention that they saw our site before contacting us for donations, jobs, etc.
- We are very big in both physical size (14,000 acres) and variety of activities. This vehicle gives our guests a way to see all of us - something a mere brochure could never do.
- We did get some clients from the web site, although not enough to pay for the cost of the site.
- Enrollment is already 180% of what was last year, which we attribute primarily to the web site. We also use the web site as a subsidiary communication piece, but it also serves as a communication hub. Our communications are vastly improved - we can quickly and efficiently post information available to a lot of people. We get a lot of visitors coming from search engines, so registering with them was a good thing.
- We earn about \$3,000 per month in income from site. We also get a lot of emails requesting targeted information; our contact system seems to be clear enough that people are asking the right person the right questions. We have also benefited from adding a place to sign up for e-publications (i.e., implemented the use of online forms)
- Allowing membership access to educational information regarding ministry broadens the scope of our reach.
- Increased sales and customer contact
- News, sermons, events, all online so people can have instant access to what is going on.
- N/A

## 19. Shifts in strategy

- Shift to team management of the site. Need to develop a coherent institution-wide marketing plan - including the web site.
- We would like to have more of a marketing presence on line by presenting all of our products on-line in an easy to navigate catalog format
- Becoming a major emphasis in all plans organizationally.
- Registration online...possible shift to accepting credit cards online
- Updating our Internet Banking system - real time.
- More material in other languages.
- Web expansion
- Pretty much the same
- It has changed from giving basic info in a static way to being a means to exchanging information between us and our members.
- As previously mentioned, the addition in 2001 of e-Bill and online customer service options was a major shift.
- I am trying to decide whether to continue the web site given my time limitations. Its initial purpose has been served.
- As the site has gotten bigger and more difficult to maintain, we are shifting to find better strategies for involving other departments in providing content for the site. We are also moving to more database-driven pages.
- The biggest has been breaking out our web site into two sites, one for Jewish seekers and one for Christians. We did that in March of 2001. It is too early to tell if this is ultimately a good thing or not. But we did find that speaking simultaneously to two audiences was not allowing us to speak fully to either. In Jewish evangelism, there are good reasons for keeping the sites together, contrary to what some might think. One comment we often hear from some in the Jewish community is that we are not being up front, not saying what we really believe, in order to fool or lure Jewish people into faith in Jesus. So we have always liked to keep up front what we say to Christians as much as possible. But the time came when we thought we would try to break out the sites. That has ended up being more work for us, but so far it has been manageable.
- Need to learn to maintain and re-format the page
- We hope to have our new site go live by the end of this year; then revamp it (according to feedback) and go to "phase II" development in six months.
- We invested \$35,000 in the total makeover of the site.
- Still in formation
- Upcoming - We will be adding online services to our site.
- Will add continuing event calendar and ability to receive financial contributions online.
- E-commerce added last year, email broadcasting/communicating will become significant in 2002.

- We are becoming more dependent on ASP We plan for churches to do all reports and forms on the web site. This will cut the cost of mailing and paper duplication costs. Also focusing on a daily news service.
- None.
- We are in the midst of developing several new resource sites for church leaders. We have also experienced great success with e-newsletters and will be launching several more in the coming months.
- None really.
- We used to look at it as separate from the marketing mix and now we're integrating it into the overall mix.
- None.
- We closed the site down after two years. Now I use our corporate site for all my Internet activities.
- I recently added forms so people could fill out information and submit it online through the web site. We are also beginning construction on our girls camp, so I will use the digital camera to take pictures for the web site so people can keep up with what is happening.
- We are launching an urban church initiative for innovative churches doing urban ministry. Our web site will allow an inexpensive and fresh way for ministries to post info about selves and share that information with others. Basically, we are using the Internet to cultivate a vital online network.
- Opening the door to multi-media web use
- None
- We are planning on putting video sermons on-line
- Online purchasing soon to be available

## 20. Preferences

<b>Preferences</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Summary	27	82%
Aggregate	13	39%
Personal	14	42%
IUSA	3	9%

## APPENDIX M

### PRIMARY SURVEY

#### Calculations Summarizing Quantitative Survey Responses

These calculations detail how I derived totals and estimates for certain questions and statements. Scaled answers were averaged for each range and then multiplied by the number of responses in that range, then the totals were added up to arrive at the estimate.

7. Length of time online

$$(2001 - 1993) \times 1 = 8 \times 1 = 8 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 1994) \times 3 = 7 \times 3 = 21 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 1995) \times 5 = 6 \times 5 = 30 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 1996) \times 8 = 5 \times 8 = 40 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 1997) \times 3 = 4 \times 3 = 12 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 1998) \times 7 = 3 \times 7 = 21 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 1999) \times 4 = 2 \times 4 = 8 \text{ years}$$

$$(2001 - 2000) \times 2 = 1 \times 2 = \underline{2 \text{ years}}$$

$$\text{Total} = 142 \text{ years}$$

8. Page views per month

$$(100/2) \times 3 = 50 \times 3 = 150$$

$$[(1000 - 100)/2 + 100] \times 4 = 550 \times 4 = 2,200$$

$$[(10,000 - 1,000)/2 + 1000] \times 10 = 5,500 \times 10 = 55,000$$

$$[(50,000 - 10,000)/2 + 10,000] \times 5 = 30,000 \times 5 = 150,000$$

$$[(100,000 - 50,000)/2 + 50,000] \times 3 = 75,000 \times 3 = 225,000$$

$$[(1,000,000 - 100,000)/2 + 100,000] \times 6 = 550,000 \times 6 = 3.3 \text{ million}$$

$$[(5,000,000 - 1,000,000)/2 + 1,000,000] \times 1 = 3,000,000 \times 1 = 3 \text{ million}$$

$$5 \text{ million} \times 1 = \underline{5 \text{ million}}$$

$$\text{Total} = 11,732,350, \text{ or } 12 \text{ million}$$

9. Unique visitors per month

$$(100/2) \times 7 = 50 \times 7 = 350$$

$$[(500 - 250)/2 + 250] \times 2 = 375 \times 2 = 750$$

$$[1000 - 500)/2 + 500] \times 6 = 750 \times 6 = 4,500$$

$$[5000 - 1000)/2 + 1000] \times 6 = 3,000 \times 6 = 18,000$$

$$[(10,000 - 5,000)/2 + 5,000] \times 2 = 7,500 \times 2 = 15,000$$

$$[(25,000 - 10,000)/2 + 10,000] \times 4 = 17,500 \times 4 = 70,000$$

$$[(50,000 - 25,000)/2 + 25,000] \times 2 = 37,500 \times 2 = 75,000$$

$$[(100,000 - 50,000)/2 + 50,000] \times 1 = 75,000 \times 1 = 75,000$$

$$[(1,000,000 - 100,000)/2 + 100,000] \times 2 = 550,000 \times 2 = 1.1 \text{ million}$$

$$1 \text{ million} \times 1 = \underline{1 \text{ million}}$$

$$\text{Total} = 2,358,600, \text{ or } 2.4 \text{ million}$$

10. Number of web pages

$$(5/2) \times 2 = 2.5 \times 2 = 5$$

$$[(25 - 5)/2 + 5] \times 12 = 15 \times 12 = 180$$

$$[(50 - 25)/2 + 25] \times 1 = 37.5 \times 1 = 38$$

$$[(100 - 50)/2 + 50] \times 7 = 75 \times 7 = 525$$

$$[(500 - 100)/2 + 100] \times 4 = 300 \times 4 = 1200$$

$$[(1000 - 500)/2 + 500] \times 3 = 750 \times 3 = 2,250$$

$$[(5000 - 1000)/2 + 1000] \times 3 = 3000 \times 3 = 9,000$$

$$10,000 \times 1 = \underline{10,000}$$

$$\text{Total} = 23,198, \text{ or } 23,000$$

11. Money invested

$$(1000/2) \times 4 = 500 \times 4 = 2,000$$

$$[(10,000 - 1,000)/2 + 1000] \times 13 = 5,500 \times 13 = 71,500$$

$$[(50,000 - 10,000)/2 + 10,000] \times 7 = 30,000 \times 7 = 210,000$$

$$[(100,000 - 50,000)/2 + 50,000] \times 2 = 75,000 \times 2 = 150,000$$

$$[(1,000,000 - 100,000)/2 + 100,000] \times 5 = 550,000 \times 5 = 2.75 \text{ million}$$

$$[(10 \text{ million} - 1 \text{ million})/2 + 1 \text{ million}] \times 2 = 5.5 \text{ million} \times 2 = \underline{11 \text{ million}}$$

$$\text{Total} = \$14,183,500,$$

*or 14 million*

12. Number of times redesigned

$$\text{Never} = 0 \times 4 = 0$$

$$\text{Once} = 1 \times 3 = 3$$

$$\text{Twice} = 2 \times 9 = 18$$

$$\text{Three} = 3 \times 12 = 36$$

$$\text{Four} = 4 \times 4 = 16$$

$$\text{Five} = 5 \times 1 = \underline{5}$$

$$\text{Total} = 78$$

Other calculations:

Web page views per visitor per month: 12 million page views / 2.4 unique visitors = 5

U.S. population involved: 2.4 million Internet audience / 275 million = 1%

12 million non-Internet audience / 275 million = 4%

Redesign Frequency: (142 years online) / (78 total redesigns) = 1.82 yrs ( 20 mo.)

Preface - Cost Calculation:

- *Service* - Telephone (\$40/mo), Cell phone (\$61/mo), Cable (\$15/mo), Internet (\$20/mo), Newspaper (\$18/mo), Magazines (\$10/mo), Electricity (\$20/mo) = \$184.
- *Equipment* - Computer (\$50/mo), Phone (\$5/mo), Cell phone (\$5/mo), TV (\$5/mo), VCR (\$2), CD's/Tape Players (\$2/mo), Radios (\$3/mo) = \$72
- **Total** = \$256/month

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