

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN EFFECTIVE INTERNET MINISTRY STRATEGY
FOR CHURCH EVANGELISM THROUGH
A CASE STUDY OF THE SARANG COMMUNITY CHURCH

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
In partial fulfillment of the requirement
For the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

AN EFFECTIVE INTERNET MINISTRY STRATEGY FOR CHURCH EVANGELISM THROUGH A CASE STUDY OF THE SARANG COMMUNITY CHURCH

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Liberty Theological Seminary, 2010

Mentor: Dr. Charlie Davidson

The purposes of this dissertation are to shed light on the essence of the church internet ministry from the biblical and ministerial angles and to suggest effective strategies for churches launching an internet ministry. In the thesis, I conducted a literary review of online ministry and a case study of the Sarang community church. Basic Web analysis, an interview, and a survey were performed to analyze Sarang's case and to draw lessons from it. I sincerely hope my suggestions on internet strategies can become a compass that points churches to the right direction as they navigate through the wave of the internet era.

Abstract Length: 99 words

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D. S. L.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the internet came to dominate every sector of people's lives in the twenty-first century, people have come to share a homogeneous lifestyle in what used to be a heterogeneous society. The Internet has brought different communities and groups together on the Web, overcoming time, space, and cultural barriers. Internet technologies have shaped how we live; we borrow books in electronic format from a library physically situated on the opposite side of the earth and obtain degrees from universities located in other countries. Demands on e-business, followed by skyrocketing supplies in online markets, are growing more than ever. Moreover, the online open markets, e-banking, online shopping, and online consulting are thriving.

Churches are not an exception in this trend. Numerous churches have already expanded their territories online. Some of the churches that took the initiative to expand in this new business field at the early stage are now enjoying the rewards of their quick response to the new trend.

Background and Necessity of the Study

Background of the Study

The success stories of many online churches can be easily found all over the world. The Christ the King Community church in northern Seattle, Washington is one of the successful cases. The Christ the King Community church initiated its online ministry by offering various services on its Web site and establishing Christ the King University (CTKU). CTKU provides online multimedia contents that guide people's spiritual growth and outreach projects. As a result, this church has grown into one of the renowned global churches in less than a decade. The church's worshipping venues are spread throughout different continents and countries. Church venues are found in the United States, Panama, Kenya, and India. There are also multiple locations in Oregon, Colorado, Hawaii, and Washington.¹

The National Community Church in Washington D.C. is one of the most successful churches in North America. The church's pastor Mark Batterson wrote in his book that 12,771 people visited his church monthly in 2006 and that most of them entered the online church door through their iPods regardless of time and space restraints.

Mars Driscoll from the Mars Hill church has a similar story. Each week, five thousand people listen to his sermon, even more people attend his online service, and about twenty-three thousand people subscribe to the Mars Hill podcast. Considering the church's hostile geographical location, that is, it is built in a region where the proportion of non-Christians is the highest in North America, Mars Hill's stunning growth in an unfriendly environment speaks volumes about the effectiveness of internet ministry.

The Life Church in Edmund, Oklahoma, is another church that has succeeded in

¹ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal books, 2007), 147-148.

expanding its territory online through interactive internet broadcasting. The church's My Secret T.V. (www.mysecret.tv) is known as one of the finest internet systems and the very first of its kind. The church currently has nine different worshipping places spread all over Arizona, Tennessee, and Texas.²

South Korea rose from poverty and from the rubble of the Korean War. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, South Koreans were living below the poverty line. In the 1960s, the Korean government's ambitious five- and ten-year economic development plans kicked off. An unprecedented economic growth followed these national-scale economic plans combined with the Koreans' strong work ethics and diligence. South Korea's economic size expanded at an average of 8 percent per year. Its per capita annual income grew from US\$87 in 1962, US\$4,830 in 1989 to US\$19,231 in 2008 (The World Bank data). In 2009, the Global Competitiveness Report issued by the International Institute for Management Development ranked South Korea twenty-seventh in the world for competitiveness.

Among the many contributing factors to Korea's economic success, such as the government's strategic economic plan, huge trade surplus, Koreans' strong work ethics, and passion for education, Koreans' readiness and promptness for the new information technology are the most valuable elements. The statistics released by the Korea Internet and Security Agency, a research institute of the Korean government, in 2009 is presented as follows.

² Ibid, 155-159.

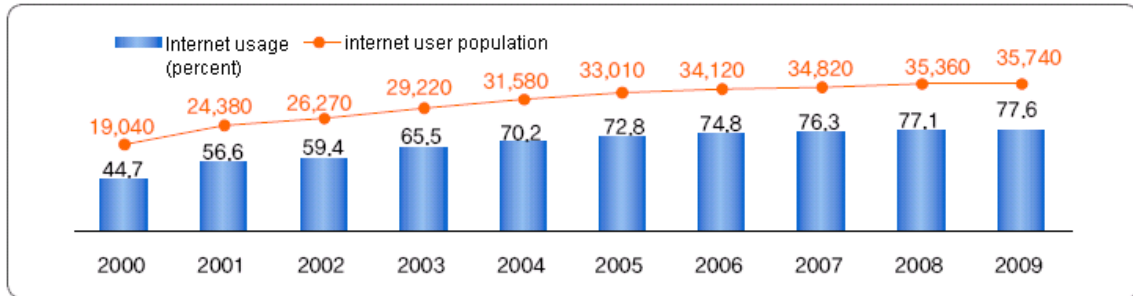


Fig. 1. Internet users' population and usage frequency.

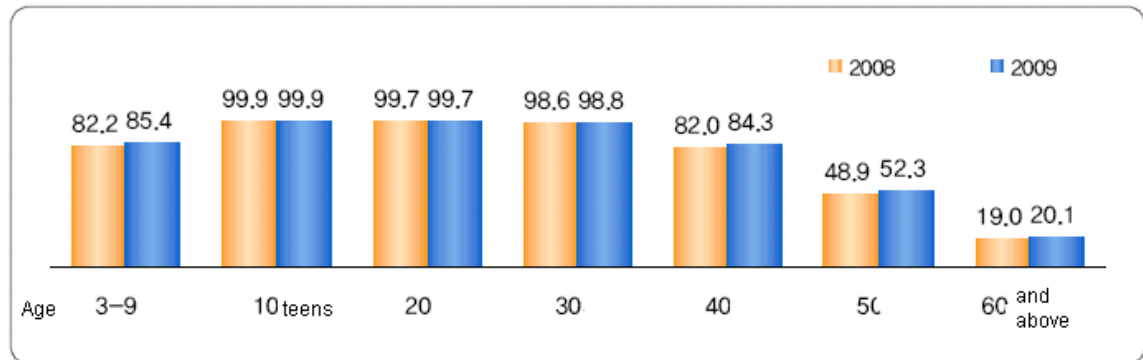


Fig.2. Internet usage by age.

According to a study on internet user population, about nineteen million forty thousand people (44.7 percent of South Koreans) were found to be internet users in 2000. The number of internet users has increased at an average of 3.07 percent each year in last decade. In 2009, the internet population hit thirty-five million seven hundred forty thousand (77.6 percent of South Koreans). The latest research reveals nearly thirty-six million people (78 percent of the Korean population aged three to sixty) have become new internet users. However, internet usage frequency differs between ages. Fig. 2 shows a huge discrepancy between the relatively young generation (people aged forty and below) and the senior group (people aged over fifty) in the frequency of internet usage.

Necessity of the Study

One of the most striking facts presented by the tables is the huge difference in religious tendencies between the age groups. Whereas the young and tech-savvy people tend to be less religious, people aged fifty and above have a very strong tendency to be religious. According to a national census entitled “A religious population trend in past two decades” conducted by the Korean government every decade, 46.68 percent of Koreans have no religion at all. Among these atheists, 81 percent comprises young people aged less than forty. The statistics released by the Korea National Statistics Office in 2005 is presented as follows.

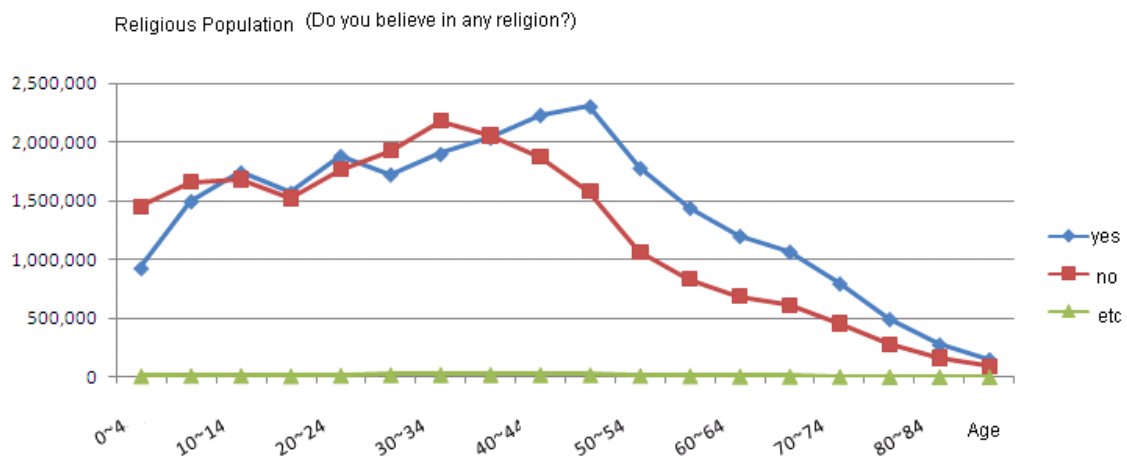


Fig. 3. Religious population by age group.

The research also shows a gradual slowdown of Christianity in Korea. The Christian population that numbered 6.48 million in 1985 (16.1 percent of Koreans) began to show signs of sluggishness in 2005. In 2005, although the sheer number of Christians increased to 8.61 million, the percentage of Christians in the country dipped by 1.6 percent, decreasing to 14.5 percent. This was a huge disappointment to Korean Christianity, which once caught the world’s attention by recording an unprecedented growth in Christian population. Annually, 0.2 million new members were added to

churches back in the 1960s and 1970s.

Korean churches are blaming this setback on Korea's failing birth rates and economic slowdown, and they are trying to find fault with some churches that are believed to have failed in taking initiatives in the information technology era. A recommended response to this slowdown in Korean Christianity is taking on this new challenge using a new ministry: an internet ministry for the internet era. Churches should not pursue anymore the already-converted Christians and church attendees but rather the seventeen million non-Christians in the Web who are young, atheists, and active internet users.

Statement of the Problem

In July 2009, *Ministry and Theology*, one of Korea's most prestigious Christian monthly publications, conducted a mass survey on "The Outlook of Korean Churches in 10 years" as a special coverage of the magazine's twentieth anniversary. Among the 972 respondents were pastors, theology professors, and seminary school students. The major questions given to the respondents were "what do you think about the various issues in Korean Christianity" and "how do you see the future of Korean churches." A surprising result was revealed: most people answered that Korean churches' growth rate would continue to decline. Fig. 4 shows how the people saw "Growth of Korean Christianity in 10 years."

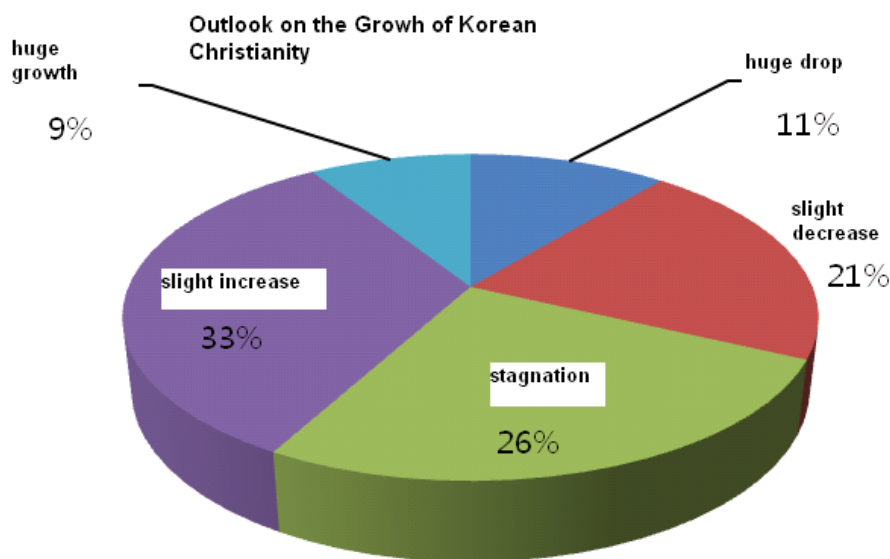


Fig.4. Growth of Korean Christianity after 10 years.³

Majority of the respondents (58 percent) replied that Korean churches would mark a negative growth. They checked the blanks on “below zero (growth rate)” and “stagnation” as presented in the pie chart above. Only 42 percent answered that Korean churches would grow. However, even these people agreed that there would not be a major quantitative growth in Korean Christianity in the next decade.

The subsequent question asked was “Which specific church can represent Korean churches in general after 10 years?” The result released by *Ministry and Theology* in 2009 on its Web site is shown as follows.

³Ministry and Theology, “Which specific church can represent Korean churches in general after 10 years?” available from http://www.duranno.com/moksin/detail.asp?CTS_YER=2009&CTS_MON=7&CTS_ID=75337&CTS_CTG_COD=9; Internet; accessed 10 September 2009.

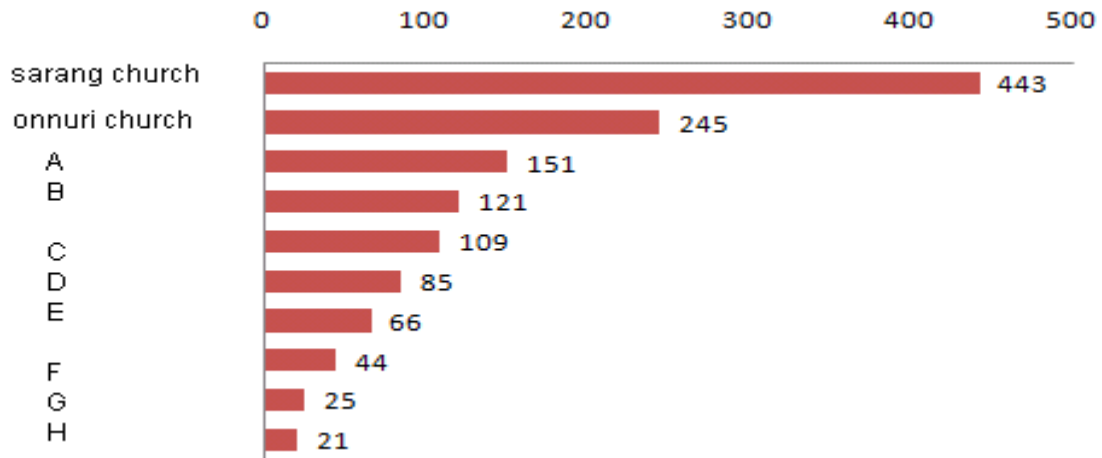


Fig. 5. Church representing Korean churches in general in the next decade.

In Fig. 5, majority of the respondents selected the Sarang community church as the country's most representative church. This outcome shows the high credibility people have on the Sarang church. Korean Christians approved of Sarang's capability and recognized it as the most dependable church in the coming decade, which represents a challenging time for Christianity.

The last question asked was "why do you have this answer?" In other words, why did the Korean Christians acknowledge the Sarang community church as the church worthy to represent Korean Christianity and believed it as the one that would take the initiative in the next decade.

Statement of Purpose

The Sarang community church is a South Korean church that achieved a remarkable growth in the 1980s through a strong discipleship training program. It was

founded in July 1987 by Pastor Ok, Han-hum along with his nine associates. It quickly emerged as one of the major churches due to the pastor's incredible sermons, effective discipleship training system, and huge evangelism events the church hosted. The church also led a Korean version of the Great Awakening movement.⁴

Only two years after its foundation, the church members increased to nearly 500. Sarang's phenomenal growth continued throughout the next two decades. Sarang's attendance number topped 10,562 people in 1992, and it reached forty-five thousand by 2009. Thus, Sarang became one of the mini denomination-sized mega-churches in Korea.

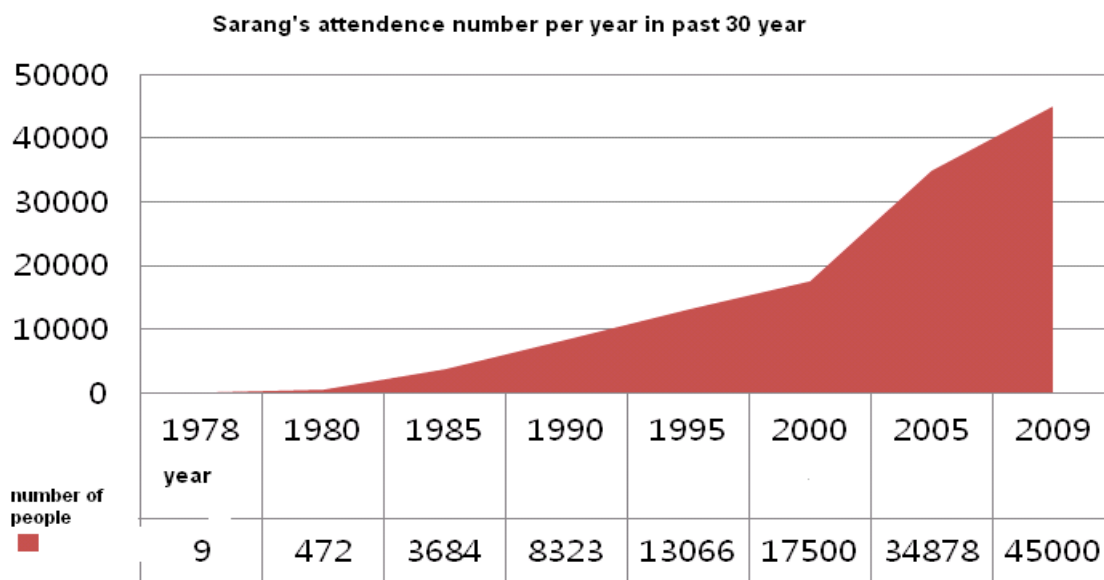


Fig. 6. Attendance of Sarang church by year ⁵.

What distinguishes Sarang from the other twenty huge churches in Korea is its internet ministry. Whereas other churches struggled with their negative growth rates,

⁴ Yong gyu Park, *Called to Awaken the Korean Church*.(Seoul, South Korea: LIFE BOOK, 1998) 197-198.

⁵ Ibid., 191.

Sarang church already had its full-functioning homepage in 1997.

In November 2000, Sarang church formed its Digital Ministry division, the first of its kind in Korea. In 2001, it opened its live internet broadcasting system. Four years later in 2005, it founded Korea's first and one of the best Christian portal sites. Sarang's portal site has paved the way for other Christian networks in Korea. Whereas Sarang had already moved on planning new ministries for the upcoming era, other churches were preoccupied conducting damage control caused by their lack of preparation and delayed responses to the change. These churches ended up losing a huge proportion of church attendance.

In the transitional period from "the industrial era" to "the information-based society," Sarang boldly shifted its ministry paradigm. Therefore, it was able to take initiatives in the new ministry, and this foresight had made Sarang the number one representative church in Korean Christianity.

The Sarang community church's current senior pastor Oh Jung-hyun is deeply interested and involved in the internet ministry. Pastor Oh, who has just successfully finished his ministry in Los Angeles, California, is a pioneer in the internet ministry field, himself being the author of the book "Internet Ministry" published in 2000. His extraordinary dedication and commitment to internet ministry were the major driving forces of Sarang's growth. Fig. 7 shows the fruits of his labor,⁶ as extracted from the Sarang church's homepage.

⁶ Sarang Community Church, "Internet Service," available from [http://tv.sarang.org/frameindex.asp?url_flag=/menu04/m4_live.asp;Internet](http://tv.sarang.org/frameindex.asp?url_flag=/menu04/m4_live.asp;Internet;); accessed 10 January 2010

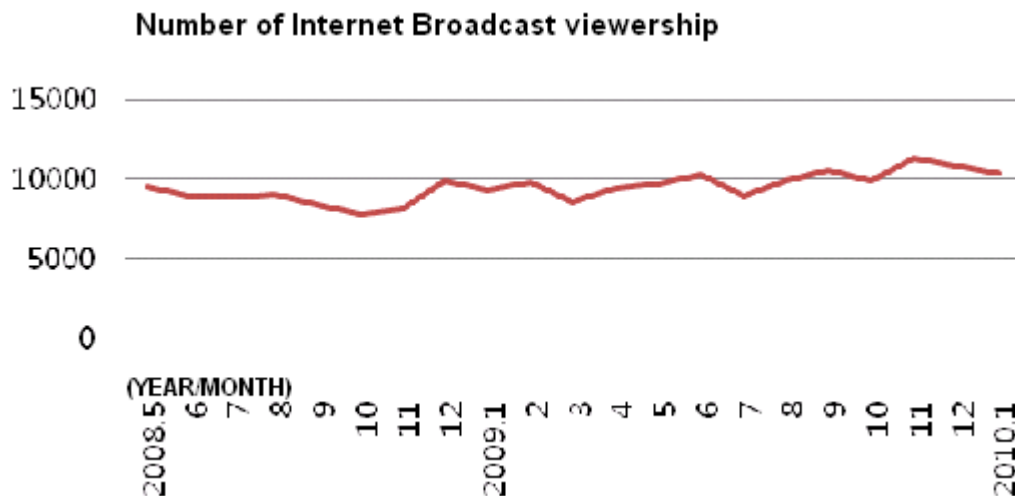


Fig. 7. Number of live internet broadcasting viewers (Sunday service)

The live internet broadcasting viewers refers to people who watch Sarang's Sunday service live online. The viewers numbered 9,511 in May 2008 but soon spiked to 10,367 audiences by January 2010. This number of online attendance amounts to a quarter of Sarang's total attendance. Within one and a half years, the numbers of internet live attendance increased by 11 percent. About ten thousand people would have missed Sunday service had it not been for Sarang's internet ministry.

The new era demands a fresh approach from churches. However, Korean churches were negligent in addressing the new requirements, which led to a crisis for Christianity in Korea. Korean churches' inflexibility in ministry held them back from embracing new changes and pursuing the new generation.

In this thesis, I will examine the various forms of internet ministry in the hope of preventing Korean churches from further losing touch with the Korean public. Each internet ministry model is optimized under a specific church condition. The following is a detailed statement of the four major purposes of the thesis:

- ① To provide greater general understanding of the internet ministry and define what it is and how it is done
- ② To approach this new internet ministry from biblical and theological angles
- ③ To analyze and assess the Sarang community church's internet ministry
- ④ Based on the three previous purposes, to recommend applicable strategies for Korean churches to develop an internet ministry successfully

Statement of Limitations

The limitation of this study originates from the scarcity of previous studies on the subject. The Web is a relatively new ministry field, and what the internet ministry offers is a unique service different from traditional offline services. I faced two major challenges in conducting this study.

First is the structural challenge. Internet ministry has a very short history; thus, there were only a handful of sample cases, especially in Korea. I felt compelled to narrow down the church cases to a few representative cases. Inevitably, some small or foreign churches conducting excellent internet ministry were left out from the research.

The second is that because I concentrated on determining easily applicable strategies for the churches, readers expecting purely theological and scholarly approaches to the subject might be disappointed.

Although I chose a practical angle that guides struggling churches to survive in the information technology era, I did not ignore the urgent need to define this new

ministry. Moreover, in the first part of the study, I approached the subject from an academic angle. Unfortunately, I had to avoid a time-consuming theological dispute on internet ministry, which left me greatly unsatisfied.

Statement of Methodology

My thesis on internet ministry undergoes the following steps.

A thorough research on every facet of internet ministry is discussed on the first part of the thesis. This research provides the answers to the crucial question of “what is internet ministry and how is it conducted?” Written documents (i.e., books, periodicals, news articles, and dissertations), visual and audio data (i.e., images, audio and video files, and electronic books), government statistics, and internet data are integrated at this stage.

Subsequently, a case study on Korean churches’ internet ministry is presented. The sample case churches are actively involved in internet ministry but still carry common characteristic with other Korean churches in general. Three sample churches selected for the thesis are the Sarang community church, the Onnuri church, and the Samil church. The study mainly focuses on the case of the Sarang church, but other church cases are also discussed for comparison with the Sarang case.

To dissect the Sarang church’s internet ministry, I intend to apply four evaluation methods most widely used in Web analysis: traffic analysis, visitor analysis, loyalty analysis, and channel analysis. An in-depth interview with a director of the Sarang church’s internet ministry team and a survey on the team members are conducted to assist the assessment of the Sarang church’s ministry. In the interview, questions about the

church's homepage, the broadcasting operation and management, and additional online programs are asked.

I then analyze and evaluate the internet ministry of the three churches including that of Sarang. This is a preparatory step toward setting up pragmatic strategies and plans for Korean churches' internet ministry. In the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis, the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities of the Sarang church's internet ministry are clarified. A brief advice for churches (including Sarang) is given accordingly. The main purpose of the study is to urge churches to take the initiative in this internet era by applying a set of pragmatic and valid strategies for internet ministry.

The specific outline of the thesis is as follows.

In chapter one, I will explain the necessity of the internet ministry in our time and the purpose of my research.

In chapter two, I will introduce the biblical and theological background of the internet ministry.

In chapter three, I will present more investigations and technical research on internet ministry to answer the questions "what is the internet ministry" and "by and for whom is it conducted?"

In chapter four, I will provide a general but detailed research on the Sarang community church.

In chapter five, I will analyze and evaluate the Sarang church's internet ministry. This part includes the SWOT method and the analyses on the interview and survey.

In chapter six, I will draw effective internet strategies from the data and the results of several analyses from previous chapters. These strategies will focus on helping various churches in different sizes to become better equipped for the future.

In chapter seven, I will conclude the research by presenting a specific internet evangelism model to Korean churches.

Definition of terminologies

The internet ministry is a new ministry field that should be identified first before discussing it further.

1. Digital Ministry

A digital ministry is a series of church ministries providing various digital multimedia contents through wire, wireless, and satellite service to anyone anywhere online.

2. Cyber Evangelism

Cyber evangelism is a generic term for evangelical projects done online at the local and international levels. Cyber evangelism is unlimited by physical barriers, and it enables churches to reach various age groups from different social backgrounds. It is most commonly used to reach young groups.

Jesus said in the Great Commission that his witnesses will spread the Good news not only to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, but “even to the remotest part of the earth.” This “remotest part of the earth” gives a biblical background to evangelizing in cyber space, the last frontier of Christianity.

3. Ministry Network

A strong and very close cooperation of churches is crucial in fulfilling their evangelical mission. Churches need to form a massive and powerful Christian network. The network will offer a deep human resource pool unrestrained by Christian sects. The Christian network will bring together competent Christians who can operate and manage various projects at the local and international levels in online and offline venues.

4. Cyber culture ⁷

Cyber culture is the cultural characteristics and practices emerging from a frequent computer usage rate and from people's active online networking. This culture exists and thrives exclusively in the absence of direct physical human contact, which is the exact opposite of how other cultures are formed.

Cyber culture has three distinguishing characteristics: openness (in sharing information), anonymity, and resistance. New online terms, such as online ethics and internet morals, are created to define the negative effect of the internet culture.

5. Contents generation (C-generation)

According to Doo san encyclopedia, one of most credible encyclopedias in Korea, C-generation refers to the young generation familiar with information in digitalized formats and feels comfortable in obtaining knowledge through the Web. After gathering information, this generation shares it with others, recreates it into its own personalized content, and casually redistributes it on the Web. Thus, the C-generation is actively involved in and contributes to making the Web a major player. Young people are not passive consumers of information but are rather providers of new contents.

⁷ Wikipedia, "Cyber culture," available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyberculture;Internet>; accessed 23 February 2010

Review of the Literature

Orthodox Christians usually have a rigid and negative preconception of the internet, especially doubts about the morality of the Internet. However, as the Internet began to permeate our lives, nearly dominating everyday activities, churches have started noticing the importance of the Internet. Consequently, internet ministry is currently thriving in some countries.

Several books have reflected the worries of traditional churches over the internet ministry. Examples of such books are *Cyber Ministry, Mission Impossible?* Written by Ha Yong-Jo and published by Light and Salt in 2000 and *Internet in Dilemma* authored by Hong Yeon-Seon published by Good Information in 2002.

The way people view internet ministry has shifted optimistically in recent years as evidenced by the article title “The User-friendly Movement on the Internet” written by Hwang In-Don published in the periodical *Church and Theology* in the fall of 2006. Another example is *the 21st-century Evangelism and teaching through the Internet*, a book authored by Kim Sang-Chul published in 2006 by Nachimban. This great deal of attention to cyber evangelism indicates that the importance of internet ministry has increased. The two major books I referred to in this thesis are *11 Innovations in the Local Church* and *Internet Ministry*.

The *11 Innovations in the Local Church* was authored by Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird and was published in 2007 by Regal Books. This book is exceptionally inspiring; it contains resourceful information on eleven kinds of

innovations that American churches have recently tried. In chapter 7, Cyber-enhanced Church, the writer introduced various types of online churches: from a church with a multi-functioning homepage, a church conducting Bible studies and discipleship training through the Internet, to churches making great progress by podcasting and blogging. Moreover, this book did not overlook the huge potential of purely online churches and more room for the improvement of a radically innovative church model.

Internet Ministry was written by Oh Jung-Hyun and published by Gyujang Publishers in 2000. The author is the very same pastor whose church I am researching, the Sarang community church. Leveling the Sarang church's reputation in the internet ministry field, this book is a user-friendly guide to internet ministry. It provides custom-tailored strategies for each different stage of the internet ministry and deals with the most fundamental values, such as how to inspire spiritual reformation online and how to form a real Christian community in virtual space.

A unique book that deals with digital theology is *Cyber Theology & Digital Church* written by Sim Young-Bo and published by KSI in 2008. In this book, the author passionately weaves various digital phenomena under theology. Another recognizable document on internet ministry is *A Study on Digital Work on Cyberspace for Church Mission*, a Th. M. thesis dissertation paper from the Suwon Catholic University published in 2002. The writer of the thesis, Baek Yun-Hyun, focused on applying the correct theological approach to cyberspace and gave suggestions to churches on utilizing this new space.

The other articles quoted in my research are "The Internet Evangelism that the Church can apply" (no English version published) and "An Introduction to Cyberspace

Churches.” The former is an article written by Kim Tae-Han and was published in the monthly magazine *Ministry and Theology* in February 2009. In the article, Kim asserts that each church should come up with its own creative plan to reach out to a specific group of audience waiting to hear the Gospel. In the article “An Introduction to Cyberspace Churches” published in the monthly *Church and Theology* in 2006, the writer Hwang, In-Don gives a general introduction to the many Christian portal sites and internet search engines inside and outside Korea.

The last document from which I obtained valuable information for this thesis is the *Digital Ministry Strategies and its Case Studies* (no English version published), a comprehensive study on Sarang’s 12 years of internet ministry and its accrued cyber experience. This study was presented in a seminar in 2003 that was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Sarang church. The writer, Kim Kil-Su, shares a full disclosure on Sarang’s digital department’s know-how and gives sincere advice on how to establish and develop a digital ministry in Korea.

CHAPTER II
THE BIBLICAL/THEOLOGICAL BASIS

Understanding the internet ministry

Internet ministry is another branch of church ministry.

Church ministry is an unending communication between Christians designed to fill each other's spiritual needs in the form of church services.¹ It is also a set of training systems assisting a believer's conversion to a truly devoted Disciple of Christ and a tool assisting Christians in freeing themselves from sin and secular burdens. Church ministry helps Christians to turn from distractions and allows them to be a part of the Lord's church.

Church members have various needs that arise from different situations and circumstances. Church members have different ages, and they came from different social backgrounds. Churches have to deal with many various issues. The education ministry, urban ministry, rural ministry, youth ministry, children's ministry, senior ministry, and ministry for the disabled, addicted, and foreign workers are some examples showing the

¹ Elmer Towns, *Evangelism and Church Growth*, trans., Eung Pyou-Hong (Seoul, South Korea: Church Growth Institute, 1998), 436.

tremendous ministerial effort made by churches.

Internet ministry is one of the efforts of the church that does not exist independently apart from the church ministry. Aside from the multimedia contents and the interactive communication, the most distinguishing characteristic of an internet ministry is that it can handle several ministries simultaneously. Unlike other ministries that often focus on one specific group or goal, internet ministry can manage five of the most essential tasks of a church ministry²: evangelism, education, worship, fellowship, and service, in an interconnected and simultaneous way.

Internet ministry is different from an internet church.

Internet churches that exist exclusively online should be understood separately from internet ministry. Although many people confuse an online church with an offline church's homepage, an online church is more than a Web page. It is a separate church service located in the Web and operates independently by providing its own Gospel contents, sermons, communion, and other services. In an online church, people can be baptized and form an online community in a space that "consists only of patterned ones and zeros traveling thousands of miles through copper wires and fiber optic filament."³

Internet ministry is different from an online church due to its connection to the offline church. Internet ministry is bolstered and supported by the offline church. The

² Millard J. Erickson, *The Doctrine of Church*, trans., Eun Soo-Lee (Seoul, South Korea: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 1992), 61.

³ Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the local Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal books, 2007), 153.

contents it offers are often video and audio files of church services transmitted in offline venues. The internet ministry's online community activities, such as the "e-prayer request" or "e-counseling" are continued and amplified by the church community offline. The internet ministry cannot stand by itself; it is designed to support the offline church ministry and vice versa.

Biblical Basis

Purpose of the ministry (Colossians 1: 16-17)

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. [Colossians 1:16-17 (NASB)]

According to the Chokmah Commentary, this verse means that everything in the world can be given a true "meaning" of its existence through God, in him and by him. The "everything" from the clause "every creation comes from him and exists for him and stand towards him" (John 1:3, Hebrew 1:2) refers to both visible and invisible substances in heaven and the earth. The "everything" can be understood as literally everything in the whole universe, including the universe itself, both tangible and intangible materials, and even something called the immaterial.⁴

The world of the Internet is a virtual space composed of visible and intangible

⁴ Norman L. Geisler, *Colossians*, trans., Jung, Min-Young, (Seoul, Korea: Duranno,1987), (indicate page number here).

substances and a place formed by a circulation of innumerable data. This specific place that can only exist on technological grounds can surely be classified under “everything.” Hence, this internet space essentially comes from Jesus Christ, is created by him (directly or indirectly), and most importantly should be used for his glory. The ultimate goal of the universe is to show the glory of God. It is every Christian’s duty to praise the Lord, Creator of everything, using every means within our reach.

Christians should be aware of the fact that the Internet is no exception to this rule. They most certainly have to utilize this space as mentioned in the Scripture: “For from him and through him and to him are all things, To him be the glory forever. Amen.”
[Rome 11:36 (NASB)]

The ministry field (Acts1:8)

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. [Acts 1: 8 (NASB)]

In this verse, Jesus defines the perimeter of the ministry, starting from Jerusalem, all of Judea, to the remotest part of the earth. According to F.F. Bruce, these geographical landmarks work as a table of contents of the Acts. According to Chokmah Commentary, all the locations mentioned in the verse exhibit the Gospel’s itinerary, departing from Jerusalem (verses 1–7), moving on to all Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1 to 11:18), and eventually spreading all over the world (Acts 11:19 to 28:31).

How can we apply this verse in our time? The Internet in our era is the bridge

connecting information, people, and cultures from various parts of the earth. Nearly every country (except a few underdeveloped countries) has been reached and covered by the Internet, and cyberspace has become a strategically important location that the church ministry should not ignore any further. It is the last frontier where Christians should fulfill their evangelical mission as God's witnesses.

The internet frontier can be traced back to Mark 16:15 if we interpret the part where God ordered "the entire world and (preach the gospel) to all creation" in our context. This online space is "the end of the world" and has now become more of "all the world," leaving us no excuse in fulfilling the Lord's Great Commission in cyberspace (Acts 1:8).⁵

The phrase "the end of the world," which means more than the literal patch of earth at edge of the earth, can be understood as the virtual world in our time. To anyone believing in the governance of God's rule in every piece of land inhabited by human beings, refuting the idea of cyberspace being reached and cared for by churches and becoming the major venue of church ministry would be impossible.

Churches have tried rigorously to praise God's name offline, and this effort should be continued online. Just as God gave us his beloved Son and executed his marvelous plan of saving the whole of mankind for degenerated generations, I believe that he will not abandon cyber space and will salvage people from the internet chaos as he had done in the past.⁶

Even the rigid Roman Catholic appears to have a very similar view. In 2002, the

⁵ Oh Jeong-Hyeon, *Internet Ministry* (Seoul, South Korea: Kyujang, 2000), 32.

⁶ Jeon Chung-Yeong, *How to do Cyber ministry?* (Seoul, South Korea: Geojassi, 2004), 18.

Vatican, officially acknowledged cyberspace as one of its kind and called it “the new field,”⁷ which Christians should convert into a more humane place. This statement was released during the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle (February 22) (the specific content of the statement will be mentioned in the next chapter).

To convert and purify the Internet, Christians should first determine the effective ways to reach the net population and to spread the joy of the Gospel online. Introducing the Gospel should come first over any other step because without the joy and power of Christ, any improvement or transformation will not be achieved.

If the church neglects the call of the times to approach the Internet and fails to conquer this big space, then escaping from the condemnation that the church created another lost garden would be difficult.

Tool of the ministry (Jeremiah 29:1, Colossian 4:16)

Now these are the words of the letter which Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the rest of the elders of the exile, the priests, the prophets and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. [Jeremiah 29:1 (NASB)]

When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

⁷ Vatican Pontifical Council for Social Communication, “Ethics in Internet.” available from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_ethics-internet_en.html; Internet; accessed 22 February 2009

[Colossians 4:16 (NASB)]

In the time of the Old Testament, Jeremiah proclaimed the Word of God through letters or written documents (Jeremiah Chapter 29). In the New Testament, Paul, Peter, John, and James conveyed God's message through written documents.⁸

If there were the internet services in the old days, Paul would never neglect this innovative and powerful tool in preaching the Gospel; he would not cling resiliently to the face-to-face approach. Christians have spread the Gospel using different tools of the times and constantly switching to faster and stronger tools.

Before Martin Luther ignited the Reformation in the sixteenth century, the Bible was locked up in a private library of rich families as a fancy property. In 1450, Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. This new technology in publication paved the way for publication in mass. Along with Luther, this technology sparked the momentum for the mass distribution of the Bible to ordinary people, even to people in different countries after the Bible was translated to their native tongues.

Christian evangelism surged and erupted through the mass distribution of the Bible; Christianity became a phenomenally powerful religion internationally.⁹ All these were sparked by a single innovation of technology in media. Billy Graham became an influential televangelist not by locking himself up in a church pulpit but by speaking through radio, which was an unconventional preaching method back then.

⁸ Ha Yong-Jo, *The Vision Bible Dictionary* (Seoul, South Korea: Duranno, 2002), 1243.

⁹ Sim Young-Bo, *Cyber Theology & Digital Church* (Paju, South Korea: KSI, 2008), 5.

Jerry Falwell, one of Liberty University's founders and a powerful evangelist, brilliantly adopted television as a means of evangelism and used it effectively in spreading the Gospel in early 1964.¹⁰

All these are success stories of pioneers facilitating new tools in communication. Radio, television, CD-Rom, videos, mp3, movies, cell phones, computers, smart phones are all media of communication. The Internet and some advanced gadgets are a combination of several media.

The Gospel can use any of these media for transmission all over the world. In each era, churches have adopted the most effective tools to spread the Gospel. In the first century, the Gospel was spread through the expansion of the Roman Empire. In the twenty-first century, the Gospel expands its territories through the activities of Christians on the World Wide Web.

The Internet can be used as a great tool to reaching out to people because it can convey messages while overcoming space barriers and political and social limitations.

Theological Basis

Humans have created a new timeline, space, and reality in a virtual world using digital technology and computerized communication. This virtual reality, which is commonly called cyberspace, is more than an illusion or pseudo reality. Cyberspace visualizes ideas and concepts by overcoming physical barriers and taking the human

¹⁰ Jerry Falwell, *Falwell An Autobiography* (VA: Liberty House Publishers, 1997), 160–161.

experience to a new level.¹¹ This new world is reshaping the present and future of mankind.

Although many researchers agree on the importance of cyberspace in the most basic level, there are still many conflicting views on how scholars perceive cyberspace, especially in ethical and spiritual aspects.

A group condemning cyberspace as space for moral degeneration

There are many psychological, ethical, and social issues revolving around cyberspace. The Internet is deluged by false information, obscene materials, malicious comments, and crimes. Loss of moral standards, destruction of humanity, and separation of personality caused by the absence of man's physical presence are the initial and major impressions on the cyberspace.

Rah do-sam, the author of the book *Black Internet*, commented in his book about people's overindulgence in obscenity, pornography, and games in the cyberspace: "The internet user of the virtual world is a machine infected with paranoia and which has most reprehensible taste. They do whatever they want; there is no reservation or hesitation in their actions. As they came to reshape our society, we will end up with having a reality that resembles their online space."¹²

The author later added that the eyesore of human nature hidden beneath the veneer of morality is revealed by the anonymity of the Internet. The three major

¹¹ Choi In Sik, *Jesus and Cyber World* (Seoul. South Korea: The Christian Literature Society of Korea, 2001), 29.

¹² Ra Do Sam, *Black Internet* (Seoul. South Korea: Ja Woo, 2001), 17.

characteristics of cyberspace, that is, anonymity, openness, and independence, which are basically neutral values, have endowed more freedom to people's actions and more options for people's decision in choosing between good and evil. As regards people's actions, there are no strict consequences and responsibilities online. This makes people easily cross over their moral standards and throw themselves into the infinite possibility of uncontrollable sin.

Notably, prominent scholars such as Jean Baudrillard and William Kline have also warned about the danger of cyber culture by pointing out that virtual reality ostracizing reality and the loss of humanity brings a debacle in the family and society.¹³

Michael Heim interpreted the innate nature of cyberspace by borrowing the old concepts of Eros (from Platonic definition), whereas Leibniz's Monadology predicted that man will lose the freedom of invention and creativity in cyberspace.¹⁴

Another group of scholars considers cyberspace as this era's Tower of Babel. These scholars stress that cyberspace, similar to the Tower of Babel in the Old Testament, is a colossal tower of collected knowledge connecting the world. It is built by people in the twenty-first century by unifying their languages into one electronic language and communicating with each other unhindered. These scholars argue that the development of the Internet amplifies and maximizes human power to the ultimate level. They believe that the Internet will reignite the human tendency to build the Tower of Babel and assume that it will eventually be used for human rebellion against God.

¹³ Choi Tae Yeon, "Cyberspace and Church," in *Christian Thought* (Seoul, South Korea: The Christian Thought, 1998, 479), 225–226.

¹⁴ Michael Heim, *The metaphysics of virtual reality*, trans., Yeu, Myung-Suk (Seoul, South Korea: bkworld, 1997), 161.

A group lauding cyberspace as a transcendental organism

In contrast, several cyber theologians consider the Internet as a living organism and a new realm of religious experience. Some scholars even went further as to call the Internet a new metaphor for God. The following paragraph extracted from the 1996 *Time Magazine* article "Finding God on the Web" reveals this view:

"People see the Net as a new metaphor for God," says Sherry Turkel, a professor of the sociology of science at M.I.T. The Internet, she says, exists as a world of its own, distinct from earthly reality, crafted by humans but now growing out of human control. "God created a set of conditions from which life would emerge. Like it or not, the Internet is one of the most dramatic examples of something that is self-organized. That's the point. God is the distributed, decentralized system."¹⁵

Furthermore, some cyber theologians are trying to find divine existence from the Internet. Whereas the traditional belief admits a chasm between the spiritual realm and the world of the machine, this daring theological and philosophical theory suggests a "convergence" of these two seemingly irreconcilable fields.

These theories, rather than considering creation as a one-time event, claim that the creative power of God can lead the evolutionary process and later extend to computers, resulting in the creation of cyberspace, which has many potentials and opportunities.

Among these radical thinkers, Jennifer J. Cobb, a theologian and a high-tech

¹⁵ Joshua Cooper Ramo, "Finding God on the Web," *Time Magazine*, December 16, 1996, Vol. 149 No. 1.

consultant, stresses in her book *Cyber Grace: The Search for God in the Digital World*¹⁶ that our machine can act as a messenger, leading us into deeper spirituality. Cobb, after being influenced by the writings of the prominent twentieth century theologian Teilhard de Chardin,¹⁷ encourages the readers to reject the dualism of the “mind over matter” framework, which has dominated Western logic for centuries.

She defines cyberspace as an area offering “a new palette with various life-enhancing values that move us toward ever greater richness of experience — love, connection, justice, empathy, care, equality, and responsibility.”

A group defining cyberspace as God’s gift but one that needs extra care

The Vatican Pontifical Council for Social Communication released an electronic document entitled “The Church and Internet” in 22 February 2002 during the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter the Apostle.¹⁸ The statement provided valuable insights into the controversies surrounding the Internet. Three main parts of the statement are the introduction to the Internet (articles 1–4), the opportunities and challenges of the Internet (articles 5–9), and the recommendations and conclusion on the use of the Internet (articles 10–12).

First, the Vatican perceives the Internet as a gift and a window of opportunity for

¹⁶ Jennifer J. Cobb, *Cyber Grace: The Search for God in the Digital World* (U.S.A: Crown, 1998), (indicate page here).

¹⁷ Robert L. Faricy, *Teilhard de Chardin*, trans., Lee Hong-Keun (Seoul, South Korea: bundobook, 1972), 44–48.

¹⁸ Vatican Pontifical Council for Social Communication, “Ethics in Internet.” available from http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_ethics-internet_en.html; Internet; accessed 22 February 2009

evangelism:

The Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication *Communio et Progressio*, underlined that point: “The Church sees these media as ‘gifts of God’ which, in accordance with his providential design, unite men in brotherhood and so help them to cooperate with his plan for their salvation”. This remains our view, and it is the view we take of the Internet.”

Second, the Vatican warns about too much censorship in cyberspace:

Thus the Church has taken a fundamentally positive approach to the media. Even when condemning serious abuses, documents of this Pontifical Council for Social Communications have been at pains to make it clear that “a merely censorious attitude on the part of the Church...is neither sufficient nor appropriate.”

Third, the Vatican admits at the same time the clear need for minimum boundaries in and guidelines on the Internet. The following is an excerpt from article 18, which deals with online ethics:

Here we wish only to emphasize that the Catholic Church, along with other religious bodies, should have a visible, active presence on the Internet and be a partner in the public dialogue about its development. “The Church does not presume to dictate these decisions and choices, but it does seek to be of help by indicating ethical and moral criteria which are relevant to the process—criteria which are to be found in both human and Christian values.”

The statement later added the need to educate people about moral standards and ethics on the Internet.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I searched for the biblical and theological backgrounds of internet

ministry.

First, I shared by my views on how to understand and define internet ministry. Internet ministry is part of the general ministry, not an independent ministry that exists by itself. It is not a unique system that operates separately from other ministries. Rather, it is an active, conclusive practice of the ministry designed to support and enhance other church functions. Internet ministry should be distinguished from the internet church, which exists exclusively online.

Second, I presented a biblical background of internet ministry. Everything was created for Jesus Christ by him and from him (Colossian 1:16-17). This principle should also be applied to the Internet just like to any other space. The Internet, as an entity created for him, by him, and in him, should be used for his glory.

“The end of the world,” as mentioned in Acts 1:8, can be interpreted as the final frontier, the edge of reality, or a place combined with the reality. Churches should be built anywhere where people live and in any location where there are human activities. This rule should also be applied in cyberspace.

In Jeremiah 29:1, the prophet Jeremiah preached God’s word through letters. As indicated in Colossian 4:16 and elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul, John, and James utilized various documents to deliver God’s message. Historically, the church of each era always finds and uses the most compatible and effective means of communication available through technology.

Third, I presented three theological perspectives on the Internet.

The first group views the Internet as a space of degeneration. This perspective is formed by the serious psychological, ethical, and social issues surrounding cyberspace.

According to scholars supporting this view, the Internet will affect the church adversely, and people are more likely to commit sinful acts due to its vile nature.

The second group of scholars considers the Internet as a blessing. Some of them view it as a place for reconciliation. This group stands against the conventional way of thinking of “mind over matter.” These scholars believe that in cyberspace, reconciliation between the mind and matter and between man and nature may be possible through the help of the Holy Spirit’s omnipresence in every space of the Internet.

The third view, which is supported by the Vatican, perceives cyberspace as a space open to endless possibilities and potentials. A statement released by the Vatican clarifies the Internet is a tool for the Gospel, evangelism, and communication. It also stresses the importance of having proper education on Internet use. Integrating all three different views on the Internet, we can conclude that although most of the scholars agree on the great influence of the Internet, their evaluations and forecasts about it are all different.

CHAPTER III

A STUDY ON THE INTERNET MINISTRY¹

Historical Background of the Internet Ministry

Media Revolution

Human civilization has incessantly reformed itself. When it comes to information management, people have developed new measures to store more information and communicate it to a wider audience.

These attempts to communicate more information more accurately, faster, and to more people gave birth to the mass media, one of most revolutionary human inventions. Beginning in the fifteenth century's Gutenberg's printing press, through which the Bible was distributed to a wider population, the media revolution had ignited and flourished throughout the Reformation, the Renaissance, and the science revolution eras. Media development sped up during the industrial era.

Churches in the past used the media to spread the Gospel, whereas churches of

¹ A text resource from the Sarang Community Church's 25th anniversary Seminar on Churches support of the Digital ministry (Nov. 3, 2003)

our time are trying to keep up with the shift from the analog to the digital era with through internet ministry.

	Means of media	How the Gospel is spread
Pre-linguisitc era	4000 B.C. Mural painting on the wall	Oral tradition by reciting the Scripture
Advent of letters	4,000 B.C. Sumerian clay slates	Commencement of written letters on clay slates or on lambskins
	1,041 B.C. China's Song dynasty's primitive forms of letterpress	
	1,241 B.C. Korea's Koryo dynasty's metal printing press	
Era of printed letters	1456 Gutenberg's printing press	Printing Bible in mass by using Gutenberg's printing press
	1833 <i>The New York Sun</i> , the first newspaper	
Era of Mass/Tele-Communication	1844 Samuel Morse's code	Television and radio help Gosepl to reach out to wider audience by overcoming the geological limits
	1876 Alexander Graham Bell's first phone	
	1895 Guglielmo Marconi's radio braodcast	
	1933 RCA Corp.'s Television	
Era of Digital Communication	1946 ENIAC, the first electronic computer	Spreading Gospel globally by using satellite broadcast and Digital copy of Bible
	1947 Bell Labs's transistor	
	1971 Intel's CPU	
	1975 HBO's Cable TV (CATV)	
Era of Advanced/Interactive Digital Mulimedia	1990s CD, Internet, PDA, HDTV	Proactive internet evangelism
	2000s Internet broadcast, Wireless Internet, DMB	

Fig. 8. Media revolution and the spread of the Gospel.²

Multimedia and the development of communication technology

Multimedia is a type of communication conducted by disseminating images and

² Sarang Community Church, "Internet Mission Seminar 32," available from <http://edu.godpia.com/link/NoaView/wbt/WBTFrame.asp>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2010

ideas in more than one format, including the text, graphic images, audio, video, and animation images.³ Along with the remarkable progress in telecommunication, the advent of the computer technology ignited the digital revolution and opened the door to the information age, where people excessively and constantly consume various multimedia contents (e.g., E-book on Demand (EOD), Music on Demand (MOD), Video on Demand (VOD), voice mail, etc.) using wired/wireless devices and gadgets.

This era is marked by the people's inseparable attachment to digital information, and this poses both a challenge and an opportunity to churches. Churches need to remind themselves that following the trend is inevitable. In order to take the initiative in this era, they are required to utilize the available cutting-edge technology in their ministry.

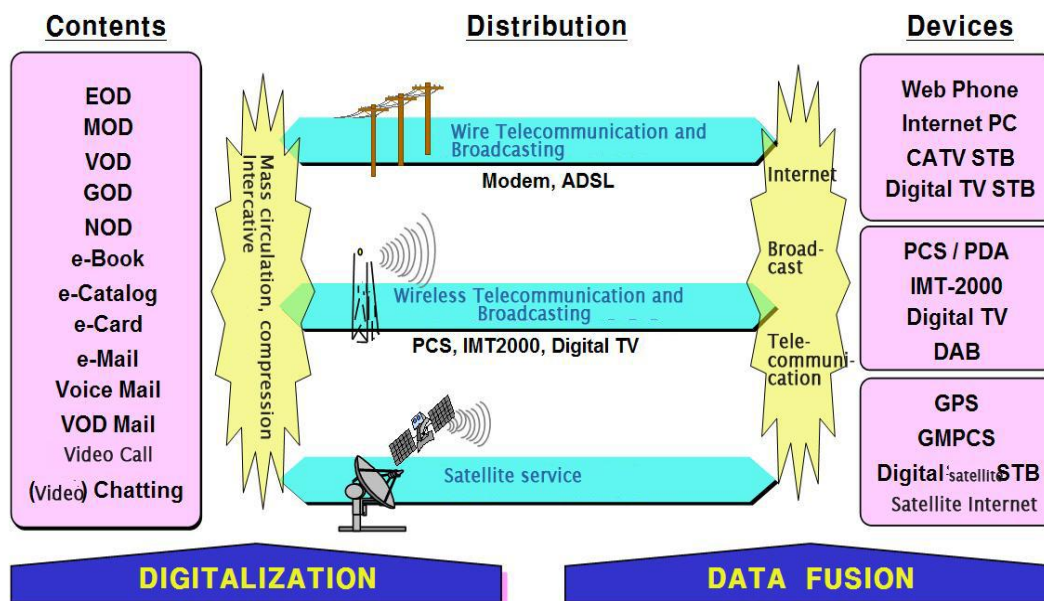


Fig. 9. Progress of telecommunication technology⁴

³ Werner J. Severin, *Communication Theories*, trans., Park Cheon-II (Paju, South Korea: Nanam, 2005), 503.

⁴ Korean Association for Communication & Information Studies, *Modern Society & Mass Communication* (Paju, South Korea: Hanwul, 2004), 251–257.

Practical Research on Internet Ministry

(What is it and by whom, where, and why is it done?)

Definition of internet ministry

Internet ministry is a series of church ministries, such as preaching, training members, and spreading the Gospel, that enhance the church service by providing raw or edited multimedia contents in digital formats through wire, wireless, and satellite to anyone regardless of the geographical location. The following diagram shows how internet ministry works.⁵

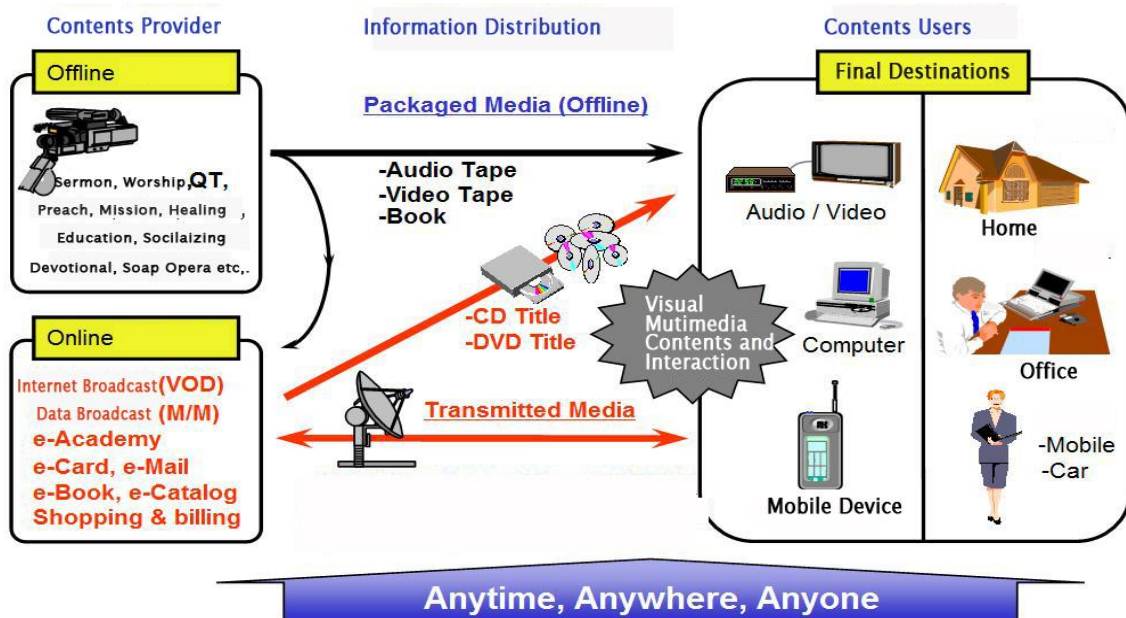


Fig. 10. What is internet ministry?

⁵ Kim Kil-Su, *Digital Ministry & Strategy* (Seoul, South Korea: Disciple Making Ministries International, 2003), 22.

For what purpose and where is internet ministry applied?

1. Purpose of internet ministry

1) Evangelical mission

The main purpose of internet ministry is to execute the Lord's Great Commission of "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (Acts 1:8 NASB) by expending God's sovereignty in cyberspace, targeting not only the local audience but also the international audience from every nation and class.

2) Reclaiming God's reign on the Internet

Everything is made by God and for him, as written in Colossian 1:16. The Internet, as part of "everything," is created by him, in him, and for him. Thus, reclaiming God's sovereign power in cyber space is self-evident, and internet ministry is a direct tool serving the goal.

3) Internet ministry can enhance offline discipleship training and mentoring

All churches bear the sacred responsibility of training their members as Jesus' disciples. In the current society where everybody is preoccupied and gathering people in one spot becomes more and more inconvenient, churches can maximize the advantage of the Internet's near omnipresence in teaching the members.

Churches can utilize the Internet in training and mentoring people more effectively online, where people can interact with each other undeterred by time and space barriers.

4) Internet networks can empower Christianity

The word “Internet” is a shortened form of “Inter-networking,” which means a network of data and information. The Web of internet networks can be transferred to the wide Christian network through the help of internet ministry. The network formed in cyberspace can lay the groundwork for a Christian network at the local and international levels, realizing the greatest dream of building a truly global church online

2. How can internet ministry be applied?

1) Churches provide services to meet their members’ needs

Following God’s will, churches provide various services to people in need, both material and spiritual needs. These services have often been hampered by people’s time limitation and geographical distance. These problems can be solved by utilizing internet ministry. People can avail of the church services they require regardless of time and space.

2) Churches need to take initiatives in cyberspace

In the Internet, people form a society and a unique culture. Churches need to appeal to these people through Web contents that are interesting and educational enough as well as beneficial to them at the same time.

3) Evangelism in the Internet

One of most pivotal duties of the church is evangelism; that is, preaching the Gospel to the ends of the earth.⁶ The focus of the entire internet ministry should be on this mission because there are many non-Christians in cyber space that have yet to be reached.

Which group of people does the internet ministry target?

The focus group should be defined first before anyone can conduct internet ministry.

The first issue that should be settled is whether the target group is inside or outside the church. Thus, should the target be Christians or non-Christians?

The second issue is demography. That is, should the focus group be seniors/youth, women/men, married/unmarried, locals/foreigners, and so on?

After the target group is defined, churches should determine which contents and services would be most applicable, helpful to the target group, and able to provide tailored services according to each group's interests and needs.

What do churches provide in internet ministry?

1. Which values should the digital contents focus on?

⁶ Ok John H., *Called to Awaken the Layman* (Seoul, South Korea: Duranno, 1994), 57.

“What values should we convey through the online service?” This question is the first step in determining the internet contents churches should provide to the people. These values can be slightly varied, whether they are meant for Christians or non-Christians and whether they will be practiced at the local or international levels.

The first step in this project is value shift. There is a gap between the priorities the traditional ministry values the most and the new value required by this new internet ministry. Value shift can only be achieved by obtaining support from the pastor, consensus of the board/elder groups, speed control, balance with the church’s other ongoing projects, and additional funds.⁷

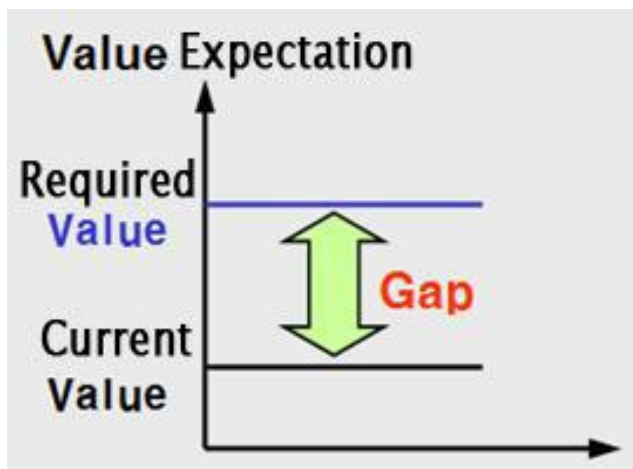


Fig. 11. Current value vs. Value expectation

2. To whom should the services be provided?

The internet service should then be given according to the audience’s age and background. Specifically, the sermon and the mentoring should be tailored for each age

⁷ Kim Kil-Su, *Digital Ministry & Strategy* (Seoul, South Korea: Disciple Making Ministries, 2003), 38.

group, the group's educational level, and the environment they live in. The worship service should also be specified for each occasion. In education service, similar contents can be provided to everyone, but how it is applied should be varied by age and background. What cannot be ignored in the service is that people experience the Internet differently.

Churches should be able to define which groups of people are not familiar or uncomfortable with the internet service.

	Preschool age	Elementary sch	Middle/high school age	College students	In/around 30s	40s to 50s	Seniors
Sermon(Korean)	Sermon tailored for each age group			Sermon for local city residents			
Sermon(English)	Effect maximized by relating it with English studies			Service given to people lived in English using countries			
Worship					Weekend Worship service and CCM songs		
Education	Required for every group						
Broadcasting					Adoptable to age group with high concentration		
Counseling				Tailored for kids entering puberty and college graduates recently getting jobs		given to neglected	
Internet Community	Activated by participation from the group with high internet user rate						

Fig. 12. Tailored internet church service ⁸

Organizational skills in operating internet service

1. Gauging the potential and the resource

The first step to be taken before launching the internet service is to grasp the

⁸ Sarang Community Church, "Internet Mission Seminar 32," available from <http://edu.godpia.com/link/NoaView/wbt/WBTFrame.asp>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2010

church's situation, that is, its potentials and resources. The following specific questions should be asked: "How much is the budget limit of this internet project?" "How many people are willing to support the project?" "Do we have infrastructure and technical support in the internet field?"

In most cases, pastors find their churches' current status inadequate and their resources insufficient. What they need to do in this stage is acknowledge the shortcomings, measure exactly how much they lack before launching the service, and determine how the gap between the reality and the ideal can be filled by taking which specific measures.

2. Development of a professional system

As online ministry evolves into a more advance, complex and competitive form, the need to form a church body that exclusively deals with the systematic management of the digital talents and resources and the production process of numerous multimedia contents becomes crucial. This church body is a subsidiary church organization in charge of the entire internet ministry.

The tasks given to this internet ministry department/division are Web site production, Web software and database formation, video production, media facility management and maintenance, outsourcing, and decision making. The head of the system should have a professional background in a related field and excellent management skills, and be someone who can cooperate well with people from other church sectors.

3. Deciding on which channel the information should be conveyed

Information is created in diverse formats, distributed through various channels, and represented by numerous digital devices. The church needs to pinpoint the means of formatting/distributing/representing to maximize the influence of the information. Correct decisions on selecting the suitable media formats, channels, and devices are necessary. This decision making in the digital process is an essential step in the development of internet ministry.⁹

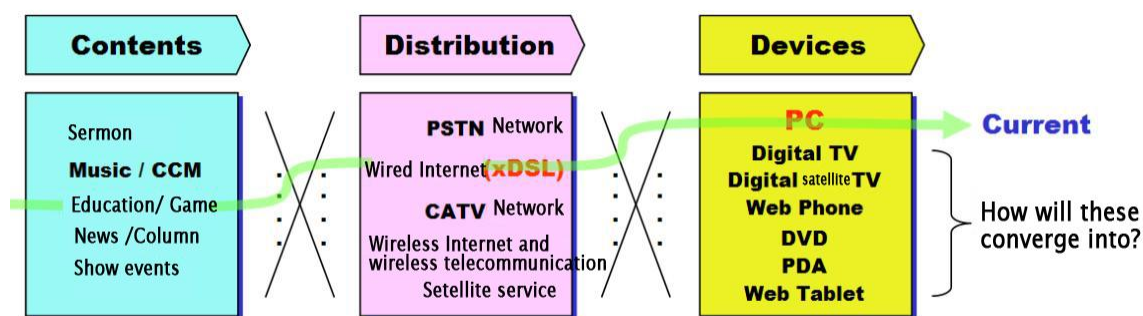


Fig. 13. Decision-making process in the information distribution process

4. Production style and organization management

To maximize the efficiency of the project, the church's internet ministry department should settle on one production style before actually developing the Web content. Internet broadcasting has two major systems: a separation system (also called a specialization system) and a one-man system.

In a specialization system, people distribute the tasks, with each one working on a task he/she specializes in. This system, although it has the advantage of "specialization" of each sector as the name implies, requires considerable human resources and suffers

⁹ Kim Kil-Su, *Digital Ministry & Strategy* (Seoul, South Korea: Disciple Making Ministries International, 2003), 20.

from lack of responsibility because there is no one to hold accountable.

However, the one-man system may be overwhelming for that “one man” and may turn out to be disastrous if that “one man’s” competency is doubtful. Nevertheless, this system has the advantages of promptness/speed and completeness of the project because everyone will receive the exact same feedback from their latest work, endowing them with a strong sense of responsibility.

Starting out with the specialization system during the initial stage is recommended before moving on to the one-man system later on in the mature stage.

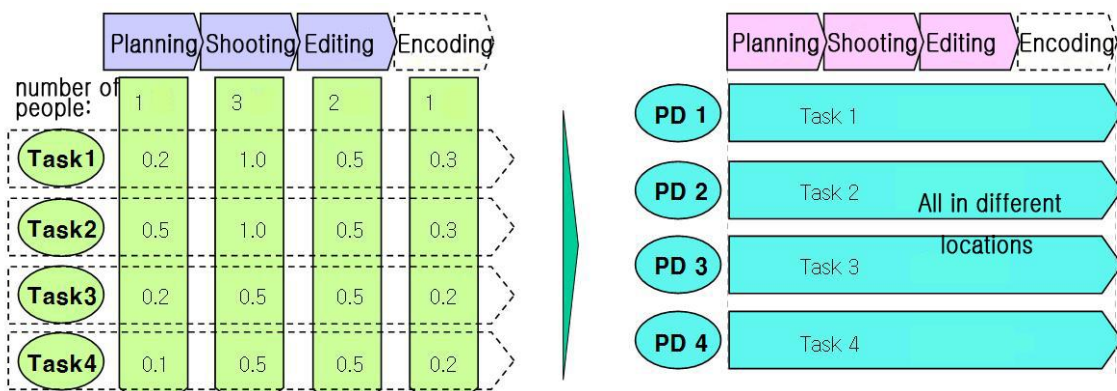


Fig. 14. The specialization system and the one-man system

5. Budget plan and investment

Contracting all the required media equipment and Web-base software and appliances for lease would cost from US\$180–270,000. The minimum number of employees required is around two to five people. To stabilize the contents supply, the church may also need to purchase equipment and Web-based software and appliances.

The estimated budget for a fully equipped and fully staffed internet ministry can reach around US\$500,000. The professional devotees in this department should be between ten and twenty people.

In the growing stage, the budget is mostly be spent on implementing the server, studio, basic media equipment, and facilities. Once the infrastructure has been set up, most of budget for the next two and three years goes to the actual production of various Web and multimedia contents. To cut down unnecessary expenditure, churches need to streamline the production process, outsource from certain sectors, and control the speed and priority of multiple on-going projects.¹⁰

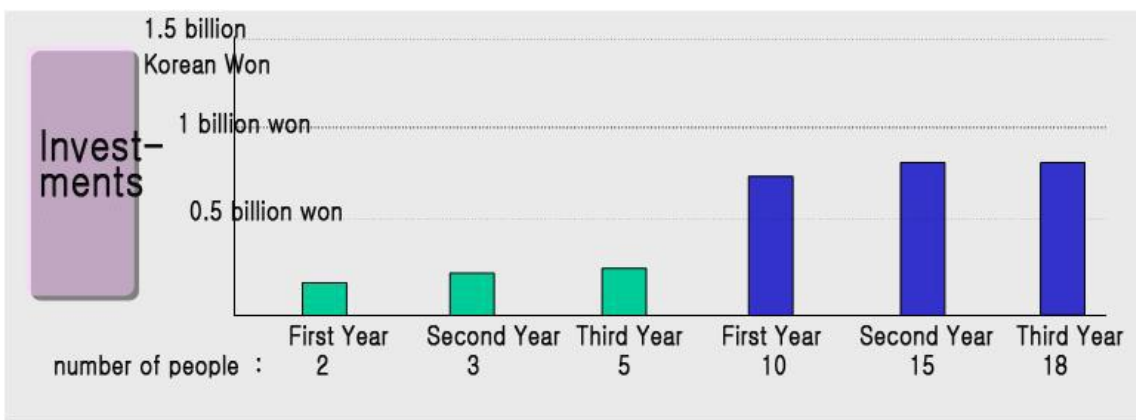


Fig. 15. Average expenditure development in both cases (green: lease, blue: purchase of the facility)

6. Outsourcing

During the initial stage of the internet ministry, churches need to contact Web/media agencies for outsourcing several projects due to insufficient professional human resource pool and lack of facilities and infrastructure. Although outsourcing may be of great convenience and improve the quality of the work, the church may become too reliant on it. Too much dependency on professional agencies leads to loss of control over the church project and huge waste of the limited budget. This loss results in the depletion

¹⁰ Ibid., 38

of money and control when there is no expert in the church ministry experienced enough to direct the outsourcing process.

Churches need to stabilize the entire production supply by developing its own system and by scouting for talents and rearing them. Once these highly skilled professionals take their posts in the internet ministry division, the outsourcing project can be conducted more effectively without losing valuable time and resources in unnecessary projects. Moreover, churches can lead and direct the outsourcing in a better way.

When a highly competent pool of experts is formed within the church internet ministry division, these experts can manage several important and advanced projects, whereas the outsourcing company can deal with the menial projects that are of relatively low in importance. This alleviates the pressure felt by the people caused by the heavy workload and stress of doing repetitive menial tasks, thereby increasing the overall quality of the major projects and minimizing the expenses at the same time.

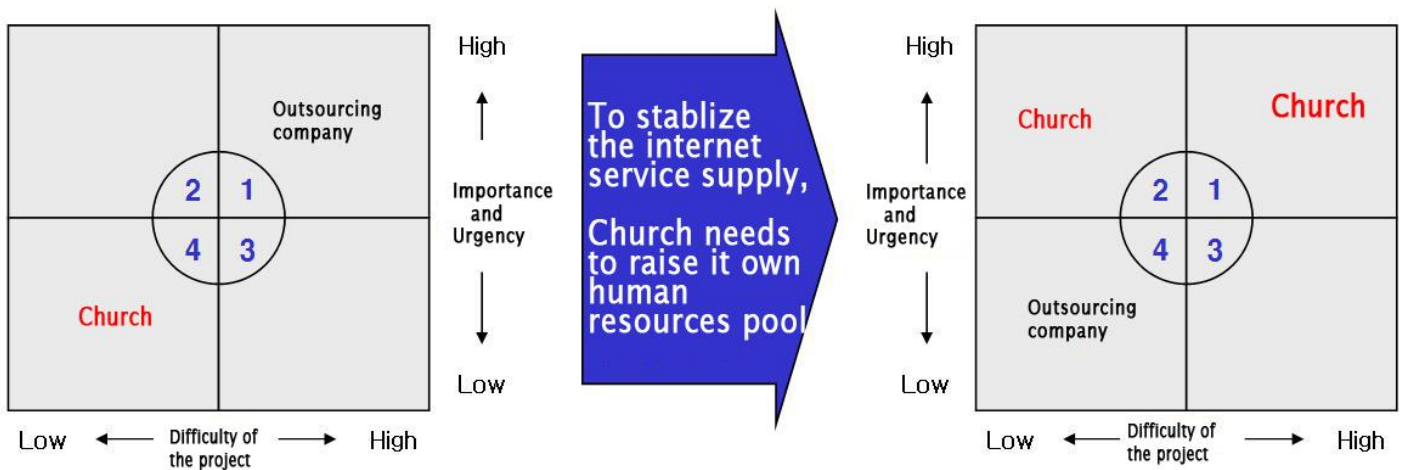


Fig .16. Decision-making process in outsourcing ¹¹

¹¹ Sarang Community Church, "Internet Mission Seminar 32," available from <http://edu.godpia.com/link/NoaView/wbt/WBTFrame.asp>; Internet; accessed 10 January 2010

The internet ministry yearly plan

The following is the suggested yearly plan for a church starting a digital ministry.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Organization, preparation, and formation of a human resource pool				
Building infrastructure and learning the basic technology and skills				
	Web site production			
	Various Web/media contents production, technology cooperation, and joint investment			
			Advancing the productions and expanding the ministry	

Fig .17. Guideline to a digital ministry's yearly plan

Outlook of the Korean churches' internet ministry

Internet user population in Korea

Internet users in Korea amount to about 15 million people. Based on the number of users, Korea ranks sixth,¹² and its internet connection speed is the fastest in the world.¹³ Korea's internet usage rate is remarkable: in 2009, 77.6 percent of the Korean population (35.7 million) was found to be internet users, and the average internet usage hours reached 13.9 hours per week.¹⁴ Fig. 18 shows the internet usage rate of each age

¹² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *The Broadband Portal*, December 2008.

¹³ Akamai, *The State of the Internet*, 2009.

¹⁴ Korea Internet and Security Agency, *2009 State of the Internet*, September 2009.

group and the significance each age group has in Korean churches.

	Internet usage rate	Significance to church-
By Age	Aged 3–9 : 85.4%	Future church leaders
	Teens: 99.9%	
	Twenties: 99.7%	People carry out Internet evangelism mission
	Thirties: 98.8%	
	Forties: 84.3%	
By Education level	College/University graduate and above: 97.5%	
	Junior high school and above: 81.0%	
	Primary education: 29.0%	
By Sex	Male: 82.4%	
	Female: 71.9%	

Fig. 18. Internet usage rate (Korean case)

Determining factors in the outlook on Korean Churches' internet ministry

Through internet ministry, small- and medium-sized churches can broaden their evangelical mission. In the past, this mission overwhelmed small churches that lacked finances and resources.

Supersized churches can go even further, that is, beyond the traditional church boundaries, and can support other communities and churches, eventually carrying out a truly global evangelical mission. These massive churches have the responsibility of sharing and disseminating their digital experience and skills with smaller churches. This transfer of ideas and technology from churches with plenty of resources to those with less determines the future landscape of Korea's internet ministry.

Chapter Summary

What is internet ministry? How, by whom, where, and when is it conducted? In this chapter, I defined internet ministry based on these questions.

Internet ministry involves producing, editing, and distributing Christian multimedia contents through wired, wireless, and satellite service to provide extended church services such as sermons, discipleship training, and mission duty to wider audiences. The church service target groups are divided into several groups by the following categories: whether they belong inside/outside the church, whether they are a local/international audience, age and social backgrounds. The reason for this is that each group has different concerns and interests that the church's Web content should consider.

The first step to establishing an internet ministry is evaluating the potentials and deficiencies of the church.

The next step is handling infrastructure, both human and structural resources. Only by reaching a certain level in the process can the church move on to the next stage of launching an internet ministry system. For efficiency, a special church division should be created to deal exclusively with the internet ministry, which integrates the finances, facilities, and technical support.

To manage the expenditure efficiently, the creation of some of the high-tech multimedia contents should be outsourced to professional media/internet companies. Strategic planning is crucial when outsourcing. In the initial stage, the ministry can rely heavily on the outsourcing companies due to its lack of technology and human resources.

However, as soon as the church forms its human resource pool, it should manage the outsourcing process on its own and gradually cut down its outsourcing to stand on its own. During the transitional period, the church can strategically allow the agencies to deal with the technically less complex but more time-consuming projects to save time and money.

People below forty years comprise 80 percent of Korean internet users as well as the entire Web population. This figure shows the predominance of the internet in Korea and evokes the urgency to utilize the Internet as a tool in church ministry.

CHAPTER IV

THE SARANG COMMUNITY CHURCH'S INTERNET MINISTRY

Introduction to the Sarang community church

The Sarang community church was founded by Pastor Ok Han Hum with other nine members on 23 July 1978 in Seoul, South Korea. From the start, the church declared its priority on discipleship training and evangelism. The Sarang church has rigorously pursued its goal by training church members and assisting them in becoming true disciples of Jesus. The church attendance reached 500, and numerous lay leaders were produced within two years after its establishment.

Through the support of lay leadership, the church had its first opening service in its new church venue on 12 January 1985. The church attendees totaled to one thousand two hundred fifty people. The church's phenomenal growth continued throughout the twenty-first century. In January 1999, the church's registered members increased to more than eighteen thousand people, including fourteen thousand nine hundred adults and three thousand eight hundred from the Sunday school. The official number of the church's registered members surpassed forty-five thousand by 2009, classifying the Sarang church as a mini denomination-sized church.

The motto demonstrating Sarang church's spirit is HEART. **H** stands for Healing

Our Nation, **E** for Equipping the Disciples, **A** for Assisting the Global Christian Network, **R** for Raising up the Next Generation, and **T** for Transforming Society and Culture. It is the inspiration God gave the prophet Ezekiel about the new spirit and mind (Ezekiel 36:26), and it has become the vision the Sarang church stands for.

The Sarang church's internet ministry

Internet ministry division

The Sarang church's internet division, which was built in 1997, manages the internet ministry. It provides extensive online service to the church members, local people, and international audiences. The church focuses on supplying resources for the church member's spiritual growth, developing online infrastructure, and producing Gospel-related multimedia contents for broader audiences.

In the initial stage of the ministry, amateur volunteers and some from the leadership group performed most of the tasks in the internet ministry. Their lack of professional knowledge and experience in related fields raised the serious need to hire professionals and experts as full-time workers. Gradually, digital experts replaced the previous amateur leaders.

Currently, the internet division belongs to the church's media department along with the broadcasting, design, and information system divisions. There are a total fifty employees in the department.

1. Achievements of the internet ministry division

- 1) Directing and setting the correct goals and strategies for the internet ministry
 - Planning internet strategies
 - Evaluating yearly accomplishments
- 2) Activating online connection between the church members and clerical groups
 - Smoothing out the communication among the pastors, staff, and church members
 - Bolstering the collaboration between church departments
- 3) Emailing service to Korean Christians
 - Sarang church's broadcasting service
 - Emailing service tailored for the needs of Christian groups
- 4) Web sites for the local and international audiences

Aside from the Korean version, English, Japanese, and Chinese pages are also provided.

5) The Christian Portal site "Godpia.com"

Sarang's Christian portal site "Godpia.com" offers popular multimedia contents (some are those of Sarang), the church curriculum, and information shared by Sarang, among others.

2. Structure of the Internet Ministry Division

1) Web Planning team

The Web Planning team specializes in creating ideas for Christian Web contents

and planning the content production schedule using the Web 2.0 based system.

2) Web Management team

The Web Management team is in charge of presenting all kinds of multimedia contents and operating the church homepage and Godpia.com

3) Broadcast Production team

The Broadcast Production team creates the various multimedia contents and church news.

Production and Management of the Web site

1. Homepage Structure and Web Navigation system

The Sarang church's homepage has several "family sites," which are its affiliated organizations. If a person registers in one of the family sites, he/she can visit and get into the other family Web sites without logging in and out each time. Users can receive various services from several sites including Godpia.com, one of biggest Christian portal sites.



Fig.19. Screen capture image of the Sarang church's homepage (Korean version)

The Sarang homepage, which has at least 200 domains, has a simple and user-friendly display featuring categorized domains and a good Web navigation¹ system. The church's main site categorically has four major domain groups, with each group representing each ministry sector. Each church department's homepage has its own sub-domain², and thus each department's autonomy in operation and management is secured. This less controlling system encourages the active participation of the members in each sector.

2. Representation of Each Content

The Sarang church ministry has four major sectors, and the church's media

¹ Web navigation refers to the operation that keeps Web display and structure in the optimal state so that site users can take the shortest path to move from one point to another within the site.

² Sub domain refers to a domain that is part of a larger domain. It allows for the easy management of the domains.

division customizes the multimedia and Web contents for each sector (excluding the church's public relations).

1) Worship sector

The worship service content is the core content of the online ministry. The worship sector is where most churches heavily focus on and put time and money in. The Sarang church's worship sector is composed of two aspects: the sermon part and the general worship service.

Sarang's worship contents are made using the interface design. For users living in foreign countries, a multilingual service is provided. The sermon is voiced over in English, Japanese, and Chinese. Not only international audiences living outside Korea but also foreigners living in Korea can watch the pastor's sermon and even download the video and transcript of the sermon from the homepage. The sermon is available in both video file format and the audio format (mp3). People can also subscribe to every new podcast.

English Service

Sermons of Senior Pastor Oh 🏠 > Broadcasting



Walking with God

- Speaker Senior Pastor Oh Jung-Hyun
- Paragraph Genesis 5:18~27
- Date 12. 06, 2009

[AUDIO](#) [VIDEO](#) [TEXT](#)

[▶ PODCAST \(KOREAN\) ▶](#)

Japanese Service

定期礼拝 吳正賢牧師



2009 / 12 / 06

- ▶ 神様と共に歩む
- ▶ (創世記5:18~27)
- ▶ 吳正賢 牧師

AOD xDSL

説教題名	聖句	説教日
神様と共に歩む	創世記5:18~27	2009-12-06
信仰の系譜をつなげる	創世記5:1~32	2009-11-29
世俗的な都市で神様に仕える	創世記4:16-26	2009-11-22
一生感謝のための信仰の土台	創世記22:1~18	2009-11-15
牧者の心が必要です。	ルカの福音書 15:...	2009-11-08

Chinese Service

定期礼拝 吳正显牧师



2009 / 12 / 06

- ▶ 与神同行
- ▶ (创世纪 5 : 18-27)
- ▶ 吳正賢 牧师

AOD xDSL

讲道题目	圣经经节	日期
与神同行	创世纪 5 : 18-27	2009-12-06
继承信心的家谱	创世纪 15 : 1-32	2009-11-29
在世俗城市中事奉神	创世纪 4 : 16-26	2009-11-22
一生感恩的信仰根基	创世纪 22 : 1-18	2009-11-15
需要牧人的心	路加福音 15 : 25..	2009-11-08

Fig. 20. Multi-lingual service

2) Education sector

The Sarang church was made popular by its excellent education and member training program. The church had recorded a phenomenal growth due to the program. Thus, the church leaders came up with the idea of introducing and spreading this system to other churches in Korea and around the world.

This training system has two categories: education conducted inside the church and that outside the church. In the internal education, education can be short term or long

term. The long-term program, which usually lasts more than four weeks, involves the popular discipleship training program. The short-term program, which lasts less than four weeks, features the Quiet Time Seminar, the most classic and widely known short-term program in Korea.

Sarang's external education is delegated to an organization called Disciple Making Ministries International³ (herein referred to as DMMI). One of DMMI's most famous ministries is the Called to Awaken the Laity (CAL) Seminar⁴. The following is an introduction to DMMI's online ministry.

(1) Mailing Service⁵

An emailing service is provided by the DMMI. It specifically targets Korean church pastors and Christians by sending them new information and editorials on a regular basis.

- Leadership Network. This email is one of the church's weekly mailing services that provide information on the discipleship training.

- Discipleship Training Network. Sent every Thursday, this email contains information and tips on how to support the church members' spiritual maturity. It is aimed at those undergoing the discipleship training process.

³ Sarang Community Church, "Disciple Making Ministries International," available from http://www.disciplen.com/frame_index.asp; Internet; accessed 18 February 2010

⁴ Founded in 1986, the CAL Seminar continues to strive to equip, recover, and reform churches worldwide. The distinct mark of this seminar is that it enables the participants to grasp a new paradigm shift by witnessing the actual ministry field of church. The conference covers the meaning and value of the discipleship training ministry model and provides lectures, workshops, and practice sessions that cover the principles and practical applications of the discipleship training ministry.

⁵ Sarang Community Church, "Disciple Making Ministries International," available from <http://www.disciplen.com/frameindex.asp>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2010

- Cell Group Network. Distributed every Tuesday, this email contains information and guidelines on cell group management.

(2) E-lecture Service

Several videos of seminars and conferences are also available. The popular programs provided by DMMI are the sermon consultant, the Gene A. Getz Seminar, and the Saddleback Church Seminar, among others.

3) Community Service Sector

The Sarang church demonstrates its commitment to community service through two major ministries: Cyber Counseling and the Jung-Gam Campaign (Jung-Gam is “compassion” in Korean).

The Jung-Gam campaign is an extensive Christian community service built under the motto of reconstructing and practicing integrity and gratefulness. One of its campaign projects is internet space purification.

The Sarang church provides special emailing service to Korean churches to promote the ten principles of internet users and encourage churches to join this movement. Video files of relevant seminars are available in the Sarang church’s homepage, along with other resources and documents.

Ten internet principles	
1	We will not defile our body, a sacred sanctuary of the Lord, by exposing ourselves to sexually obscene materials on the Internet.
2	We will ban ourselves from playing violent internet games that destroy any form of life using guns and swords.
3	We will not violate copyrights on the Web or appropriate others’ personal

	property or private information.
4	We will not insult and harm others by disseminating false information, spreading malicious rumors, and leaving abusive comments online.
5	We will compel ourselves to observe the internet principles and only use appropriate information online.
6	We will use the Internet with fairness and transparency on any occasion.
7	We will take the initiative in the “sharing movement” online.
8	We will create a non-destructive internet culture by leaving fair and constructive comments online to comfort weary souls.
9	We will use the Internet as a means for the Gospel to restore the joy and hope in people’s lives.
10	We will convert the Internet into God’s kingdom that is filled with justice and love.

Fig. 21. Ten principles of internet users for internet space purification⁶

4) The Evangelism Sector

The Sarang church’s evangelism sector features local and international missions, which can be categorized into on-site mission and online mission. The strong network built around the Sarang church plays a role in supporting the missionaries inside and outside the country. The church’s online mission academy was established to supply a sustainable number of missionaries to areas in need.

The Sarang church’s evangelical mission sector provides various online services such as broadcasting of sermons, database for mission works, a prayer team for the missionaries, and a guidebook on the target countries and its people.

Category	Dispatched	Professional	Affiliated	Volunteers	Organization staff	Total
Southeast Asia, Japan	5	4	25	3		37

⁶ Sarang Community Church, “Jung-Gam Campaign,” available from <http://it365.sarang.org/sub02/10gae.asp>; Internet; accessed 17 February 2010

Central Asia, Russia, Mongol	11	6	11	3		31
China, YenByun North Korea	8	12	12	2		34
Middle East, Africa, Europe America	8	10	16	2		36
South Korea	3	1			7	11
Total	35	33	64	10	7	149 (269)

Fig. 22. Missionaries supported by the church (May 2007)⁷

3. Tools for Online Interaction

Interactive communication is an essential characteristic of the Internet. The Sarang church has applied six tools to activate and maximize interactivity in its church ministry: Q&A, bulletin board, consulting, emailing service, links to missionaries' homepages and emails, and the hyperlinks.

Using hyperlinks, the Sarang church connects its members to various resourceful Christian Web sites. People can glean useful information from different sites according to their needs and wants. Sarang church's powerful hyperlink on evangelical mission can gather people who are interested in evangelical mission work in one spot and offer them practical training and proper education on the outreach mission.

This hyperlink opens the door to the evangelical mission by inviting people to participate in the mission work or assist missionaries on their mission through their prayers.

⁷ Sarang Community Church, "Go or Send," available from <http://mission.sarang.org/abroad/index.html>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010

Prayer Link for the World⁸ (You can read missionaries' prayer requests by clicking on the regions.)



Fig. 23. Screen capture image of the Sarang church's mission hyperlink (names of counties are written in Korean)

Internet Broadcast

1. Internet Broadcasting Station Operation

Since its launch on April 2000, the Sarang broadcasting service has been available online in VOD⁹ format.

⁸ Sarang Community Church, "Go or Send," available from <http://mission.sarang.org/abroad/index.html>; Internet; accessed 10 March 2010

⁹ According to the Wikipedia Web site, VOD and Audio Video on Demand are multimedia formats that allow users to select and watch/listen to video or audio content on (their) demand. Television VOD systems either stream content through a set-top box, allowing viewing in real time, or download it to a device such as a computer, digital video recorder (also called a personal video recorder), or portable media player for viewing at any time. The majority of cable- and telco-based television providers offer both VOD streaming, such as pay-per-view, where a user buys or selects a movie or television program and it begins to play on the television almost instantaneously, or downloads it to a DVR rented from the provider for viewing in the future. Internet television using the Internet is becoming an increasingly popular form of VOD.

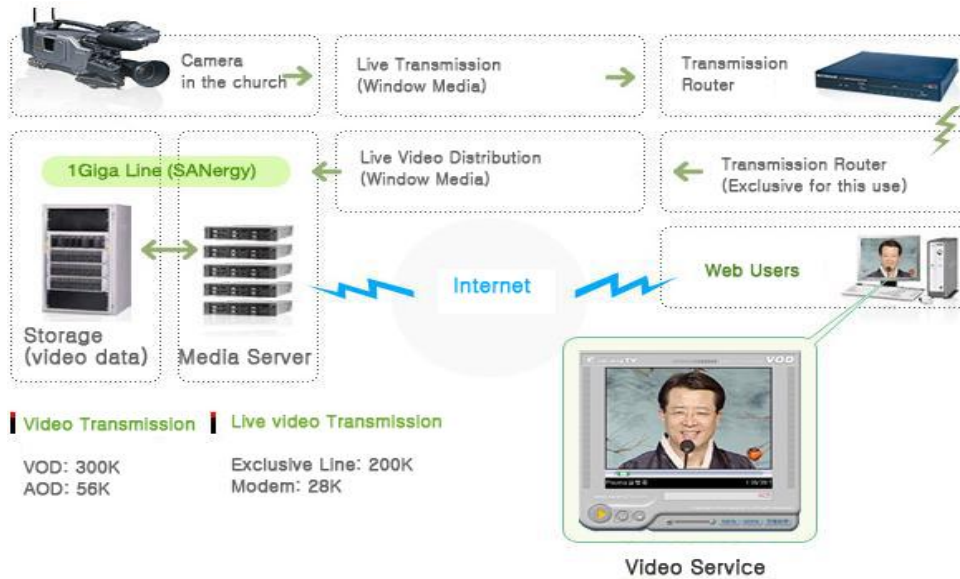


Fig. 24. Broadcast process¹⁰

2. Internet Broadcasting Contents

- 1) Weekend Service, (promotional) event and conference, Christian entertainment
- 2) International mission broadcast

This broadcasting content is available on CTS TV, CBS TV and Radio, and FEBC Radio on a regular basis.

3) Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) Broadcast

The IPTV is a system through which internet television services are transmitted. Sarang's broadcast uses the Internet Protocol Suite instead of the traditional radio frequency broadcast, satellite signal, and cable television formats. Sarang's IPTV has the reputation of being Korea's first Christian broadcasting system to connect the Internet

¹⁰ Sarang Community Church, "Internet Mission," available from http://digital.sarang.org/frame_index.asp; Internet; accessed 10.January 2010

to television using the B2B Model. This innovative broadcasting format is used effectively in delivering the live worship service direct to people's houses.

Godpia.com¹¹

Godpia.com is a Christian portal site run by and owned by the Sarang church. Sarang can easily disseminate a variety of quality contents and resources through the site to other Korean churches.

1. Official name of the site: Godpia.com
2. Internet address (URL): <http://www.godpia.com>
3. Target audience and users: Everybody
4. Major Web contents:

An online Bible, resources for quiet time, online worship, and education services are the popular contents shared in the Godpia.com site to assist people's spiritual growth. Other services such as news, games, and counseling service are also displayed on the We site to attract non-believers.

People can create their personal blogs and internet cafés (referring to social network services) in Godpia.com as well as form online Christian communities. Many people have already registered for the service and are actively participating online.

5. Godpia.com's online ministry
 - 1) Participation of other local churches in Godpia.com

Godpia.com occasionally hosts various promotional events such as job fairs,

¹¹ Godpia.com is a Christian portal site for the Korean churches.

show events, performances, seminars, fair markets, and surveys to include more local churches in worthwhile projects and bring Christian communities together. Fig. 25 shows for what purpose Korean churches use Godpia.com.¹²

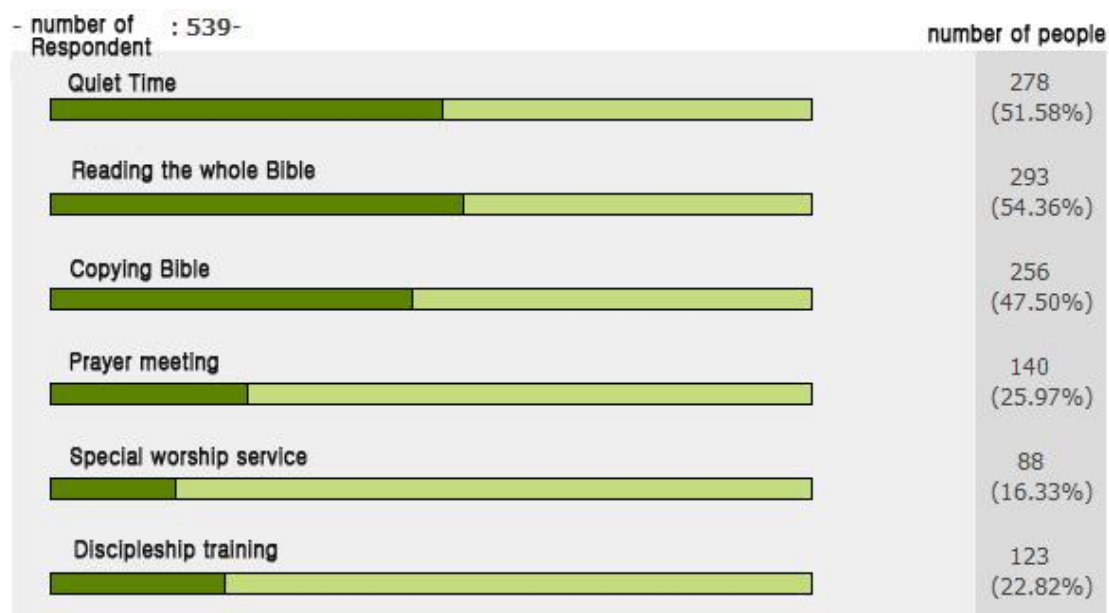


Fig. 25. Survey conducted by the Godpia.com

2) E-counseling service by Godpia.com

In the cyber counsel room of Godpia.com, eleven full-time professional counselors are always on call. These counselors usually receive calls from young people (with four counselors specializing in dealing with young people's problems) and adults (with the remaining seven manning this group), all with various issues. E-counseling also provides a self-test on personal characteristics and spiritual gifts to people in search of themselves.

¹² Sarang Community Church, "Survey conducted by the Godpia.com," available from http://with.godpia.com/frameindex.asp?url_flag=/poll/poll_view.asp?db_idx=43;Internet; accessed 11.March 2010.

These counseling services can be offered online either publicly or privately depending on the situation. After an individual completes the self-diagnostic test on personal characteristics and spiritual gifts, the test result and analysis will be given to him/her on the Web.

Chapter Summary

The Sarang community church's internet ministry division manages four different sectors (i.e., Web planning, Web designing, broadcasting production, and Web management) with professional groups of programmers, Web designers, TV producers and writers, and technicians since it launched its internet ministry in 1997.

Sarang's site has at least 200 domains under its main Web page. The system operates effectively using clear domain categorizations and a Web navigation system. Most of Sarang's departments have its own sub-domain to secure the department's autonomy in management. This autonomy has greatly encouraged members' participation.

The major contents provided over the Web are the broadcasting service of sermons and worship services, emailing service on the discipleship training and various church projects, and online quiet time. Internet broadcasting, which is the pillar of Sarang's internet ministry, provides multimedia contents in VOD format. Contents include video, audio, and text files of the worship service, files on promotional events and seminars, entertainment, UCC, and broadcast of evangelical missions.

Various scopes of services and contents are available in Godpia.com. For believers, Godpia.com provides an online Bible, online quiet time, Christian songs, and

educational resources for their spiritual growth. At the same time, the Web site feeds non believers with entertaining contents and an online counseling service. It also offers a private space on the Web for each individual to use privately or publicly. Private blogs from the site, when associated with other blogs or social networks, can form into voluntary online Christian communities. Many people have already signed up for the service.

Sarang's internet ministry division helps people by nurturing them with resources and tips that come in handy during discipleship training. At the same time, the division continuously tries to become a worthy role model to other Korean churches by improving and developing online technology and by producing more colorful and helpful Christian contents.

CHAPTER V
ASSESSMENT OF SARANG CHURCH'S INTERNET MINISTRY

Evaluation of Sarang's Internet Ministry

Introduction to Web Analysis

1. Methods of the Evaluation

The American Web Analytics Association defines Web analysis as follows:

Web Analytics is the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of Internet data for the purposes of understanding and optimizing Web usage.¹

Analyzing the Web uses three methods, each assessing the Web from different angles. Behavior Analytics focuses on the intention of the user's behavior, whereas Outcome Analytics evaluates the Web operation based on the Web company's and user's performance. Experience Analytics is used to understand the motive of a user's Web experience.

These Web analyses build a win-win relationship between the Web company and

¹. Web Analytics Association, "The Official WAA Definition of Web Analytics," available from http://www.webanalyticsassociation.org/resource/resmgr/PDF_standards/WebAnalyticsDefinitions.pdf; Internet; accessed 12.March 2010.

the users by helping both fully understand each other's Web experience. This mutual understanding leads them to take best actions as regards the Web site.² These analytics are done by measuring four main elements of the Web. I will evaluate the Sarang church's ministry by analyzing the following four Web elements.

1) Traffic Analysis

By measuring the amount of data traffic made by users' visits to the Web page, the researcher can gauge the users' interests in the site, read the Web page's current status, and predict the growth rate of the Web site.

2) Visitor Analysis

The researcher can grasp the users' Web behavior by gaining access to the visitors' profiles. The analysis on the visitors allows the researcher to understand the Web site's comparative market share in the same Web category.

3) Loyalty Analysis

This method measures the users' loyalty to the site by checking the amount of time spent on the Web site and the frequency of their visits.

4) Channel Analysis

The researcher can predict the market power of a Web site by comparing the difference in the promotional effect of the concerned Web site with that of its competitors. Specifically, the researcher needs to analyze the inflow and outflow channel sites and the interaction made in the channels to estimate the site's influence.

²Avinash Kaushik, *Web Analytics An Hour a Day*, trans., Jung Yu-Jin (Kyung Ki, South Korea: Acorn Publishing Company, 2008), 51–58.

2. Web Indicators

There are several Web indicators the researcher should treat seriously to estimate the Web site more accurately. The principal questions that need to be answered during the estimation process are “how did the visitors come to visit the site,” “through which passages and channels did they visit the site,” “what are the users’ age/sex proportion,” and “which Web content is most popular in the site.” The following are the ten Web indicators³ that I focused on during my Web analysis on Sarang’s internet ministry.

- Unique Visitor (exact number of visitors): This figure indicates the exact number of inferred individual who visited the Web site within a designated timeframe, with activity consisting of one or more visits to a site. Each individual is counted only once.

- Page View: It indicates how many times a page has been viewed.

- Session Visits: This refers to repetitive visits to a Web site, a counting of the number of visits made by a person in a one-hour timeframe. The ceiling of the number of visits a person can make within twenty-four hours is twenty-four visits.

The higher the figures are in this indicator, the more frequent and repetitive people's visits are to the site. As such, the Web site can be assumed to be attractive and resourceful to the people.

- Comparison Market Share. This shows the Web site’s relative importance in its field. It is shown by percentage, with 100 percent points referring to the total visits to the concerned Web sector.

³ American Web Analytics Association. Web Analytic Definitions, (insert publication date here).

- Loading Speed. It measures the time consumed in loading the Web page by counting how many seconds it takes between users' requests in entering a certain Web page for the Web page's loading to be completed.
- Growth Rate: This shows the trend in the Page View, Unique Visitor, and Session visits of a Web site during a certain period of time
- Sex/Age Proportion: This indicator shows the sex and age proportion of Web users during a certain time period.
- Duration Time: This indicator shows how much time a visitor spent on the Web site.
- Frequency: This refers to the number of times a certain action was performed by a unique visitor.
- Page Views per Visit: This refers to the number of page views in a reporting period divided by the number of visits in the same reporting period.

3. Subjects of the Evaluation and the Professional Web Evaluation Agency

The main subject of the evaluation is the Sarang church's Web site, but to assess it more objectively, I compared the Sarang case with two other Korean church's Web sites: the Onnuri church⁴ and the Samil church⁵. The Onnuri church is one of the Korean global mega-sized churches whose scale is very similar to that of Sarang. In contrast, the Samil church is small in size, but the excellent performance of its internet ministry is

⁴ The Onnunri church is an international church with nine different worship places in Korea and 25 church venues in other countries. It was built in 1985.

⁵ The Samil church is a newly emerging church targeting the young people. Currently, twenty-two thousand young people attend the church. It was established in 1995.

equally comparable with that of Sarang.

Rankey.com⁶ is one of the most credible Web analyses and evaluation agencies in Korea. I requested the assistance of Rankey.com for my research and was able to obtain data on how churches are conducting their internet ministries. Among the forty-five thousand Web sites Rankey.com manages, the ten listed as follows are the most popular under the “Church” category.

Rank	Name of church	Market Share	Daily Visitors	Web Site Address
1	World Mission Society Church of God	28.18%	34,964	http://www.watv.org
2	Samil church	15.13%	22,790	http://web.samilchurch.com
3	Sarang community church	11.87%	15,681	http://www.sarang.org
4	Onnuri	3.97%	7,482	http://www.onnuri.or.kr
5	Yonsei Central Baptist Church	3.88%	6,243	http://www.yonsei.or.kr
6	Yoido church	3.76%	7,268	http://yfgc.fgtv.com
7	Yullin church	3.37%	4,263	http://www.yullin.org
8	Woori church.	3.29%	5,873	http://www.woorichurch.org
9	Saeronam	2.27%	2,494	http://www.saeronam.or.kr
10	Samil Presbyterian Church	2.00%	2,624	http://www.samil.cc

Fig. 26. Most popular church Web Sites⁷

Web Analysis on Sarang’s Web Site⁸

⁶ Rankey.com(<http://www.rankey.com>) is a professional research agency specializing in Web analysis. It provides quality information on the comparative data of websites under the same categories. It also provides mass reviews and substantial feedback on the Web sites it gathers from its pool of internet panels. Rankey.com has the most number of panels in the business.

⁷ This ranking is January 2010 average.

⁸ The analysis was conducted based on data gathered from February 2009 to January 2010.

1. Web Traffic Analysis

1) Church's development in Web popularity

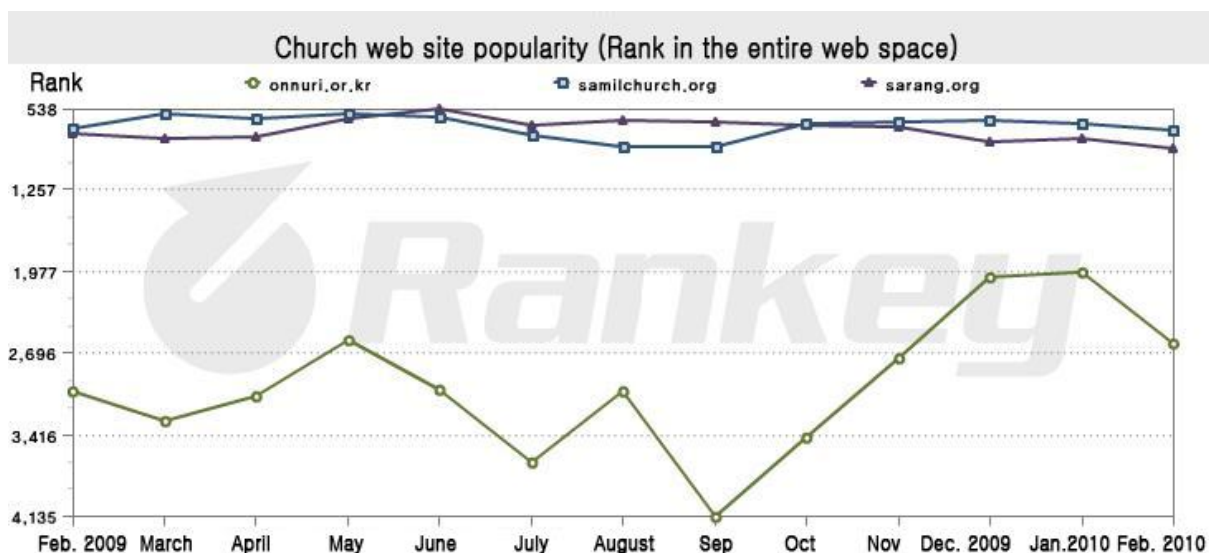


Fig. 27. Recent development in the three churches' internet ministries (February 2009–February 2010)

	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Church Rank	Total Rank	Church Rank	Total Rank	Church Rank	Total Rank
2009.2	3	750	2	719	9	3,033
2009.3	3	807	2	582	8	3,291
2009.4	3	781	2	625	7	3,078
2009.5	3	620	2	584	7	2,574
2009.6	2	538	3	605	8	3,012
2009.7	2	682	3	775	9	3,661
2009.8	2	642	3	877	9	3,025
2009.9	2	649	3	870	8	4,135
2009.10	3	687	2	671	7	3,439
2009.11	3	704	2	656	7	2,743
2009.12	3	832	2	647	7	2,024
2010.1	3	808	2	675	4	1,984
2010.2	3	805	2	727	6	2,605

The result shows the fluctuation of church site popularity in 2009. Sarang church's site ranked third, except in four months during the summer of 2009. The Samil

church ranked second last year except in the summer of 2009.

Considering Samil church's insufficient resource pool, technology, and contents compared with those of Sarang church, Sarang is expected to surpass greatly Samil church as regards internet ministry. In the case of Onnuri church, it concentrates on Christian television broadcasting. It has made remarkable progress in popularity and has moved from the ninth to the fourth place.

2) Number of unique visitors⁹

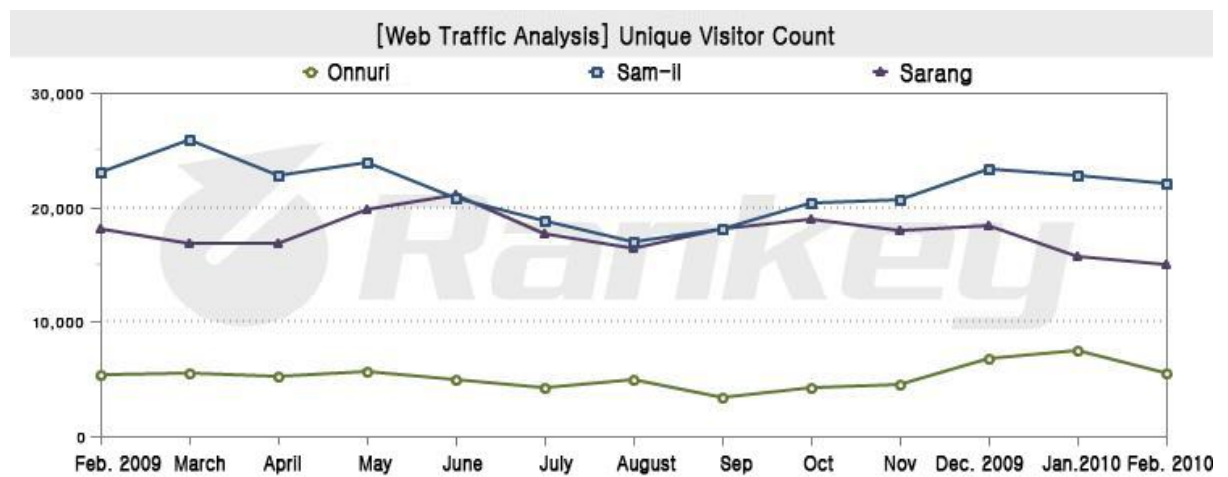


Fig. 28. Unique visitor Counter

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
2010.02.	15,046	▼635	22,097	▼693	5,505	▼1,977
2010.01.	15,681	▼2,647	22,790	▼489	7,482	▲655
2009.12.	18,328	▲406	23,279	▲2,626	6,827	▲2,335
2009.11.	17,922	▼972	20,653	▲212	4,492	▲251
2009.10.	18,894	▲812	20,441	▲2,371	4,241	▲794
2009.09.	18,082	▲1,601	18,070	▲1,094	3,447	▼1,559

⁹ Media Channel, "Internet Data Service," available from http://www.rankey.com/data/traffic.php?idx_type=uv#;Internet; accessed 15 March 2010.

2009.08.	16,481	▼1,219	16,976	▼1,785	5,006	▲820
2009.07.	17,700	▼3,360	18,761	▼2,049	4,186	▼804
2009.06.	21,060	▲1,250	20,810	▼3,144	4,990	▼705
2009.05.	19,810	▲2,913	23,954	▲1,181	5,695	▲497
2009.04.	16,897	▲65	22,773	▼3,143	5,198	▼309
2009.03.	16,832	▼1,245	25,916	▲2,894	5,507	▲90
2009.02.	18,077	-	23,022	-	5,417	-

Sarang's unique visitors (the actual number of visitor) drastically reduced in a span of one year (about three thousand). On the contrary, the unique visitors of Samil and Onnuri churches remained relatively stable, although there were minor fluctuations. On average, Sarang lost -1761 unique visitors, which was much more than the -928 unique visitors of Samil and +88 of Onnuri. The decline in visitors is a serious issue that Sarang should address with adequate strategies.

3) Page view count

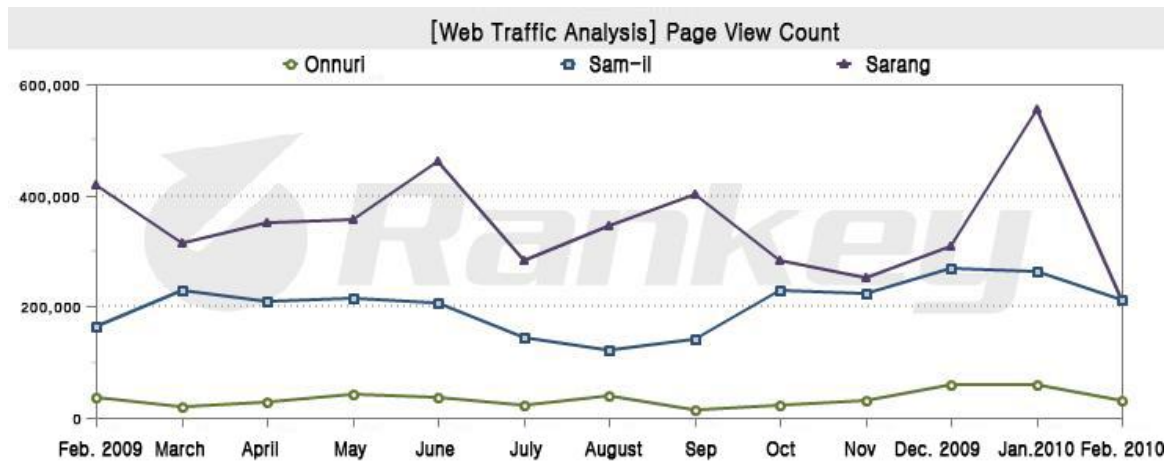


Fig. 29. Page view count

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	211,036	▼342,387	213,353	▼48,772	30,873	▼28,315
Jan. 2010	553,423	▲244,872	262,125	▼5,479	59,188	▲988
Dec. 2009	308,551	▲56,802	267,604	▲42,750	58,200	▲28,121
Nov.2009	251,749	▼30,416	224,854	▼4,445	30,079	▲8,429
Oct.2009	282,165	▼121,060	229,299	▲87,211	21,650	▲6,614
Sep.2009	403,225	▲57,462	142,088	▲19,697	15,036	▼25,450
August2009	345,763	▲62,341	122,391	▼21,650	40,486	▲17,669
July2009	283,422	▼178,528	144,041	▼62,546	22,817	▼14,590
June2009	461,950	▲104,330	206,587	▼7,317	37,407	▼5,018
May2009	357,620	▲6,434	213,904	▲5,851	42,425	▲15,159
April2009	351,186	▲37,983	208,053	▼20,760	27,266	▲7,267
March2009	313,203	▼104,751	228,813	▲63,911	19,999	▼16,792
February.2009	417,954	-	164,902	-	36,791	-

Page view refers to the number of times a page has been viewed by the visitors. The more page views, the more the site's contents are assumed to be colorful and useful. The Sarang church shows a satisfactory result in this sector. However, the fact that the Samil church, which has lesser resources, is on the same level as Sarang with regard to page view count, indicates that Sarang still has more room for improvement. The Onnuri Web site shows noticeably high page views per person. This indicates the high growth potential of the Onnuri Web site, although it currently has low overall popularity.

4) Session visits

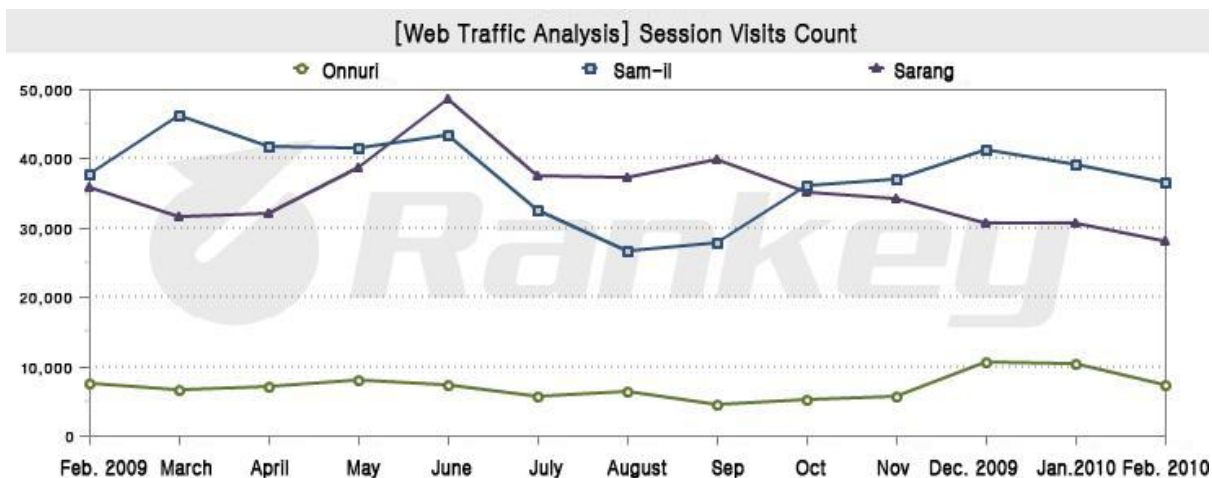


Fig. 30. Session visits

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Visits	Change	Visits	Change	Visits	Change
February 2010	28,115	▼2,576	36,458	▼2,680	7,364	▼2,909
Jan. 2010	30,691	▲136	39,138	▼2,197	10,273	▼257
Dec. 2009	30,555	▼3,610	41,335	▲4,313	10,530	▲4,826
Nov.2009	34,165	▼936	37,022	▲958	5,704	▲608
Oct.2009	35,101	▼4,768	36,064	▲8,166	5,096	▲614
Sep.2009	39,869	▲2,587	27,898	▲1,180	4,482	▼1,784
August2009	37,282	▼189	26,718	▼5,932	6,266	▲699
July2009	37,471	▼11,044	32,650	▼10,839	5,567	▼1,800
June2009	48,515	▲9,833	43,489	▲1,980	7,367	▼680
May2009	38,682	▲6,518	41,509	▼131	8,047	▲886
April2009	32,164	▲574	41,640	▼4,509	7,161	▲497
March2009	31,590	▼4,261	46,149	▲8,357	6,664	▼805
February.2009	35,851	-	37,792	-	7,469	-

A high session visit count indicates the repetitive visits made by Web users. The figure increases as more users find the Web contents attractive and resourceful. Sarang's number of session visit decreases, whereas that of the others increased. Ironically, Samil

and Onnuri, which are late starters in internet ministry, showed a strong upward tendency, whereas Sarang, which had a good head start, entered a period of stagnation.

5) Comparison market share

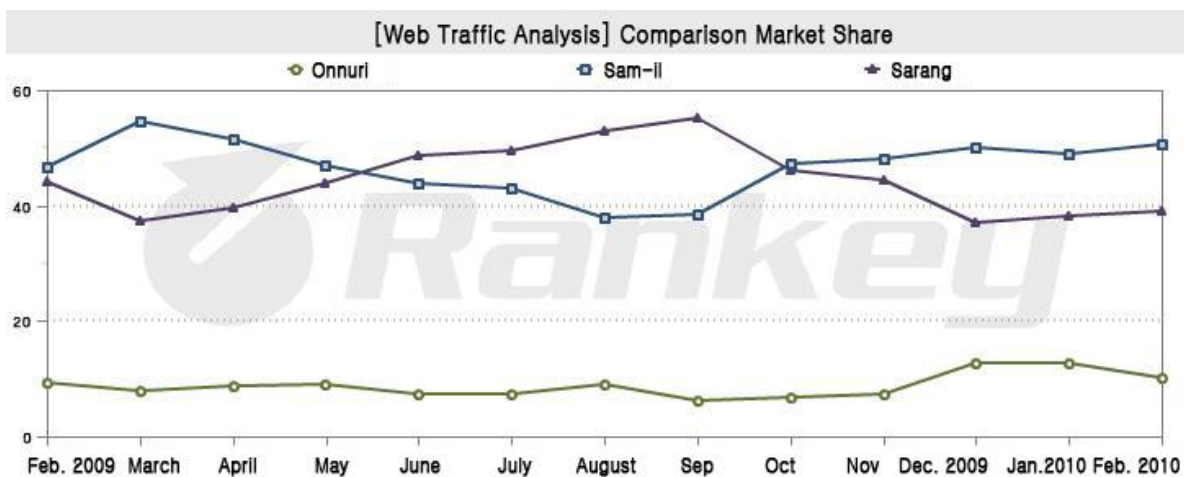


Fig. 31. Comparison market share

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	39.08%	▲0.77	50.68%	▲1.82	10.24%	▼2.59
Jan. 2010	38.31%	▲1.24	48.86%	▼1.29	12.83%	▲0.05
Dec. 2009	37.07%	▼7.36	50.15%	▲2	12.78%	▲5.36
Nov.2009	44.43%	▼1.6	48.15%	▲0.86	7.42%	▲0.74
Oct.2009	46.03%	▼9.15	47.29%	▲8.68	6.68%	▲0.48
Sep.2009	55.18%	▲2.12	38.61%	▲0.59	6.20%	▼2.72
August2009	53.06%	▲3.55	38.02%	▼5.12	8.92%	▲1.57
July2009	49.51%	▲0.69	43.14%	▼0.62	7.35%	▼0.06
June2009	48.82%	▲4.98	43.76%	▼3.28	7.41%	▼1.71
May2009	43.84%	▲4.11	47.04%	▼4.39	9.12%	▲0.27
April2009	39.73%	▲2.3	51.43%	▼3.25	8.85%	▲0.95
March2009	37.43%	▼6.77	54.68%	▲8.09	7.90%	▼1.31
February.2009	44.20%	-	46.59%	-	9.21%	-

The comparison market share is an index indicating the importance of the concerned Web site in its field. The trend in the past years shows that Sarang was on an upturn for eight months, whereas Samil was only on the rise for only six months. This result can be interpreted as Sarang providing its regular visitors good resources that cannot be easily found in other church Web sites.

6) Loading time (internet speed)

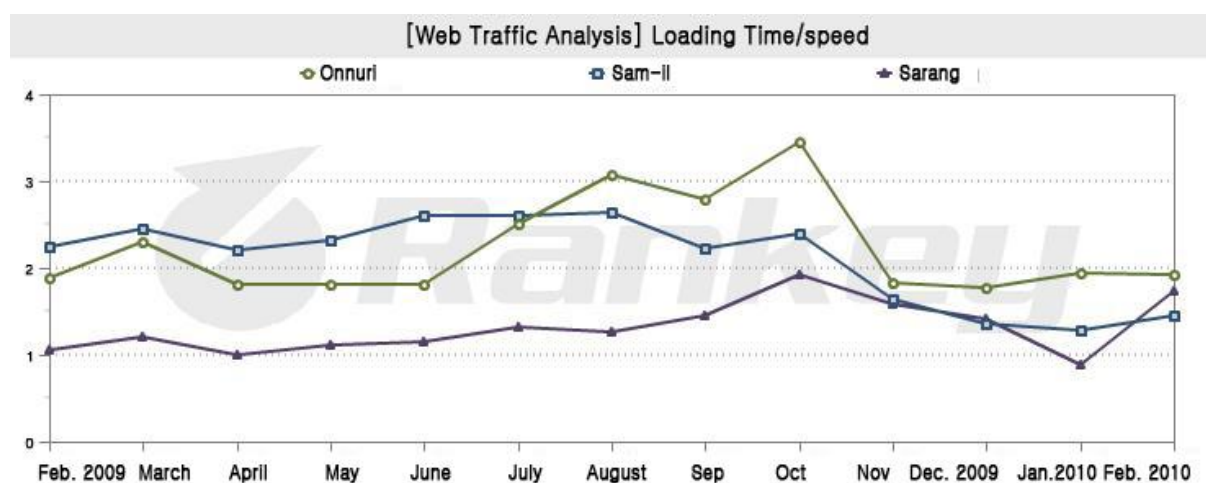


Fig. 32. Loading time

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	1.74	▲0.8	1.46	▲0.2	1.93	▼0.1
Jan. 2010	0.89	▼0.5	1.28	▼0.1	1.95	▲0.2
Dec. 2009	1.42	▼0.2	1.35	▼0.3	1.77	-
Nov.2009	1.59	▼0.3	1.65	▼0.7	1.83	▼1.7
Oct.2009	1.92	▲0.4	2.39	▲0.2	3.46	▲0.7
Sep.2009	1.46	▲0.2	2.23	▼0.4	2.79	▼0.3
August2009	1.27	-	2.64	-	3.07	▲0.6
July2009	1.32	▲0.1	2.6	-	2.51	▲0.7
June2009	1.16	▲0.1	2.6	▲0.3	1.82	-

May2009	1.12	▲0.1	2.33	▲0.1	1.82	-
April2009	1	▼0.2	2.2	▼0.3	1.81	▼0.5
March2009	1.2	▲0.1	2.46	▲0.3	2.31	▲0.4
February.2009	1.05	-	2.24	-	1.88	-

Loading time, in layman's terms, is the internet speed of a Web site. Technically, it refers to the amount of time it takes to open a Web page. This is an effective indicator in evaluating the quality of the Web service. The average loading time of Sarang is 1.3 seconds, whereas that of Samil is 2.1 seconds and that of Onnuri is 2.2 seconds. When evaluating the internet quality solely on this result, Sarang can be said to have the best quality internet platform among all Korean churches. However, that Samil is marking a rapid development in the Web technology field should be noted.

7) Growth rate of session visits (SV)

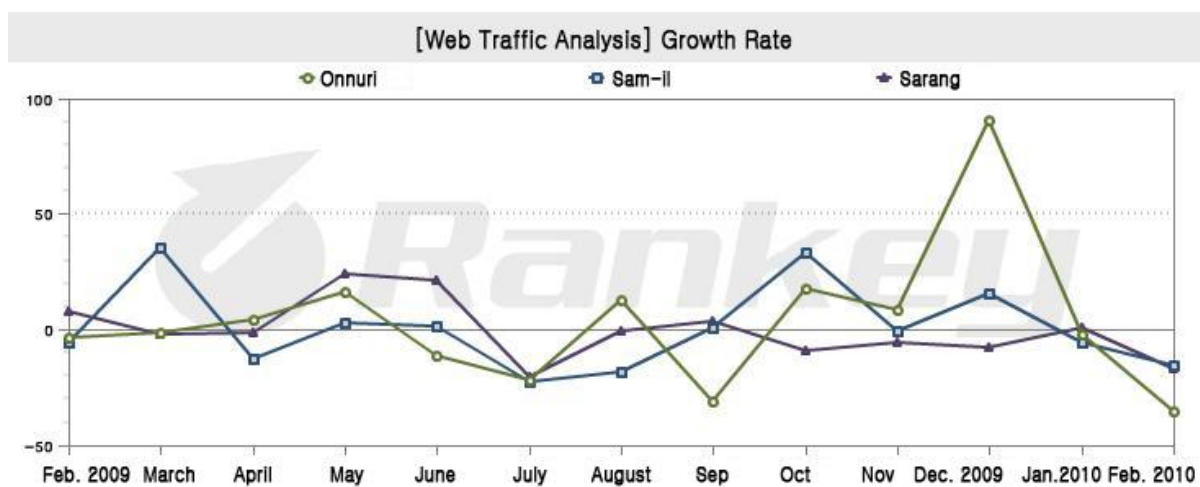


Fig. 33. Growth rate of session visits

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	28,115	▼2,576	36,458	▼2,680	7,364	▼2,909
Jan. 2010	30,691	▲136	39,138	▼2,197	10,273	▼257
Dec. 2009	30,555	▼3,610	41,335	▲4,313	10,530	▲4,826
Nov.2009	34,165	▼936	37,022	▲958	5,704	▲608
Oct.2009	35,101	▼4,768	36,064	▲8,166	5,096	▲614
Sep.2009	39,869	▲2,587	27,898	▲1,180	4,482	▼1,784
August2009	37,282	▼189	26,718	▼5,932	6,266	▲699
July2009	37,471	▼11,044	32,650	▼10,839	5,567	▼1,800
June2009	48,515	▲9,833	43,489	▲1,980	7,367	▼680
May2009	38,682	▲6,518	41,509	▼131	8,047	▲886
April2009	32,164	▲574	41,640	▼4,509	7,161	▲497
March2009	31,590	▼4,261	46,149	▲8,357	6,664	▼805
February.2009	35,851	-	37,792	-	7,469	-

The potential growth of a Web site can be estimated from the growth rate of the SV. The SV growth rate of Sarang is -6.67 on average, whereas that of Samil is +9.06 and that of Onnuri is +42.33. The potential growth of Sarang's Web site is believed to be relatively lower than that of the other two churches.

2. Visitor Analysis

1) Sex Proportion

The following shows the male-to-female sex ratio of Web visitors of the three churches in February 2010.



Fig. 34. Sex proportion

The Sarang church has a sex proportion of 64:36 (male: female), whereas that of Samil is 57.6: 42.4 and that of Onnuri is 70:30. The sex proportion is balanced in Samil, which means that the site is equally visited by both genders. In the case of the Sarang and Onnuri, the disproportionate ratio of female visitors raises the need to produce more content targeting the women.

(1) Male Demography

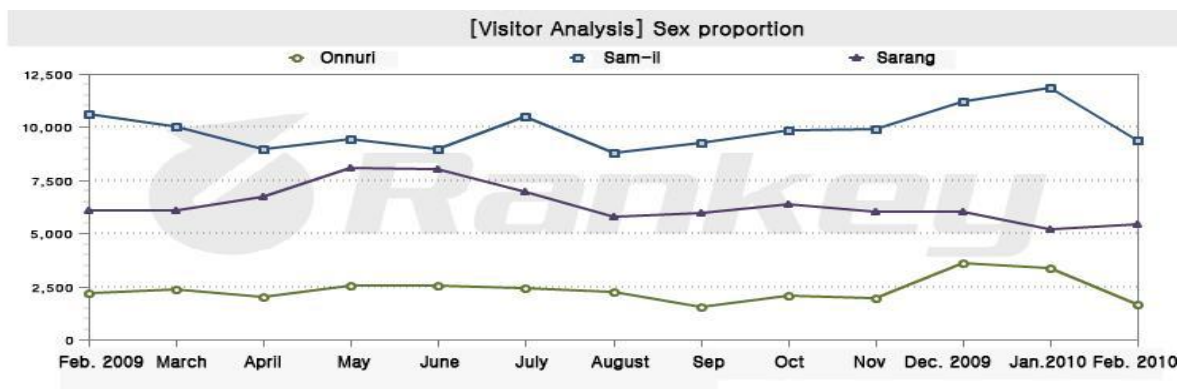


Fig. 35. Male demography

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	9,629	64.00%	12,729	57.61%	3,855	70.03%
Jan. 2010	10,474	66.79%	10,916	47.90%	4,119	55.05%
Dec. 2009	12,302	67.12%	12,072	51.86%	3,217	47.12%
Nov.2009	11,890	66.34%	10,745	52.03%	2,568	57.17%
Oct.2009	12,518	66.25%	10,606	51.89%	2,193	51.71%
Sep.2009	12,127	67.07%	8,842	48.93%	1,897	55.03%
August2009	10,694	64.89%	8,204	48.33%	2,748	54.89%
July2009	10,748	60.72%	8,290	44.19%	1,740	41.57%
June2009	13,033	61.89%	11,875	57.06%	2,455	49.20%
May2009	11,748	59.30%	14,514	60.59%	3,163	55.54%
April2009	10,158	60.12%	13,793	60.57%	3,195	61.47%
March2009	10,734	63.77%	15,888	61.31%	3,139	57.00%
February.2009	11,984	66.29%	12,424	53.97%	3,233	59.68%

The table above shows the fluctuation in male population and male sex proportion in the last year. The average male proportion is 64.2 percent in Sarang, 53.6 percent in Samil, and 55 percent in Onnuri. However, the trend shows a declining male population in all three churches. Sarang marked a -2.1 percent decrease in male visitors on average. Samil (-0.4) and Onnuri (-4.6) followed suit.

(2) Female Demography

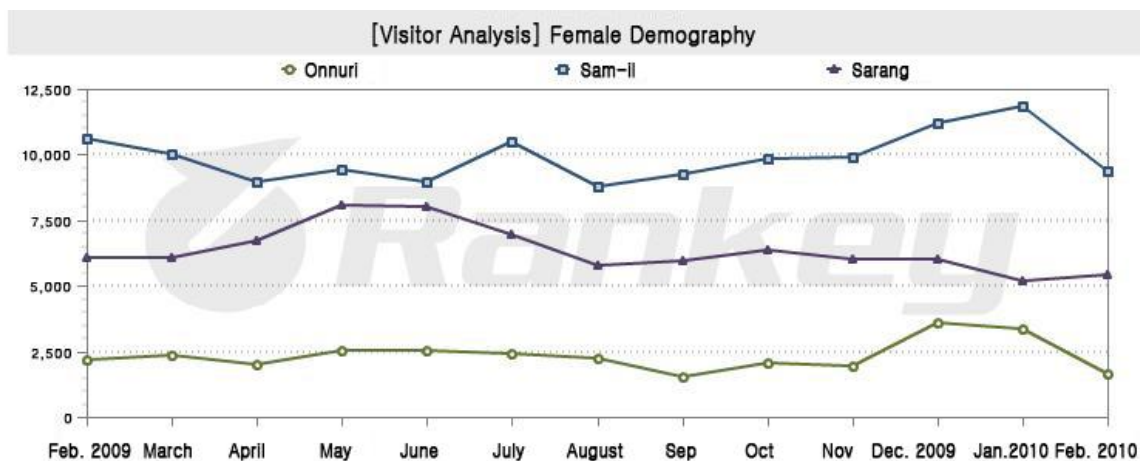


Fig. 36. Female demography

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	5,416	36.00%	9,369	42.40%	1,650	29.97%
Jan. 2010	5,207	33.21%	11,875	52.11%	3,363	44.95%
Dec. 2009	6,027	32.88%	11,208	48.15%	3,611	52.89%
Nov.2009	6,032	33.66%	9,909	47.98%	1,924	42.83%
Oct.2009	6,376	33.75%	9,835	48.11%	2,048	48.29%
Sep.2009	5,955	32.93%	9,228	51.07%	1,550	44.97%
August2009	5,786	35.11%	8,772	51.67%	2,258	45.11%
July2009	6,952	39.28%	10,470	55.81%	2,445	58.41%
June2009	8,026	38.11%	8,935	42.94%	2,535	50.80%
May2009	8,062	40.70%	9,440	39.41%	2,532	44.46%
April2009	6,739	39.88%	8,979	39.43%	2,003	38.53%
March2009	6,098	36.23%	10,028	38.69%	2,368	43.00%
February.2009	6,094	33.71%	10,598	46.03%	2,184	40.32%

The figures in the table exhibit the fluctuations in the female population trend and female ratio from 2009 to 2010. The average proportion of female online visitors is 35.8 percent for Sarang, 46.5 percent for Samil, and 45 percent for Onnuri. The number

of female visitors increased in all three churches despite the disproportionate gender proportion. The Sarang Web site currently has 2.1 percent more female visitors than last year. The female population of Samil's increased by 0.5 percent and that of Onnuri by 5 percent.

2) Age Proportion

(1) Age group

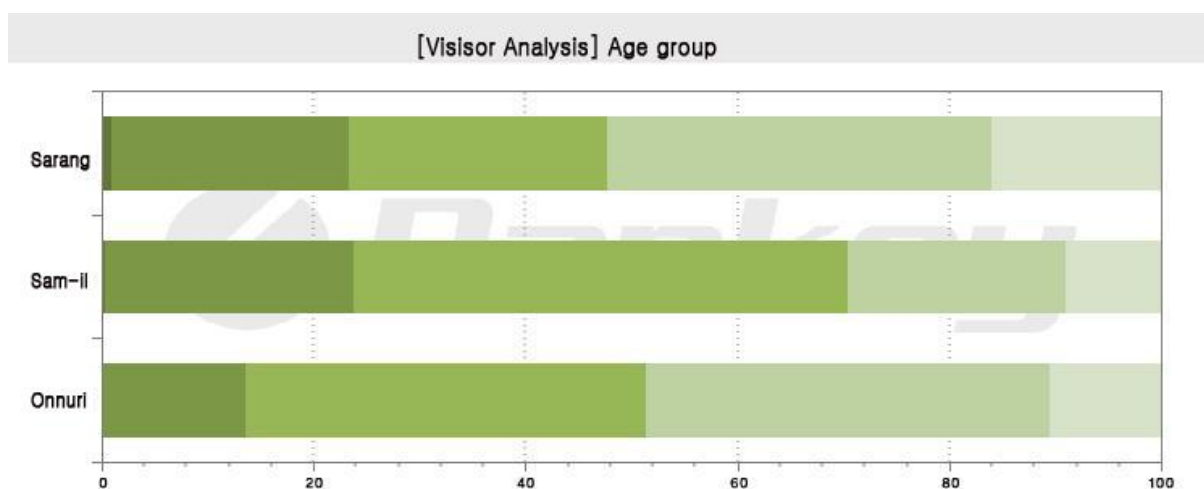


Fig. 37. Age group

Age group	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
Ten population	138	0.92%	67	0.30%	-	-
Age 20-29	3,368	22.38%	5,180	23.44%	744	13.51%
Age 30-39	3,683	24.48%	10,302	46.62%	2,086	37.89%
Age 40-49	5,454	36.25%	4,571	20.69%	2,097	38.09%
Age over 50	2,403	15.97%	1,979	8.96%	579	10.52%
Number of Average visitors	15,046	100%	22,097	100%	5,505	100%

In Sarang and Onnuri, the majority of the population is people in their forties, followed by those in their thirties and then by those in their twenties. However, Samil

shows a different pattern: people in their thirties are the majority, closely followed by those in their twenties and then by those in their forties. All three church Web sites were hardly ever visited by teens. Sarang’s Web site was the most popular for people over fifty (Sarang>Onnuri>Samil in popularity). According to these figures so far, Samil can be considered a “young” church compared with Sarang and Onnuri.

(2) Teen Population

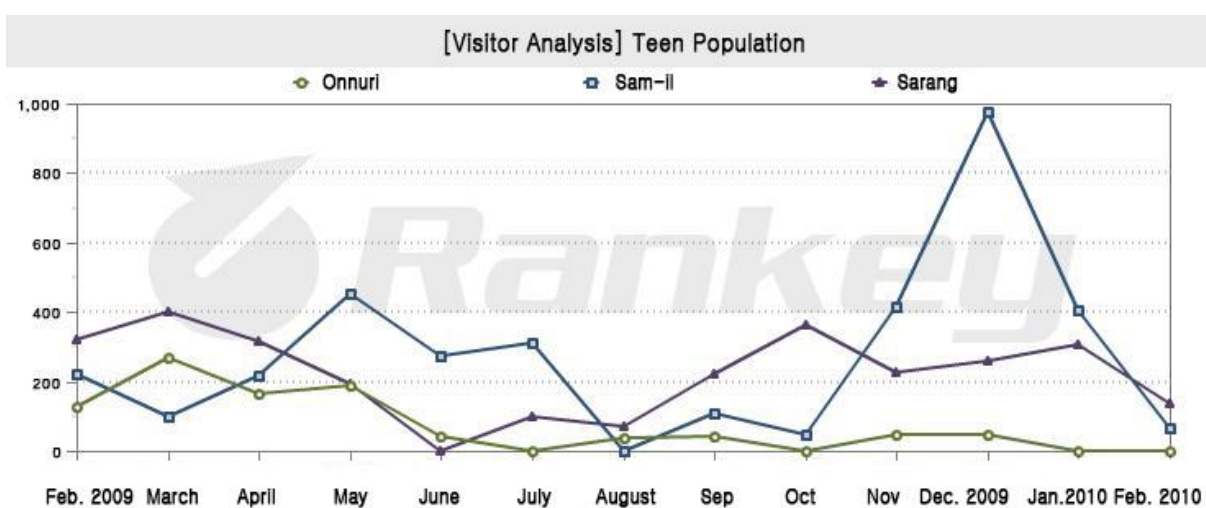


Fig. 38. Teen population

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Visitors	Percentage	Visitors	Percentage	Visitors	Percentage
February 2010	138	0.92%	67	0.30%	-	-
Jan. 2010	305	1.95%	404	1.77%	-	-
Dec. 2009	261	1.42%	978	4.20%	47	0.69%
Nov.2009	228	1.27%	414	2.00%	46	1.02%
Oct.2009	361	1.91%	49	0.24%	-	-
Sep.2009	222	1.23%	107	0.59%	41	1.19%
August2009	69	0.42%	-	-	40	0.80%
July2009	101	0.57%	312	1.66%	-	-
June2009	-	-	272	1.31%	41	0.82%
May2009	192	0.97%	453	1.89%	189	3.32%

April2009	314	1.86%	218	0.96%	164	3.16%
March2009	401	2.38%	101	0.39%	271	4.92%
February.2009	322	1.78%	221	0.96%	128	2.36%

According to the figures above, the average proportion of teen population accessing the Web site in 2009 is 1.39 percent for Sarang, 1.36 percent for Samil, and 2.03 percent for Onnuri. In all three churches, the proportion of the teen population took less than 2 percent of the whole population, a tiny share compared with the other age groups. This result shows and unfortunately confirms that the church Web sites are not very appealing to teenagers.

(3) Age 20–29

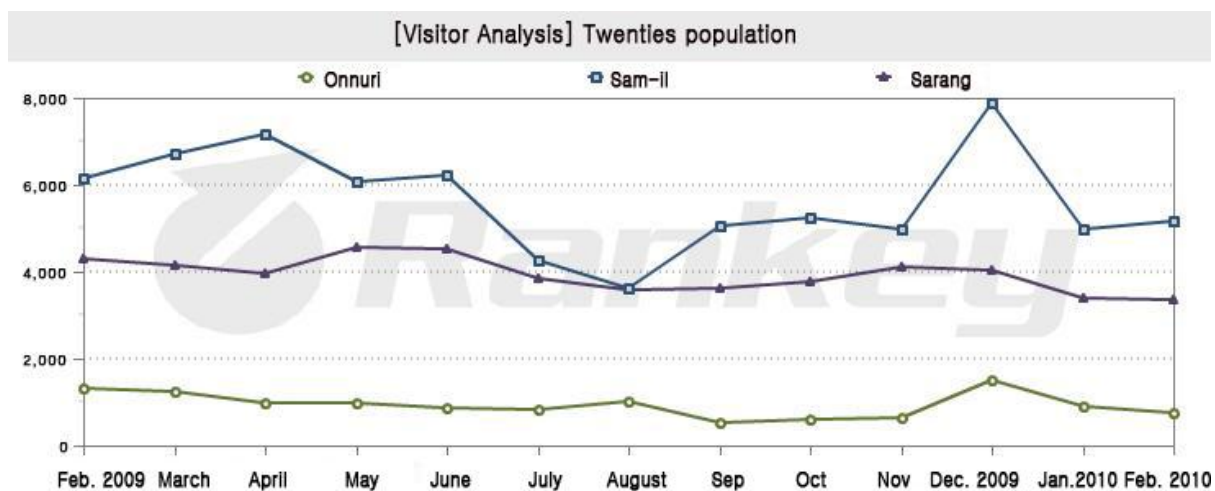


Fig. 39. Age 20–29

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	3,368	22.38%	5,180	23.44%	744	13.51%
Jan. 2010	3,413	21.77%	4,974	21.83%	915	12.23%
Dec. 2009	4,038	22.03%	7,885	33.87%	1,501	21.99%
Nov.2009	4,095	22.85%	4,989	24.16%	631	14.05%

Oct.2009	3,770	19.95%	5,254	25.70%	612	14.43%
Sep.2009	3,640	20.13%	5,045	27.92%	517	15.00%
August2009	3,569	21.66%	3,605	21.24%	1,003	20.04%
July2009	3,863	21.82%	4,255	22.68%	826	19.73%
June2009	4,538	21.55%	6,220	29.89%	865	17.33%
May2009	4,567	23.05%	6,073	25.35%	995	17.47%
April2009	3,957	23.42%	7,168	31.48%	980	18.85%
March2009	4,144	24.62%	6,724	25.95%	1,237	22.46%
February.2009	4,290	23.73%	6,154	26.73%	1,304	24.07%

In case of people in their twenties, they held 22.2 percent of the Web population in Sarang church, 26.2 percent in Samil, and 17.8 percent in Onnuri in chu2009 on average. Samil recorded a 0.5 percent increase in the twenties population, whereas Sarang and Onnuri lost this age group by -1.5 and -6.3 percent, respectively. The fluctuation in the Samil population is noticeable: slightly unstable yet dynamic.

(4) Age 30–39

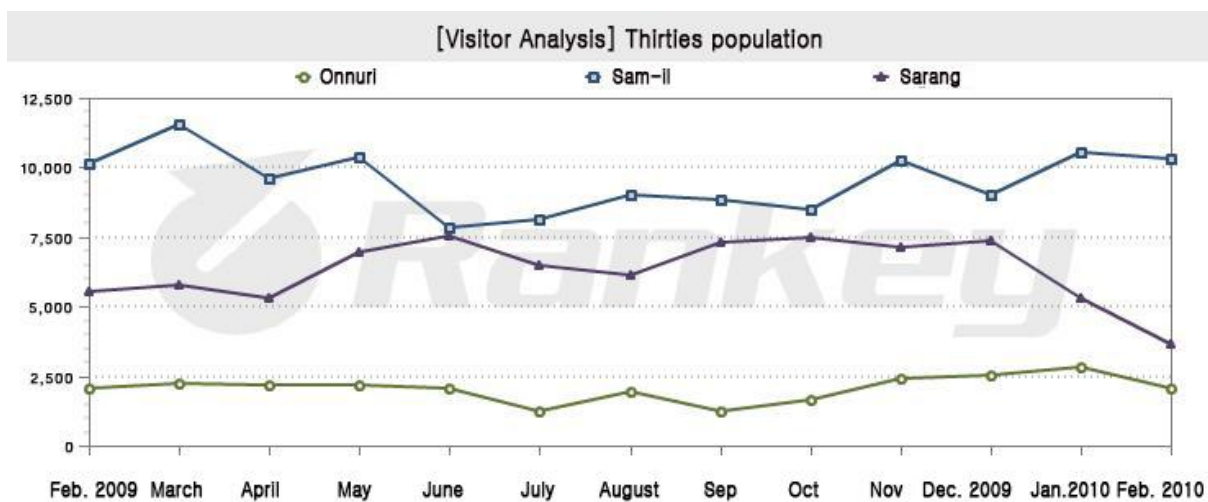


Fig. 40. Age 30–39

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	3,683	24.48%	10,302	46.62%	2,086	37.89%
Jan. 2010	5,314	33.89%	10,557	46.32%	2,853	38.13%
Dec. 2009	7,363	40.17%	9,007	38.69%	2,509	36.75%
Nov.2009	7,122	39.74%	10,249	49.62%	2,422	53.92%
Oct.2009	7,507	39.73%	8,518	41.67%	1,646	38.81%
Sep.2009	7,334	40.56%	8,839	48.92%	1,249	36.23%
August2009	6,159	37.37%	9,013	53.09%	1,918	38.31%
July2009	6,475	36.58%	8,111	43.23%	1,224	29.24%
June2009	7,549	35.85%	7,868	37.81%	2,040	40.88%
May2009	6,987	35.27%	10,374	43.31%	2,201	38.65%
April2009	5,320	31.48%	9,625	42.26%	2,180	41.94%
March2009	5,753	34.18%	11,558	44.60%	2,225	40.40%
February.2009	5,543	30.66%	10,120	43.96%	2,054	37.92%

The average proportion of users aged 30–39 is 35.4 percent for Sarang, 44.6 percent for Samil, and 39.2 percent for Onnuri. All three churches recorded an increase in this age group compared with last year at 4.7 percent (Sarang), 0.7 percent (Samil), and 1.2 percent (Onnuri). Whereas Samil and Onnuri's population at the thirties age group remained steady, the fluctuation in Sarang in that age group was noticeable.

(5) Age 40–49

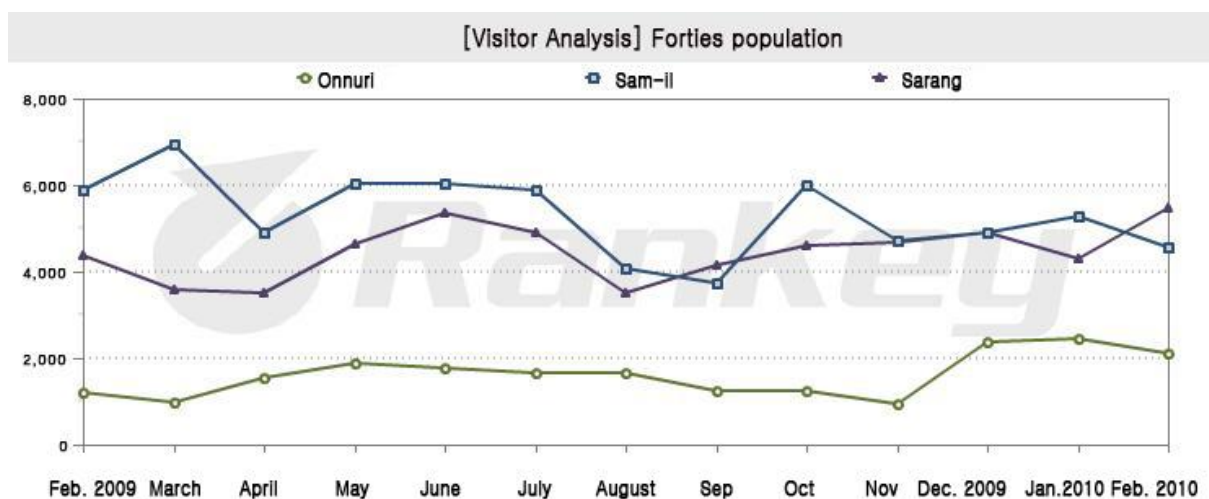


Fig. 41. Age 40-49

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	5,454	36.25%	4,571	20.69%	2,097	38.09%
Jan. 2010	4,309	27.48%	5,284	23.19%	2,443	32.65%
Dec. 2009	4,902	26.75%	4,887	20.99%	2,375	34.79%
Nov.2009	4,675	26.09%	4,704	22.78%	943	20.99%
Oct.2009	4,598	24.34%	6,013	29.42%	1,227	28.93%
Sep.2009	4,156	22.98%	3,741	20.70%	1,250	36.26%
August2009	3,514	21.32%	4,084	24.06%	1,675	33.46%
July2009	4,901	27.69%	5,871	31.29%	1,664	39.75%
June2009	5,353	25.42%	6,026	28.96%	1,758	35.23%
May2009	4,658	23.51%	6,054	25.27%	1,888	33.15%
April2009	3,493	20.67%	4,905	21.54%	1,557	29.95%
March2009	3,591	21.33%	6,929	26.74%	964	17.50%
February.2009	4,378	24.22%	5,874	25.51%	1,221	22.54%

The proportion of users aged over forty in each church Web site in 2009 is 25.2 percent for Sarang, 24.7 percent for Samil, and 31 percent for Onnuri. Whereas Sarang and Onnuri church recorded an increase in the 40-49 age group at 1 and 8.5 percent, respectively, Samil church marked a decrease by 0.8 percent.

(6) Age over 50

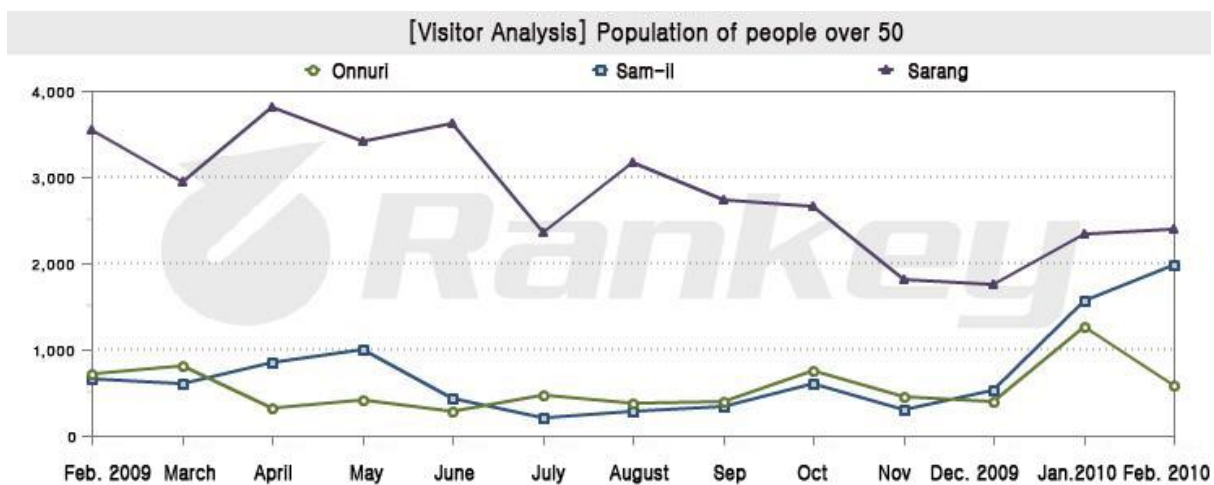


Fig . 42. Age over 50

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
February 2010	2,403	15.97%	1,979	8.96%	579	10.52%
Jan. 2010	2,340	14.92%	1,572	6.90%	1,271	16.99%
Dec. 2009	1,763	9.62%	522	2.24%	395	5.79%
Nov.2009	1,802	10.05%	298	1.44%	451	10.04%
Oct.2009	2,658	14.07%	607	2.97%	757	17.85%
Sep.2009	2,731	15.10%	338	1.87%	389	11.29%
August2009	3,169	19.23%	275	1.62%	370	7.39%
July2009	2,360	13.33%	212	1.13%	471	11.25%
June2009	3,619	17.18%	425	2.04%	287	5.75%
May2009	3,406	17.19%	998	4.17%	423	7.43%
April2009	3,815	22.58%	858	3.77%	318	6.12%
March2009	2,943	17.48%	605	2.33%	808	14.67%
February.2009	3,544	19.61%	653	2.84%	711	13.13%

In Sarang, users over 50 accounted for 15.9 percent of the Web population on

average. The proportion of the same age group in other churches was low. The proportion of the senior group was 3.3 percent in Samil and 10.6 percent in Onnuri. There was a decrease in the senior population last year (Sarang by -3.7 percent and Onnuri by -2.5 percent), with the exception of the relatively “young” Samil church, which recorded an increase in the proportion of senior users by 0.5 percent.

3. Loyalty Analysis.

1) Duration Time

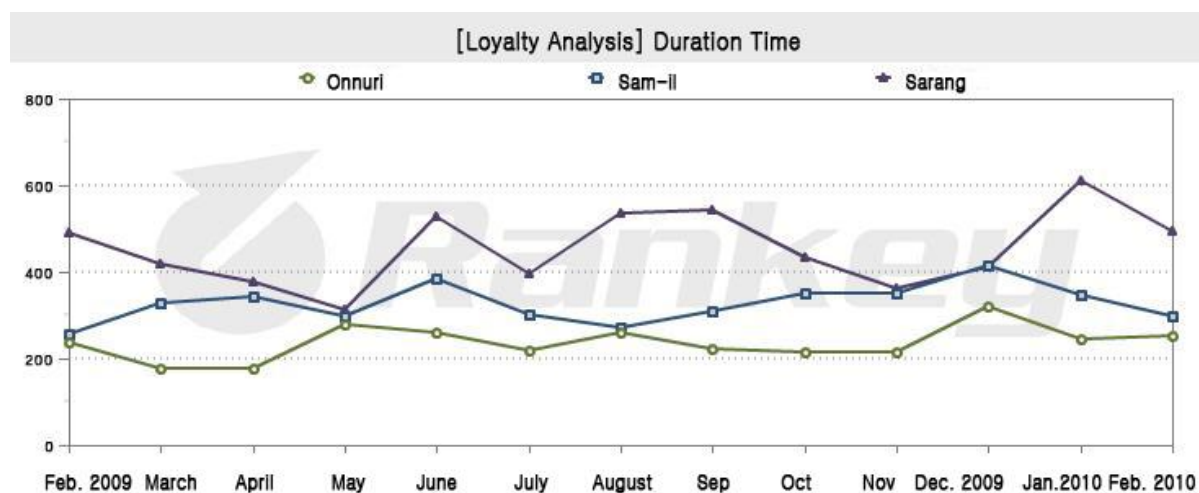


Fig. 43. Duration time

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Start	Change	Start	Change	Start	Change
February 2010	0:08:13	▼0:01:55	0:04:58	▼0:00:47	0:04:12	▲0:00:07
Jan. 2010	0:10:09	▲0:03:19	0:05:45	▼0:01:09	0:04:05	▼0:01:15
Dec. 2009	0:06:50	▲0:00:46	0:06:54	▲0:01:03	0:05:21	▲0:01:46
Nov.2009	0:06:03	▼0:01:08	0:05:50	▼0:00:01	0:03:34	▼0:00:01
Oct.2009	0:07:12	▼0:01:52	0:05:52	▲0:00:42	0:03:35	▼0:00:08
Sep.2009	0:09:05	▲0:00:09	0:05:09	▲0:00:37	0:03:44	▼0:00:35
August2009	0:08:55	▲0:02:18	0:04:31	▼0:00:28	0:04:19	▲0:00:42
July2009	0:06:37	▼0:02:11	0:05:00	▼0:01:25	0:03:37	▼0:00:44

June2009	0:08:49	▲0:03:34	0:06:26	▲0:01:29	0:04:21	▼0:00:16
May2009	0:05:14	▼0:01:04	0:04:56	▼0:00:45	0:04:38	▲0:01:39
April2009	0:06:19	▼0:00:40	0:05:42	▲0:00:12	0:02:58	▲0:00:00
March2009	0:06:59	▼0:01:09	0:05:29	▲0:01:11	0:02:58	▼0:00:57
February.2009	0:08:09	▲0:03:37	0:04:18	▼0:00:55	0:03:55	▲0:00:44

Duration time, the amount of time people spend on the Web, best reflects people's interest on the Web site's contents. The more the duration time, the higher the people's interest is. Sarang church's duration time is seven minutes and thirty-two seconds, a relatively higher figure compared with five minutes and twenty-nine seconds of Samil and three minutes and fifty-five seconds of Onnuri. This can be interpreted as Sarang having quality Web content favored by the users. However, examining the figures more closely, the number of visitors decreases as the duration time increases. This discrepancy suggests that Sarang's Web contents may not be as excellent as those of the others. Further explanation about this evaluation will be presented in the next section.

2) Frequency

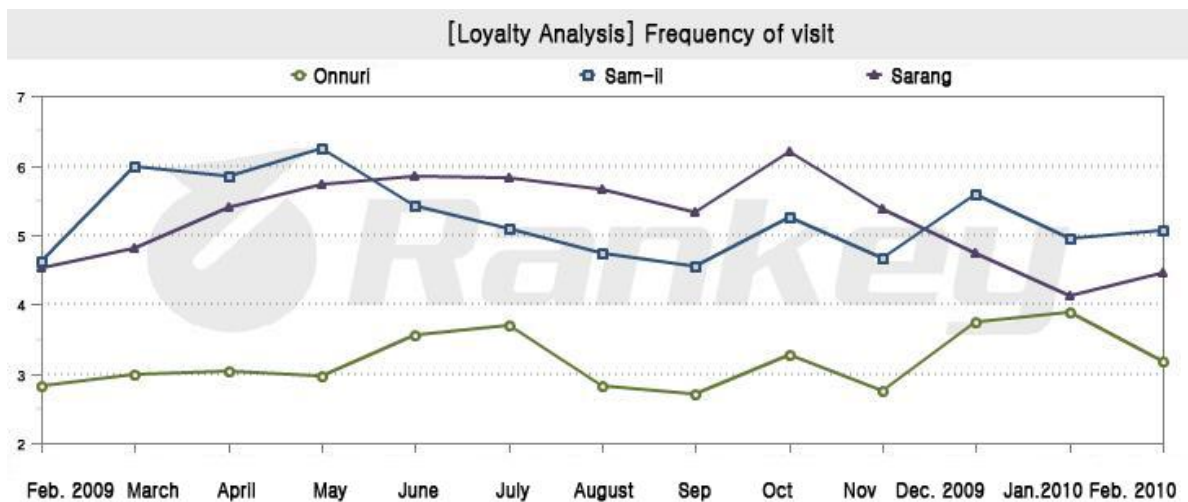


Fig. 44. Frequency

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
February 2010	4.45	▲0.33	5.07	▲0.11	3.19	▼0.69
Jan. 2010	4.12	▼0.63	4.96	▼0.63	3.88	▲0.13
Dec. 2009	4.75	▼0.63	5.59	▲0.91	3.75	▲0.98
Nov.2009	5.38	▼0.82	4.68	▼0.58	2.77	▼0.51
Oct.2009	6.2	▲0.86	5.26	▲0.70	3.28	▲0.56
Sep.2009	5.34	▼0.31	4.56	▼0.19	2.72	▼0.10
August2009	5.65	▼0.18	4.75	▼0.34	2.82	▼0.88
July2009	5.83	▼0.01	5.09	▼0.34	3.7	▲0.15
June2009	5.84	▲0.11	5.43	▼0.81	3.55	▲0.58
May2009	5.73	▲0.32	6.24	▲0.40	2.97	▼0.07
April2009	5.41	▲0.61	5.84	▼0.15	3.04	▲0.04
March2009	4.8	▲0.26	5.99	▲1.36	3	▲0.18
February.2009	4.54	▲0.09	4.63	▼0.31	2.82	▼0.09

This figure shows that the higher the frequency, the more visits are made by regular members than new visitors. The frequency of all three churches increased: Sarang by 0.7 percent, Samil by 0.6 percent, and Onnuri by 0.4 percent, indicating that these churches have loyal regular visitors.

3) Page Views per Visit



Fig. 45. Page views per visit

Time period	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Value	Change	Value	Change	Value	Change
February 2010	14.03	▼21.26	9.66	▼1.84	5.61	▼2.30
Jan. 2010	35.29	▲18.46	11.5	-	7.91	▼0.61
Dec. 2009	16.83	▲2.78	11.5	▲0.61	8.52	▲1.82
Nov.2009	14.05	▼0.88	10.89	▼0.33	6.7	▲1.60
Oct.2009	14.93	▼7.37	11.22	▲3.36	5.1	▲0.74
Sep.2009	22.3	▲1.32	7.86	▲0.65	4.36	▼3.73
August2009	20.98	▲4.97	7.21	▼0.47	8.09	▲2.64
July2009	16.01	▼5.92	7.68	▼2.25	5.45	▼2.05
June2009	21.93	▲3.88	9.93	▲1.00	7.5	▲0.05
May2009	18.05	▼2.73	8.93	▼0.21	7.45	▲2.20
April2009	20.78	▲2.17	9.14	▲0.31	5.25	▲1.62
March2009	18.61	▼4.51	8.83	▲1.67	3.63	▼3.16
February.2009	23.12	▲9.63	7.16	▼3.02	6.79	▲1.97

Page view (per visit) refers to how many Web pages a visitor checks while staying on the site. The average page view of Sarang is 19.76 pages, which is much more than the 9.36 pages of Samil and 6.34 pages of Onnuri. However, considering that there

was a constant decrease in Sarang's visitors, this figure is unsettling because it may indicate that Sarang's Web site has an ineffective structure, forcing visitors to browse unnecessary pages before going to where they want to go. Sarang needs to streamline its Web site's navigation system and adjust the display of the overall structure.

4. Channel Analysis

1) Inflow Channel

Number	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Inflow Site	Rate	Inflow Site	Rate	Inflow Site	Rate
1	Naver	38.8%	Naver	40.7%	Naver	34.5%
2	Godpia	15.8	Daum	10.6	CGNTV	20.2
3	Daum	13.5	Nate	6.9	Daum	15.9
4	Nate	3.1	Woori Church	4.8	Yahoo Korea	4.1
5	Samil Church	2.8	Cyworld	4.3	Nate	3.3
6	Logger	1.7	Sarang Church	3.3	Yonsei Church	2.4
7	Woori Church	1.4	Yahoo Korea	1.3	Sarang Church	1.7
8	Y2k	1.4	Godpeople	1.3	Woori Church	1.7
9	Mgoon	1.1	Yoido Church	1.2	Google Korea	1.6
10	Chosun.com	1.1	MTN	1.1	Gajai	1.0

Fig. 46. Inflow channel

Fig. 46 shows through which channels visitors enter the church Web site in February 2010. The most popular channel site in all three churches is Naver.com, one of the largest portal sites in Korea, followed by Godpia.com for the Sarang church and CGNTV for the Onnuri church. Godpia.com is a Christian portal run by the Sarang church, whereas CGNTV is a Christian TV satellite station as well as a Christian portal site operated by the Onnuri church. Clearly, attracting visitors is easier when a church

owns a portal site or an online broadcasting site.

Other church Web sites are the other minor channel sites used by visitors to enter the three churches' Web sites: Woori church in Bundang, Yoido Full Gospel Church, Samil church, Sarang church, and Yonsei Central Church. Interestingly, the Woori church's Web site was used as a channel to all three churches' Web sites.

2) Outflow Channel

Number	Sarang Church		Samil Church		Onnuri Church	
	Outflow Site	Rate	Outflow Site	Rate	Outflow Site	Rate
1	Naver	32.7%	Naver	22.3%	Naver	25.7%
2	Godpia	8.5	Hanafos	8.0	Google Korea	8.9
3	Y2K	8.2	Cyworld	7.3	Cyworld	5.3
4	Daum	7.8	Daum	6.8	Duranno	5.2
5	Samil Church	4.6	SaRang Church	4.7	Yahoo Korea	3.7
6	Yulin Church	3.9	Nate	2.9	Samil Church	3.6
7	EDUhansol	3.0	Chosun.com	2.5	CGNTV	3.6
8	Mgoon	2.0	Godpeople	1.3	Daum	3.5
9	Yonsei Church	1.9	CGNTV	2.2	Nate	3.5
10	MBC	1,8	Woori Church	2.1	Ktdom.com	3.4

Fig. 47. Outflow channel

Fig. 47 shows that the most frequently used channel site to exit the church Web site is Naver.com, which is also the top inflow channel, followed by Godpia.com of Sarang and CGNTV of Onnuri. These results are similar to those of the inflow channel, proving the effectiveness of Christian portal sites in connecting the users to the Web sites. Possibly, a church with its own portals site can attract visitors more easily.

The other outflow channels listed in the figure are the Web sites of Samil church,

Yulin church, Yonsei Central Church, the Sarang church, and the Woori church. In this case, Samil church shares the outflow channel of Sarang and Onnuri.

3) Interactive Cross-visits

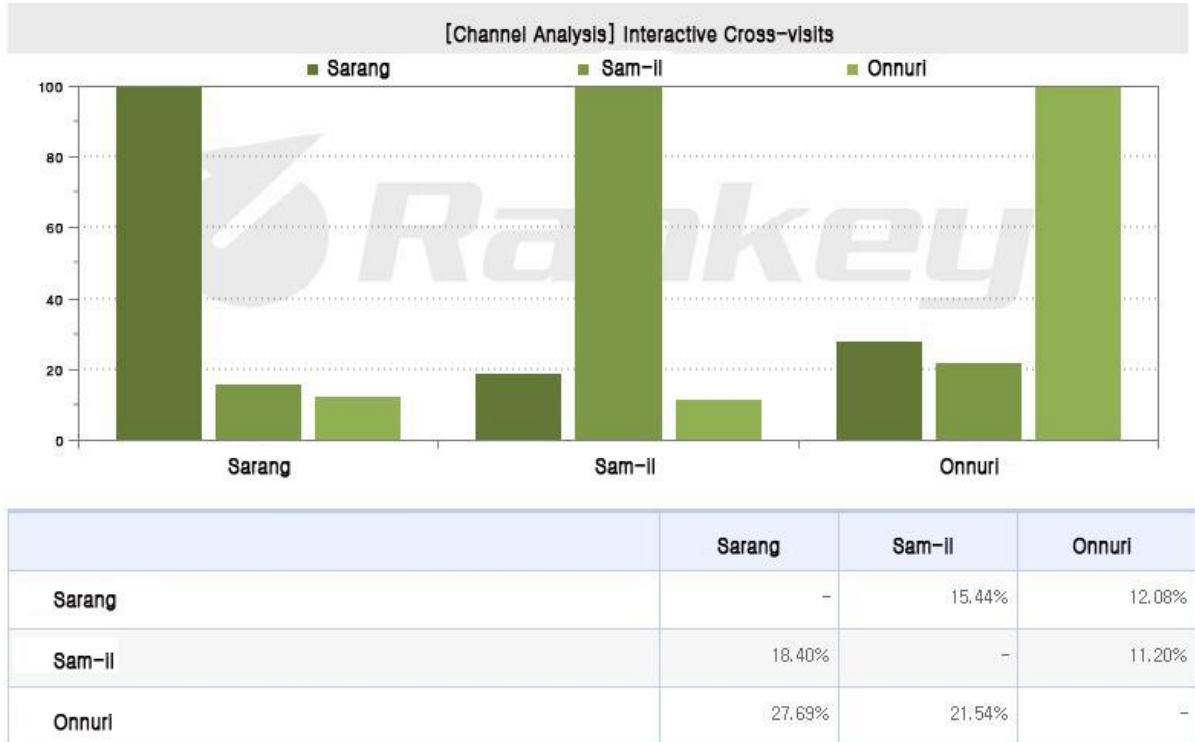


Fig. 48. Interactive cross-visits

The number of cross-visits among the three churches' Web sites gives an idea of the visitors' preference for each site. When understood correctly, the pattern obtained from the cross-visits can later be used effectively for setting internet strategies. Sarang's cross visits are 27.52 percent in total, a figure much lower than that of Samil at 29.60 percent and Onnuri at 49.23 percent. This indicates that the Sarang's visitors are more satisfied with its church's Web site than those of the other churches. Alternatively, it can

also infer that most of Sarang's visits come from its own members rather than from the outside, that is, new visitor groups. Thus, Sarang needs to create promotional events and advertisements to attract new visitors.

Internal evaluation of Sarang's internet ministry

- An interview with Sarang church's internet ministry director

The following are the replies I received from an interview with a director of Sarang's internet division. The interview took place on 24 February 2010 in Sarang's internet ministry office.

1. Internet ministry structure

There are fifty employees of the media department, including the engineers. Among the employees, thirty work for the internet ministry division. Both professionals and amateurs comprise the staff group. There are only a few experienced people, even in the programming and Web design sectors.

2. Home page management

1) Visitors per month, page view per month, and registered online members

Twenty thousand visitors visit Sarang's Web site per month. The monthly average of the page view count is three hundred thousand. Three hundred sixty thousand people are officially registered members of Sarang's Web site.

2) Disposition (of visitors by sex, age, frequency of visits, and duration time)

Visitors of the Sarang church's Web site are 60 percent of male and 40 percent female. People aged over forty are the majority age group, accounting for most of the proportion.

Integrating the figures above, a hypothetical average visitor would visit Sarang's Web site five times a month and stays on it for about eight minutes. Eighty percent of the Web site members are from different churches other than Sarang; two percent of the Web membership is non-believers. The yearly budget for the Web site management is around 500 million Korean Won

3. Contents of the internet ministry

1) Programs of interest and strategies

In a survey administered to Sarang's internet ministry team members, most of the respondents selected the pastor's sermon and worship service as the most appealing contents. They pointed out the seminars, conferences, and worship service (including the sermon part as a whole) to be Sarang's strategic Web contents.

The staff would like Web planning and Web technology to be developed further. However, Sarang's current situation is not conducive for this. A full-out investment on the Web aspect had to be de facto suspended due to the heavy workload from offline projects (some are online projects) and the team's lack of revenue and professional human resources.

2) Focus of the internet ministry

The internet ministry focuses mainly on spreading the Gospel to the people and providing quality education about the Gospel. Sarang's Christian portal site Godpia.com performs this duty by supporting Korean churches by providing Christian resources.

3) Online community within the church

Sarang was once famous for its active online community formed within and around its church Web site. Currently, however, the online community is shrinking due to some internal reasons and is showing signs of stagnation. Until its Web site is restored to its normal state, the opinions of its members will not be heard online, causing them to feel left out in the church's decision-making process.

4. Staff's self-diagnosis on the internet ministry

1) Major accomplishment of the internet ministry

The major accomplishment of Sarang's internet ministry is the building of Sarang's reputation. Sarang church became a high profile church as well as a role model to any church interested in establishing an internet ministry. In the same way, the internet ministry became a major feature indispensable to Sarang.

2) Accomplishment of the internet ministry in evangelism

Although measuring the internet ministry's contribution to evangelism using hard numbers is difficult, Sarang's evangelism work online can be considered successful considering the fact 2 percent of Sarang's online members are non-Christians.

3) Influence of internet ministry on Korean Christianity

The influence of Sarang on Korean churches is tremendous in several aspects. Sarang's Web site provides and shares quality information and resources with Korean churches at no cost. Sarang also holds numerous seminars and conferences through special church organizations, such as the Disciple Making Ministries International, to help church leaders and loyal church members.

5. Future plans of the internet ministry

Sarang's goal is to develop its internet ministry system further and provide more useful programs and contents to Korean churches. Its long-term goal is to realize the true form of a global ministry worldwide.

6. Answers to other questions

1) Q: Why do you think Sarang fell behind Samil church in Rankey.com's statistics?

A: There are many variables in and causes of this phenomenon. I strongly believe that it is just a temporary situation that will soon be remedied. This kind of fluctuation has happened before. You need to consider the fact that the Samil church's population is mostly made up of young people.

2) Q: How satisfied are the online audiences with the sermon?

A: They are very much satisfied. Most of Sarang's Web traffic is caused by people from other churches looking for our sermons. Only 20 percent of traffic is caused within Sarang.

3) Q: What was the outcome of the survey conducted in January 2010?

A: A survey on the satisfaction level of Sarang's Web site was administered to the Sarang's internet ministry staff from January 18 to 31. According to the result, more than 98 percent of staff was "satisfied" with Sarang's internet ministry, making the survey almost pointless.

4) Q: How are the decisions made and communicated between the internet ministry staff and the church leaders?

A: The two major decision makers are the group of church elders and the pastor. The typical top-down approach is how most of the communications are done for efficient church administration. A shift was made in the internet division due to the resignation of the team director who was one of the initial members of the internet ministry division. Recently, several divisions and teams have been merged together.

5) Q: What is the final goal of Sarang's internet ministry?

A: Our final goal is world evangelism. We are working hard to achieve it.

6) Q: What is most urgently needed in the internet ministry?

A: Recruiting more professionals to the team is of the utmost priority. Getting more interest and support from the church and the people in/outside the church is also crucial.

Non-quantitative Analysis of Sarang's internet ministry

Introduction to non-quantitative analysis

1. Analysis methods

There are several non-quantitative methods used for analyzing e-businesses.

The 3C Analysis focuses on the actions and dynamics made by three marketers (i.e., Customer, Competitor, and Company) and defines the overall business environment.

The 5 Forces Analysis, which is also known as the Michael Porter Theory, is useful in understanding the competition in business.

The 4P Analysis (i.e., Products, Price, Place, and Promotion) concentrates on the marketing strategies. The SWOT analysis is unlike any of the previously mentioned analyses. It can be applied widely from a typical for-profit business model to non-profit organizations. Based on the structure of an organization and the business environment, the SWOT analysis provides a convincing set of strategies. In this chapter, I will use the SWOT analysis to suggest the correct strategies for Sarang's internet ministry.

2. SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate one's strengths and weaknesses and to understand the opportunities and the threats one faces.

The first step is to clarify the goal of a business and identify the contributing factors and conditions (both internal and external). This method was first introduced by Albert Humphrey in a convention at Stanford University. Humphrey demonstrated how the SWOT can be used in analyzing mass data about the Fortune 500 listed companies¹⁰

¹⁰ Wikipedia, "SWOT analysis," available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SWOT_analysis Internet; accessed 27 February 2010

he collected from the 1960s to the 1970s.



Fig. 49. SWOT analysis

Identifying the four SWOT elements is an essential step toward making the correct business suggestions and plans.

Sarang internet ministry's SWOT

1. Strength

- 1) The ministry has fully equipped hardware and software. Financial support given to the ministry's system and human resources is stable. Sarang has a fully furnished broadcasting room and many offices filled with working professionals.
 - 2) Sarang's Web site is well recognized among online Christian communities due to Godpia.com, which is Sarang's own portal site, and its family Web sites.
 - 3) Sarang has the technology, skills, and experience required in applying cutting-edge information technology to its internet ministry.
-

- 4) Its high comparison market share indicates that the Web site has its own loyal regular visitors
- 5) Based on fast loading speed, Sarang Web site's can be interpreted as having one of the best Web qualities.
- 6) Its high page view indicates that various viewers find Sarang's Web contents to be resourceful.

2. Weakness

- 1) The church's online community, which is a major player in the internet ministry, is not operating smoothly at the moment. For some unidentified reasons, the church's bulletin board, where people exchange opinions and share stories, has been closed for about four months.
- 2) The Web page's session visits have been declining for several consecutive months, implying that the church's Web site is no longer appealing to the viewers.
- 3) Relatively more senior people visit the Web site than young people.
- 4) It has less female viewers compared with a comparison group.
- 5) The Web visitor number is inversely proportional to the number of page views. This slightly unsettling phenomenon of the number of Web visitors declining while the page views per person increase can be observed online.

3. Opportunity

- 1) The business of Internet is thriving in Korea, where 78 percent of the population is internet users. A total of seventeen million avid Web users are unchurched young people less than forty years of age. This huge, unaddressed market opens a wide opportunity for Korean churches.
- 2) Sarang already has a strong spiritual background. Its internet ministry was founded under the frontier spirit of Pastor Ok and was shaped by the Web-friendly approach of Pastor Oh. This moral support is a huge asset to Sarang's future growth
- 3) Sarang marks relatively low repetitive visits, indicating that most of the visits are made by regular visitors, not by newcomers. Compared with other churches, Sarang has a huge potential for substantial growth. Sarang's new program is likely to become an instant hit because it already has loyal fan groups that will support it.
- 4) Sarang's portal site, Godpia.com, is a great asset that opens a window of opportunity for Sarang. Sarang's Web site can be exposed to new visitors using Godpia.com as a bridge. In turn, Sarang can convert new members into loyal customers through Godpia.com.
- 5) The Sarang church has a solid support group. Eighty percent of Sarang's Web members are trained church members from other churches. They are also financially affluent and are very strong supporters of Sarang.

4. Threat

- 1) Sarang used to rank second in Christian Web traffic. It was pushed to third

place by Samil, and there is still no sign of recovery. Sarang now faces double threats from Samil and Onnuri. Whereas Samil is smaller than Sarang in scale, the Onnuri church is similar in size to Sarang and is closely going after Sarang's position.

- 2) Sarang's total number of Web visitors has declined drastically. Last year alone, Sarang lost about three thousand visitors
- 3) Sarang's growth rate in visitors per hour is the lowest compared with that of other churches. This indicates that Sarang has a low growth potential.
- 4) The growth rate of the three age groups (i.e., teens, twenties, and fifty and above) has declined.
- 5) Offline gigantic projects distract Sarang's attention and resources away from internet ministry, setting a huge setback to the internet ministry.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I analyzed Sarang's internet ministry through several Web analyses (including the SWOT analysis), an interview with a director, and surveying the staff members. Web analysis was performed by Rankey.com, a professional Web research agency. Rankey.com assessed to Sarang's status by checking its Web elements and comparing it with two other churches. The compared churches are also ranked among the top five in the church sector. The results of the research are as follows.

First, in the Web traffic analysis, Sarang's rank went down from number two to number three last year. The number of visitors to Sarang's site declined drastically, and

Sarang's Web session visits declined.

Second, visitor analysis reveals a disproportionate makeup of Sarang's Web population. The Web site's male-to-female ratio is 64:36. The average age of visitors is relatively older than that of other churches. The majority age group is 40–49, followed by the 30–39 age group.

Third, loyalty analysis shows Sarang's comparative advantage in terms of Web contents and loyal customer pool. Sarang's Web site marked high on duration time, frequency of visit, and the page view per visit.

Fourth, in the Web channel analysis, Naver.com, the most popular portal in Korea, ranked the number one channel site through which most of the traffic (inflow and outflow) to and from the three churches' Web sites is made. Sarang and Onnuri have their own portal sites which can be used to attract visitors to the churches.

The result from the SWOT analysis is as follows.

Sarang's strength is its strong infrastructure. Most of the crucial hardware and software are already installed in Sarang's internet ministry. Additionally, Sarang has its own portal site, Godpia.com, which has a pool of regular visitors.

The weakness of Sarang's internet ministry is its shrinking online community. Further aggravating the situation, its number of session visits is on the decline, and it has less young and female visitors compared with other churches.

The opportunities given to Sarang are the huge demand in e-business and a growing number of avid online users. The internet business is thriving in Korea, and Sarang can obtain some of the synergy coming from other e-commerce trends. Sarang is a fortunate case whose internet ministry is backed by a strong spiritual legacy of two

innovative senior pastors and the church's loyal supporters.

An apparent threat to Sarang's internet ministry is the late starter churches. Churches that jumped into the internet ministry later than Sarang have now quickly risen above Sarang. Sarang's number of visitors is on a sharp decline, especially people aged ten to twenty-nine and those over fifty. Its growth rate is the lowest among the three church Web sites. One of most serious threats to Sarang's internet ministry is its offline projects that require the church's full attention and consume much time and energy, which should be directed to the internet ministry.

CHAPTER VI
INTERNET MINISTRY STRATEGIES

Sarang's Strategies for Internet Ministry

Setting up the Strategies

After analyzing Sarang's current status and environment using the SWOT analysis, the strategies offered by the Cross-SWOT should be considered.

OS Strategy: A strategy maximizing the positive elements by focusing on the opportunities and strengths.

WO Strategy: A strategy focusing on overcoming the weaknesses and making the best use of the opportunities at the same time.

TS Strategy: A strategy focusing on evading the threats and making the best use of the strengths.

TW Strategy: A strategy minimizing the negative elements by evading the threats and overcoming the weaknesses.

Cross-SWOT strategy analysis

1. Selecting the correct strategy for Sarang

Sarang has high marks at the opportunity and weakness levels. Korea presents favorable conditions to internet ministry. However, Sarang is presenting more and more of its weaknesses lately.

The WO strategy that makes the best use of opportunities and minimizes the weakness best suits Sarang's case. It is visualized by the following coordinates.



Fig. 50. Main strategy for Sarang's internet ministry

2. Application of the WO strategy to Sarang's internet ministry

- 1) Sarang needs to create new Web contents to maintain its number of visitors.

The decline of the session visits indicates that people spend less time on its Web page and that its Web contents are no longer attractive to the viewers. Sarang needs to feed its viewers with more fresh and appealing contents.

- 2) Sarang needs to activate its online community and adjust the Web display to maximize users' convenience.

The stagnation of the online community poses a serious threat to the internet ministry. Sarang needs to open its church's online bulletin board to activate the online community as soon as possible. Moreover, people perceive that the current display is designed only for the church staff and managers' convenience. The Web display should be refined for the visitors' optimal use.

3) Sarang needs to target the females and the 20–39 age group.

Sarang should focus more on the university students, newly graduates, and people in their thirties by creating new systems for them and promoting their status in the church.

The female members are usually the most loyal and devoted members in the church, and they are passionate about the evangelical mission. More specialized programs and support, such as expanding the female cell groups to include more female Web members and promoting the activities of the female members, should be developed.

4) Sarang needs to overhaul its display and Web navigation system.

The declining number of visitors despite the high page view per visits indicates that people are forced to enter several unnecessary pages before they get to their destination. Sarang should overhaul its Web structure and Web navigation system, and, if necessary, the overall Web display

5) Sarang needs to facilitate the internet ministry for non-Christians.

In South Korea, 78 percent of the whole population uses the Internet. Among the

avid Web users who are not over forty, most are untapped by the Gospel.

Sarang should invest its infrastructure, human resources, technology, and financial means to create online programs targeting non-Christians. This is not only a task given to Sarang but also a duty given to all Korean churches.

6) Sarang needs to provide a diverse internet ministry for church members

Eighty percent of the Sarang Web membership accounts for people from other churches. Sarang can convert them to become its loyal supporters by providing them with resourceful seminars, effective evangelism tips, strategies for church growth, and sermons.

7) Sarang needs to try new promotional events and a new system.

Most of the visits to Sarang are made by new visitors. The number of repetitive visits to Sarang's Web site is relatively lower than that of other churches. This indicates that once Sarang launches a new program for new visitors, it is more likely to succeed because there would be a new pool of visitors willing to try the new programs online.

Internet Strategy for Korean Churches

Drawing strategies for the internet ministry in general

The Sarang church's internet ministry is the archetype of a Korean internet ministry. Other Korean churches are attempting to follow suit. To attain its current status, Sarang had indeed invested a large amount of money and backed it up with constant

prayers.

Based on the previous chapter's assessment of Sarang's internet ministry and the corresponding WO strategy for each church sector, I will discuss the practical lessons and tips Korean churches can learn from Sarang's case. Data used in this chapter are the statistics on Korean churches' internet ministry from 2009 to 2010.

Finding applicable, practical, and effective Web strategies for Korean churches

1. Korean churches need to change their Web sites from a supplier-friendly structure to a user-friendly one and reinforce their online community.

The following graph shows the number of visits made to Korean church sites last year¹. The graph shows a sharp downturn curve in the most recent timeframe. Korean church sites lost thirty thousand visitors last year.

¹ Statistics from Rankey.com shows the current place and situation of Korean churches' internet ministry in general from February 2009 to February 2010.

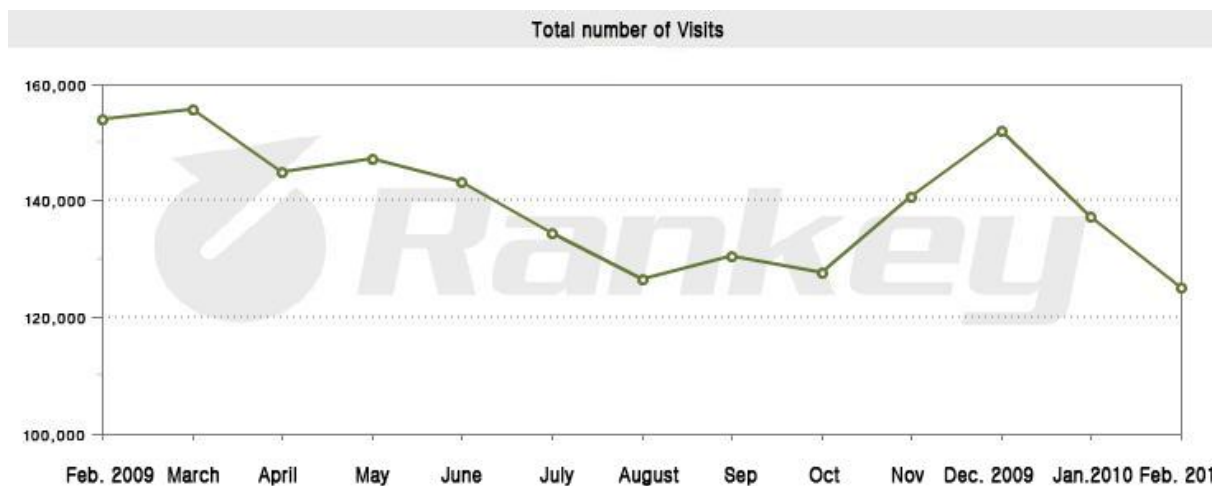


Fig. 51. Number of visitors to Korean church sites

(The number of visitors was 153,896 in February 2009. It decreased to 12,192 visits by February 2010.)

The core of internet ministry is the voluntary participation and involvement of the entire church members. However, in most churches, a church homepage is merely used as an online bulletin board where announcements, weekly notices, and advertisements on church programs are presented. Thus, a church's Web site should become a place of true openness and reflect the members' sincere participation.

Most Korean church Web sites feature an authoritative structure and display. To indicate the "authoritativeness" of the site, its menus and services are often lined up for the suppliers' convenience. A place for interactive communication is used for one-sided announcements, tacitly urging its members to agree with the leaders' decision. The church Web site should be changed to allow more inclusive communication and easy access to online community activities planned and executed by the members themselves. One idea is to link a family blog to the church's online community so that church members can exchange and share their ideas as a family unit. The homepages of Korean

churches should be shifted to an online community-oriented system.

2. Churches need to offer colorful and hard-hitting contents through their homepages

The following graph shows the total page view counts of Korean churches last year.² The graph shows a downward curve indicating a drop of the page view by about 1.3 million views.

This shows that the contents are not attractive enough to yield visitors' repetitive visits. The visitors may enter a church site once, but they gradually lose interest. The visits last no more than twice.

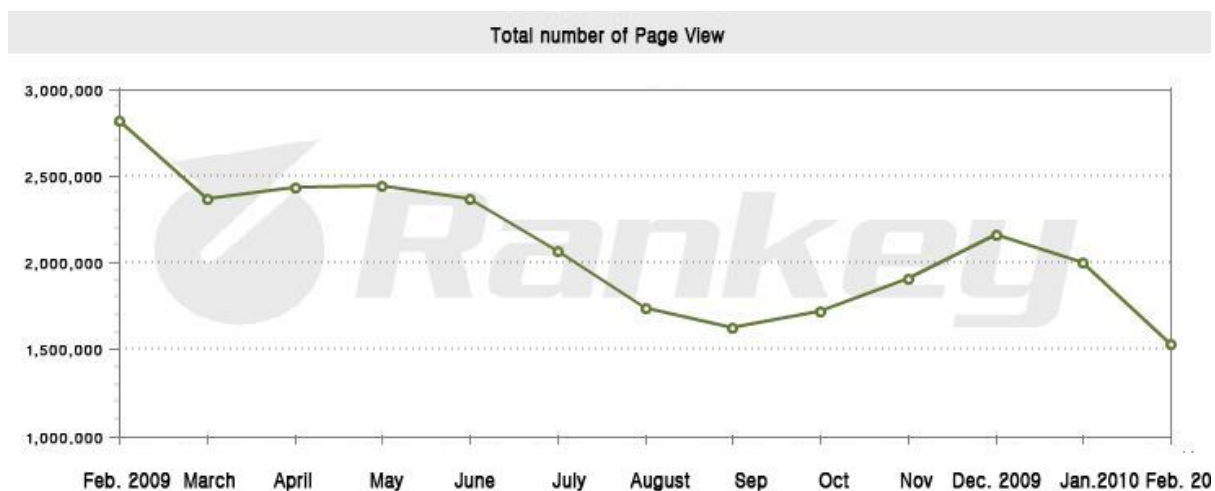


Fig. 52. Korean churches' total page view counts

(The number of page views, which was 2,814,685 in February 2009, was down to 1,526,246 in February 2010.)

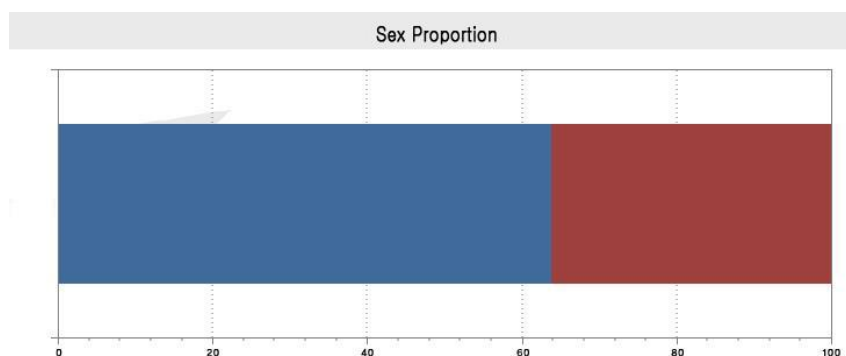
² Statistics from Rankey.com shows the current place and situation of Korean churches' internet ministry in general from February 2009 to February 2010.

A church's homepage should be filled with various contents people can look at and several controversial contents strong enough to inspire people. However, most of the contents in the Web pages of Korean churches are merely propaganda materials that lavishly praise the church pastor and his ministry and promote the leaders' opinions. The church's Web database should be used not only to support the leadership but also to store and disseminate resources on spiritual growth, Bible studies, and discipleship training guidelines that can quench people's spiritual thirst.

Just as people suffer from lack of drinkable and clean water during floods, under the deluge of information in the internet era, people seek meaningful and practical material for their spiritual well-being.

3. Churches should capture the female audience through a specialized ministry.

The churches' Web sites' male-to-female sex ratio is 64: 36 on average in February 2010. The following figure shows that in last year alone, the number of female visitors declined by eighty-four thousand; unfortunately, this trend continued on to this year. Korean female visitors are gradually losing interest in church Web sites.



[Male visitors: 448,539 (63.84%), female visitors: 254,075(36.16%) in February 2010]

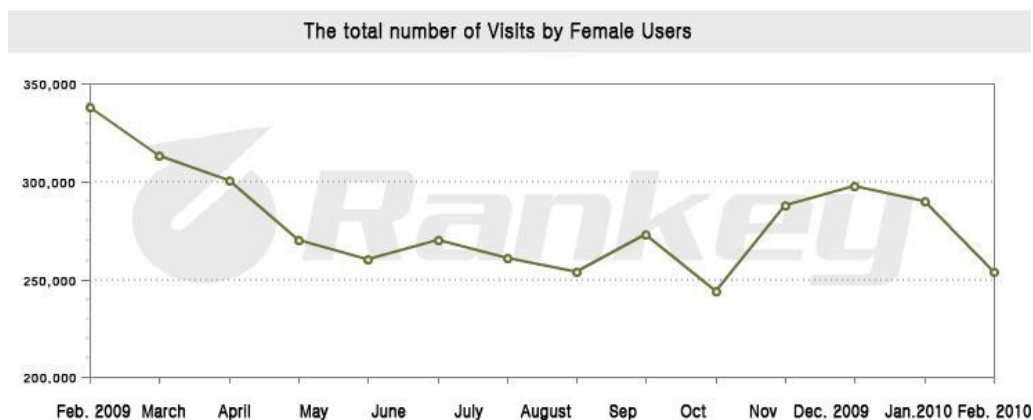


Fig. 53. Total number of female users

(Female visitors in February 2009: 338,100; February 2010: 254,075)

The female members are one of most loyal and devoted groups in the church. Their low participation on Web sites is not a good sign for any church's future. What churches can do as a first step is to expand the women cell group to include more women and later launch an internet site designed exclusively for women within the main page. The Daum's Miznet in Korea is a good example that Korean churches can benchmark. One of Korea's biggest portals, Daum.net, has a special sub-site built for women for sharing their stories and ideas without giving their real names. Female church members can form strong relationships and communicate openly in a special church Web site.

One of the major purposes of church ministry is to help those in distress, in debt, or discontented. The Korean internet ministry should focus on recapturing female members who are alienated online by providing them with an exclusive Web space and contents.

4. Churches need to target the young audience, that is, the 10–29 age group

A dismal report on Korean church Web sites' low popularity among the young people is shown below. Teen visitors declined by 1.9 percent, and more than 9 percent of people in their twenties dropped out of church in last year alone. Churches have lost eighteen thousand teenagers and ninety-seven thousand people aged 20–29. This result is disturbing because teens and those in their twenties are the most internet-savvy people and avid Web users, and, more importantly, the future of church growth.

Time period	Teenagers		Twenties	
	Visitors	Percentage	Visitors	Percentage
Feb. 2010	17,590	2.50%	163,194	23.23%
Jan. 2010	20,080	2.61%	190,319	24.74%
Dec. 2009	23,892	3.13%	205,288	26.85%
Nov. 2009	23,991	3.32%	195,483	27.03%
Oct. 2009	15,065	2.31%	181,524	27.86%
Sep. 2009	14,430	2.13%	179,958	26.53%
Aug. 2009	11,658	1.78%	184,029	28.12%
July 2009	21,142	3.10%	192,629	28.28%
June 2009	15,859	2.25%	199,824	28.35%
May 2009	22,592	3.06%	194,290	26.27%
April 2009	18,944	2.67%	192,735	27.21%
March 2009	17,356	2.25%	216,945	28.09%
Feb. 2009	23,623	2.94%	232,286	28.92%
Jan. 2009	35,589	4.44%	260,248	32.50%

Fig. 54. Dismal report of visits of teens and those in their twenties to Korean church Web

sites

The withdrawal of the young population from church Web sites is a critical issue for Korean churches. Churches need to provide young people with a special Web space where they can easily access Christian contents and freely share their stories and ideas. This open space, with some supervision from adult church members, will eventually lead the young people to the church and guide them to spiritual maturity.

The church can take an innovative and bold measure, such as a webtoon. A webtoon is a combination of cartoons and the Web; it is a concise, often amateurish, cartoon used for educational and product promotional purposes. It became an instant hit in Korea, and more companies and government organizations are using it to involve more people in their campaigns. College students in churches can produce these Web contents together as a team to discuss Christianity and a converted life as Jesus' disciple. The younger people, after being taught, can reproduce a corresponding webtoon of their own. They can post their own version of the webtoon in their blog or social network sites and discuss about it with their friends. Uploaded pictures and images by the students can reflect how they understand Christian concepts. Based on these contents, adults or college students can give them feedback. Once these voluntary interactions are formed, the young people will no longer feel rejected in Christian Web sites.

Along with these new and creative attempts, adult guidance should be given to teens in a friendlier and less authoritative way. Churches can adopt an internet counseling and mentoring system that does not require the teens to give their real names. Sex education and crime prevention can be conducted in a more convincing way over the

Internet.

Moreover, with the help of the churches' rich human resources and helpful materials gleaned from the Internet, teens and recent college graduates can start their career planning, a process often neglected in Korean schools. There are many possible and untried ways to reach out to teens and those in their twenties. Churches should not be limited in trying out these new methods because losing the young population will seriously debilitate and adversely affect the church's growth potential.

5. Churches needs to provide tailored services.

In Korea, 78 percent of the whole population uses the Internet, and among them seventeen million are the young and the non-Christians. To reach them online, churches need specific evangelism methods tailored for each purpose. The following are the possible strategies churches can adopt in the three major service sectors.

1) Worship Service

The sermon should focus on delivering the Gospel and God's existence. Preaching about God to non-Christians is not easy, but still it should not be left out or compromised in the sermon. There are many anti-Christians on the Web ; thus, online sermons targeting these people should approach the matter from various angles. Churches can talk some sense into them and persuade them by presenting historical facts and scientific evidence, such as fossil remains and metrological data, mentioned in the Bible.

An important thing to consider when producing an online sermon is that people's

attention span online is extremely short. Keeping the sermon as concise as possible is advisable to prevent people from leaving the site. One study even shows that the average teenager's concentration span is only seven minutes in total. Churches should not expect non-Christians to stare at the monitor for an hour-long worship service filled with jargons of the Christian community. More valid and effective methods should be sought and tried in churches to reach out to the non-believers.

2) Fellowship

When reaching out to non-believers, building a relationship before proclaiming the Gospel and judgment is a prerequisite. The latter, which is a straightforward manner, is acceptable to Christians who can take it as it is. However, to non-Christians, the former and softer approach is proven to be more effective. It takes some time and energy to build a relationship with non-Christians through hours of listening and sharing.

The church should set apart specific Web pages (e.g., internet cafes, bulletin boards, and counseling pages) as an open space for non-believers that can be accessed easily to conduct discussions in a relaxed atmosphere. This place should allow any comment on Christianity as long as it is not abusive or insincere.

3) Evangelical work

Korean churches should carry out the evangelical mission strategically, discreetly, and with extra care online. Evangelical work is also an active communication of the message between the sender and the receiver.

Korean churches in the past used to force the Gospel in an aggressive, one-sided

manner. They placed greater importance on the role of the message sender with no regard for the audience's input. This non-interactive Gospel delivery was often met with repulsion and is currently not being applied. The old crusader way has been proven to be no longer effective in modern Korea. Most Gospel- and church-related emails sent to random audiences have been classified as the spam.

Churches need to build a relationship on the Web first for effective evangelical work. Church members are recommended to open their own blogs and social network accounts and join in several internet communities.

By actively being involved online, church members become exposed to a window of opportunity to contact the nonbelievers and hear their stories. Through this series of online activities, churches can lay the groundwork for evangelism. Every church member is a missionary dispatched to the Web.

6. Churches need to focus on the world evangelical mission

Churches seriously need to ask themselves whether the World Wide Web they are using is an actual “world-wide” network or a de-facto local network that starts with “www.” The internet ministry is the most powerful and handy tool in supporting and assisting mission works done all over the world. Churches can help missionaries abroad by supplying Gospel contents in their native tongues in a manner that does not seriously conflict with the countries’ culture.

When offering this international support to missionaries living under authoritative regimes or Communist countries, assistance should be given discreetly. In a

country where religious activity is severely banned or censored by the government, the internet ministry Web site should be disguised as an ordinary humanitarian service or a civilian counseling program to reach the local non-believers easily and safely. The Internet has no borders, and internet broadcasts present churches with an endless opportunity to reach out to people living in secluded areas.

7. E-churches should be rooted in off-line churches.

This “e-church” is an active, self-maintainable internet ministry that can work in two ways: as an online branch of an offline church or as a separate church existing only on the Web. When expanding their realm through e-churches, Korean churches should remind themselves of how they used to start a new worship venue in different cities.

Although there are already many e-churches reportedly existing and operating exclusively online, I believe introducing a purely Web-based e-church can wait until the ongoing theological controversy settles down and people no longer feel uncomfortable with the idea. A practical reason for delaying a pure online e-church is the tremendous amount of financial investment on infrastructure and the time and energy spent on the Web content production in its initial stage. All these can only be provided with the help of local, offline churches.

Cyberspace needs to be understood as a frontier where local churches build e-church bureaus for the successful settlement of the Gospel in the unexplored region. One ground rule in managing the online bureau is to secure its autonomy. Even after the local church has funded and built its Web bureau, the e-church's independence in operation and

management should be protected because the work fields of two churches are different, and each of its members' ideas on church and life patterns can be identical.

A church's reproduction of another onsite church is a great strategy in expanding God's realm in the world. In this sense, the e-church can be identified not only as a mere "church in the online space" but as an "Internet (evangelism) Mission church." The mother church in the offline space should support this e-church to stand on its own and to carry out its evangelical mission in cyberspace.

Chapter Summary

The following is the summary of the suggested strategies drawn from the SWOT analysis on Sarang's internet ministry:

1. Sarang needs to develop fresh and appealing contents to draw multiple visits.
2. Sarang needs to activate its online community and adjust the site's display for users' convenience to increase more participation from the members.
3. Sarang should target two groups: people in their thirties and female members.

By creating and enhancing programs designed for these groups, Sarang can obtain ideas and the energy from the diverse groups.

4. Sarang needs to overhaul and reconsider the Web site's navigation system and its overall display.
5. Sarang can contribute to Korean Christianity by investing on the production of new evangelical contents targeting non-Christians in Korea.
6. Sarang needs to continue its powerful internet services, such as Godpia.com,

to empower Christianity in Korea.

7. Sarang can activate the church ministry by planning and executing new programs and promotional events on the Internet.

The following are the suggestions given to Korean churches launching and operating their own internet ministries:

1. Korean churches need to activate the online community function of their Web sites and adopt a user-friendly manner, as the core value of the internet ministry is the members' voluntary participation.
2. Churches need to fill their homepages with touching and resourceful materials.

It is church's duty to identify and address the needs and wants of the people and provide them with correct and helpful resources.

3. Churches should reinforce their ministry for women.

The number of female visitors to the church Web sites has declined drastically in the past few years. Churches can bring this population back to their Web space by encouraging the females to participate.

4. For their growth potential, churches should target the 10–20 age group because these people will be the pillar of Korean churches in 20 years' time.
5. When producing Gospel contents, churches need to level with ordinary people.

To reach out to the diverse avid internet user groups in Korea, churches need to realize that these people are mostly young (aged less than forty) and non-Christians.

Churches' Gospel contents should be comprehensible in their level of understanding.

Here are some suggestions on how the Gospel contents can be designed for and delivered to the young generation.

1) Sermon

The sermon should always focus on conveying the Gospel and explaining the Lord and His superior existence by talking some sense into the young generation.

2) Communication and building a relationship

Proclaiming the Gospel and the coming judgment has worked for the already converted Christians. However, a softer approach is required for non-believers. Churches are required to build a relationship first by listening to the ideas and stories of the non-believers on the Web. Churches need to convey the Gospel through casual communication rather than aggressive persuasion, which has been proven to be no longer effective.

3) Evangelism

Internet evangelism should be done strategically. Building a relationship with each target on the Web is the first step. For example, joining and participating in an online internet community and communicating and getting to know about the person give a chance to talk about Gospel.

Each church member can select its own target and work on laying the groundwork for evangelism in cyberspace. This can be conducted without a specific time period, regardless of place, and, most importantly, simultaneously. Every member of the church can act as a missionary dispatched to cyberspace.

6. Churches need to concentrate on world evangelism.

The Web we are using is literally a “world-wide” Web, but churches often use it as a local network only. Churches can use the Internet to support mission projects and onsite missionaries in different parts of the world through financial and technical means. This support includes building a Web site in their native tongues with Gospel contents comprehensible in their cultural context.

Korean churches can take the initiative in world evangelism by building churches in regions unreached by the Gospel or enhancing online ministry in regions already populated with fading offline churches by providing them with internet technologies and skills.

7. The e-churches can operate in strategic areas when supported by off-line churches.

The strategic area refers to a marginal place in the world where the offline church cannot be approached easily or a place in cyberspace unaddressed by an offline church. These places are perfect locations to establish an e-church. This e-church can also be called an “Internet (evangelical) Mission Church” as the conventional offline church can delegate the evangelism mission to it in several locations.

Similar to a church opening its second and third worshipping venues in different cities and countries, Korean churches can strategically facilitate e-churches by giving birth to them and nurturing them for evangelical mission.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

Brief Summary of the Research

The internet ministry is the most recently created innovative form of church ministry after the Internet became an inseparable aspect of our lives. I wrote this thesis to answer the question of how churches facilitate this powerful internet tool in evangelical and church ministerial ways. I tried to elaborate “by whom, when, and where” the internet ministry can be put into action. In Korea, where 78 percent of the whole population uses the Internet, reaching a large audience without the Internet is nearly impossible.

In the thesis, I identified the concept of internet ministry from church ministerial and biblical angles and made an evaluation of the Sarang church’s internet ministry by using various analytical methods. The assessment and suggestions on Sarang’s internet performance are given as a good sample case to help Korean churches when they set strategies for their internet ministry. The results of the study are as follows.

Definition of internet ministry

The internet ministry is an online representation of church functions, its ministry, discipleship training, and evangelical work with edited multimedia contents transmitted through wired, wireless, satellite services and internet networks.

Categorization of members by their age, sex, social status, nationality, and belief (believers/non-believers) is needed because each group's needs and wants are different under their unique situations. However, Korean churches' internet service does not meet people's expectation

Research on Sarang's current internet ministry

The Sarang church launched its internet department in 1997. It has four divisions, namely, Web planning, Web designing, broadcast production, and Web operation, which deal with various tasks. Sarang's Web site has more than 200 domains, and each domain is divided by the task and the ministry sectors.

The major Web contents Sarang supplies on its Web site are the sermons, broadcasts of the worship service and seminars, online quiet time, emailing service on the discipleship training, church projects, and so on. The core aspects of the Web services are internet broadcasting and Godpia.com, Sarang's portal site that provides various resources to the public and is one of most extensive Christian portal sites in Korea.

Assessment on Sarang's internet ministry

Several methods were adopted in the thesis to analyze and evaluate Sarang's internet ministry. An interview with a director of the internet ministry team, a survey administered to the internet ministry staff, Web analysis of data from Rankey's.com, and the SWOT analysis were conducted to draw an overall evaluation.

The Web analysis was made on the four Web sectors: Web traffic, frequency of visits, Web loyalty, and channel sites. I compared Sarang's Web data with those of the two other churches included in the top five churches in Korea in online ministry performance.

According to the SWOT analysis, Sarang's strengths are its solid infrastructure, hardware, and software, which are fully equipped for online contents production, and its own portal site, Godpia.com, which guarantees a stable supply of visitors to Sarang's Web site.

Its weaknesses are its stagnant online community and the constant decline of several crucial figures, including the decreased number of session visits and the unbalanced male-to-female ratio of the visitors. Sarang has a disproportionate number of old, male population that far exceeds the number of young and female visitors.

The greatest opportunity Sarang has is the thriving e-market in Korea, which poses an optimal situation for any e-business. Another advantage that places Sarang ahead of its competitors is its preparation for such a situation: it has a strong spiritual background and loyal groups of supporters.

The most serious threat to Sarang's internet ministry is the constant decline of its visitors and the lowest growth potential of page visit per hour. The decline was caused by the withdrawal of the young generation aged 10–29. Another urgent issue is its over-

concentration of resources on gigantic offline projects, which diverted the attention from the online programs.

Strategies drawn from the assessment

The WO strategy is effective in maximizing the opportunities and overcoming the weaknesses at the same time. The following are the WO-based suggestions for Sarang Church:

1. Sarang needs to develop a series of fresh, attractive Web contents for its regular visitors.
2. Sarang needs to activate its online community and adjust the Web display to a more user-friendly presentation to encourage interactive communication.
3. Sarang needs to target the young and female group and provide a set of specialized ministry for them to boost their participation.
4. Sarang's Web navigation system and its Web structure should be streamlined.
5. Sarang has a duty to produce quality Web/broadcasting contents for non-Christians, as it is a large-scale church with the ability to carry out such task using its vast financial and human resources.
6. Sarang needs to provide more colorful and helpful resources and data to Korean churches to empower Korean Christianity.
7. Sarang's internet ministry should be developed further with more innovative programs.

Conclusion

Moses climbed down from Mt. Sinai carrying two stone tablets where the ten commandments were engraved by fire. Ezra taught the Scripture written on a sheepskin scroll, whereas Paul conveyed the Gospel on paper that was later delivered by human hands.

The church always provides strong contents: the truth and the Gospel. What remains to be done is how to transmit the content most effectively to the people of our time. The Internet can be a new tool in delivering the truth.

The thesis focused on defining and evaluating internet ministry by selecting one sample church that has a remarkable internet ministry. By learning from Sarang's pioneer experience in online ministry, churches can determine which specific practical strategies they can apply to their internet ministry. The following is a set of strategies for Korean churches.

First, churches need to change their Web display to make it more user-friendly and to enhance online community activities. The core of a church's Web site is the voluntary participation and involvement of the church members. A church's Web site should be a more inclusive space that functions more than as a place for church advertisements and re-runs of the worship service. It should become an open space where all church members can meet, share, and form online communities. Adjusting the Web site's display for users' convenience is the first step to converting it into a place for interactive and democratic communication between the church leaders and the members.

Second, church Web sites should be filled with meaningful and resourceful contents to quench the spiritual thirst of the people. Just as there is a shortage of drinkable water during floods, the people of today suffer from spiritual thirst that cannot be slaked by any kind of information flooding the Internet. This irony can be solved only by supplying the people with quality spiritual resources.

Third, Korean churches need to include more female members to its internet ministry by developing new programs designed exclusively for them. Korean churches in general are marked by a low participation level of female members on the Web. Churches are required to invest and support programs exclusively made for women, such as Miznet, where anonymity is secured to allow honest and genuine talk between women without fearing the unwanted dissemination of their stories. Other measures, such as expanding the female cell group to include more people and activating an online female community on its Web site, are also needed.

Fourth, Korean churches need to target and focus on the young population. The sharp decline of those aged 10–29 is an urgent issue that should be addressed without reservations because the young generation is the future of the church. The church needs to provide them with an open and comfortable Web space for them to enjoy, share their stories, and build their faith by interacting.

The online counseling service can be an effective way to reach out to the young people. Church counseling makes young people feel much closer to the church in general, inspiring them with dreams and plans for their future and preventing from making mistakes in the future, which they could commit had they not been involved with the church program. There are many possible ways to win over young people. The church

should try various ways without minding the possible risks and challenges.

Fifth, churches need to consider the audience's understanding level and their cultural context when producing Gospel contents. Seventeen million avid internet users in Korea are young non-believers. Carefully planned out and at the same time bold measures should be taken when delivering the Gospel to them. When approaching non-Christians, aggressively forcing our beliefs onto them or proclaiming the coming judgment has been proven to be not very effective.

Churches first need to listen to the stories of the non-Christians and build a relationship with them. This process can be done more easily and simultaneously on the Web. Church members can approach multiple non-believers through their online clubs, social networks, and online community sites. Church members can gather information on the target group's concerns and possible prayer lists, share life stories, and build a strong relationship before introducing the Gospel to each target.

Sixth, Korean churches should devote themselves to the world evangelism mission. The Internet is the highway to world evangelism; churches can use it as an optimal tool to spread the Gospel at an international level. The church can support missionaries abroad by launching a Web site in their native tongue and producing Gospel contents compatible with their cultural context. An internet church should be built in an area unreached by the Gospel, and support can be given to churches struggling in the evangelism frontlines.

Seventh, the offline churches need to support e-churches. On the Web, an e-church can act as the offline church's alternative worshipping venue. In its initial stage, an e-church requires great financial investments in building up its infrastructure and human

resources. The offline mother church can step in and help it to stand on its own.

Reproducing the church is a brilliant and meaningful strategy in spreading God's Word on the spiritually barren Internet.

Churches should realize that the autonomy of each e-church should be protected. The online members' life patterns and world views may not agree with those of offline members, and the online service sector may not completely follow or reflect the offline ministry principle. The offline mother church should accept and value the differences and should not force its ways onto the online church.

Suggestions

Self-assessment on the thesis

I first encountered internet ministry seven years ago in a conference hosted by the Sarang community church to celebrate its twenty-fifth anniversary. Several years later, I decided to write a thesis on the subject by taking Sarang's internet ministry as a sample case. Internet ministry is still in its initial stage, and there are only a handful of academic studies on this new subject. If my thesis would be ever considered meaningful and valuable, it would be because I was able to recognize internet ministry as worthy to be seriously studied, even if my research is not that extensive.

If I had to name only one significant accomplishment of my study, it would be the series of practical and valid suggestions I provided for Korean churches in applying the internet ministry. Korean churches would be better prepared in planning their internet

ministries by getting suggestions from real Korean cases.

However, my thesis is limited by the lack of detailed explanation on Web technology and the technical approach to internet ministry. Discussing the internet ministry's technological aspect is problematic because the subject itself belongs to the engineering sector. Thus, I was not able to include the Web engineering aspect in my thesis because it entailed an extensive discussion on engineering.

Geography is another limitation of my thesis. I only researched on the internet ministries of local churches in Korea, although internet ministries can be found everywhere, even in the far-flung areas of the Internet. I focused only on several examples in Korea in order to find specific internet models that could be practiced by Korean churches.

Suggestions

I recently met a friend of mine who is also a pastor. He once tried to establish a purely online-based church 10 years ago in Seoul but did not succeed. Currently, he is a senior pastor in a local offline church practicing traditional evangelism-oriented ministry. He shared with me his story of his failed attempt and explained why it did not pan out in Korea in the past. One huge obstacle he encountered was the lack of people's voluntary involvement. The people simply did not come to the online church, let alone participating in it, no matter how hard he tried. The reasons for this are many, including the time period he launched the internet ministry (around 1999). One realistic explanation to this failure is that his online church was not buttressed by an offline church.

Nowadays, there is an increasing number of “e-churches” and local churches specializing on internet ministry. Internet ministry is mushrooming, enough to change the landscape of the church ministry. Professor Elmer Towns wrote in his book *II*

Innovations in the Local Church:

When culture changes, your methods or you will lose your effectiveness... but never change your message or your principles! When methods no longer work, don't blame the harvest as being unreachable; instead ask God if it's time to change your methods!

This is the lesson pastors of our time should always remember. We cannot allow the internet ministry to fail again like it did ten years ago. There is no reason not to venture into online ministry just because it is controversial and unconventional. If churches decline to contact the great number of non-Christians on the Web just because they do not favor the idea of an online ministry, then it would be a serious breach of the duty God assigned them. The following are my suggestions to the churches.

Local churches can launch their e-churches in the same way they build a new worshipping venue in different cities and countries. After supporting the e-churches financially and with human resources until the new system settles down, they need to allow their autonomy. By securing their independence, e-churches can produce more creative Gospel contents for the new internet generation.

Korean Christian sects and denomination leaders should never give up on internet ministry just because it does not feel right or they doubt its effectiveness. Churches need to keep reproducing themselves by pouring all available resources to online churches, as in most cases, e-churches are rooted in and stem from offline mother churches. Churches may find internet ministry too burdensome at a certain point. As such,

they should remind themselves that there are always new ways to fulfill the evangelism mission and new inspiration from God that can lead to a breakthrough in online evangelism.

I expect future studies and follow-up research on this subject to be more practical, specific, and technical. Some of the research should be conclusive enough to be called an internet ministry manual, which can serve as a guide to people who are passionate about Web evangelism. I hope that more studies, including mine, will leave traces in internet ministry history in the same way that the wheel patterns made by the Christians in the city of Ephesus remained.

The End

APPENDIX

AN INTERVIEW WITH A DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNET MINISTRY TEAM

List of questions

1. Questions on the Sarang internet department's structure
 - 1) Number of staff and its composition: How many staff members are working in the internet ministry department? How many members are experts/experienced or inexperienced in relevant fields? How many people are working in each division?
 - 2) Work place and work load: Is the work place fixed (no home office)? How is the work load distributed? Are there some sectors run by a one-man system?

2. The Sarang homepage operation and management
 - 1) Current status: Number of daily visits, page views per visit, and registered Web member population
 - 2) Visitors' demography and activity: Sex and age proportion of the visitors, visit frequency, visit duration time, proportion of Web members who belong to other churches
 - 3) Financial status: Questions on the yearly budget and where it is spent

3. Contents of the internet ministry

- 1) What are the most popular contents on the Web? What is the church leadership's strategic program?
 - 2) On which sectors/contents does the internet department want to focus on?
 - 3) Which services the church ministry focuses mostly on? (e.g., providing information, evangelism, mission work, and discipleship training)
 - 4) Is the church's online community activated on the Web? Are people's opinions reflected in the decision-making process?
4. Self assessment of the Sarang's internet ministry
- 1) Profitability: How lucrative is the ministry? How much profit does the church gain from the internet ministry compared with its financial investment?
 - 2) Evangelism: How helpful is internet ministry to church evangelism? Has the Internet actually led people to the church?
 - 3) How does internet ministry influence Korean Christianity?
5. Future prospect of internet ministry
- 1) How will the internet ministry develop?
 - 2) What are the ministry's five- and ten-year plans?
6. Other questions
- 1) What are the factors that caused Sarang to be pushed to the number three spot by the Samil church in Rankey.com's internet market share survey?
 - 2) How satisfied are the online audiences with the church sermons?

- 3) What is the result of Sarang's homepage survey in January 2010?
- 4) How do the church administration and the command system operate between the church leaders and the internet ministry team?
- 5) Comment briefly on the outsourcing system.
- 6) What happened to the previous appealing contents? (e.g., introduction to Christianity, Christianity Manual, Christianity Statistics, and so on.)
- 7) What is the eventual goal of the internet ministry? How are the efforts of the e-church paying off?
- 8) What is most pressing matter that the internet ministry department is dealing with now?

This is the end of the survey. Thank you for your answers.

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