LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ONLINE CHURCH: A BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY PROJECT

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

J. Todd Mullins

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida

May, 2011

LIBERTY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THESIS PROJECT APPROVAL SHEET

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GRADE

_____

MENTOR, Dr. Frank Schmitt
Professor of Educational Ministries
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary

_____

READER, Dr. Doug Randlett
Executive Pastor
Thomas Road Baptist Church

_____

READER, Dr. Elmer Towns
Dean, Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
Liberty University

ABSTRACT

ONLINE CHURCH: A BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

J. Todd Mullins

Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011

Mentor: Dr. Frank Schmitt

Faith and spirituality widely exist in the virtual world of the Internet, spanning the continuum of expression from the traditional to the abstract. This religious presence online includes every religion, and includes Christianity. Whether one believes the Christian church is capable of existing online has much to do with one's perspective of the Internet and one's definition of church. The author will address the use of the Internet to build Christian community and establish the church in a virtual environment. Arguments for and against the church online will answer the question, "Is church online truly the church?"

Abstract length: 97 words.

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CHAPTER I

DEFINING AND DEPICTING THE ONLINE CHURCH

Introduction

It is very rare to meet someone today who is not dependent upon, or at least being impacted by, technology. Between online social networks, blogs, books, newspapers, magazines, and educational institutions, the Internet has changed the way our society gathers and assimilates information. A virtual world of connectivity, community, and enlightenment is at our fingertips. Accordingly and undeniably, these advances in technology provide the church with unique opportunities to minister outside both the physical and methodological walls of the church.

It is within the backdrop of this growing reality that this writer's church, Christ Fellowship, began to question how to best leverage technology for the kingdom of God. If people are constantly turning to and depending upon technology for information consumption, how can the church use this medium to connect them to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to His body?

At first, they began by simply streaming their church services for those within their church family that would be traveling. This allowed them to stay connected with the messages and vision of the church while out of town. They didn't give it much attention or resources as it was only reaching a small group of people.

Soon they began to hear of people who were watching online from their city and all around the world. Local people said they had been watching their services online before ever coming to the church. It was their way of "checking them out" before walking through the front doors. Others visited the church from out of town and returned home to join them online every weekend. Soon they found people from all over the world that were calling their online experience "church." As they began to further explore the situation, many were in towns where there was no evangelical church. Others lived in remote areas of the country far from any town, while others felt called and connected to the Christ Fellowship vision and mission.

They began to feel a spiritual responsibility to these people beyond the streaming of a weekend service. They had heard of other churches that had "online campuses" or "church online." They began calling and meeting with those churches to learn what defines an online church. Life Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, was extremely helpful to their understanding of what an online worship experience could be like. Life Church has dedicated multiple staff members to the area of technological innovation for the Kingdom of God. They found no other church in America that seemed as dedicated to leveraging technology to communicate the Gospel. Since they had been operating an online church experience for a year longer than Christ Fellowship had, they had discovered many of the opportunities and pitfalls associated with online church.

Life Church began holding church services online in April 2006. Using chat rooms for prayer and counseling while streaming the worship service, people from all

around the world were able to connect with this church in the middle of Oklahoma.[1]

Seacoast Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and Flamingo Road Church in Cooper City, Florida, were some of the earliest adopters to this new form of church, all of them paving the way to what is currently happening with the church online.[2]

Today hundreds of thousands gather from around the world to experience various expressions of church online. In its most basic form, church online is a virtual experience of a physical worship service; what is taking place in a physical location is also being experienced in a virtual location, all around the world, instantaneously.[3]

Through technology Internet pastors and volunteers are welcoming people into the virtual service through chat "rooms." They pray with each other in virtual prayer rooms and share the concerns of their everyday lives.

Additionally, Christ Fellowship talked with families who were watching their online services to see how they could better connect with them and help them grow in their walk with Christ. They discussed discipleship methods and options, connection avenues, as well as practical ways their church could serve them. After much prayer and seeking out an online pastor, they launched our online campus in January of 2008.

Through the use of online chat rooms, the Online Campus Pastor, David Helbig,[4] meets with those attending this virtual campus both before and after the services. The

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[1]Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon and Warren Bird, *A Multi-Site Church Road Map* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 88.

[2]Ibid., 88-89.

[3]Chad Hall, "Church . . . Virtually," (January 4, 2010), available from http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2009/fall/churchvirtually.html (accessed March 13, 2011).

[4]Pastor David Helbig, Church Online Pastor. David joined the Christ Fellowship pastoral team in 2004. David has more than 15 years of pastoral experience in Canada, the United States, Europe and Southeast Asia. His experience ranges from church planting to family and children's ministries. David is a

chat rooms also provide opportunity for those attending to connect with each other for encouragement and prayer. Prayer, connection, and even counseling are taking place before and after each weekend service in these chat rooms. Additionally, Pastor David is available through the week for further connection and prayer through e-mail and phone. The Online Campus also provides discipleship classes to help people grow in their relationship with Christ and Christ Fellowship. Although this is an area that needs further development and attention, the basic steps are in place to allow spiritual growth to take place online.

The Online Campus, which is now reaching thousands of people from all over the world, is constantly producing evidence of the cultural, sociological, and evangelical impact technology is having on the way they can and should be doing ministry. It allows them to literally reach around the world with the love and message of Jesus Christ unlike any other initiative in which they have participated in the past. The church simply cannot afford to be on the backside of a rapidly advancing technology movement. She has to learn how to best leverage technology for the advancement of the Kingdom.

Statement of the Problem

The question the church at large is grappling with in regard to online ministry is: "Can true worship, fellowship, discipleship, service, and evangelism—all core philosophies and directives of the church—actually take place in an online environment without sacrificing the biblical definition and model of *koinonia*?" In other words, can

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graduate of Vanguard College in Edmonton, Canada, where he studied theology. David and his wife, Manuela, have been married since 1992 and have three children.

"real" church take place on the Internet? Can people genuinely connect, fellowship, and grow with one another in healthy community in an online environment?

As a multi-site church[5] that is already using streaming technology for dispersing the sermons to their campuses, it was an easy step to leverage that technology to establish an online campus. Yet they knew to have an online campus required more than a Web address and sermon video. "Church" by definition is so much more than simply a sermon or recorded services.

They began by selecting a campus pastor for this online community, someone who would connect personally with those joining online. He would be available before, after, and during the services for prayer and counseling, to connect with newcomers, and answer basic questions. One of his main goals is to create a sense of "community" or "*koinonia*" among those gathering online, to recreate the same sense of family and belonging people experience when they are in one of their physical locations.

Through the use of monitored chat/prayer rooms, the congregation can share prayer requests and needs with the online campus pastor as well as others in this virtual room. Pastor David has reported that it is common for those in these chat rooms to begin praying for one another's needs before he has the chance to respond. These chat rooms have become their "altar experience" where they come for prayer and are prayed for by the body of Christ. Pastor David reports that many of those gathering return week after week for connection, prayer, and encouragement.

For many who question the validity of "online church," their number one argument is that true fellowship cannot occur without being face to face. The early

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[5]A multi-site church is one church meeting in multiple locations. (See Elmer Towns, Ed Stetzer, and Warren Bird, *11 Innovations in the Local Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books), 65-94. The author's church, Christ Fellowship, has a multi-site model with four physical campuses and one virtual campus.

church met together daily, ate together, and prayed together. It was in this context that the church as we know it began. How can something so personal morph into a virtual experience where perhaps no other human touch occurs? Can cyberspace be an environment for community and care? For example, Mark Driscoll of Mars Hill Church believes "technology is in no way a substitute for life-on-life, face-to-face, actual Christian community where the eight characteristics of the church are present."[6]

What about the writer of Hebrews' admonition not to "give up meeting with one another" (Hebrews 10:25)? Is it possible for this worship "meeting" to take place in various forms on multiple plains? These are legitimate questions and concerns that must be addressed before the validity of the online church can be defended. As a part of the discussion, other virtual communities must be assessed. Communities such as Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter are virtual gathering places where friendships and relationships are fostered. Less than a decade ago, these virtual connections were not available. Now they are among one of the most common points of connection within millions of people's everyday life. With the enhancement of mobile technology, access to maintaining these points of communication has exponentially increased. People are more connected with more people than ever before.[7]

Yet many argue this connection is superficial. How truly connected can you be to more than 400 friends? While the question is rhetorical, it does pose a compelling argument regarding the validity and profundity of online community. How this matter intersects with the online church must be analyzed.

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[6]Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, 96.

[7]Hilary Stout, "Antisocial Networking," *New York Times* (May 2, 2010), available from http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9401E3D8103DF931A35756C0A9669D8B63&scp=12&sq=more+cell+phones&st=nyt (accessed March 11, 2011).

Furthermore, Jesus' mandate to make disciples and baptize one another (Matthew 28:19-20) must be considered. If the online church is legitimately a church, how does it address this issue? Some online churches are encouraging their attendees to find a local church to be physically baptized in water. Other online churches have performed baptism via video with a pastor in one state and the person being baptized in their bathtub at home by a friend. Still other churches are grappling with the question, "If the purpose of baptism is to be an outward testimony of an inward work, does water have to even be involved?" Their argument is contextually driven. If in the first century church, water baptism was an outward expression or testimony to the community, is there a better way to share that testimony? Since many baptisms take place within the four walls of a church to be witnessed by fellow believers, could a more effective witness be a video testimony of lives change and dependence upon Christ as Lord and Savior? Again, these pose valid questions for the increasing numbers of online church communities.

The argument that seems the easiest to answer is: "Is it possible for the church to properly and efficiently disciple people on the Internet?" With the more common practice and effectiveness of online schooling, both for secondary, undergraduate, and graduate programs, this question seems benign. People all over the world are growing and learning from the Internet. Classes and teaching will continue to become even more effective allowing better teacher/pupil interaction for greater learning.

But what about Paul's admonition to "equip God's people for acts of service" (Ephesians 4:12)? Is it possible for the church to help people online to identify their God-given gifts and then provide them with outlets to use their gifts to build up the Kingdom of God? For any online church to truly be the church these purposes and demonstrations

must occur in the lives of the believers. Otherwise the online experience is nothing more than watching a church service on the television or computer. There is no personal connection, no opportunity for care, and no opportunity for spiritual development and service.

Statement of Limitations

- This thesis project will not outline the process for programming for online services.

- The author will not detail methods for setting up wire feeds or streaming technology.

- The author will not recommend equipment needed to stream services.

- The author will not propose theories or methods for online counseling.

Theological Basis

Community by definition is "a group of people sharing common characteristics or interests."[8] Although the term has historically been associated with a group of individuals living in a common location, the introduction of the Internet has broken that barrier. Community no longer has geographical limitations associated with it. Author Stephen Spyker validates that community takes place online. "Increasingly the Web is not seen just as a way for the individual to access vast quantities of date, as in the lone religious

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[8]*Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary,* available from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community, s.v. "community," (accessed March 3, 2011).

seeker looking for truth out there somewhere, but also as a way for people to come together, to *be* together, in cyberspace."[9]

The introduction of online communities such as MySpace, Facebook and Twitter (to name a few) has proven that community and connection can take place online.[10]

As a part of the research for this project, the author has joined several online communities and participated in the relationship-building taking place within them. He has found the connections to be both authentic and unfulfilling at the same time. Some of the connections are meaningful and have an impact on his thoughts and everyday life, while others are simply surface relationships. The same is true with relationships he has had with those physically connected in his daily life. Some are meaningful and change the way he thinks and lives while others are mere acquaintances.

However, community within the Christian context implies more than just knowing someone's favorite color or genre of music. Christian community implies a sense of belonging and caring. The word *koinonia* more clearly defines the close-knit community of the first century church. Conceptually, it includes a sense of fellowship, association, community, communion, and joint participation. It is this type of community that most churches strive to create.[11] The questions remain, "Can true *koinonia* take place

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[9] Stephen Spyker, *Technology & Spirituality, How the Information Revolution Affects Our Spiritual Lives* (Woodstock: SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2007), Kindle download e-book (accessed December 28, 2010.

[10] Michael S. Rosenwald, "Can Facebook Help Overcome Shyness?" *Washington Post* (February 12, 2011), available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/can-facebook-help-overcome-shyness/2011/02/12/ABxotpQ_story.html (accessed March 11, 2011).

[11] Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 352.

online? Can the church live out its expression of love and caring for each other in a virtual reality?"

The expression of "community" has changed over the centuries. Even within the last 100 years the definition has changed. Back in the early 20th century, community was noted by the relationships within a small town and village. Neighbors knew each other and spent time talking with each other. As time progressed and culture changed, the automatic garage doors became the moats to castles. People became more reclusive and less connected with their neighbors. Larger cities drew people out of smaller communities. There is much to be gleaned from examining the sociological evolution of community in relation to the manner in which authentic community is built by the church.[12]

Still, we must look to the Bible to see how true community is expressed. From the very beginning, God refers to His children as a community. In the Book of Genesis, God speaks a blessing over Jacob and says, "I am God Almighty; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a **community** of nations will come from you, and kings will be among your descendants" (Genesis 35:11 [*New International Version*], (emphasis added). Throughout the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, the Israelites are commonly referred to as a "community."

The Book of Acts offers us the clearest expression of true care and community within the church. Within the opening chapters of the book, *koinonia* and care are expressed as we see the people of the early church devoting themselves to one another and sharing with whoever had need (Acts 2). Believers ate meals together daily in each

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[12]Danielle Burrows, "Next Door Strangers," (February, 2011); available from http://www.southjersey.com/articles/?articleid=23708 (accessed March 13, 2011).

other's homes. They sold their possessions and gave to those in need, and the Bible says that everyone's needs were met. What a powerful picture of love and care.

Before we can ask if this type of care can take place in an online community, we have to ask if it is actually happening today in churches across America. Again, as culture has changed so have our definitions of what acceptable "community" looks like. Within the author's church, he has witnessed and been a part of care and love as expressed in the Book of Acts. He has been on the receiving and giving end of such love. But in a church of its size with more than 20,000 in attendance each weekend, that type of *koinonia* can only take place in a small group. So the logical question, then, is can small group care take place online?

At Christ Fellowship they have proven that small groups can occur online. However, the question we must all grapple with is can deep care and *koinonia* occur within groups that never meet face to face?

Statement of Methodology

The author will be using technology in the form of online surveys to analyze the effectiveness of technology. Using an online survey program, the process for gathering data and proof will include questioning those churches actively pursuing and using this use of technology.[13] This writer believes this methodology will be effective in helping him adequately determine the strengths, value, and possibilities of online church.

Further, he will also be surveying people who are current members of his online church campus at Christ Fellowship. This latter group will provide great insight into how

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[13]See Surveymonkey.com, available from http://www.surveymonkey.com/partners/efax.aspx?cmpid=&gclid=CJqpzeL7vKcCFR9x5QodbQo2_A (accessed November 9, 2009).

effective we are or are not at discipleship. The author will also be surveying church staff members and pastors asking them similar questions to the ones our online campus attendees will answer.

Additionally, books and articles from experts in the field will round out the process of gathering data and proof for this thesis. Analyzing expert input will provide the author with a rounded perspective of both the effectiveness of the online church and the fears, theological oppositions, and shortcomings.

As a part of this analysis the author will analyze the age of the participants. In anticipation of gathering this data, the author has engaged in several conversations with pastors about online church and its effectiveness. He is discovering an interesting trend that aligns with the ages of the pastors. The younger the pastor, the more excited they appear about the possibilities and effectiveness of doing ministry online. They are actively engaged in online communities and spend time every day on Twitter or Facebook. Taking those experiences to an online gathering of the church is an easy bridge to cross.

Yet those who are 50 and older find it hard to believe that true connection can take place online. When asked if they are familiar with several of the online mediums, they indicate they are not.

The breakdown of the chapters is as follows:

Chapter 1 – Defining and Depicting the Online Church

Chapter One will begin by clearly defining what online church is and how it functions. Using current online churches as the prototype, the author will give further description of how the online church is currently reaching people with the message of

Christ and growing them into disciples. This chapter will give description and detail how church takes place in an online environment. This opening argument will establish the need for the impending analysis as online church is not something of the future but something currently taking place around the world. This chapter will set the framework for the ensuing discussion.

Chapter 2 – The Potential of the Online Church

Chapter Two will explore the potential and possibilities that the online church provides. The barriers to sharing the Gospel that were common in our world at the end of the 20th century are no longer a consideration. The world has become a much smaller place as people today truly live in a global community. Iron curtains have fallen and the Internet allows the church to reach around the world. Additionally, the Internet allows more people to become involved in evangelism. This chapter will explore the potential of releasing e-vangelists to utilize the Internet as a tool to advance the kingdom of God.

Chapter 3 – Considering Arguments Against Online Church

Chapter Three will address the growing concerns associated with the online church. Literature on the topic, theological guides, and survey results will provide the framework for this chapter. Each rational argument must be fully addressed to provide the clearest picture of the future of this new ministry opportunity. Although several arguments will be addressed such as "How is communion administered online?" and "How are baptisms performed?" the main argument will address the issue of whether true *koinonia* can take place online. Can people feel cared for and loved in an online church?

Chapter 4 – The Online Church and the Purposes of the Church

By evaluating the data received from both churches that conduct church online as well as those who attend online church and congregants engaged in online church at Christ Fellowship, Chapter Four will address just how effective the online church truly is. Effectiveness in the areas of discipleship, worship, counseling, evangelism, congregational care, opportunities to serve, and administering the sacraments of the church will be discussed. Much consideration will be given to the attendee's perspective over the church leadership since they are the end user. A church may believe they are effective at community building or congregational care, but unless the congregation agrees with their point of view, the analysis is flawed.

This chapter will also address how online churches are measuring their effectiveness with their congregation. Since this is a new area for most all the churches involved, analysis tools must be in place to ensure effective ministry.

Chapter 5 – Practices and Programs any Church Must Have

Chapter Five will address the programs and practices that must be in place for an online church to be a "church." There are some programs and tools that churches meeting in geographical locations must have to do church successfully. Does an online church need all the same programs and tools? Can the online church experience be adapted while not losing its effectiveness? For example, most churches wouldn't think of existing without a nursery for babies and a children's ministry for the kids. Do online churches have to consider the same types of demands and restrictions? If so, which ones? Is there a new approach to some of these "standard ministries" taking place in an online environment?

Chapter 6 – Lessons Learned from Doing Church Online

The final chapter will address lessons learned from those churches that are currently doing online church and how their experiences can give a new perspective to the church at large. What new areas of ministry and evangelism are taking place online that other churches must consider? Just as churches began to leverage radio and television back in the middle of the 20th century, shouldn't churches be leveraging the Internet to spread the Gospel of Christ? These questions along with other technological advances that the church could leverage will close out the discussion.

Review of Literature

Many churches are recognizing the ease with which they can use a website to keep their congregations up to speed on events and to invite newcomers in the area to join their family. And some of those churches are branching out to explore how the Internet might be used to implement new and enhance existing ministry programs. Because of this growing trend, some books are popping up in Christian circles to address the need for churches to tap into the power of such broad, mass communication.

Wired for Ministry, by John P. Jewell; *Web-Empower Your Church,* by Mark M. Stephenson; *eMinistry,* by Andrew Careaga; and *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture,* by Shane Hipps all address the very issue of using the capabilities of the Internet to maximize and expand the church's ministry beyond its four walls. Further, these books shed light on the opportunities afforded the church to reach out in unprecedented new ways because of the world-wide Web. Each author here makes the case for the need for the church to be "visible" online in order to have impact on today's society. They also

enter the discussion of the church's privilege and responsibility to carefully and strategically integrate technology and ministry while avoiding pitfalls. However, none of these books seem to address the real theological issues at stake of whether real *koinonia* can be fostered in online church. Rather, the emphases seem to be on the "how-to's" of online ministry.

Church Next, by Aubrey and Michael Malphurs, and *Grown Up Digital,* by Don Tapscott, discuss the importance of understanding and reaching the "Net generation." This demographic is between the ages of 11 and 30, and they are growing up digital with brand new ways of thinking, interacting, working, socializing, and even worshiping. The church must listen to the arguments these authors make about relating to future generations online. However, neither of these authors hit on the question the writer is wrestling with in this project: Can the mere comfort and availability of worshiping online truly foster the same kind of authentic Christian community found in a brick and mortar church where face-to-face contact is rightly made?

Exploring Religious Community Online, by Heidi Campbell; *The Internet Church,* by Walter P. Wilson; *Give Me That Online Religion,* by Brenda A. Brasher; and *Religion Online,* edited by Lorne L. Dawson and Douglas E. Cowan get closer to the topic of this project, but none comes to any definitive position. In fact, *Religion Online* seems to hit many issues relative to this project including considering the possibility of "sacred space" in cyberspace and "religion and the quest for virtual community," but none of the articles therein address whether the biblical definition of *koinonia* is sincerely honored in an online church environment. In fact, later articles concern themselves with the spread of

Buddhism and cults online, completely abandoning the relative nature of the Christian church, making the book only partly adequate to this discussion.

Exploring Religion Community Online is probably the most helpful in developing a comprehensive sociological perspective of biblical community and addressing some of the challenges of online religious community. However, Campbell does not question the theological issues churches must grapple with in order to truly be the church.

In his book, *SimChurch*, Douglas Estes does an effective job of addressing the current online world and how it intersects with spirituality, specifically the church. Estes challenges the church to not ignore the virtual world but to engage it to reach people for Christ. He addresses Internet churches and the differing arguments surrounding their effectiveness. However, he does so from a practical perspective rather than a theological one, spending more time arguing that churches must engage in the virtual world than clearly addressing if true biblical community can be experienced online. Still, Estes does a solid job of addressing many of the issues surrounding how the church must engage in the online world to be effective in the coming days.[14]

In his book, *Technology & Spirituality*, Stephen Spyker addresses how technology is affecting our relationship with God. The author deals with both the benefits and the negative consequences of our technologically-driven culture. Spyker's own spiritual journey mixed with his love for technology makes his approach to this issue authentic and engaging. He dedicates an entire chapter to how spiritual community online can be formed and maintained. Spyker argues that community is not regulated to geographical boundaries. He encourages the reader to broaden their perspective of what community in

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[14]Douglas Estes, *SimChurch* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), Kindle download e-book.

the future will look like in light of technology. His book is brilliant in addressing how technology affects our walk with God; however, the author does not specifically confront the question whether the church can biblically exist in an online environment.[15]

Steve Hewitt's book, *Windows PCs in the Ministry*, is a more recent publication addressing how technology can be used to enhance the ministry of the church. His book is a shotgun approach briefly addressing many areas including selecting worship presentation software, blogging, and how to build a good website. Hewitt's book serves as a basic introduction of current technologies for churches but he offers little knowledge of existing opportunities and endeavors. The author does offer basic applications such as ChurchonVideo.com and StreamingChurch.tv for those churches interested in streaming their services or wanting to start an online church. Hewitt does not begin to address the various arguments surrounding church online nor the theological question of whether church online can truly be a biblical representation of Christian community.[16]

In review of current literature, the author did spend a great deal of time examining various doctoral theses, looking for perspectives about church online and found nothing directly written about the online church. Not one project explored whether authentic *koinonia* could take place online.

This writer did find a few projects that could be informative that covered such areas as handling communion in the cyber church,[17] computer use in the local church in

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[15]Spyker.

[16]Steve Hewitt, *Windows PCs in the Ministry* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2010), Kindle download, e-book.

[17]Dae-Hun Min, "*Research about Restoration of Holy Communion Service: Dealing with the Cyber Church,*" (Doctoral diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2003).

the 21st century,[18] [19] community enhancement on the Internet,[20] using the Web as an evangelistic tool, [21] [22] considering the potential of the Internet for ministry,[23] and perhaps the most relative being "forming spiritual community on the Internet."[24] This last project evaluated interactive community online in light of its potential to alter ecclesial community. However, this project does not evaluate the biblical basis of *koinonia* or the programs and doctrines of the church both historically and theologically.

According to the author's research, he believes this project will be valuable to the modern church.

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[18]Todd Douglas Anderson, "*Hearing the Word in Our Own Language: Computer Use in the Local Church for the 21st Century*" (Doctoral diss., United Theological Seminary, 1997).

[19]Kenneth Lynn Lewis, Jr., "*Christian Communication in the Twenty-First Century: Patters and Principles Relative to the Effective Use of Internet-based Communications*" (Doctoral diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2002).

[20]W. Davies Owens, "*Community Enhancement on the Internet*" (Doctoral diss., Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2000).

[21]Sandra L. Bochonok, "*Unleashing the Mighty Power of God through Internet Evangelism*" (Doctoral diss., Wesley Theological Seminary, 1999).

[22]Stephen C. Strom, "*An Evaluation of Barriers in Communicating the Gospel using an Evangelistic Web Site*" (Doctoral diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2003).

[23]Donald P. Olsen, "*Networking Community: A Look at the Internet and Its Potential for Ministry*" (Doctoral diss., Chicago Theological Seminary, 1998).

[24]Stephen M. Walsh, "*Forming Spiritual Community on the Internet*" (Doctoral diss., Columbia Theological Seminary, 2002).

CHAPTER II

THE POTENTIAL OF CHURCH ONLINE

In 1439, the world as it was completely changed. Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press. It took 10 years to perfect, and in 1450 the first poem rolled off that printing press. It was then that Gutenberg conceived the idea of printing and distributing the Bible. In 1455, 180 Gutenberg Bibles were printed. This invention would effectively change the world.[1] For the last five hundred years, the primary delivery system for learning and faith development has been print.[2] It revolutionized education, communication, literacy, and above all, the spread of the Gospel. The printing press catalyzed both the Renaissance and the Reformation.

Since that time, there has never been a discovery or invention that could even come close to the changes brought about by the power of the printing press—until the Internet. Once again we find ourselves catapulted to a new level, a new level of assimilating information, communicating with others, educating ourselves, and keeping up with friendships. The Internet has affected all of humanity, from the wealthiest to the poorest, and even those with little or no access to it.[3] The movement for clean water is an example of that. When a remote village gets a clean water well, it is most likely due to an

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[1]Wikipedia, "Johannes Gutenberg," available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Gutenberg (accessed March 16, 2011).

[2]Leonard Sweet, Foreword to *Web-Empower Your Church: Unleashing the Power of Internet Ministry*, by Mark M. Stephenson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006), 11.

[3]Bill Gates, "Shaping the Internet Age," (December 2000) available from http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/exec/billg/writing/shapingtheinternet.mspx (accessed March 13, 2011).

Internet campaign bringing awareness to individuals willing to help. One cannot discuss the potential of church online without first considering the potential of the online world. In the early 1990s as the commercialization of the Internet began, no one could have imagined the profound impact it would have on society today. What began as a means of storing and transferring information has become a tool of business, education, and relationships. Today the Internet is used to buy and sell commodities from around the world. Finances are managed, educational classes are taught, and personal moments are shared.

Today the Internet allows people to work from virtually any place in the world. The traditional office setting is becoming unnecessary and, in some cases, obsolete in many professions. As a result, people are able to live where they desire and travel to distant countries while developing careers at the same time. People are discovering new and fresh ways to expand their business opportunities in their community and around the world.

The Internet has caused the world to drastically shrink in size. People today are not only more aware of cultures and civilizations halfway around the world, but the Internet allows them to actually know and build friendships with people there. When the author was growing up, it was rare to travel to distant places. The only means of accessing these worlds was through encyclopedias and textbooks. This is not so any longer. The Internet invites its users to discover exotic places and people. It allows them to visually communicate with people worlds away and encourages them to discover and expand their horizons and relationships.

As a result, the sociology of this current culture is very "one-world" minded. Rather than the national-centric world the author grew up in where patriotism was second nature, children today are growing up in a world where east not only meets west, but they cohabitate and produce offspring, creating a melting pot of ideas and perceptions about the world we live in today. Connectivity among various nationalities and people groups continues to draw in the circumference of the world.

With the advanced technology of mobile devices, the access to information and people from around the globe continues to feed this "one-world" view. Now at any given moment, one can "facetime" someone on their phone from the other side of the world, not only talking with them, but actually seeing them while they talk. Mobile phones and handheld computers can provide directions to a specific location and make dinner reservations before they arrive.[4]

The Internet plays a significant role in the area of relationship-building as well. Social networks link people from around the world in online community. One such network, Facebook, has more than 500 million users. Facebook touches one in twelve people worldwide, making it the third largest "nation" in the world. It adds approximately 700,000 new users daily.[5] Each user shares personal information with his or her "friends" and has the ability to interact and share thoughts and ideas throughout the day. Users can also join in groups based on common interests or organizations. The author's church,

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[4]"Advancements in Mobile Technology and Influence of the Internet," Articlesbase [Free Online Articles Directory] (December 3, 2008), available from http://www.articlesbase.com/technology-articles/advancements-in-mobile-technology-and-influence-of-the-internet-668478.html (accessed March 13, 2011).

[5]Lev Grossman, "Person of the Year: Mark Zuckerberg," *Time.com* (December 15, 2010), available from http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2036683_2037183_2037185,00.html (accessed December 16, 2010).

Christ Fellowship, uses a Facebook page that has more than 7000 users that stay

connected with the church on a daily basis. Through this page, they are able to send out

Scriptures for the day, ask for prayer requests, and remind their "Facebook family" of

upcoming church activities.

Of course Facebook is just one type of social networking taking place online. In

addition to others, the Internet allows families separated by distance to connect through e-

mail, instant messaging, and video conferencing. Grandparents can see their

grandchildren taking their first steps even though they may be continents away. Soldiers

in the middle of the desert can stay in touch with their families and loved ones and not

have to wait for the mail carriers to bring them news from home. All this relational

connection is available now because of the Internet.

What does the future of the Internet look like? How will the advances in

technology offer even greater connectivity with the world and the people around us?

Technology advances at such an alarming rate. What is new and cutting edge today will

be outdated within a few months. With such advancements, the future of the world online

will include even greater access to information sharing and communication. Hologram

imaging and even clearer video conferencing will soon shorten the distance between

individuals. All of these advances will also be available to advance the mission of the

church.

Church online currently takes various shapes and expressions. As churches better

leverage current technology and prepare for the advancing technology; the potential for

ministry online is endless. Church online removes the barriers of distance and time,

allowing individuals to be reached and ministered to 24 hours a day. The new digital

generation that is emerging needs resources and training to be e-vangelists to a growing online world.

Most church services are offered on Sunday mornings with some churches offering Saturday night services. Pastors and volunteers are available to share the message of God's hope and grace with those who are searching. Those needing prayer can find prayer partners ready to help them in their time of trouble. However, what about when the service is over and the church doors are locked? Who is available to meet and pray with someone in need at 2:00 a.m.?

Traditionally, the only means by which one can meet such needs is a phone chain. Church online can eliminate this antiquated practice. It offers the potential for continual services and prayer rooms to be available around the clock. Currently, Christ Fellowship's online church has volunteers residing in other countries that help to lead their online services that are timed for the convenience of people attending in differing time zones. With the training and deploying of additional service leaders, more and more online services could populate the Internet, allowing more people to be reached for Christ. It would be extremely possible, even likely, that one day soon the church online would have services taking place online 24 hours a day with people from around the world able to pray with those gathering online in their own time zone.

Additionally, Bible classes could be made more readily available online. Online learning institutions are filling the Internet. Even Christian universities like Liberty University are training leaders around the world using an online format in addition to traditional classrooms.[6] This practice has afforded educational institutions the

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[6]Liberty University Online, available from http://www.onlineatliberty.com/?gclid=CN6d_bjc56cCFYh_5QodkhpAcg (accessed March 14, 2011).

opportunity to educate the world. One never has to leave his or her home to receive a quality education. In fact, several friends and colleagues of the author have received online degrees while making great contributions to the Kingdom of God where He has called them.

Churches could easily access the same programs and implement the same approach to post their discipleship courses online, allowing people to grow spiritually without having to be in a physical church building at a specific time. Currently, some of the author's church classes are available online, but the potential to offer all their classes is in the near future. A primary goal of the church is to develop Christ-followers and discipleship is a pathway to reaching this goal. Accordingly, having classes online would certainly cultivate a sense of community and provide outlets for growth.

Church online is also a powerful vehicle for one-on-one mentoring. Through instant messaging and video conferencing mentors can connect without having to coordinate schedules and meet in person. Online church could post classes and discussion boards where those being mentored are coached and developed on various subjects. This allows an even greater fulfillment of making disciples by allowing personal and intentional interactions with one another.

When the very first disciples were beginning to fulfill the Great Commission and go into all the world, they leveraged the infrastructure of their conquerors. At that time the Ancient Roman Empire extended through most of Europe to Northern Africa and throughout the Middle East. Rome's approach was to convert conquered people to

Roman thought and ideologies. They would impose their language and culture on nations and people, slowly changing the way they thought and lived.[7]

To maintain influence over their subjects and to accommodate the transport of their military conquest, Rome built extensive roadways throughout their domain. This network of roads not only allowed Rome to maintain communication and control, but it also provided a means for the Gospel of Christ to reach the known world. It is ironic that the very entity that was set against Christianity became the means God would use to help spread the Good News.

Just as the Roman network of roads became a tool the apostles used to spread the message of Christ, another network, the Internet, has been established. This network expands throughout most of the known world. It crosses physical and cultural barriers and provides an open door into homes and offices around the globe. It has no limitations like the confines of roads. The superhighway of information is always expanding its reach to people all over the world. As the church better leverages this tool, it will only serve to expand the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

> Continue to do the same old things, and you'll get the same old results. Try to see the future. We are moving into a world that requires that we do things very differently. The unchurched will remain unchurched. Don't expect them to show up at your door. Create a network that reaches out to their world, and ask God to begin touching their lives. He will. We need only declare His Word. His Spirit will leverage the Internet for the advantage of the kingdom.[8]

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[7]Wayne Blank, "Roman Roads," *The Church of God Daily Bible Study,* available from http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/romeroad.htm (accessed March 13, 2011).

[8]Walter P. Wilson, *The Internet Church* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 41.

Evangelism

Of all the potentials of church online, the greatest is its ability to evangelize. The church online is a church without walls, without geography, without borders. It crosses oceans in seconds, and takes the message of the Gospel to places the name of Jesus is not yet known.

There are countries such as Afghanistan, North Korea, China, and Sudan where Christian missionaries are not allowed, where the teaching of the truth of Christ is not only forbidden by law but also punishable by death. In countries like these, church online can become a powerful tool for evangelism. In nations like China where the church is forced underground, church online becomes an open door for people to find out more about the grace of Jesus. Although some countries limit and monitor Internet activity, it is increasingly difficult for all Internet activity to be scrutinized.

Ahmed is a Muslim from Syria studying in Iran. Coming from a country where Christianity is illegal, the Internet allows him the freedom to discuss his faith with others online. He e-mailed the online pastor at the author's church, reaching out for help. He had accepted Christ into his life but was afraid because as he put it, "Here in these countries, if I say I am a Christian, they are going to kill me because in Islam you can't change your religion. Please help me. Teach me how to be patient like Jesus."[9]

The online pastor conversed with Ahmed by e-mail until he thought about connecting him with a man in our church named Kamal who may be able to more intimately understand Ahmed's circumstances. Kamal is from Egypt and has a ministry in the Middle East with Muslims. He has many connections to Christians all over the

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[9]E-mail information sent to Pastor David Helbig from Ahmed, October 15, 2010.

Middle East and to the underground church there as well. Discipling Ahmed has helped Ahmed to remain steadfast in his faith despite the fears and uncertainty of his future. Online church brings light for believers trying to live out their faith in dark parts of the world.

Like Ahmed, who is forbidden to walk into a physical church building and worship, members could join online in worship, teaching of the Word, reading of the Word, and prayer. Prayer rooms allow for them to be ministered to by trained pastors and prayer partners. Translation devices allowing people to type in their own language and have it converted to the language of the host[10] are already being used by LifeChurch.tv and other online churches.

The opportunity for evangelism is endless. As far as the Internet reaches, there is the prospect of reaching one more with the message of Jesus Christ. The author's church online welcomed people from more than 100 different countries in the last year.[11] Church online allows for the spreading of the Gospel and the intentional follow up that comes through online discipleship tools and classes. Even when the church reaches into countries with potential language barriers, evangelistic and training resources abound in multitudes of languages from around the world.

The opportunity for evangelism not only extends to foreign soil, but also here at home. Many people have an apprehension of walking through the doors of a local church. Perhaps hurts from their past, negative experiences, or simply the fear of the unknown keep them from walking through the doors. Church online allows the attendee to observe

[10]Program is called BabelWith.Me, available from http://www.babelwith.me/, (accessed March 13, 2011). Allows someone to communicate with anyone, anywhere in up to 45 languages. This is a simple, free group chat that automatically translates your conversation as you type.

[11]See Appendix E.

what a service is like, talk with a pastor, and get an overall feel for the church before they ever step in a building. In some cases the church online becomes a "pre-evangelistic" tool to invite people to church.

The author has seen this case in his own church. Congregants will actually invite their friends and neighbors to participate in a service online to learn more about the church. Dozens of people now actively involved in Christ Fellowship made a stop at their online campus before attending one of their physical campuses. After watching the services for a few months they felt comfortable to step out and bring their family to a physical service.

Kathy, a resident of Palm Beach Gardens, FL, where the author's original campus is located, found the Christ Fellowship Facebook page and began communicating with the online campus pastor to ask questions about their programs and beliefs.[12] Her husband Bob was Jewish and did not wish to join a Christian church, but he agreed to let her and their children attend the church of her choice.

The online campus pastor invited Kathy to observe a Christ Fellowship service online, and she did. Their conversations continued as she asked for prayer for various situations her family was experiencing. Eventually she signed her youngest child up for a baby dedication at the Gardens campus. It was her first time at a physical campus of Christ Fellowship. Following the service, Kathy and Bob invited the online pastor and his family to lunch where they all got to meet in person and begin building a relationship offline.

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[12]Christ Fellowship Facebook Page, available from http://www.facebook.com/ChristFellowshipChurch, (accessed March 16, 2011).

A few months later, Bob accepted Christ at Christ Fellowship's Christmas Eve service. A very busy and successful businessman who traveled frequently, Bob didn't have a lot of time to join discipleship classes at the church to grow in his new relationship with Christ so the online pastor mentored him online. Bob's life changed radically. His friends, business associates, clients, and family all recognized the changes. Bob and Kathy's faith and commitment to Christ and to Christ Fellowship has changed their marriage, their family, their business, and countless thousands of individuals they touch on a regular basis. And it all started because Kathy was able to connect with the Christ Fellowship family through the online church. She felt safe being able to observe the church online before stepping out to attend a physical campus.

The potential for the church online to be a powerful evangelistic tool is immeasurable. It reaches to the backwoods of Canada, and a dusty village in Italy, to a household in Perth, Australia, where an entire family came to Christ. Approximately a year ago on a Sunday morning, Christ Fellowship's online campus gathered for worship. At their physical campuses, they were preparing to take communion as a part of the worship service. On weekends where they share in communion, the online pastor enters the live chat and directs participants to find some juice and bread or crackers for the elements. That particular Sunday, the senior pastor explained the significance of the elements, and he offered a chance to come into a relationship with Christ. Many in the sanctuary that day asked Christ into their life as Lord and Savior, and online a man named Malcolm in Perth, Australia, sat weeping at his computer screen as the truth of the Gospel pierced his heart. He prayed to invite Christ into his life.

Right after the prayer, Malcolm entered the live chat and told the online pastor (as well as everyone else participating) what had just taken place in his life. Immediately, he was flooded with prayers and encouragement for his step of faith and his declaration of Christ as his Lord. As the next service began, Malcolm gathered his wife and daughters around the computer. He wanted them to hear the truth that had just transformed his life. He was able to help lead his wife and children into their own personal relationship with Jesus!

Another woman named Kim searching for the truth joined the Christ Fellowship Facebook page. The online pastor occasionally sends welcome messages to the newcomers on the page so he reached out to Kim and introduced himself and told her he was available to answer questions or help her however he could. She wrote back immediately and said, "Thank you for "friend requesting" me. It seems strange that I would see that you sent that note just as my friend is talking to me about praying and trusting in God. She is born again or saved, not sure which is the right term to use, but I have been having a very tough time and she has been trying to help. Anyway, I wanted to say Thank you. I guess He does work in mysterious ways."

Their conversation leading to Kim's salvation during an online chat on Facebook follows:

4:07pmDavid
It's kind of funny because I don't really make a habit of doing it a lot. Every once in a while I'll have a look at who's new in our group and send out a few messages, but that's it. Are you from around here? I'll pray for you ok. God promises us that if we seek Him we'll find Him. Happy hunting!

4:15pmKim
Well he was working through your fingers today. I live out in the acreage and have been feeling the pull to him for about a year now. I just haven't really acted, I guess you could say. Maybe it is time. I know I feel broken and I'm ready for some hope!

4:42pmKim
One more thing... if you don't mind... What is the prayer to bring God into your heart?

4:46pmDavid
Hey, I'm going to grab something that I wrote a while back for the Web... it's called Knowing God Personally. I want you to read that... then I'll send you a simple prayer that you can pray. and anytime now or later, you can ask me any question you like about any of it!

Do you desire purpose, meaning and a reason to live? Deep down most of us ponder these things and wonder why we feel empty. We each have an emptiness in our lives, and regardless of how hard we try, nothing we do can fill the void in a lasting way. Relationships, possessions, success and even religion fall short of occupying this space

A personal relationship with God fills this emptiness.

The following four principles will help you discover a personal relationship with God.

1. Realize that God loves you and has created you to know Him personally

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

What prevents us from having this relationship?

2. People are separated from God by their own choices, which the Bible calls sin. This makes it impossible to know God personally or experience His love.

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23.

3. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, provided the way to have relationship with God. "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me'." John 14:6

"Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred..." 1 Corinthians 15:3-6

But it's not enough to know this truth:

4. We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then we can know God personally and experience His love.

"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." John 1:12

"By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works that no one should boast." Ephesians 2:8,9

[Christ speaking] "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him." Revelation 3:20

Receiving Christ involves turning to God and trusting Christ to come into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to make us what He wants us to be. You can receive Christ now by asking God to forgive you and by inviting Christ to be Lord (CEO) of your life. God knows your heart and is not as concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart.

David
I'm right here if you have any questions.

4:56pmKim
I read your passage and I do understand it. It's just amazing to me what happened today with the friend request from you. I've had a pull to the church over the past year.

4:59pmDavid
So you understand what I sent you? I hope you know that God has a purpose and a plan for you.

5:00pmKim
Yes I do...Well... heck why didn't I check with him sooner? LOL Cause what I'm doing obviously isn't working.

5:00pmDavid
Better late than never!

5:00pmKim
True. You're an online Pastor? Do you do a service online?

5:02pmDavid
Well I'm a Pastor, and online just happens to be the place I work for Christ Fellowship. We provide services for people who can't get to church...small groups and discussions for people who may not be close by or maybe out of the country, support groups for those who might be suffering or recovering from illness, disease, or sickness... whatever. I personally believe that the church ought to go where the people are at and offer hope, and people are definitely on the Internet!

5:05pmKim

I agree... :):) Well it worked today!

5:05pmDavid
So Kim...are you going to let me lead you in a prayer of surrendering your life to the power and presence of God?

5:05pmKim
Yes ... I will

5:06pmDavid
I want you to do something...I want you to either type in exactly what I type... kind of representing you saying it or read what I'm saying out loud.

5:07pmKim
Okay...How about both!

5:07pmDavid
Perfect....I just want you to really feel it, and mean it, not just read it.

5:08pmKim
I understand.

5:08pmDavid
Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally...

5:08pmKim
Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally...

5:09pmDavid
Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins...

5:09pmKim
Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins....

5:09pmDavid
I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord...

5:09pmKim
I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord.....

5:09pmDavid
Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life...

5:10pmKim
Thank You for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life...

5:10pmDavid
Take control of my life...

5:10pmKim
Take control of my life...

5:10pmDavid
Make me the kind of person You want me to be...

5:11pmKim
Make me the kind of person You want me to be...

5:11pmDavid
In Jesus' Name, amen.

5:11pmKim
In Jesus' Name, amen.

5:11pmDavid

The Bible says that you are a NEW creation, all things have passed away, and you are made new.

5:12pmKim
Thank you David!

5:12pmDavid
Kim, this is only the beginning.

5:12pmKim
I know... and I'm ready.

5:12pmDavid
You have a purpose, and meaning for your life... and now you get to discover that.
I will help you...it won't be easy, but you are not alone.

5:13pmKim
Thank you. I know, it's not going to be easy. Thank you!

5:14pmDavid
I want to give you a book that will help you. It's called The Purpose Driven Life. And I want to give you a Bible.

The online pastor continued talking with Kim and invited her to begin attending

services at Christ Fellowship, especially since she lived nearby. She came that weekend

and met the online pastor who had led her to Christ. The following week, she attended a class to become assimilated into the church family.

Soon after, she contacted the online pastor to tell him her story and background leading up to her new relationship with Christ. She and her husband were in the midst of a divorce. He was abusing substances, and it was ruining their marriage.

Within a few months of her new relationship with Christ, her husband began going to recovery classes at Christ Fellowship, and they signed up for marriage counseling. Their marriage was restored, and her husband is now sober. Months later, her husband, too, gave his heart to the Lord, and the online pastor baptized Kim, her husband, and their oldest child together at the beach. They are now regular, growing members of Christ Fellowship.

People just like Kim are desperately seeking for truth. Mankind is wired by God to long for Him and only find true fulfillment as they walk in right relationship with Him. That's why the term "spirituality" is one of the words most frequently entered in online search engines. As Malphurs and Malphurs mention in their book *Church Next,* there are approximately 28 million people who have used the Internet to find religious information and materials and up to three million searching for this information daily.[13] People want to understand the meaning of life and the truth about God and they turn to online resources to learn. The potential for church online to be there and answer their questions and lead them to Christ is remarkable. It provides a place of healing and hope at the very place the world is coming to search for answers.

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[13]Aubrey Malphurs and Michael Malphurs, *Church Next: Using the Internet to Maximize Your Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 123.

In John 6:44 Jesus declares, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them..." (John 6:44, [*New International Version*]). The true work of evangelism is not upon us. It is the work of God's Spirit to draw the lost to Himself. Our role is to communicate the message of salvation and the grace of God. The Holy Spirit will work in the heart of the sinner, revealing his need for God. The Bible clearly teaches that the Holy Spirit is not limited by time or space. Psalm 139:7-10 says, "Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast." (Psalm 139:7-10 [*New International* Version]) Accordingly, computer screens or cables do not limit His work.

Similarly when we pray with someone while speaking on the phone, we believe God is there with us through His Holy Spirit. We pray for healing or encouragement or even for someone to experience the grace of God through salvation. None of us would discount the ability of the Holy Spirit and omnipotent God to move through these prayers. Our God is not handicapped because we are not there in person with the individual. In the same way that telephones leverage technology to connect people to each other and to the power of God, the Internet and church online is doing so as well.

Equipping E-vangelists

Church online also has the ability to inspire an army of "E-vangelists," a generation of young people, who have been raised on technology and who will use it for the Kingdom of God. One of the emerging generations is being called the "Net

Generation." They have grown up with computers and the Internet. Surfing the Web and checking their e-mail on their mobile devices is a part of their everyday lives. They instinctively turn to the Internet to connect and communicate. Before they choose a restaurant or a church or a job, they research it online. The primary means of connection with others takes place on the Internet as well. "These young people are remaking every institution of modern life, from the workplace to the marketplace, from politics to education, and down to the basic structure of the family."[14]

This generation of believers is also a part of our physical (and virtual) churches and is ready for action. Their peers, however, are grossly lost and searching for truth. "Young people, steeped in this postmodern culture and heavily influenced by what the entertainment industry feeds them, pick and choose ingredients of their own personal spirituality from a variety of belief systems. A kind of eclectic spirituality is in vogue these days, and it is a predictable outcome of the postmodern ethos."[15]

The church must create online church venues in which young believers can reach their peers with the truth of Christ's grace and God's plan for their lives. Church online has the potential to harness their abilities and skill sets and prepare these young believers to share Christ with the online world.

People online are open to discussing personal and spiritual matters. Perhaps the anonymity adds to the feeling of security and willingness to be open. Anonymity online actually lends itself well to discussions of a spiritual nature. For some reason, those seeking can sometimes feel a sense of inadequacy or weakness so anonymity allows them

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[14]Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 10.

[15]Andrew Careaga, *eMinistry: Connecting With the Net Generation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 71.

to ask their questions freely and objectively without feeling like their foundations are being scrutinized outwardly. "Questions about God can be asked in complete privacy on the Internet. The Internet displays no culture, no race, no gender, and no age. It provides a seeker with the ability to navigate his or her way to the foot of Calvary's Cross."[16]

Spiritual topics are among the leading issues discussed and researched online.[17] Unfortunately though, many are being led away from the truth of Christ. The Internet is filled with Websites and blogs pointing spiritual-seekers into dangerous areas and into spiritual darkness. New Age teachings and eastern religious thoughts threaten to entrap those looking to the Internet for answers. By equipping an army of e-vangelists to take to the Internet to share the hope of Christ, the church online can not only present the seeker with truth, but can also help them wrestle with questions that are hindering their decision to give their lives to Christ. By training e-vangelists from around the world, the church can constantly be available online. Not restricted by time zones or physical limitations, the church online can be available and "open" 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Many evangelicals are unprepared to fulfill 1 Peter 3:15: "…Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15 [*New International Version*]). The first step in equipping this online army, as with any army of believers, would be to make sure they understand the important tenets of their faith and how to clearly articulate them to others. In doing so the church online would also be fulfilling Ephesians 4:12-13 to "prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith…" (Ephesians 4:12-13, [*New International Version*])

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[16]Wilson, 25.

[17]Malphurs, 123.

The objective would be to raise up and equip apologists who are ready to guide online spiritual seekers to the truth of Jesus Christ, thus fulfilling the Great Commission of the church.

In preparation for equipping this army, the author's church has purchased the Website domain names for www.stillnotsure.com and www.whatdoidonow.com to help the e-vangelists with their mission. Many people they engage with online may not be ready to make a decision for Christ at that moment. Many questions may remain unanswered so www.stillnotsure.com will be a resource to answer some of those questions, allowing the seeker to dig deeper. This Website will also become a resource for the e-vangelists as they face questions for which they may not know the answer.

Www.whatdoidonow.com will be a Website designed to help the new convert take their next step in faith. Providing Bible studies, Scripture readings, and daily devotionals, this site will provide foundational instruction for those just beginning their journey with Christ. Online tools become an immediate connection for an online community. The person making the decision for Christ while online doesn't have to wait for traditional mail to arrive with Bible study materials or drive to a physical bookstore to purchase a Bible. Instead, he or she can instantly access online resources. The potential to leverage the online church to reach a lost world is truly limitless.

However, the potential of the online church model is being recognized by various, non-Christian religious groups as well. In fact, "More than three million individuals go

online every day looking for spiritual content…"[18] And there are more than a million religious Websites up and running online for people to peruse various faiths.[19]

The Church of the Latter Day Saints has recently decided to leverage the Internet to convert more to Mormonism. A recent article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* indicates that until recently, Internet usage for Mormons was extremely limited. However, motivated by a desire to proselytize as many people as possible by whatever means necessary, Mormon leaders are strategically using the Internet to publish invitations for conversion and to facilitate online chats with seekers.

Scott Swofford, director of media for the LDS Missionary Department at church headquarters in Salt Lake City, said, "Our leaders were struggling for years to find a more effective, less annoying way to get our message across than knocking on doors…. It's a lot more effective than [door-to-door] tracting in many places."[20]

Muslims and other world religions are also leveraging the Internet to reach out and teach their lies.

> The conversion of Christians in Europe and the United States to Islam has become a matter of debate in some Western countries. Muslim scholars have called on immigrant Muslims to become involved in summoning non-Muslims to their faith. Indeed, the call on Muslim migrants to proselytize has become central in contemporary Islamic writings, not only in books, but also in sermons—many online on YouTube—and others on DVDs, and Islamic Websites. The strategies that the global Islamic media use to promote conversion of Christians to Islam

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[18]Elena Larsen, "CyberFaith: How Americans Pursue Religion Online," *Pew Internet and American Life Project,* (December 23, 2001); available from http://www.pewInternet.org (accessed February 3, 2011).

[19]Brenda E. Brasher, *Give Me That Online Religion* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 6.

[20]Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Church Sees Potential in Proselytizing Online," *Salt Lake Tribune,* September 21, 2010.

illustrate both the perceptions of Islamists and can expose themes to defend and promote in cultural and public diplomacy.[21]

"The Internet is a-spiritual, a-religious, and a-moral. In and of itself, the Internet is not a Christian tool any more than it is a Muslim, Hindu, or atheist tool. It is a reflection of the world we live in with all its diversity, beauty, prejudice, sin, and pathology."[22] The message of God's true and perfect love is being gravely threatened and undermined throughout the Internet. The Internet, aptly nicknamed the "Information Super Highway," is an ideal place to entice the seeker and ensnare them with faulty information. We who know the truth of Christ must use every tool we can to share the Gospel and raise up disciples. The church online can become one of those tools.

Special Needs

Christ Fellowship has a unique ministry to people and families with special needs. Through this ministry, we have built a strong partnership with Joni Erickson and Friends Ministry. Joni, a paraplegic with a platform of hope to the world, has told the author's church about the millions of people who are disabled and homebound around the world. The potential for the church online to minister to them is profound. As the church reaches out to minister to people at their point of need, she aptly responds to the parable Jesus tells in the Gospel of Matthew 25, "...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40, [*New International Version*]).

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[21] Uriya Shavit and Frederic Wiesenbach, "Muslim Strategies to Convert Western Christians," *Middle East Quarterly* (Spring 2009): 3-14.

[22] John P. Jewell, *New Tools for a New Century: First Steps in Equipping Your Church for the Digital Revolution* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 35.

The church online has incredible potential to connect with the special needs community and provide a church home for thousands that are homebound and forgotten. They need the church and often cannot physically, emotionally, or mentally participate at a physical campus. The church online provides a solution to this all too familiar situation.

The realization of this great need surfaced for Christ Fellowship when a man named Dwight showed up in the online chat room. The online pastor soon discovered that Dwight was a quadriplegic and could not easily get out of his home. As a results, he never thought he could be a part of a church family. Soon after making his situation known, the online pastor went to visit Dwight in his home. After that initial visit, Dwight's heart softened, and he gave his life to Jesus Christ. The online pastor even arranged for Dwight's baptism.

As a further result, Dwight's parents gave their hearts to the Lord and have since been baptized as well. Dwight is active in the church online and in his online small group. He is training to be an online group leader for Triumph over Suffering. Dwight is just one story of one who was homebound and found the power of Jesus at church online. How many more, just like him, are waiting for the love and grace of God to reach them at their point of need?

Church Planting

Church online also has the potential to become a model for church planting. Christ Fellowship's church online hears about groups meeting together around a large computer or television, worshiping together during service. These groups of sometimes twenty or more people have a great affinity to each other and to the Lord. Normally they

spring up on a college campus or where someone has recently moved away from one of Christ Fellowship's physical locations.

There is great potential for these home groups to actually become church plants. Using the tools and resources that church online currently provides or could provide, group leaders sensing the call of God to start a church could be mentored and developed. They could begin pastoring without carrying the burden of preaching every weekend. They could use the streaming worship service until God provides them with a worship leader. They could use archived sermon series for midweek Bible studies. They could leverage the church online discipleship classes and tools. This entire process allows a church plant to crawl before walking, allowing for a greater chance for success than just starting on their own.

The potential of church online to lead to more physical churches being planted speaks once again to the possibility of even greater evangelism across our nation and the world. Through leveraging technology, church online has the capability of truly reaching and transforming the world for Christ, one community of believers at a time.

Potential for Community

As mentioned previously, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace have already established online communities. Online dating sites such as EHarmony.com have taken online relationships to an even higher level of commitment and intimacy. As more and more people become more comfortable with discovering and developing relationships online, the church online has even greater potential to develop community and fellowship among its members.

Currently, people are praying for one another and sending each other notes and e-mails. Some send electronic hugs and smiley faces through their chat. None of these online expressions can replace an actual hug when you're going through a hard time, but it is a start. Knowing that your church family is there for you and praying for you is a powerful demonstration of support. Opening up your e-mail and finding your inbox flooded with messages from your church online friends is encouraging. Yet is there even more potential?

There have been so many technological advances in the past ten to fifteen years. Video chatting is normal. Video chatting from your phone is becoming commonplace. Friends living on the other side of the world from one another can have a conversation "face to face." And although it may not be the same as being there, they couldn't begin to ascribe a value to the experience. All of this is accomplished through technology. When discussing the potential of the church online community one must ask what impending advances will further enhance this online community? What role does virtual reality play in the coming years?

The term "virtual reality" simply refers to a computer-simulated environment that replicates a physical space and experience. The term gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s as science-fiction books and movies began painting a picture of future worlds where the simulated would replace the actual. Video gaming leveraged virtual reality technology to give gamers a more realistic experience. Recent advances in this technology by Xbox 360 and Nintendo have eliminated the need for joysticks and game controls. The user is now invited to "enter the game" by wearing virtual reality sensors on their body and actually participating as a gaming icon.

Recent advances by European researchers have led to virtual interaction between people through the use of robotics and haptic technology. Haptic technology is a tactile response technology that leverages the user's sense of touch by providing vibrations and movement. The mechanical stimulation is in conjunction with virtual visual stimulation creating a realistic experience.[23]

Using this technology, scientists have allowed two people to dance with each other without being in the same location. Each user experiences the touch and sensation of dancing with a partner without ever actually being together physically in the same location.

Researchers suggest that a day is coming soon when this technology will move from our gaming devices into our everyday life. Just as we are currently able to video chat with loved ones through the Internet, we will be able to give virtual hugs and hold hands online. Three-dimensional graphics are also improving and becoming more life-like. Using the Internet's capacity to create realistic environments, eventually you will be able to sit down with friends for dinner, each in various cities, and yet feel as if you are together in the same room. Virtual reality experiences will become more and more realistic giving the users a sense of truly "being present."

Although many would agree that this experience is somewhat lacking the intimacy afforded by actual proximal interaction, it far exceeds the limitations of a letter, a telegraph, or a phone call. Virtual reality allows a deeper connection and experience than we have ever known. Simply because we have never experienced it, doesn't disqualify its validity or value. Two hundred years ago many would have argued that man

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[23]G. Robles-De-La-Torre, "Virtual Reality: Touch / Haptics," in B. Goldstein (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Perception* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009), 2:1036.

would never ride in vehicles at 70 miles per hour to get to work or that a heavy machine made of metal would fly through the sky. Fifty years ago people would never have dreamed that computers would fit in the palm of your hand and everyone would have one. A decade ago people didn't trust buying items online rather than in a physical store, yet this year 65% of all online users shopped on the Internet.[24]

Embracing the Future

Many people judge the future based on the present. They base their comfort of what will be acceptable upon what they currently experience. Most people do not embrace change well. The thought of building lasting relationships and community online is only called into question if one has never experienced that in a virtual world. There will come a day when virtual reality will be indistinguishable from the physical reality. It may not be in our lifetime, but there will come a time when touch, taste, smell, and sound from any form can be completely reproduced virtually and our senses will not be able to discern the actual from the virtual.

Although not currently there, there are many ways that the virtual experience surpasses the physical experience. One is shopping. Many people would prefer shopping online to fighting the crowds and the traffic. Selection online is not limited by the stores that are available in a person's town. Online stores are open 24 hours a day. All of these factors surpass the limitations of a physical store.

An Army soldier prefers virtually flying an unmanned drone on a mission over the skies of Iraq to physically flying in a plane over enemy territory. Using robots, the

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[24]Jim Jansen, *Pew Internet and American Life Project,* December 30, 2010; available from http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Paying-for-Content.aspx (accessed February 19, 2011).

Marines can virtually maneuver through potential land mines without the loss of life. These virtual experiences also surpass the physical.

Finally, the author prefers to pay bills online. In years past, he would have to write checks and get them in the mail. His ancestors had to drive their wagon from creditor to creditor to pay their bills in person using chickens and eggs. When he pays his bills online, money is removed from his account and transferred to an accounts receivable somewhere in virtual space. This virtual experience surpasses the physical.

As the world continues to evolve and technology continues to advance, the ability for community and relationships to be more richly experienced online will advance with it. The church online will advance right in step and be able to provide deepening and lasting community in the decades to come.

The church must embrace the Internet because of the potential it affords to reach the ends of the earth with the love and message of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Walter Wilson summarized this thought well when he said, "I suggest we as Christians not view the Internet as technology, but as God's moving to bring the gospel to every man, woman, and child upon the earth…With the Internet we have the opportunity to reach every man, woman, and child upon the face of the earth…" [25] It is potentially the very tool that God will choose to use to reach every tribe in every nation. The church must consider this challenge carefully and be openly willing to take up the charge from God to carry out His mission online.

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[25]Wilson, 15.

CHAPTER III

CONSIDERING ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHURCH ONLINE

The issue of church online has become a topic of discussion and debate among pastors and church leaders. Recent articles published in religious magazines argue the opposing sides of church online. Pastors and denominations wrestle with the question, "Is church online really church?" Valid arguments exist on both sides of the equation.

Part of the confusion is from the fact that "at no point in the history of Christian thought has the doctrine of the church received the direct and complete attention that other doctrines have received."[1] Accordingly, the very first question that must be asked is "how does the Bible define church?" To determine if church online is "really church" one must understand what the Scriptures teach on the subject.

Defining "Church"

Jesus says in Matthew 18:20, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:20, [*New International Version*]). When Christ made this statement there were no church buildings or chapels. Even as the early church began in the book of Acts, much of the assembling took place in homes.[2] In Romans 16:5, a "house church" is called a church, 1 Corinthians 16:19 ("Aquila and Priscilla, together with the church in their house . . . ."). The church in an entire city is also called a

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[1]Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1984), 1037.

[2]Graydon F. Snyder, *Church Life Before Constantine* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1991), 166.

"church" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; and 1 Thess. 1:1). The church in a region is referred to as a "church" in Acts 9:31 . . . . Finally, the church throughout the entire world can be referred to as "the church" (Eph. 5:25 and 1 Cor. 12:28)."[3]

As a result of the Bible's mention and definition of the term "church," most theologians would argue that a formal building is not needed for the church to be present or for people to gather together in community. Theologian Wayne Grudem clarifies this thought: "In the New Testament the word 'church' maybe applied to a group of believers at any level, ranging from a very small group meeting in a private home all the way to the group of all true believers in the universal church."[4] The church is not a building; instead it is the people who gather together.

Throughout the New Testament, the Greek word that is translated into our English word for church is *ekklesia*. The Apostle Paul uses this word when addressing many of the new churches throughout his epistles. True to other biblical expressions, the word *ekklesia* never refers to a building or structure, but to the gathering of the people. In fact, the word is better translated as "gathering" or "assembly" meeting in a public place. Often the term was used in Greek society to refer to a group of the citizens gathering for a civil interest.[5]

Since a building is not required, the issue of gathering online seems viable. People can interact, talk together, pray with one another, and read Scripture. When two or three,

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[3]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 857.

[4]Ibid., 857.

[5]Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 195-196.

or even two or three thousand gather together online in the name of Christ, He is there among them.

Most followers of Christ who have prayed with someone over the phone understand this concept. Even though two people may be separated by continents, when they pray in the name of Jesus Christ they are inviting the presence of Christ into that prayer. They believe that the Spirit of God is with them at that moment even though they are not gathered in the same building or location. As stated earlier, God's Spirit is not limited by time or space.

In the book of Colossians, chapter one, the Apostle Paul addresses the preeminence of Christ over all things and specifically over the church. In verse 18, he says, "Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything" (Colossians 1:18, [*New Living Translation*]). Again the Greek term *ekklesia* means the people gathered together. The church is a gathering of people under the Lordship of Christ. They hold their common citizenship in heaven (Philippians 3:20) and are a part of the same community. Accurately then, the Biblical use of the word "church" refers to the people that make up the congregation, irrelevant to where or how that congregation may gather.

Theologian and author, Millard J. Erikson, defines the church as "the whole body of those who through Christ's death have been savingly [*sic*] reconciled to God and have received new life. It includes all such persons, whether in heaven or on earth. While universal in nature, it finds expression in local groupings of believers that display the same qualities as does the body of Christ as a whole."[6] If the church is made up of God's

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[6]Erickson, 1044.

people gathering together, and the emphasis of its definition is on membership in the body of Christ, there need not be limits placed on the location in which the people gather.

The Purpose of the Church

Further Biblical exploration of the definition of the church turns towards the purposes and requirements of the church. Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, has served as a guiding light for many church planters and pastors. Warren argues that any biblical church must be built on the five purposes of worship, ministry, mission, discipleship, and fellowship. Warren attests that these five purposes come from the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:37-40) and that all Scriptural teaching regarding the church of Jesus Christ can be categorized in one of those five purposes.[7] Assuming Warren to be correct, the advocate of church online simply needs to address these five purposes and define how they are fulfilled in order to prove the validity of online church.

When asked whether they believed the five purposes could take place effectively in the online church, one pastor surveyed by the author replied, "I would say that all five purposes take place on some level, but I'm skeptical that they would ever reach their fullest potential through an exclusive online experience. There's development that takes place through human physical and tangible interaction that I'm not sure you'd fully receive online…"[8] Another pastor wrote, "People can engage in all of these purposes, which demand action to be fully expressed. A person online can grow as a follower and

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[7]Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 102-103.

[8]See Appendix B.

disciple others, they can fellowship with others, they can find ways to 'serve' somebody through words of encouragement, giving, etc. online, they can share the Good News, worship the Lord effectively online." However, he does agree that exacting one's expression of the purposes solely online is limiting. "For me, it's not as much a matter of effectiveness as it is the extent to which they can live out these purposes. If a person is purposefully living out these marks of the church online, then they are probably finding ways to express this in 'real-time, real life' ways too. However, I believe a person will miss the majority of what the Lord has for them (and others) if their outworking of the purposes is exercised exclusively online."[9]

While these pastors' concerns are worthy of consideration, if the proper functioning of the five purposes in the online church is agreed to be sufficient evidence of its validity, we must scrutinize whether they can actually take place effectively.

Worship is easily engaged in the online church experience through singing, prayers, and Scripture reading. Worshipers are able to sing, pray, and read the Scriptures just as if they were physically present in the building with other congregants.[10]

Some who are apprehensive about comparing participation in a live, physical service experience with a virtual one would suggest that worship online is just a shallow representation of the real thing. One of the pastors surveyed by the author explains this sentiment of opposition: "While you can broadcast a worship experience, the actual experience is not the same as it would be if you were physically in the room where the

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[9]Ibid.

[10]The issue of communion and baptism as elements of corporate worship will be addressed later in this chapter.

service was taking place."[11] In addition, author Walter Wilson says, ". . .those who log on for twenty minutes do not get the benefits of church membership in the local body. Even those who attend a Sunday service by computer in real time are not joining with the church in celebration. . . they are only observing it."[12]

Is it really not possible to celebrate in worship online? To suggest that it is mere observation implies that we cannot worship outside church walls. This is certainly not true! As followers of Jesus Christ, we can and should worship him at all times in a variety of ways. We don't have to be sitting in a church building singing and praying with others to truly worship our God with the community of believers.

Ministry, or serving, is also available in the church online. The author's church online invites people to serve by hosting online small groups, mentoring new believers, or hosting the online chat and prayer rooms during the service times. Volunteers currently serve in these capacities from all around the globe. Admittedly, there are fewer opportunities for serving than in a physical location. There is no need for childcare workers, youth volunteers, ushers, or other roles needed to minister to crowds of people physically gathered in shared space.

Rather than view this as limited opportunities to serve, the online pastor should see this as an opportunity to encourage attendees to get involved in serving Christ outside the "walls" of a church by serving in the communities where they live. Many Christian organizations are desperate for Christian volunteers. The fact that people attending online church don't have to help serve in a physical church building allows them to reach out

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[11]See Appendix B.

[12]Wilson, 23.

and serve their community and take the love of Christ to the streets. One pastor surveyed by the author has embraced this concept well. "There are ways to serve online and you can always serve in your community no matter where you go to church."[13] The idea of suggesting online congregants serve in their communities should not be a novel one! Christian service doesn't and shouldn't just happen inside the church walls.

Some of the pastors surveyed by the author lack this vision entirely. When asked whether they believed online congregants could live out the five purposes effectively, one pastor said, "I don't think this is done really well at all except for instances of needing online prayer partners or counselors. Many of the people who 'attend' online church are not gifted in those areas and would be willing to serve, but there aren't really areas of service available to them."[14]

Another pastor said that he too felt all the purposes could be lived out online except for service. He said, "As most would agree, service to others is a MUST relative to the life-cycle of believers. We see in the Gospel that Jesus was the perfect example of service to others. As Christ followers, we must all follow that example, which for the online community may be difficult to effectively achieve. The only exception is online giving, which is a means for those attending online to support the various ministries that serve the local church."[15]

Unfortunately, by only considering ministry opportunities within the church, these pastors miss the significant expressions of serving outside their churches and partnering

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[13]See Appendix B.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

with other Christian organizations for the cause of Christ. The way believers engage their community outside the walls of the church will actually say more for Christ than what happens inside those walls.

Mission or evangelism is probably one of the easiest opportunities for church online. We are the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. As members are given resources and training through online courses and mentoring, they learn how to be E-vangelists, leveraging technology and online communities to share the love and hope of Christ. People who engage in online communities such as Facebook and Twitter and Myspace are used to opening up about their lives and the issues they are facing. And yet, opponents like author John J. Jewell say this isn't possible.

> One of the main stumbling blocks of online evangelism is the absence of relationships and community. The context of caring relationships and supportive communities is central to the process whereby the Holy Spirit can bring about the inward turning to Christ that lays the groundwork for transformation. Evangelism in a virtual world created by digital technologies may actually be the antithesis of authentic disciple making.[16]

Jewell is wrongly attributing evangelism's purpose and possibility to man's abilities alone. He is neglecting the power and role of the Holy Spirit in drawing men unto Himself in truth. This can happen regardless of the way in which one hears the truth. If it were not so, we would have to discredit the salvation decisions of all those who accepted Christ as a result of a Billy Graham crusade on TV or anyone who read a tract and made a decision that way. And what about the countless individuals who come forward as the result of an altar call in our churches? Are they any less "saved" because they don't have a personal relationship with the pastor? No, salvation is not contingent upon a relationship with the one sharing the truth; rather, it is contingent upon

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[16]Jewell, 95.

understanding the need for a Savior and accepting the gift of grace from God, through His Son! Therefore, one could argue easily that relationships and community are not absolutely needed to share the Gospel message and help someone take a step of faith.

Christians have a great opportunity to talk openly about matters of faith online. The author has heard many stories of Christians inviting their friends to join their church's online services. Through this tool, many that would never step into a physical church building are hearing the message of the Gospel and being introduced to Christ. This is especially true with emerging generations. According to Barna's research, one out of every six churchgoing teenagers expects to rely increasingly on the Internet to meet their spiritual needs in the coming years.[17] Barna goes on to say that "within the next fifteen years a majority of Americans will be completely isolated from the traditional church format."[18] Barna made these comments nearly fifteen years ago! We have to take the message of truth to the Internet where people, young and old, are searching for God's relevance in their lives.

Discipleship is probably the least argued point when it comes to the validity of church online. The Internet has long been viewed as a resource for study and learning. Many Christian and educational institutions have established online learning opportunities. Online classes and programs are an easily accepted part of church online, giving members the opportunity to grow and learn at their own pace and at a time that is convenient for them. In a physical church setting, members have to attend a physical classroom at a set time to receive the instruction and teaching. Live chatting between

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[17]Careaga, 34.

[18]Ibid., 35.

teacher and student or posting of comments allows students to engage with the teacher and their peers to ensure that spiritual growth is taking place and to foster interaction and community.

This leaves the last purpose of the church, fellowship. Fellowship is the one topic that is most heavily debated when it comes to the argument against church online. The Greek word for "fellowship" is *koinonia*." It is used throughout the New Testament to describe the relationship the early church had with one another through the bonds of Christ. It is used nineteen times in most editions of the Greek New Testament and suggests community, intimacy, and participation. The word is also directly connected to sharing in the Lord's Supper, as this act of communion is what ties us together and makes us one.[19]

Koinonia is first used in Acts 2:42-47 to describe the way the early church worshiped and functioned together in unity.

> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Koinonia implies a common focus and action, a joint participation with a closely connected group of people. There is a commitment not only to Christ, but also to the body of Christ, His church. The Greek word *koinonein* means to "own a share in something together," as when two or more people share in a business opportunity or

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[19]*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, James Orr (ed.); available from http://www.studylight.org/enc/isb/view.cgi?number=T2225, s.vv. "communion" and "fellowship," (accessed March 3, 2011).

shared property. It can also mean they share in a common belief.[20] Obviously when we are in a relationship with the church, we are not only sharing in our common belief of Christ, but we are also sharing together in the mission of the church to reach the world.

The Greek word *koinonos* means a partner or companion.[21] *Koinonia* can even be used to refer to a marriage bond. This is a powerful connection that God intends for the church, one of intimacy and commitment. The word clearly describes a deep knowing and fellowship with one another.[22] Within the church, there is to be a sharing of the joys and sorrows, where brothers and sisters in Christ carry one another's burdens as Paul commands in Galatians 6:2: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, [*New International Version*]). Many ask if true fellowship and community can occur in an online environment. Can people truly care for one another and encourage each other virtually? Can people develop a sense of authentic community and fellowship in an online environment?

Some boldly assert that it is not possible to build real community online. One of the pastors anonymously surveyed by the author warned that "…church online could provide a false sense of community and not allow for strong, mature relationships to develop. Participants who attend church solely online tend to live life behind a screen in an almost false reality."[23] Another pastor surveyed said the online church "encourages

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[20]Thayer, 353.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., 352.

[23]See Appendix B.

isolation."[24] In addition, Jewell states, "People whose primary communities are Internet-based are attempting to fulfill a need for genuine community through what I call a 'virtual collective.' This virtual collective is a phantom community, a digital masquerade of real community. The virtual collective seems to fill a need for community, but in fact misses the mark."[25] He goes on to explain why virtual communities cannot replace Christian community. "Virtual community is community without accountability. Virtual community does not have canons of truth. Virtual community does not have permanence. Virtual community does not have 'real presence.'"[26]

Clifford Stoll, the author of *Silicon Snake Oil*, agrees with Jewell's position. He believes online community is a fraud. He claims that "only the illusion of community is created via CMC (computer-mediated communication), that the only relationships created are 'shallow, impersonal, and often hostile.'"[27]

These statements by Jewell and Stoll force us to consider whether the online church can forge an environment where there is accountability, truth, permanence, and a real presence among its participants. This is a vital consideration because, as Jewell puts it, "In the church, the only real measure of the success of technology is its ability to enhance the quality of community. Community, or the quality of the life of the body of

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[24]Ibid.

[25]Jewell, 58.

[26]Ibid., 60-61.

[27]Brittney G. Chenault, "Developing Personal and Emotional Relationships Via Computer-Mediated Communication," *Computer-Mediated Communication Magazine,* May 1998; available from www.december.com/cmc/mag/1998/may/chenault.html (accessed January 14, 2011).

Christ, is a critical and biblically mandated foundation for ministry. If there is no unified, connected community, there is no viable body of Christ to reach the world."[28]

One of the leading opponents to the validity of church online is the very popular pastor, author, and theologian, John Piper. John Piper is the pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota; yet his influence extends far beyond the borders of his hometown. Countless Christians follow his reformed theology and embrace his perspective on issues pertaining to the church. Of all the dissenting voices against the church online, none is as powerful as John Piper's. Piper also bases most of his dissention around this issue of community and care.

Piper refers to an individual whose worship experience is only online as "sick." He goes on to say,

> I don't think radio and Internet and television can ever replace the church of Jesus Christ. They can never replace the body of Christ gathered in a local place, where people are face to face with others and participating in singing, prayer, repentance, and confession. They can't replace experiencing firsthand the assurances of pardon and the Word of God being preached. I think that if all of that came only through media then the church would no longer exist as God designed it to exist.[29]

The author believes that radio, television, and the Internet cannot entirely replace the church of Jesus Christ. However, the question for debate isn't whether online church can "replace" the traditional church as we know it. The question is whether the online church is a valid expression or model of the church. Can care and connection genuinely take place online even if the people convening online are not in the same physical building?

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[28]Jewell, 23.

[29]John Piper, "Is Direct Human Contact Important in Evangelism and Church Life?," September 24, 2007; available from http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/resources/is-direct-human-contact-important-in-evangelism-and-church-life (accessed December 28, 2010).

Perhaps it is important to consider the true nature of spiritual community. Dietrich

Bonhoeffer illustrates the difference between human and spiritual community in his book,

Life Together.

> Because Christian community is founded solely on Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual and not a human reality. In this it differs from all other communities. The scriptures call 'spiritual' that which is created only by the Holy Spirit. . . . The scriptures term 'human' that which comes from the natural urges, powers, and capacities of the human spirit.[30]

Here Bonhoeffer reminds us that if the Holy Spirit is drawing people together in

fellowship and community through their worship of Jesus Christ, it is a spiritual reality

that can take place anywhere. One does not need to limit his or her spiritual community

to a church building. As discussed earlier in this chapter, God does not define the church

in His Word as a building!

In his dogmatic approach, Piper seems to ignore the countless millions who are

homebound, never able to attend a "traditional" church service in an actual building.

They do not have the physical ability to participate in local church life. Their physical

disabilities limit their involvement in traditional church community. More than 100

million people in the world have disabilities, making them a part of one of the largest

minority groups in our society. [31] This group is often overlooked or forgotten. Jesus may

have been referring to them in Matthew 25 when He refers to the "least of these." They

are much like Dwight, whose only opportunity to be a part of a group of believers is

through an online church service and small group.

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[30]Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), 31.

[31]World Health Organization, *The Global Burden of Disease* (Geneva: WHO Press, 2004), 34.

Additionally, there are millions of people who live in remote locations throughout the world where the Bible is not available in their language and where there is not a church that is preaching the Word of God.[32] Does this mean that their involvement in church online is "sick" or "unhealthy," as Piper argues? Are they automatically disqualified as members of a church because of their inability to attend a physical church facility?

Soon after the author's church launched its online church campus, a woman named Linda who lives in the mountains of British Columbia began attending. She was in a very remote area where she did not have access to growing, Bible-believing churches like Christ Fellowship. Attending online helped her to connect with the church family in ways that were otherwise unavailable to her. She began chatting online with the campus pastor and others present and soon began serving as a life group host and a chat host. She also serves by doing some needed administrative work during the week. Linda is an excellent example of how important the church online is to those without a church family in their communities. The church is able to reach people like Linda by being present in community online.

Piper continues in his attack of church online:

> The embrace, the hug, the handshake; the ear, the eye: these are all physical things that are not intended to be replaced with glass screens or sound waves coming through a box. Christ means for there to be a body of people who are face to face with each other, loving each other, exhorting each other, helping each other, and getting face to face with each other—to each other and to him—in worship.[33]

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[32]Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc., available from http://www.wycliffe.org/ (accessed March 16, 2011).

[33]Piper.

Here Piper argues that true community cannot take place in an online environment. He contends that care, encouragement, and exhortation can only take place as people are "face to face with each other." He assumes that "community" is bound by geography and physical human interaction. However, as author Andrew Careaga points out, "In cyberspace, communities are most likely to develop among people with common interests or beliefs, rather than geographically."[34]

The author's church leadership has witnessed the exact opposite of Piper's notion in their church online experience at Christ Fellowship. Through the use of online chat, those attending the church online can participate by talking with each other, encouraging each other, and even praying for one another.

Recently, a lady in the Christ Fellowship online live chat shared a personal need for prayer and wisdom for a crisis she was facing. Before the online pastor could even respond to her, others in the chat began to pray for her needs. In fact, everyone participating in the chat began to focus on encouraging her and praying for her. Later the online pastor was able to invite her to a private prayer chat where he was able to counsel her as well. By the time he was speaking with her, she was encouraged and inspired that her online family was standing with her in this struggle.

Church online can function in many ways like a traditional church. Just as a traditional church would receive calls regarding individual members who are going into the hospital, so does an online pastor receive calls regarding members from the church online family. One key difference is location. While most calls that come into a physical church campus address local needs, the congregation online is literally from around the world.

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[34]Careaga, 131.

Recently, Christ Fellowship's online pastor received a call from an individual who was diagnosed with cancer and was in a hospital in New York City. After spending time praying with the lady over the phone, the online pastor remarked that if she was locally hospitalized, he would go to visit her. Since the church online isn't just made up of random people watching an Internet stream, but rather a group of people caring for one another from around the world, the online pastor was able to contact a few members that live in the New York City area. He asked them to personally visit and pray with this sister in Christ. A university student up in New York took it upon herself to be the representative of Christ and Christ Fellowship and go be with the cancer patient. She went to the hospital, gave hope, inspiration, and prayed with the lady.

Virginia is an elderly homebound individual that attends Christ Fellowship online every week. She is actively involved in their small groups and prayer groups. Recently she called in to ask for assistance because her wheelchair broke and she was in need of a new one. Obviously she felt comfortable, as any church member should, to turn to her church family to help her with this need. This was one of the first times the online church at Christ Fellowship was faced with the issue of benevolence coupled with the issue of proximity and distance.

The online pastor wasn't sure how to solve this situation. After praying with her, he was determined to view the issue as if she were local. Believing it is the church's responsibility to care for their congregants in the best possible manner, the online pastor had to carefully consider how he could assist in meeting Virginia's need, even if she lived far away making it difficult to help practically.

Christ Fellowship has a woman on staff who helps people with their medical needs and insurance claims. She has helped hundreds of families receive the medical care and attention they need and helped them save hundreds of thousands of dollars by knowing which resources to use. By simply applying her talents to this online community member's need, Christ Fellowship was able to solve the problem. The appropriate grants and applications were completed, and Virginia had her new motorized wheelchair within two weeks. Attaining this chair was something she couldn't do on her own. Her church online cared for her and stepped up and met this important need in her life.

Community and care can happen in an online environment. It is happening through church online every day as people extend the same care and kindness online as they do in person. Author Walter P. Wilson says, "In the world of Internet technology, communication is not place-specific, but person-specific. That means ministry is conducted with a person, wherever that person may be."[35]

Opposition to Change

In addition to defending that it can live out the five core purposes, church online must also contend with a persistent opposition to change. The church has notoriously been slow to embrace change as it relates to cultural shifts. "Unfortunately, the church's track record of responding to the threats of new media is not good. Whenever new challenges to the faith arise, the church tends to respond inappropriately. All too often, modern congregations either stick their heads in the sand, ignoring the changes sweeping

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[35]Wilson, 62.

through the larger culture, or they become reactionary, further alienating those whom they should be reaching."[36]

Some react adversely to online ministry because of the negative things that take place online. "Any form of technology undoubtedly influences behavior, and the Internet *does* pose dangers to our society. But the Internet is no more an implement of evil than a hammer."[37] Both the Internet and a hammer are tools that can be used for good or evil. The person, not the tool, is responsible for how the tool is used.

The church is called to spread the love and message of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world! We cannot alienate those who still need that love and message simply because there is evil in the world. Light exposes darkness so let's let our light shine online where it is desperately needed (Ephesians 5:13).

While the presence of evil is one reason to oppose online ministry, some just simply do not want to change. Wilson also notes, "Many Christians seem to value stability and tradition over change. It's not hard to understand that, because stability is comfortable, easy and predictable. . . Change is uncomfortable, and if we have a choice, that's not the way we choose to go through life."[38] However, the ability to adapt and change our methodology to reach the lost is vital to those perishing. Rick Warren reminds us that "our message must never change, but the way we deliver that message must be constantly updated to reach each new generation."[39] The message will never change, but

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[36]Careaga, 35.

[37]Ibid., 21.

[38]Wilson, 99.

[39]Rick Warren, *Evangelizing the 21ˢᵗ Century Culture,* January 7, 2004; available from http://www.pastors.com/blogs/ministrytoolbox/archive/2003/09/15/Evangelizing-the-21st-Century-culture.aspx (accessed January 26, 2011).

the method must because as Wilson points out, "This is a generation that does not use the Internet as a tool but as a way of life."[40] We must take the message of truth to them.

The author has seen the impact of this perspective in his own church. Christ Fellowship has always embraced changing methods to reach people for Christ. This attitude and perspective originates not from the youngest members but from the oldest. Dick Smith is the founding elder of the congregation. Through his personal walk with Christ, he continues to influence this congregation of more than 20,000 at an age of 83.

Early on in the ministry of Christ Fellowship when the music began to change to reach a younger generation, Dick was the first to celebrate the decision. He did not celebrate because he personally wanted a more aggressive style of worship, but because he wanted our church to be a place where his grandchildren and their children would want to come to encounter Christ. Dick was also the first to support taking the church online. Again, this was not for his benefit, but for the benefit of reaching more with the Gospel. When the elders of the church continue to celebrate innovation and risk-taking, a congregation can reach into new territory for Christ. The author's church is blessed with a healthy, multi-generational expression of faith. Respect and reverence for those who have walked with Christ for decades is blended with the enthusiasm and energy of the emerging generations. This harmony creates countless opportunities for growth and innovation.

We must adapt in order to grow. We must be relevant in order to reach out. For the church to thrive and fulfill its mission, we have to learn to embrace new things that will not compromise the message. We must constantly implement the things that will enhance our mission by being relevant to those who will never cross the threshold of our

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[40]Wilson, 144.

buildings. "The Internet is here to stay. So, too, are the thousands of seekers who feel alienated from the traditional church and are turning elsewhere to find relevance, meaning, and spiritual connections."[41] We must embrace change.

Administering the Sacraments Online

Beyond the outward issue of community and the inward, fundamental opposition to change, the administration of the sacraments of communion and baptism are often among the leading arguments against church online. How do members participate in the Lord's Supper? How can a person be baptized virtually? These are valid doctrinal questions worthy of consideration.

Most online churches currently encourage their members to get their own bread and juice or wine in preparation for communion. Later in the service, when communion is explained and prayed over, they are invited to share in the elements they personally prepared. This may be in conjunction with the church that is streaming its service or as an online community with their online pastor. Either way, this is viewed by many as a valid expression of remembering the Lord's Supper within the context of community.

For Catholics, however, the issue of communion being offered online is absurd and sacrilegious since they believe the wafer and wine become the actual body and blood of our Lord. Their theological position of transubstantiation supports their belief that the bread becomes the body of Christ when the priest raises it in the air and says, "This is my body." They would therefore argue that communion must be administered by the priest within the context of a physical location. However, both Catholic and Presbyterian

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[41]Careaga, 22-23.

churches have what they call "extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist" that go into nursing homes, jails, and to those who are bedridden to administer the sacraments. They are not priests themselves, but they are blessed and sent by a priest as an acceptable substitute.[42]

While the Catholic position of The Lord's Supper fails to acknowledge the "symbolic character of Christ's statements" (Matthew 26) and the "clear New Testament teaching on the finality and completeness of Christ's sacrifice once for all time for all our sins" (Hebrews 9:25-28)[43], many Protestants would agree with their Catholic friends on the issue of clergy-administered sacraments. The thought of someone at home getting a piece of bread and some juice or wine seems too common and irreverent. However, according to Wayne Grudem,

> The New Testament gives no instructions at all that place restrictions on the people who can preside at Communion. And since Scripture places no such restrictions on us, it would not seem to be justified to say that only priests can dispense the elements of the Lord's Supper. Moreover, since the New Testament teaches that all believers are priests and members of a 'royal priesthood' (1 Peter 2:9, Hebrews 4:16, 10:19-22), we should not specify a certain class of people who have the rights of priests, as in the old covenant, but we should emphasize that all believers share the great spiritual privilege of coming near to God.[44]

The purpose of communion is to remember the sacrifice of the Lord and commit one's life in response to that sacrifice.[45] Protestants believe the sacrament of communion is symbolic. The bread symbolizes the body of Christ while the juice symbolizes the

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[42]Peter A. Kwasniewski, "Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist," *Eternal World Television Network* (Spring 2002) taken from Sapientia: Newsletter of the Confraternity of Catholic Clergy © 2002, Spring 2002, page 13; available from http://www.ewtn.com/library/Liturgy/EXTRMIN.HTM (accessed March 16, 2011).

[43]Grudem, 992-993.

[44]Ibid., 993.

[45]Erickson, 1119.

blood He shed on the cross. If this is indeed a symbolic act, then, as Grudem advocates, the location and ceremony do not make the experience more "holy."

One of the pastors surveyed by the author said, "I don't believe there is anything wrong with performing these sacraments in any setting. The important part isn't the location or surrounding circumstances. The important thing is the heart of the believer and the understanding of the significance of the specific sacrament."[46]

Most denominations don't address the topic of "online communion" in their bylaws as it has become a more recent phenomenon. However many denominations offer guidelines for worship within their churches. The Presbyterian Church has a "Book of Order" that is published every few years that addresses the issues of church government, worship, and church discipline. Realizing their denomination crosses the globe, their General Counsel makes room for slight variances in issues such as communion. Elements for communion may be substituted if local context requires. This may be the case in locations around the world where bread or wine are not readily available or would be impractical for regular use. The guiding concept behind this ruling is the fact that communion is symbolic.

Since bread and wine are not readily available to all those participating in a church online service, is there another way to address the elements of communion? Since we do not believe that the bread actually becomes the body of Christ, is there a digital form of "bread" that could be used to remember the body of Christ? Since our location is "synthetic" could there be a synthetic replacement of the elements that would allow for an equally sacred remembrance of Christ's sacrifice?

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[46]See Appendix B.

In discussing the place of the sacraments in our religious expressions, one cannot ignore the practices of the Quakers. One of the most distinctive features of the Quakers from most all other Christian churches and denominations is their lack of observance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Still the Quakers remain a group of Christians fully devoted to the Word of God. How can they not observe these sacraments?

"Sacrament" comes from the word "sacred," meaning a sacrament is a sacred event or "expression where man meets God, where the natural intersects with the supernatural."[47] Quakers believe that all of life is sacred, that all of life belongs to God, and every person should live in constant communion with Christ. No ritualistic moment in a church service is needed to recognize that fellowship. Additionally, they hold the belief that all days are holy unto God, not just Sundays. The Quakers do not believe that observing the sacraments of communion or baptism is wrong; they are just not necessary or required for Christian fellowship or discipleship.

Quakers believe that the presence and power of Christ is not dependent on symbolic rites or actions, but upon daily surrender to and communion with the Holy Spirit. They fear that religious rituals can quickly lose their meaning and become "religious." The Quakers walk in such a way before their God that they make every meal a table at the Lord's Supper, pausing to reflect on the grace of God through Christ. The reality of communion is not about the elements but about the attitude of the heart. The presence of Christ with and in His church does not require a symbolic exercise, but a real and daily connection with the Holy Spirit.[48]

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[47]Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries, A History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 381-382.

[48]Ibid.

This teaching is not coming from some liberal group that doesn't embrace the inerrancy of Scripture. Rather it comes from a group considered by many to be narrow-minded and even out of touch with modern society. Yet the authenticity of their faith is refreshing and thought-provoking. Countless Christians attend churches every week and participate in the Lord's Supper without any real thought to allowing the Holy Spirit to be powerful and evident in their everyday lives. They move through the religious motions of communion without being in communion with the Spirit of God. Could it be that God would rather have someone participate in a lifestyle of daily communion with Christ and never partake in the elements of physical communion? If that is a worthy argument, then communion online becomes a moot point. The attitude of the heart of the person observing communion is what truly matters. Whether the bread and juice are provided by the church or the local supermarket becomes less of the issue. The issue is the focus of the heart and life walking in surrender and communion with the Holy Spirit.

Clearly, the questioning of the administration of the sacred elements may appear borderline heretical to some, yet the questions must be asked as society and technology move forward. In fact, as theologian Millard Erickson notes, the means of administering the elements in communion is at once "a factor that unites and divides Christendom."[49] Denominations have been at odds over proper methodology for ages, but as Erickson points out, we must focus on the meaning of the practice and less on the method.

> The subject of the spiritual or practical value of the Lord's Supper has become lost in the dispute over theoretical issues. The theoretical questions are important (they affect the spiritual considerations), and so they ought not to be too quickly dismissed. If, however, we get bogged down in the technical issues, and do not move on to deal with the practical meaning, we will have missed the whole point

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[49]Erickson, 1116.

of Christ's having established the Supper. Experience of the meaning of the Lord's Supper, not just comprehension, is our goal.[50]

Regardless of where one stands on this issue of communion, the church online does usually address the issue, allowing people to prepare the elements for themselves. The elements are typically prayed over by a pastor before the online members are invited to take them. Church online opponents will sometimes yield on this point as many of the concerns are logically addressed.

However, the issue of baptism is altogether different. Here is where many online churches differ in their opinions. Some church online supporters say that members who want to be baptized need to go to a physical church to have this performed. If they are handicapped and live locally, they are encouraged to find a way into the church, or members from the church may go physically to their house. Some online pastors have contacted churches in towns near where their online parishioners live and have asked for a minister in their town to perform the baptism.

One of the pastors surveyed by the author agreed with this position. "Baptism can be accomplished by building networks of believers who might partner with the church to administer communion and/or missional teams might travel to various parts of the online campus each year and baptize people . . ."[51]

However, strong proponents of church online do not support this option as it invalidates the legitimacy of church online, making it dependent upon a physical church for its existence. These church online advocates encourage online congregants to find

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[50]Ibid., 1117.

[51]See Appendix B.

someone in their family or a close friend to perform a baptism for them, often while the online pastor video casts in for the ceremony.

Just like the question of administering one's own communion, some have questioned whether baptism administered by anyone other than clergy is appropriate or irreverent. In fact, some of the pastors surveyed by the author didn't even wrestle with the argument in their answers. One of the pastors' answers strongly implied that they believed that baptism of the believer was reserved for clergy alone. "A pastor performs the sacraments in the leadership of a congregation so it would be difficult to participate when a person is at home—particularly baptism."[52]

Theologian G. W. Bromily remarked about this very issue in the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*.

> Discussion has been raised concerning proper ministers and subjects of the action. In the first instance there may be agreement with Augustine that Christ himself is the true minister ('he will baptize you,' Matthew 3:11). But Christ does not give the external baptism directly; he commits this to his disciples (John 4:2). This is taken to mean that baptism should be administered by those to whom there is entrusted, by inward calling and outward calling, the ministry of Word and sacrament, though laymen have been allowed to baptize in the Roman Church, and some early Baptists conceived the strange notion of baptizing themselves.[53]

Wayne Grudem agrees with Bromily's position. "We should recognize here that Scripture simply does not specify any restrictions on who can perform the ceremony of baptism. . . if we truly believe in the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:4-10), then

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[52]Ibid.

[53]G. W. Bromily, "Baptism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell, second edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 129.

there seems to be no need in principle to restrict the right to perform baptism only to ordained clergy."[54]

Believing that alternative modes of baptism are permissible, Potential Church (formerly Flamingo Road Church) in Cooper City, Florida, was one of the first online churches to perform an Internet baptism. The online pastor and the baptismal candidate set up computers with Web cameras. The candidate filled her bathtub with water and asked a friend to perform the actual baptism; while the online pastor oversaw the spiritual aspects of the baptism. The service was broadcast live over the Internet to the members of their church online and is posted on YouTube.com.

As awkward as this online baptism may appear, this young lady took a step of obedience and shared her testimony with the world. The truth is she reached many more people by sharing her baptism on the Internet than she would have in the confines of a traditional church. The online service even captured the attention of media who reported the phenomenon.

The arguments concerning communion and baptism are very similar as both are symbolic. Baptism symbolizes the new life we have received in Christ.[55] Romans 6:4 tells us, "We were therefore buried with him through baptism and into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Throughout the New Testament we are taught that baptism symbolizes the death and resurrection of Christ in a believer's life (Colossians 2:12, Titus 3:5).

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[54]Grudem, 983.

[55]Erickson, 1105.

Because baptism is a symbol, could that symbolism be communicated and celebrated differently? Is water even necessary for the symbolism to hold true? If we believe that something mysterious or miraculous happens in the water, we must be reminded that God is the One who does the mysterious and the miraculous. Could He not accomplish the same with "virtual water?" Bromily believes the "type of water and circumstances of administration are not important. . . . Other ceremonies may be used at discretion so long as they are not unscriptural and do not distract from the true action."[56]

However, it is important to note that in Greek, the world "baptism" most clearly means "to dip or to plunge under water."[57] In the Bible, we see various examples of baptism by immersion. "John baptized Aenon 'because there was plenty of water' (John 3:23). When baptized by John, Jesus came 'up out of the water' (Mark 1:10). Upon hearing the good news, the Ethiopian eunuch said to Philip, 'Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?' (Acts 8:36). Then they both went down into the water. Philip baptized him, and they came up out of the water (v. 38-39)."[58]

Each example shows that the employed mode of baptism was in water by immersion. However, while some theologians insist that because the biblical mode is immersion, others, like Erickson, suggest that perhaps while immersion is historically authoritative it isn't authoritatively normative.[59] In other words, it is not mandated that we perform the same cultural practice, just that we keep the meaning intact. "Those to whom the mode does not seem crucial maintain that there is no essential link between the

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[56]Bromily, 129.

[57]Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), 1:305-306.

[58]Erickson, 1113.

[59]Ibid.

meaning of baptism and the way in which it is administered."[60] This position leaves room for special considerations such as home/self administration, a virtual representation of water, and for the special needs community who cannot have traditional baptism by immersion because of physical or proximal limitations.

Additionally, baptism is often referred to as an outward testimony of what God has accomplished on the inside of a believer.[61] It is portrayed as identifying oneself as a follower of Christ. If baptism serves as a testimony to friends and family, couldn't that testimony be better communicated in an online environment than within the confines of a church? In an online environment, the believer has the opportunity to share what Christ means to them, the difference He has made in their life, and the new path they are walking with the entire world. When this same testimony takes place inside a church, only those in attendance have the opportunity to hear the story.

Ultimately the heart of the Gospel is about connecting man back to God through the transforming power of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). The goal of church online is to strengthen the faith of the weak and cause people to draw closer to God. If someone in Perth, Australia, can acquire their own communion elements and share with an online community around the Lord's Supper, then church online is fulfilling its purpose. The bread and juice in their home in Australia is no different than the crackers and juice served at a physical church. The Holy Spirit uses them both to remind us of the sacrifice of Christ.

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[60]Ibid.

[61]Erickson, 1105.

Similarly, the Holy Spirit works through the sacrament of Holy Baptism. God takes care of the spiritual aspect within the sacrament. "…We remember that behind the external action there lies the true baptism, which is that of the shed blood of Christ."[62] The physical aspects of the sacraments help us connect with the divine.

Baptism in an online environment continues to be one of the unresolved challenges for church online. However, many are not willing to engage in debate at the expense of moving forward with a valid online ministry. The church at large has never agreed on every issue of faith yet has remained effective in reaching the world for Jesus. Online baptism may continue to be such an issue. However, as one pastor surveyed put it, "Church online is outside of the box of the typical bricks and mortar church and if we can accept that individuals come fully prepared to attend a worship service, then we must be outside of the box regarding the implementation of the sacraments."[63]

Challenges for the Users

Of all the challenges against the validity of church online, the greatest are the challenges many participants bring upon themselves. Some use church online as simply a matter of convenience. They don't live in a remote part of the world or in a village without an evangelical church. They live just down the street from Christ Fellowship and simply have chosen to worship in their pajamas rather than get dressed and participate in the local church.

Although one could argue that church online is in reality a viable church experience, then why would this be a problem? Unfortunately, the author has found that

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[62]Bromily, 130.

[63]See Appendix B.

those who live close to one of his church campuses but use church online as a point of convenience do not become involved with the community online. Yes, they can stay in tune with the preaching and experience a worship service. They can even submit prayer requests and pray for others in the chat room. Yet notably, most do not. They simply remain unengaged online or in person. Their haphazard attendance makes it difficult for them to function and serve within the physical church or the virtual church.

Many opponents to church online argue this as their main point of conflict. They believe that church online feeds into the consumer mentality that many have within the church today. People shop around to find the preaching they like the most or the worship that matches their preferences. Opponents argue that church online only exacerbates that flaw within the church. One can listen to the worship from Life Church then switch over to North Point to hear Andy Stanley preach. If they don't like what Andy is preaching about that week, they can jump to a myriad of other online churches without any sense of connection or community.

So the challenge remains. Can this type of intimacy and commitment be experienced online? Can church online provide a community where the church can live together in a deep way? Is it possible to carry the burdens of people you have only met online in a chat room?

For some, church online becomes a place to escape from such commitments. Not long ago Christ Fellowship's church online pastor began connecting with a lady who lived just outside of Atlanta, GA. She started to become demanding. She wasn't offensive, but he could tell there was something wrong with her perspective and connection to the church at large. Atlanta has several church options and opportunities.

With that in mind, the pastor began to probe a bit into her prior church involvement and experience. With numerous good strong Christian churches around her, he discovered that she had serious issues and concerns with each one. She began using church online as an escape from her personal issues regarding fellowship with others and the Bride of Christ. As soon as the pastor discovered this, he began to counsel her regarding these issues and encouraged fellowship, healing, and wholeness in a local church. She ultimately needed to both show and experience grace.

Over the next few months the pastor would pray with her and continue to counsel her with the Word of God. Within three months, she began attending a local church once again and met with her pastor to begin the steps to reconciliation. Transparency and counseling with the church online was a critical part of her journey to spiritual health and healing.

As stated, church online can easily become a place to hide, a place where nobody knows your name or history. These challenges however, often lead to opportunities. Jenny, a young lady who participates in church online, almost always asked for prayer. After about four weeks of praying for her regularly, she began to open up to Christ Fellowship's online pastor about her life. She worked in local gentlemen's club and was uncomfortable coming to church. She knew what she was doing professionally and the lifestyle that she was living were completely wrong. She was trying to find a way out but was entrapped with the lifestyle and the money it provided her.

The online pastor connected Jenny with his wife for further counseling. Since she lived locally, they were able to meet with her in person and invited her to a concert at church. While she was there, she met some people her age. She began to connect with

them and soon began attending services regularly. Jenny prayed to receive Christ, and trusted in His grace and power to help her turn from the life she was living. Today she is walking in victory and grace and growing through weekly Bible studies in the church. Her life has been transformed by the grace and power of God. She is walking in true *koinonia*, and God used the church online to make this a reality in Jenny's life.

Still, not all church online attendees live locally or even try to reach out to anyone through chat or prayer rooms. Thousands simply observe rather than participate. *Koinonia* cannot happen through attendance or observation alone. Many who gather online feel they are fulfilling their church obligation simply by watching the service. This is similar to countless Christians who simply attend a church service at a physical location week after week. True fellowship and connection do not occur.

Around the world, millions of Christians show up on Sunday morning with no understanding of true *koinonia*. There is no sense of commitment or community. There is no intimacy, only a quick handshake or greeting. They are not participating in church life as the early church did. The same misfortune can occur easily on church online. However, that doesn't mean church online is not capable of becoming a place of community and deep fellowship. If it did, we would have to shut the doors of most all churches across America. Likewise, just because there are those attending church online as observers only does not imply it is any less of a church experience.

We will always have people in our churches, the physical and virtual churches, who are observing. Many observe before they choose to participate. We have to provide the opportunities for community and we have to challenge them to connect, but it is the Holy Spirit who helps them see the need for it and draws them to true *koinonia*.

Summary

Valid concerns for the church online exist. Questions must be asked, and answers must be discovered. The difficulty of distributing the sacraments or performing baptisms continues to cause many churches to avoid this form of ministry. The challenge of building healthy relationships also remains problematic within much of the Christian community. Some pastors, like Piper, have taken zealous stands against the possibility of valid community taking place online; while others have given first hand testimony to its existence and fruitfulness.

Simply because a church struggles in an area of effectiveness is no justification for not pursuing this new method of ministry. Some physical churches would admit there are areas of ministry where they fail. That does not mean they should shut their doors and quit trying. Just because they have not yet figured out how to do effective discipleship or evangelism doesn't disqualify them from being the church. If that were so, countless churches would be disqualified immediately. No, we as the church must continue to grow and develop, especially in the areas where we are weak. As we listen to the Holy Spirit and apply new techniques and methods, we will overcome our shortcomings and effectively reach and disciple people for Christ.

CHAPTER IV

THE ONLINE CHURCH AND THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH

For something to be effective, it must produce the desired outcome.[1] For effectiveness to be evaluated, two critical steps must occur. First, the desired outcome must be determined. What is the goal? Second, there must be measurement tools in place to determine if and when you reach these goals.

We grow up familiar with measuring effectiveness. In school students quickly understand that to pass a grade level they must learn the material and be able to communicate their gained knowledge. Test scores precisely measure the effectiveness of the learning experience.

Businesses also understand the importance of measuring effectiveness.[2] Without set goals, companies will function aimlessly, never effectively meeting the demands of their clientele or society at large. They measure effectiveness in sales and profit. If sales are down, they must analyze everything from marketing to customer demand to customer service.

Likewise in the church, we must become better at marking and measuring our success in everything we do. We are not about selling clothes or convincing the world

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[1] *The Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*; available http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/effective, s.v. "effective," (accessed March 11, 2011).

[2] "Why Companies Need to Measure and Increase Sales Productivity," *MeasureProductivity* (January 30, 2008); available from http://www.measureproductivity.com/why-companies-need-to-measure-and-increase-sales-productivity.htm (accessed March 13, 2011).

they need a new gadget. We are about matters of eternal significance so it is imperative

that we constantly evaluate to determine if we are communicating the message of the

Gospel in the most effective way possible. The message will never change, but the

methods with which we communicate must constantly change and evolve. The church

online is one way today's church is adapting to reach the culture for Christ. With this new

adventure comes the need for clear goals and new measurement tools to evaluate

effectiveness. Goals must be specific. To simply state that the goal is to reach more

people for Christ is ambiguous and indistinct. There's a good chance that any church who

begins to even stream their services will reach at least one more person for Christ with

just a little effort.

Goals for church online need to be established for each area that is critical to any

church: worship, evangelism, discipleship, fellowship (or community), and serving. In

addition, due to the debate concerning the administration of the sacraments, church online

must measure how they are fulfilling these ordinances of the church. Once the goals have

been set, regular evaluation of these areas must be performed to guarantee effectiveness.

When the author's church began church online, clear goals were not set. They

were simply attempting to enhance the experience for those viewing their live worship

stream on the Internet. They assigned an online pastor in hopes that he could create more

community and care for those watching online. They had no effective way to measure

that desire other than individual stories. As powerful as those stories may be, they

became anecdotal and not a means for thorough evaluation.

Measuring Attendance Online

Within the first few months, the leaders at Christ Fellowship began to measure the number of people joining online. Measuring the number of attendees is a complex assignment. Unlike at a physical location, you cannot simple count the number of people in the room. They began by measuring Internet Protocol (IP) addresses, the numerical label assigned to each computer device. By counting IP addresses they knew how many computers were connected to their service. They could even determine the length of time each computer was connected and the country where the attendee was located.

Still they could not be sure how many people were logging on with each computer IP address. Soon they surveyed those joining church online and asked a few simple questions to determine who was actually attending. Not taking into consideration some large groups that were gathering together, they found that the average attendance per computer was 2.1. This allowed them to establish the approximate number of people joining in for worship online. They took the total number of IP addresses, reduced that number by 20% to allow for those that may have connected more than once, and multiplied that number by 2.1. Using this very conservative formula, they determined that they had thousands joining in every week for services.[3]

Among the various online churches, there is not a consensus as to how to measure attendance. No standard measurement tool for quantifying Internet statistics and attendance exists. Bobby Gruenwald of Life Church says, "Currently, no standard of

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[3]**Christ Fellowship Church Online Attendance**
Feb. 2009   2576 – Average Weekly
Feb 2010   3983 – Average Weekly
Feb 2011   9074 – Average Weekly
* John Maxwell Series   Jan 2011 13074 Average Weekly – Highest Month Ever

measurement exists for online attendance and isn't likely to emerge in an area of such diversity."[4] Life Church chooses to measure the point of maximum online IP addresses that occur simultaneously. Some online churches only measure those that stay connected for a minimum of 20 minutes; while others measure every IP address that connects to their site if even for only seconds.[5]

Currently, the method Christ Fellowship uses to measure online attendance seems conservative and appropriate and gives them a point from which to measure growth and development. However, it is an area that falls under scrutiny from those opposing the online church. Should better, more accurate indicators of evaluation be made available, Christ Fellowship would be among the first to implement such tools because of their great concern about providing community and discipleship to everyone attending church online.

Measuring Online Giving

In addition to attendance, online giving became the next metric Christ Fellowship began to evaluate. During the offering time, online attenders were encouraged to give and support the church just as they would in any other church. They soon realized this measurement wasn't exact as many viewers were active members at one of their other campuses but were watching online that particular week. Soon they implemented a campus selection button with the online giving mechanism. Those who are primarily a

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[4]James Long and Lindy Lowry, "How Online Worship is Changing Church," *Outreach Magazine*, October 6, 2010; available from http://www.outreachmagazine.com/features/3822-How-Online-Worship-Changing-Church.html (accessed January 18, 2011).

[5]Ibid.

part of church online, select that button before they give. This has helped to clearly see how much the online attenders are giving.

It's interesting to note that this is an area in which the author feels they have failed. With approximately 7000 people attending online each weekend, the offerings from the church online are currently $2000 to $4000 each week. When the online church began, giving was half that amount.[6] The poor response was analyzed, and it was surmised that perhaps those joining online were becoming disconnected during the announcements that preceded the offering because they were primarily geared to the physical campuses. The online pastor began to "disconnect" from the live service and place a pre-recorded video of himself challenging the online community to participate in the giving and mission of the church. As a result, they have seen the offerings double. Although this is a move in a positive direction, they are determined to continue to analyze and measure this metric to help online members be more generous and obedient. In his book *SimChurch*, Estes argues that the "good news is that it is a whole lot cheaper to build a state-of-the-art worship auditorium in the virtual world than it is in the real world. The bad news is that, at least anecdotally, there seems to be a much lower giving rate among virtual churchgoers than real-world churchgoers."[7] The author's church has found this to be shockingly accurate. Their real-world churchgoers give at an average of $35 per adult attendee, while online churchgoers only give an average of less than one dollar per person. The contrast is sobering.

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[6]**Christ Fellowship Church Online Giving:**
Average Giving Per Month Jan/Feb
2009 $1210
2010 $1668
2011 $2519

[7]Estes.

Measuring the Worship Experience Online

Beyond attendance and offerings, what should church online measure? What components are critical for church online to be an effective church? The first area is the worship experience. Although not the most important aspect of a church, it is the one that leaves a lasting impression on first time visitors and regular attenders alike. Church online must provide a warm experience for those attending, making it easy to connect with the online pastor and others in the congregation so they feel as though they can worship effectively.

Eighty-seven percent of pastors surveyed with online churches said they believe their church is effective at facilitating services in which their attendees worship online well.[8] And when surveyed, 60% of church online congregants at Christ Fellowship agreed that they worship online effectively; while another 34.6% somewhat agreed.[9] This is a high percentage, but had the author surveyed his congregation when his church first launched their online campus, this likely would not have been the case. People noted that they found it trying and frustrating to connect because Christ Fellowship didn't have a solid video player that housed their online chat. People actually had to launch Skype, a video conferencing and instant messaging online application. Even if they had already had a Skype account, it was inconvenient. If they didn't understand Skype, it was nearly impossible. This struggle using Skype continued for the first couple of years. Finally, to enhance the experience, Christ Fellowship invested in creating their own custom video

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[8] See Appendix D.

[9] See Appendix C.

player with a built-in instant messaging board. Attendees still have the option of going unnoticed, but if someone wants to connect for prayer or for interacting with the community, the option is easily accessible.

In addition to the online pastor, there are service hosts in the chat area talking with people and praying for needs as they arise. They are able to take a conversation into a private chat room if someone needs personal attention. They also can monitor the chat to make sure it stays positive and appropriate. If someone enters the chat with the intent to disrupt, the service host can move them to a private area or can block them from the discussion altogether.

The chat feature is not essential for someone to experience worship online, but it is important for someone to be able to easily connect with a pastor or counselor for prayer and counsel online. It is critical for creating a sense of community. Estes argues that features such as chat rooms provide peer-to-peer communication. "If we and other people come together and are present in the same place in the virtual world, we can create real community. This real community allows for the possibility of a real church, and for a real God to be present with us."[10] One pastor surveyed agreed that his online church's best feature to date was the "chat room to facilitate interaction. . . .The chat room itself isn't great, but I believe it proves the importance of social interaction and questioning."[11] Without it, church online isn't much different from watching a church service on television. The online chat allows the worship service to be interactive and engaging. It provides a platform for interaction and connection. One of Christ Fellowship's online

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[10]Estes.

[11]See Appendix D.

attendees surveyed verified that they "like that we have the opportunity to chat with others and some are from around the world…"[12] This participant went on to say, "I have been encouraged by others online. And I can e-mail Pastor David with questions and concerns."[13]

While many do take advantage of the chat feature while attending online church, the author found that of those surveyed, many made suggestions asking for "more online connection and interaction" and some asking, "Is there anything else I can do online besides seeing the service?"[14] Both of these statements indicate that Christ Fellowship's online church needs to improve its communication of opportunities to join these accompanying conversations, helping attendees to connect authentically with one another and with their church leadership.

Additionally, the worship experience has a built in slideshow presenter where the online pastor can share important messages during the service. This may be used as they prepare for offering, providing an easy connection to the online giving page, or it can provide a link to a place to learn more about an upcoming online class. The purpose of the slideshow presenter is to further engage the attendee while they are at church. It would compare to having a credit card swipe at every seat in your sanctuary at offering time or a small computer for each person to register for a class at announcement time. The online worship experience has the opportunity for even greater effectiveness than a traditional physical worship service.

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[12]See Appendix C.

[13]See Appendix C.

[14]Ibid.

During the worship experience, the online pastor greets attendees. Additionally, the pastor speaking at the physical location will refer to those gathering online, welcoming them to the worship service. Many have said that this personalized greeting makes them feel that the pastor is speaking directly to them. They feel as though they are truly a part of the congregation even though they may be thousands of miles away. The author believes this also encourages greater commitment to engaging with others during the service and not simply observing.

Before each service begins, the online pastor meets with various people in the chat room to discover who is joining online. He quickly sends a few names to the pastor at the physical location, which allows the pastor to greet some by name from the live platform. Their city and country are also mentioned, reminding those in the physical campuses that there are thousands of people, not in the physical sanctuary, who are worshiping with them that day. Furthermore, the pastors at the broadcasting campus encourage those online to engage in the worship by singing and praying along with the congregation at the appropriate times. The author's church expects them to participate as though they were physically present, and the pastors tell them so. As a result, online worshipers join in singing and praying and Scripture reading during the service. Some will even type words of praise and worship in the chat room as a tangible expression of their participation. These words help join the online community together by focusing on God.

When the time comes for the message, sermon notes are available online as well. Those attending can print the notes or simply type their own notes and have those sent to their e-mail inbox or printer. This further encourages the online congregation to

participate and learn and not simply casually watch. Again, having a keyboard at your fingertips to type notes and Scriptures is far more efficient than handwriting notes that later need to be typed or filed.

Additionally, when attendees want to share prayer requests, there is a tab where they can submit a request for a team to pray with them during the coming week. There is no need to go to a welcome center to fill out a prayer card like one would have to do in a physical campus. If an attendee wants to pray with someone during or following the service, there are prayer partners available in the chat room.

These are just a few ways that the church online worship experience is more efficient than a physical church service. It offers both convenience and accessibility. Online, one can have instant access to the online pastor and prayer partners. At a physical location one must wait or perhaps make an appointment to speak with the pastor. This does create some difficulty for the online pastor in services that are more heavily populated. During those more intense times, he has to depend on the prayer partners and service hosts to help care for the needs of the congregation. However, having immediate access to the leadership of the church is much easier than in physical campuses because of chat room features online. In fact, 63.5% of those surveyed agreed that they felt they could connect with a pastor via e-mail or online chat when needed or desired with an additional 25.8% asserting they somewhat agree; and 59.3% said they agreed that they felt comfortable praying with others online with another 27.2% somewhat agreeing.[15] Both of these above average percentages indicate that Christ Fellowship is fostering an environment of community and care between their leadership and their attendees.

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[15]See Appendix C.

Kim and her husband Bob used to live in South Florida and attended one of the author's physical campuses before moving out of state. Bob is in the construction business and when the economy broke down in recent years, Bob and Kim had to pack up and move to where there was work. They were very disappointed to leave their home church. Kim explained, though, how God made a way for them to take their church family with them.

> I don't do well with change! At first I thought…an online campus, how peculiar and totally out of my comfort zone! YET, after a continual bugging by the Holy Spirit and a heart laden with loneliness, I tried it. I am so glad I did! It was simply-significantly life changing!...I met friends in the online chat, and we have become family! In three years, I can't tell you how many cities I have lived in, my head is still spinning; YET I can tell you that my soul is stable and wherever I am sent in this country, I have the same church, the same online family that comes with me! [16]

Kim's testimony is just one of many more who have a home at church online and despite not being in a physical space with others, feel welcomed and cared for online.

Overall the online worship experience has evolved to be very inclusive and welcoming. Just as in a physical church, people can quietly slip in and slip out unnoticed, one can do that with church online a well. However, if attendees want to connect, the church online worship experience allows them to do so more easily. The worship and comments from the broadcasting campus create an atmosphere of participation, and the video player and online tools make engaging more efficient. Many of these enhancements have occurred in the last twelve to eighteen months. Continued improvements and adaptations will only further enhance the church online worship experience in the days ahead.

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[16]Kim, e-mail message to Pastor David Helbig, February 16, 2011.

Measuring Evangelism Online

One of the key purposes of the church is to evangelize the world, sharing the message of Christ with every tribe and nation.[17] This mission is rooted in the commissioning of the church by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20, [*New International Version*]). As previously discussed, the Internet allows the church to literally go into all nations and preach the Gospel.[18] Through the Internet, the church is not limited by international borders, government regulations (except in a few countries), or prejudices against Christian missionaries. We have access to billions of people, 24 hours a day.

Church online leverages this opportunity far beyond just a Christian Website. A Website can present information, but church online allows for interaction and discussion around the person of Christ.[19] Seekers are not left to discover truth for themselves on a Website, but are engaged by pastors and trained prayer partners as they connect in an online church environment. Seventy-three percent of pastors with online churches believed they were effectively evangelizing online.[20]

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[17]Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 104.

[18]Estes.

[19]Ibid.

[20]See Appendix D.

Several months ago, a teacher named Becky who attends one of the author's physical campuses, had a 16-year-old student named Lisa approach her regarding some personal issues she was having. Lisa knew her teacher Becky was a believer and asked her to pray for her. Becky prayed for her and invited her to attend a service at Christ Fellowship.

Although she would have liked to attend, Lisa knew that she had no way of getting to Christ Fellowship so she declined. Becky immediately thought of the church online and gave Lisa the link and encouraged her to participate in church via the Internet.

A few weeks later as Becky was welcoming the students into her classroom, she noticed the student approaching, said good morning, and asked how she was doing. The student flashed Becky a gigantic smile and said that she had accepted Christ the weekend before. Becky asked her where and how that happened, and the student said that she had been participating in church online for several months, and that past weekend she felt like she finally understood what it meant to have a personal relationship with Christ. The online church is creating inroads for the Gospel to be shared with people who would otherwise not hear its saving message of truth.

Measuring Discipleship Online

Not only does church online help the church at large fulfill the mission to take Christ into all the world, but it specifically helps the church make disciples. The church is called not just to make converts, but to make disciples. A disciple of Christ is one who understands and embraces the teachings of Christ and surrenders to His Lordship in their

life. It is a process of growing more like Christ.[21] Church online provides a platform for that to occur. Christian Websites can inform and provide tools for spiritual growth, but only the church can come alongside a new Christian and help him or her to mature and take the first spiritual steps and continue growing to maturity.

Discipleship is a critical process for any healthy church. Helping people grow in their relationship with Christ and become more like Jesus is paramount to a true Christian community.[22] This is true not only for the physical church, but also for the virtual church. Of course the entry place for both churches is the weekend worship experience and the sermon. Anointed and purposeful preaching of God's Word will challenge a congregation to grow and hunger for more of God's truth. Preaching and teaching should actually point people to deeper study and discovery. Eighty-three percent of pastors with online churches surveyed believe they are effective in biblical instruction and teaching online.[23] And 87% of the author's online church congregants surveyed agree that they are satisfied with the biblical instruction and teaching they receive online; while 12% somewhat agree. Only 1.1% somewhat disagreed leaving 0% to completely disagree.[24] This is an indicator of the online church's success in helping people online to grow. Different online churches measure spiritual growth differently. Potential Church in Cooper City, FL (formerly known as Flamingo Road Church) measures growth in their online congregation by "discipleship steps" taken by the members. Troy Gramling, the lead

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[21]Oswald Chambers, "The Method of Missions," *My Utmost for His Highest* (October 27, 2011); available from http://utmost.org/the-method-of-missions/ (accessed March 11, 2011).

[22]Warren, *Purpose Driven Church. 106.*

[23]See Appendix D.

[24]See Appendix C.

pastor at Potential, says that church is "a process of taking one step after another along the faith journey. As a church, Flamingo Road [Potential Church] measures growth and discipleship through steps taken. Baptism is a step. Financial giving is a discipleship step. Serving is a discipleship step."[25] Potential Church believes that is the same for their physical locations as well as their online campus.

In addition to preaching and teaching online, the online church can also facilitate growth by connecting people into online Bible studies and Life Groups. Although Christ Fellowship didn't begin its online church immediately with Life Groups, the church online now recruits and trains Life Group hosts from all around the world to lead groups online. These Life Groups participate in Bible studies and spend time praying for each other. As with physical Life Groups, they satisfy both a discipleship component as well as a community component.[26] And while many of Christ Fellowship's online church participants agreed that being a part of Life Groups helped them connect with others and grow in their faith, some surveyed suggested that they didn't know how to connect. Others obviously were not aware such opportunities were available because they made suggestions for groups to be made available online. This indicates the need for greater emphasis on inviting people to take advantage of the Life Groups.

In the online Life Groups, an attempt is made to group people together from the same region of the world to accommodate time zone preferences. This has also, in some cases, made it possible for in-person meetings for further connection and development of friendships.

[25]Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, 95.

[26]Bill Search, "Single-Obsession Small Groups" (January 30, 2009); available from http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2009/winter/singleobsessiongroups.html (accessed March 11, 2011).

One such situation at the author's online church included Tim and Christine, who live in New York. They had been attending church online for quite a long time and with regularity when the online pastor was introduced to a college student in the New York area who was pretty much on her own in the city, so he connected the three of them and encouraged them to meet. Almost immediately they met and decided to watch services together and have then enjoyed times of fellowship together offline.

Online classes and discipleship remain an area for further development for Christ Fellowship. In fact, of all the suggestions made by the online congregants who were surveyed from the author's church, an overwhelming number of responses regarded the need for greater variety of classes and equal opportunities akin to being physically present of one of their traditional, physical campuses.

Christ Fellowship leaders acknowledge that restricted resources have limited their ability to get more classes recorded and monitored online. However, this will change in the coming year as they have dedicated media staff to the creation of more online classes. Maturing their online congregation is becoming their number one goal for church online in the coming year.

Measuring Congregational Care Online

Another key component of church that must be evaluated is the way the congregation is cared for as they face the trials of life. In a traditional, physical church, parishioners would have access to a pastor or counselor to discuss their needs. Someone would meet with them for prayer and Biblical guidance. In church online, the same ministry takes place although not always face-to-face. When the person is local, perhaps

homebound or suffering from a long-term illness, the online pastor visits and prays with them in person. Just like a traditional church pastor, the online pastor is responsible to shepherd the online congregation. "Like traditional pastoral ministry, virtual-church pastoral ministry will hinge on how the pastor handles people, relationships, and community far more than on how he manages technology."[27]

Recently Christ Fellowship's online pastor received a call to perform a hospital visit to a lady he did not know. She had been ill for some time and needed to speak with a pastor. As Pastor David entered her hospital room, the lady's eyes lit up as she exclaimed, "Pastor David, it's so nice to meet you!" They had never spoken before, but she recognized David from the church online services. David noticed the laptop next to her bed as she explained that through the months of her illness she had been able to stay connected with her church family through church online.

However, the majority of those in Christ Fellowship's church online live hundreds and thousands of miles away. A personal visit would be impossible. In these situations, the online pastor can video conference, e-mail, or phone the person in need and spend time praying with them. While this may not be exactly the same as being physically present, it can be equally effective in showing care and concern for those church members in need. In fact, of those surveyed from Christ Fellowship's online church, 75.2% either agreed or somewhat agreed that they feel they can receive or extend to others care during pivotal moments of life (e.g., birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce) via e-mail or other online social mediums.[28]

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[27]Estes.

[28]See Appendix C.

Mike is a soldier in the United States Army. He attended one of Christ Fellowship's physical campuses and was heading on his third mission when the church online was launched. Mike had access to the Internet and was able to join the online services on the weekends. He was uncomfortable in the chat room but would speak privately with the online pastor. Often, they would schedule times throughout the week to video chat. On one such occasion, Pastor David could tell Mike was discouraged. He looked burdened, sad, and lonely. When David asked him if everything was all right, Mike started to get emotional. He missed home and his family. He began to tell David what his day had been like. A suicide bomber had blown up a United States military vehicle. Mike was responsible for the recovery and clean up. He mentioned to Pastor David that no one could possibly understand what it's like to scrape human remains off an exploded vehicle, to collect the pieces, and to put everything back in order in the unit. Before Mike signed off that day, Pastor David was able to pray for his encouragement and healing. Pastor David thanked God for Mike, for his bravery and commitment, and he asked God to give him His peace and surround him with His love.

Upon Mike's return to the United States, he told Pastor David how important their connection was to him while he was away. Mike expressed that the spiritual counsel and care he received through church online was what brought him through his time away.

TJ was a Sergeant in the United States Army. While deployed in Iraq, TJ would collect a few of his friends and join Christ Fellowship for church online. TJ testified that the blessing of having church online was something that strengthened him each week while deployed. As a token of his appreciation, TJ wanted to give something meaningful back to Christ Fellowship. He went to his commanding officer and told him what Christ

Fellowship had been doing for the troops. They took the flag that had been flown over the Army headquarters in Iraq, had a ceremony commemorating Christ Fellowship, and sent that flag to the church along with a letter and certificate from the commanding officer. The tattered flag that had once flown over the US Army camp now flies in the sanctuary of Christ Fellowship as a symbol of the impact the online church is having on our military stationed around the world, fighting for the freedom afforded us to worship freely.

These two stories speak of the genuine care that takes place through Church Online—real people loving and caring for one another in times of need. That is what the church family does for each other. The Bible commands us to "carry one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2), pray for each other (James 5:16), comfort each other as God has comforted us (2 Corinthians 1:4) and to help each other in times of need (Philippians 2:4). Church online is effectively fulfilling these commands, no matter the distance.

Measuring Serving Online

One additional critical area for all churches is challenging their congregation to serve.[29] The Bible tells us in Mark 10:45, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, [*New International Version*]). The Bible continues to teach that we are created to serve one another. The Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 2:10, "It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that

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[29]Warren, 365-366.

we should spend these lives helping others" (Ephesians 2:10, [*Living Bible*]). We have

been created to serve.

In many traditional, physical churches there are opportunities to serve in the

nurseries, children's ministry, music departments, and student ministries. In fact, in many

churches there are dozens, even hundreds, of areas in which to serve. In contrast, as noted

earlier, the church online has fewer areas for serving. However, 44% of Christ

Fellowship's online congregants surveyed agreed that they feel they can exercise their

spiritual gifts online with another 31.1% somewhat agreeing.[30]

Volunteers can host a Life Group, host a service, or serve as a prayer partner or an

online mentor. Those with the gift of teaching can help teach online classes. But the list

of opportunities is limited. Most online churches don't need ushers, nursery workers, or

parking lot attendants. This can be seen either as a dilemma or an opportunity.

Jesus calls the church to not only serve one another, but to serve the world (Matt.

20:28). Too often, people in traditional, physical church settings view serving as

something that occurs only within the four walls of the church. In fact, due to the

overwhelming need for volunteers within the ministries of the church, many churches

cannot afford to encourage their members to serve outside the church. Just the opposite is

true for church online. With a limited need for volunteers, church online can encourage

its participants to go into their communities with the love of Christ. Opportunities to be

the hands of Christ exist all around us. In addition to great parachurch ministries that are

in constant need of volunteers, there are opportunities to serve neighbors, single parents,

and the elderly in our own neighborhoods. The message of serving as Christ served

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[30]See Appendix C.

doesn't change with church online, but the application does.[31] However, it may actually be more biblical than how it is played out in traditional, physical churches around the world.[32]

Fifty percent of pastors with online churches reported in surveys that they felt they were effective at offering opportunities or encouraging their online attendees to use their gifts to serve others.[33] Currently, Christ Fellowship's church online effectively helps those who want to serve within the virtual church, as well as those whose passions lay within the community. The message is focused on becoming the hands and feet of Christ to the world. That admonition is the same if you live in America or in a village in Eastern Europe. Regardless of location, everyone can humbly serve those in need with the love of Christ.

Where Christ Fellowship can improve is providing their online congregation with more examples of people who are using their God-given gifts to serve within the community. They need to expose online attendees to examples of those serving at soup kitchens, caring for the elderly, or helping to meet the needs of a single mom. In fact, a few attendees who were surveyed made suggestions that the online church have video testimonies of people using their gifts to serve in the kingdom. Examples in story form celebrate what God is doing through the virtual church family as well as point people to examples of spiritual maturity.

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[31]Estes.

[32]Ibid.

[33]See Appendix D.

Measuring the Administration of Church Ordinances Online

In addition to these evaluations, church online must monitor how well it performs the administration of the sacraments of baptism and communion. The manner in which some online churches perform these ordinances was discussed earlier. Still, a process of evaluation needs to be established. Helping followers of Christ to participate in these significant steps of faith is vital for any church to do well.

There should be a better process than simply mentioning that communion will be taking place and encouraging the online participants to quickly find crackers and juice. The author's church has discussed sending communion elements through the mail to those participating online. Church supply companies sell individually sealed communion supplies that could be sent out monthly to the online church congregation with a letter from the pastor indicating the weekend that communion will take place.[34] Scripture and further explanation of the meaning of communion would prepare the online participants for this sacred celebration. Two factors have prohibited this opportunity—cost and the lack of updated information from those joining online. Again, because communion is so central to the celebration of faith in Christ, the online church must look for new ways to enhance the experience.

Similarly, encouraging those wishing to be baptized to find a local church or fly to Christ Fellowship to have baptism performed is not acceptable either. Both options imply that church online cannot address the admonition of baptism and that a physical church is necessary for the fulfillment of this ordinance. While the author's church has not come to a resolution either, church online must address how it can best administer

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[34]Celebration Cups available from http://www.celebrationcups.com/ (accessed March 11, 2011).

these two sacraments. Currently, no evaluation on the effectiveness of administering these sacraments exists. However, it is clear from surveying both church pastors who have online churches and attendees of the author's online church, that this is the weakest area of effectiveness for the online church. Pastors surveyed only felt 46% effective in this area, with many citing that they simply do not administer communion and baptism online.[35] And only 31% of those surveyed in the author's online campus felt they agreed that they could effectively receive the sacraments of the church online.[36] This is an area that definitely needs improvement as discussed in detail earlier.

The Church Online is Effective

No church is 100% effective in every area of ministry. There is constant room for development and improvement. Likewise, the church online must progress and develop areas of ministry to enhance its effectiveness. That being said, the church online is effective.[37] Countless stories of lives being reached and changed for Christ through church online continue to affirm its effectiveness. People are being reached that would otherwise have not been reached. People are growing in their relationship with God through church online, and people are serving and caring for one another. The surveys conducted by the author indicate that God is at work through church online.

Through surveys and internal examination, it is clear there is room for improvement and growth in the noted areas of ministry. These needs justify measurement tools to help the church online adapt and mature in the years ahead. Periodic surveys of

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[35]See Appendix D.

[36]See Appendix C.

[37]Estes.

the online congregation and in depth analysis of the results of online discipleship can guide the future growth of church online. With these in place, church online is positioned to be a powerful tool for the kingdom of God. The church at large cannot resist the opportunity to meet people where they are. Instead we must embrace technology as the new medium through which to communicate a timeless message of God's grace and hope for the world.

CHAPTER V

PRACTICES AND PROGRAMS ANY CHURCH MUST HAVE

According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, the primary definition for the word "church" means "a building for public and especially for Christian worship."[1] Although recognized to also mean a body of religious believers, most people use the word "church" to imply the actual building where the believers meet. This most common definition plays against the very concept of a virtual church, as a virtual church has no building or facility. There is no physical sanctuary for people to gather to worship God.

Although the hurdle remains for someone with limited biblical knowledge, the Word of God clearly defines the church not as a building or structure but as the people who gather together, wherever they may gather. In the first century when the church began, there were no church buildings in which to meet. The church gathered in homes and in the temple court. Both were vibrant expressions of the community of believers bound together by the bonds of Christ.

The word "church" comes with baggage for many people. The very word can conjure up various meanings based upon one's experience with the church. Those who grew up Catholic have one interpretation of church. Even within the Catholic Church, there are varied degrees of experiences. Some attended church where the mass was performed in Latin and they didn't understand what was being said, much less the relevancy to their life. Others grew up in a Catholic church where the passion for Christ

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[1]*The Free Merriam-Webster's Dictionary;* available from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/church, s.v. "church," (accessed March 3, 2011).

filled the parish. This differentiation was dependent upon the priest and his personal relationship with Christ.

Still others grew up in fundamental churches where legalism may have played into their perspective of church. Some may have witnessed a wonderful expression of what it means to walk within a community of believers. Regardless of one's upbringing, everyone comes to the discussion with a view of what he or she believes the church will be like.

Dealing with Expectations

With that outlook also comes an expectation of what the church should be or should do for each individual and family. People who grew up in a church with dynamic programs for children and teenagers expect a church to have similar programs. If they attended a church where there was powerful music and a lively worship experience, they would approach a church looking for a similar experience. If they grew up in a more orthodox setting, they may expect a traditional church with more liturgy and formality.

How do these expectations position church online for those looking for a church home? How will people approach a church that is dissimilar to anything they have experienced before? Is church online that different at all? Perhaps the starting point is recognizing that society has changed. Most people do not attend church, and most are fine with it.[2] Fifty to sixty years ago, people had a general understanding of church, and our nation was still very Christian in its ideologies. Today that has changed. We have

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[2]B. A. Robinson, "How Many North Americans Attend Religious Services (and how many lie about going)?" *Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance*, (August 10, 2007); available from http://www.religioustolerance.org/rel_rate.htm (accessed March 11, 2011).

quickly moved from a nation that was postmodern to one that is now post-Christian.[3] Christianity is no longer the dominant religious underpinning of the culture. No longer are our principles and values widely guided by the Word of God and the teachings of Christ. Secular humanistic thought prevails.[4]

This change in culture has brought with it an exodus from the church.[5] Generations have now grown up with no personal experience of what church should look like. This can work to our benefit. No longer are churches, physical or virtual, bound to the traditions established by committees and denominations from decades past. Today the church can step out and meet the culture where it is and introduce it to the message and love of Christ in relevant ways.

Church online enters the story at the perfect time in history. Never before have so many people worldwide had such access to the Internet. According to Internet World Stats, there are 1.9 billion people online with the highest increase (1,825.3%) coming from the Middle East.[6] Never before have so many been without a preconceived idea of what church "should be." This gives the church online the freedom to ask what we must do as the Church to spread the message of Christ and make disciples at this time in history.

Those of us in the church may be the biggest hindrances to boiling down the essence of what truly makes a church a church. We have our opinions of what is

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[3]John Meachum, "The End of Christian America," *Newsweek,* (April 4, 2009); available from http://www.newsweek.com/2009/04/03/the-end-of-christian-america.html (accessed March 11, 2011).

[4]Ibid.

[5]Robinson.

[6]Miniwatts Marketing Group, June 30, 2010; available from http://www.Internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed January 2, 2011).

important and our experiences of how we have operated in the past. This often makes it challenging to think differently or to step out and try new methods to reach emerging generations.[7]

Christ Fellowship Considers the Necessity of Church Programs

Christ Fellowship launched their church online as another one of their campuses in their multi-site organizational structure. The leaders had their own perspective of how to plant churches and start campuses. When a physical church or campus is planted, it needs a physical location. The size of the launch team determines the size of the facility needed. When they launched a new physical campus in a nearby town, they estimated that they would begin with 700 people. They had approximately that many driving from this town to their first church campus thirty minutes away. As a result, they found an elementary school that could hold 700 people with facilities for nurseries, children's ministries, student ministries, and some onsite storage. Within the first few months of opening, they discovered they had drastically underestimated the response as they were soon hitting the 1000 mark in attendance.

They ran out of room in the cafeteria and ran out of chairs. Even after purchasing more chairs, they soon had to add multiple services. The parking lot soon became an issue because with more people attending they were quickly running out of parking spots. Their volunteers were asked to park in a field behind the school, allowing more parking spots for visitors. Weekly they had to turn a cafeteria into a sanctuary, a gymnasium into

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[7]Estes.

a children's church, and classrooms into nurseries. All of these ministries were expected at this new campus. They expected it of themselves.

Months later when Christ Fellowship launched the church online they had to ask themselves what was necessary for them to be church in an online environment. They didn't need to rent a facility or purchase chairs or worry about parking. Many of the very issues that were critical to the effective launch of a physical location weren't even a thought as they prepared to begin church online.

They had similar deliberations when they launched that first campus in the elementary school. Their original campus had a plethora of ministries including men's ministry, women's ministry, special needs ministry, children's and youth ministry, and even a mechanics' ministry to help single mothers with their vehicle needs. The question was "which of these ministries had to be reproduced for this new, physical campus to be a church?"

Through much debate, they narrowed the list to worship, children's ministry, youth ministry, congregational care, and Life Groups. These ministries would be their main focus for discipleship in the formative years. All other ministries could and would wait without compromising the mission, evangelization, discipleship, and care of the people attending. It didn't make this campus less of a church just because all the options weren't available at this location. It simply met the minimum of the definition of what they believed a church was to include. Through the years as leaders emerged, additional ministries have been born to continue to help this congregation grow deeper and reach more people even more effectively.

The Purpose of the Church as it Relates to Programming

The same debate must take place for church online. What must be at the core of its focus and purpose? Just as the Word of God must direct the focus and purpose of every church, so it must direct the church in a virtual world.

As discussed earlier, after having studying various Scriptures and participating in numerous discussions, Christ Fellowship embraced Rick Warren's philosophy of the five purposes of the church.[8] Warren contends that the five key purposes for the church are found in two passages of Scripture, the Great Commandment found in Matthew 22:36-40 which says, "'Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?' Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments'" (Matthew 22:36-40, [*New International Version*]).

The second passage is the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20, which says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20, [*New International Version*]). Both texts give purpose and direction for the Church.

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[8]Warren, 107.

Again, from these passages Warren identifies the purposes of the church as worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and mission.[9] At the very core of any church, these five purposes must be lived out for that church to be effective. For church online, these same purposes must find their place in the ministries provided. The key components mentioned in the previous chapter include these five purposes and have been thoroughly addressed. They must be the solid foundation for church online. However, what about other seemingly important ministries such as children's or student ministries? Does church online need to provide them in order to be revered as a "real," purposeful church? What about recovery ministry or grief care? Is the online church any less authentic without these programs to care for the needs of their attendees?

As mentioned, Christ Fellowship would have never thought of launching their new campus for 700 people without a children's pastor and a youth pastor. They selected their physical location based upon the proximity of their children's classes to where the adults would gather for worship. It was a critical decision. Yet with church online, no thought had been given to a children's ministry. Their current online attendance is approximately 7000 weekly. No church in America with 7000 people would ever consider not having ministries for the children and teens. Yet church online is in a virtual world, which potentially greatly alters needs for extensive programming.

At first this could be a point to celebrate. No nurseries to staff. No rooms to prepare. No chairs to set up each week. There is no need to train teachers and store supplies. But is this the proper approach? Is there a better way to analyze the question?

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[9]Norman Wade Cox (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists,* Volume 1 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958). See the section *The Function of the Church*; The Worship of God: 274; The Word of God – The church as the body of Christ exists to proclaim the Word of God . . .: 275; The service of God: 275; Evangelism: 407, 416.

As far as the author's research indicates, no church meeting online is currently providing any type of ministry to children and youth. All worship services and ministry opportunities, including classes, are geared towards adults.

The Future of Children's Ministry Online

Perhaps the church online can change its attention from "What should be?" to "What could be?" The church can obviously be a church without a children's ministry or children's pastor. There are churches in the United States and around the world that do not have a children's ministry.[10] The children and teens are simply a part of the adult services. Several pastors at the author's church grew up in churches with no specific ministry to children, and their faith as adults is solid and well rounded. However, if the desire of the church is to deepen the faith of each believer, then speaking the language of the child or teenager can only help reach that goal. It's the very reason most churches have age-specific ministries. How a child in second grade learns and grows is different from a tenth grader or from a mother in her forties. The issues and concerns they are dealing with are varied, and the best way for them to take a step in faith will play out very differently. With this in mind, what would a children's ministry online look like?

Believing that the parent is the most influential person in a child's life, the greatest service any children's ministry could offer is to provide resources and equip parents to help their children know and love God. This is true for any church but potentially the main foundation of a children's ministry for church online. In this sense, the limitations of church online may actually force a purer form of ministry. Parents are

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[10]Jared Kennedy, "The History of Family Ministry, Part 4: The Family Ministry Movement" (May 1, 2010); available from http://sojournkids.com/2010/05/the-history-of-family-ministry-part-4-the-family-ministry-movement/ (accessed March 11, 2011).

not able to simply drop their children off at church and expect some paid church staff to teach their children about Jesus as they would in a traditional church building. They have to do it themselves. They must learn how to have spiritual conversations with their children and encourage godliness. As parents, they must understand the basics of the faith and be able to pass them along to their children.

Consequently, the church online children's ministry would need to focus on how to best provide resources for the parents. Online tools, age-appropriate Bible studies, and spiritual discussion questions could be the starting point. Church online could have Websites attached to their main site dedicated to these resources and trainings, leveraging volunteers gifted in teaching. Church online could provide training videos that walk parents through sharing faith in Christ with their children. Links to articles and other online resources would be beneficial. Many parents are not even sure where to begin when it comes to talking with their children about things of faith. Basic online resources would start them in the right direction.

For online churches with more advanced IT departments and resources, a more thorough Website dedicated to the children would be beneficial. Some churches already provide Websites designed for the children as a part of their main Website.[11] These dedicated pages could be interactive and provide learning opportunities for children in the church online.

The online ministry for children does not need to be complex. The previous week's lessons, videos, and Bible verses can be uploaded to the dedicated site. These along with a video training for the parents can equip the parents to lead their children

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[11]North Point Community Church; available from http://www.northpoint.org/, (accessed March 11, 2011).

through the Christian education process. Most Christian parents would not resist the responsibility of spiritually leading their children, but many do not know how. Providing online training for the parents through video and print will the resources the parents need to take their rightful place as their children's spiritual leaders.

Parents could sign up for daily e-mails or texts that could remind them of the Scripture memory verse or follow up questions from the week's lesson. Similarly to how Bible clubs used to mail Bible lessons for children to complete and mail back, the online application could allow for families to work through lessons together and provide interactive questions to ensure the child is learning the Scriptures.

In many ways this hands-on participation by the parents would far exceed what most children receive in the physical church settings, where many parents view the children's ministry as a glorified babysitter. An online children's ministry would require active participation from the parents reinstating them as the key spiritual leaders for their children as God intended.

An online children's ministry would be extremely successful. Already 86% of children in the United States have at least one computer in their home, and 74% have an Internet connection.[12] The most common activity they participate in is gaming and communication.[13] Leveraging this phenomenon for the Kingdom of God would only help children grow in their understanding of the Word of God and their relationship with Christ.

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[12]Dale Hudson and Scott Werner, *Turbo Charged Children's Ministry* (Loveland: Group Publishing, 2008), 216.

[13]Ibid., 90.

The Future of Youth Ministry Online

Likewise, the conditions for church online ministering to teenagers are ripe. This generation of teenagers is more technically advanced than any other in history.[14] They have grown up with video games and computers. They understand the Internet better than most adults. They have been labeled the "Net Generation" due to their attachment and experience with the online world. With that foundation, the church online has a strong leverage point to reach this generation with the message and purposes of Christ.

Similar to an online children's ministry, a ministry to teenagers online would start with the understanding that parents are still the most influential factor in a child's spiritual life. Even though as teens grow older, peers begin to have greater influence over their lives and decisions, parents still remain the number one guide for spiritual matters for their children.[15] Therefore a priority for an online youth ministry would be to equip the parents to talk about God with their child. So many parents will discuss all sorts of issues with their teens but avoid the topic of God or the working of the Holy Spirit.

The most critical assignment parents have is to help their children know and love Christ. They are assigned by God the responsibility to help their children follow His ways. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, [*New International Version*]).

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[14]Tapscott, 2.

[15]Shane Stacey, "Parents: A Major Key to Ongoing Spiritual Formation," (April 15, 2010); available from http://www.reachstudents.org/reachstudents-blog/post/parents:--a-major-key-to-ongoing-spiritual-formation (accessed March 11, 2011).

The responsibility to help children grow in the ways of the Lord clearly falls in the lap of their parents, but so many don't know where to begin. The church online can help by equipping and empowering the parent to step out and assume this critical role as their children's spiritual leader. Links to various online resources that speak about Christian parenting would help parents know how to lead discussions. Videos addressing issues that teens are facing positioned within the context of a biblical worldview could open the doors for healthy conversations between parents and teens.

In addition to parental resources, the site could offer sections just for teens to connect and interact with online youth volunteers. In a physical church, godly volunteers that can relate and connect with teenagers are critical to any fruitful youth program. No longer can one youth pastor minister to dozens of students.[16] By inviting young adults and parents that feel called to minister to teenagers, the youth pastor expands his influence over the teens. Likewise an online youth ministry could enlist qualified adults to connect and mentor online. Online Life Groups for students could also be established to create more opportunities for community development and spiritual growth. With this generation already building so many of their relationships online, building spiritually healthy relationships through an online youth group would be completely natural and welcomed.

Ideally, many of the larger churches that have church online or are contemplating doing church online have multiple staff in their youth ministry departments. More than likely some of those staff are already very active in online communities and could help

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[16]"Practical: The Role of the Full-Time Youth Pastor in the Local church," *Youth Pastor.com,* (May 18, 1997); available from http://www.youthpastor.com/lessons/index.cfm/Practical-The_Role_of_the_FullTime_Youth_Pastor_in_the_Local_Church_9.htm (accessed March 11, 2011).

launch this online youth ministry. The potential for ministry to teens in an online
Christian environment is unlimited.

With a majority of teenagers already connected through social media such as
Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, building a platform that uses these mediums would be
a natural bridge to an online youth ministry. Churches would make a mistake to think
they could build an online platform that competes with these social giants. Instead,
finding ways to build community within these already used and established media
platforms is going to be pivotal to its success. The author's church has more than 7,000
members that use the church's Facebook fanpage with more than one million hits per
month. The church uses the fanpage to send out Scripture, words of encouragement,
special event announcements, as well as to gather prayer requests. The same could be the
starting point for an online youth ministry that would build community and connection
for students online.

Additionally, a youth ministry could broadcast their services online allowing
those who do not live near a church that has a youth program to connect with the teaching
and worship from a dynamic youth ministry. Similar to how weekend services are
broadcast, the youth service could be broadcasted with chat rooms and prayer rooms
being led by online volunteers. Online discussion of critical topics facing teens would be
natural as so many teens are already sharing and discussion such topics online with
friends. The advantage with the online youth ministry would be that they are sharing with
trained Christian adults who can help guide them to a biblical perspective regarding the
issues. In his book *Windows PCs in the Ministry*, author Steve Hewitt gives practical
advice for streaming services without high complexity or high cost. Using services like

www.churchonvideo.tv or StreamingChurch.tv student ministries could afford to stream their youth services online and keep students connected and growing.[17]

In addition to teens that don't live in a community with a vibrant youth ministry, this online youth ministry also could be critical for those teens that do not have transportation or cannot rely on their parents to drive them to and from church. Because most youth services take place mid-week, time does not allow many parents to make it home from work, prepare dinner, and get their children back out for the youth service. An online youth ministry would help those students stay consistent and connected.

However, in an informal survey of youth pastors, the concern was raised that an online youth ministry in itself would not completely meet the needs of their students. Most felt that the students still needed face-to-face time with other Christian teenagers and adults. Most of the youth pastors did agree that an online youth ministry would be a positive supplement to their youth programs for students that cannot be consistent in their attendance due to work or school requirements, but it could not completely replace traditional youth programs in the local church.

The following question was posed to youth pastors regarding the viability of online youth ministry. Their answers follow:

o Question: Anyone doing youth ministry online? What church has the best online youth ministry presence? Would church online work for student min?

o Answers:
   ▪ William N.: No won't work....we need to assemble our self. We need interaction and communion with each other. If Jesus had our technology would he have had the last supper on line? We need to gather together not isolate ourselves.
   ▪ Jenna L.: I've never done it but I think for the average teen it would be a good idea... I'd love to have an online young adult program that does meet

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[17]Hewitt.

occasionally but bases is online because getting the time to go somewhere is very slim

- Joanna F.: If the goal of youth ministry is students growing deeper in their relationship with Christ, that requires knowing Him more and being known....which is about real face time with others. Online tools are important, but a ministry run on line with occasional gatherings leads to a feeling of autonomy and anonymity, neither of which promotes a deeper relationship with Christ. We also want students to go out into their world, not just have another reason to be on an electronic device. Online tools, like facebook, twitter, blogs, etc open a window...face time opens the door.

- Jenna L.: But you are also more likely to get an unbelieving teen to check out a Website and get connected than enter a church door. I understand the need for traditional youth groups but the online is a great new wave that I think could be really effective

- Joanna F.: I never said the face time had to be in church...in fact, most relationships for teens happen outside of youth group, but still face to face. It's a long process that costs us our time...picking them up, driving them places, buying them coffee, taking their late night calls, being there for tragedy, confronting them in sin, and being consistently...there...loving them and proving to them that Jesus is worth it. What teens want more than anything is for us to be real, not phony. You can't evaluate than through an online connection point.

- William N.: I like your comments Joanna. We need stop accommodating people. If they won't go to a church...do you really think they will check out online. I agree we need to be directly involved in their lives. People don't want to know how much you know they want to know how much you care.

- Joanna F.: Actually William we do need to accommodate people by meeting them where they are, and most of the teen generation are looking to the Internet for information and connection...but it can't only be there. It's a complex answer to be sure. If Jesus were alive today, I imagine He would not have a problem texting or blogging, all with the intent to share Himself with us in person, ultimately. The truth of Christ is unchanging, but the delivery and method changes, necessarily, with culture. As the hands and feet of Christ, we need to go where they are before they will come to us. Thanks, Dave, for such an interesting topic:)

- Jenna L.: Dave if you do find an online ministry, please let me know I am VERY interested in one :)

- Dave S.: Great feedback guys. I love the discussion. I think with the advance of technology we will need to consider online options for not only discipleship but also gatherings for worship and preaching. Online is a huge platform that we must utilize.

Currently, very few online discipleship resources are available for teens. Even

fewer sites are geared towards equipping parents to lead their own children. This area

represents an enormous opportunity for the church, both the physical church and the online church. The equipping of our parents is critical to capturing the hearts of our teenagers for God.

The Necessity of Worship Online

With or without a specific ministry for children and teens, the online church is a place where people gather to worship God. Participants of church online are personally recognized and welcomed by the lead pastor at the author's physical, broadcasting campus. Participants of the author's church online are personally recognized and welcomed by the lead pastor at the author's physical, broadcasting campus. Often, individuals are mentioned by name acknowledging Christ Fellowship's church family meeting in multiple locations around the world. Groups that are gathering perhaps in their dormitory room from college or a small town in Europe who have made themselves known to our online pastor are welcomed by name. Additionally, the online pastor greets each person that joins the online chat as the service is beginning. As the worship service starts, each person is encouraged to focus on God and His truth as they participate with their church family. People have often commented that they feel free and comfortable worshiping at church online. Some have mentioned that had it not been for church online they would not have otherwise had the opportunity to connect with God in a corporate setting.

Several months ago, a lady by the name of Shelly was worshiping online. She was a regular attendee of one of the Christ Fellowship physical campuses. This day she was struggling in several areas of her life and asked for prayer. At the end of the service, the

online pastor was having a conversation with her and she admitted that for the first time during worship she was able to completely yield to God. She wept openly during her time of worship. She had never cried before in church. She admitted to being proud, afraid, and self-conscious. That day God did something very special in her heart, and it changed her. For Shelly, worshiping online that day brought profound freedom and joy to her soul.

Giving is also an expression of worship (Pro. 3:9). At church online, the pastor shares a personal stewardship lesson before providing those online with the opportunity to participate in giving tithes and offerings. A simple "Give Online" hyperlink button is on the viewer screen. Once the participant clicks on the button, a new window opens that allows the participant to give electronically while not being disconnected from the worship experience. The author's church feels that providing biblical instruction on tithing along with opportunities to give online are necessary aspects of the traditional church that must translate to the online church as well.

Communion is another essential element of worship (1 Cor. 11:17-34). As previously mentioned, the online pastor gives those participating online advance notice that communion will be taking place as a part of worship during that service. In addition to preparing their hearts for this time of reflection and celebration, they are encouraged to gather some elements such as juice and bread so they can participate with the rest of their church family. Sometimes communion is taken along with the entire church at the physical campus and other times the online pastor will come on screen and lead those attending church online through the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Christ Fellowship has discovered that participating in communion is vital for those participating in church

online. As they are worshiping in community with others, they desire the corporate nature of celebrating communion together.

The Necessity of Discipleship Online

One key responsibility of any church is to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). The church isn't called to make converts, but rather to make disciples who follow in the way and truth of Christ. Therefore, to fulfill the Great Commission and thus the mission of the church, a robust discipleship program is critical. This is one key area that must be constantly analyzed and improved in any church, whether physical or virtual. Still, the virtual church has the potential to leverage technology to strongly enhance the learning experience.

Schools have long determined that learning can occur online. From online home schooling courses to universities, educational institutions have leveraged the Internet to help people learn and develop.[18] Several churches offer their classes online for those in their congregation who cannot attend a midweek class.[19] Learning can and does occur in an online environment. The question is how can church online leverage this experience even further. The advantage of having your congregation already connecting and growing through the Internet makes the bridge to online learning less of a hurdle. Those

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[18]I. E. Allen and J. Seaman, "Staying the Course: Online Education in the United States" (Needham: Sloan Consortium, 2008); available from http://sloanconsortium.org/ (accessed March 11, 2011).

[19]Sea Coast Church, available from http://www.seacoast.org/ (accessed March 11, 2011) and Saddleback Church; available from http://www.saddleback.com/ (accessed March 11, 2011).

participating in church online are familiar with navigating online resources and experiences.[20]

Currently the author's church is offering several classes for their church online community:

Get In the Game (Christ Fellowship's Membership Class) – Taught and facilitated through Skype[21], Livestream[22], and USTREAM[23];

Foundations (teaching the foundations of the faith) – Taught and facilitated through Skype, Mogulus, Livestream, and USTREAM;

Budget Coaching – Taught and facilitated through USTREAM;

Triumph over Suffering – Taught and facilitated through Mogulus and LiveStream;

XEE (an Evangelism Training from Evangelism Explosion) – Taught and facilitated through Mogulus and LiveStream

IMAX (Maximizing the weekend sermon) – Taught and facilitated through Mogulus and LiveStream;

Online Women's Bible Study – Taught and facilitated through Skype;

Live Like You Were Dying – Taught and facilitated through Skype.

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[20]Estes.

[21]Wikipedia, "Skype"; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skype (accessed March 5, 2011). Skype (pronounced /ˈskaɪp/) is a software application that allows users to make voice calls and chats over the Internet. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free, while calls to both traditional landline telephones and mobile phone can be made for a fee using a debit-based user account system. Skype has also become popular for its additional features which include instant messaging, file transfer, and video conferencing.

[22]Wikipedia, "Livestream"; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livestream (accessed March 5, 2011). Livestream, formerly known as Mogulus, is a live streaming video platform that allows users to view and broadcast video content using a camera and a computer through the internet. It offers a free ad-supported service and multi-tiered premium services. Livestream also offers wireless HD broadcasting in the form of a device combination called Livepack, described as "a satellite television truck in a backpack."

[23]Wikipedia, "Ustream"; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ustream.tv (accessed Marach 5, 2011). Ustream, established March 2007, is a network of diverse channels providing a platform for lifecasting and live video streaming of events online.

This past year, the author's church brought together the online pastor and the Director of Adult Ministries (for their physical campuses) and challenged them to build a new online platform that would serve both the church online as well as the rest of the Christ Fellowship church family. Understanding that all people are at a different place in their spiritual journey, a thorough discipleship ministry should be able to analyze where a person is on that journey—from pre-Christian to young in the faith to solid believer—and then direct them to the appropriate growth opportunities. Similar expectations are necessary for an online discipleship program.

This challenge came as a result of the author's church's examination of Willow Creek's *Reveal Study*. In it they describe what many churches already knew. The Reveal Study discovered that churches, especially large mega-churches, are very good at attracting the lost and helping them accept Christ, but poor at helping them go very far in their relationship with Jesus.

> The decline of the church's influence as people mature spiritually suggests that the church may have put too much emphasis on the spiritual equivalence of the diaper-changing and homework-helping stage of care. Much like parents, the church may need to shift its relationship with its maturing disciples into something different in order to maintain an appropriate level of influence and provide the support they need.[24]

Furthermore, the report clarified that typical mega-churches could help new believers take their first steps of faith in laying a good spiritual foundation but often failed at producing solid "reproducing" believers.[25]

The author's church knew that was an area of weakness that needed attention. Due to the rapid growth of the church over the years, the ability to create a healthy

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[24]Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *Reveal: Where are You?* (Barrington: Willow Creek, 2007), 55.

[25]Ibid., 21.

process that truly produced strong disciples had been lacking. Their discipleship process had some gaping holes in it. There were places that were solid but just as many places that were ineffective.

In 2008 in response to Willow Creek's *Reveal Study,* the author's church began to dismantle their discipleship strategy. Pastors, church staff, and key lay leaders were included in the deconstruction and analysis of the ministry. A series of meetings that stretched over sixteen months in partnership with other key churches across America, including Willow Creek, has resulted in a new discipleship platform that is solid and robust. Taking the lessons learned from Willow Creek's subsequent study, *Follow Me,* the author's church built a discipleship tool that not only helps new Christians take their first steps of growth through mentors and coaches, but helps those who have walked with Christ for decades continue to be challenged and grow in their faith. Those mature Christians are challenged to be constantly reproducing their faith through a variety of mentoring opportunities within the discipleship model.

In the early months as this new discipleship model was introduced, hundreds of people were beginning to discover what spiritual growth and enrichment looks like in their life. All of this was done through the lens of leveraging the online environment to help people grow, whether they were a part of a physical church campus or an online campus. Approaching the construction of a new discipleship model with this perspective allowed the church to build something once for both the virtual and physical world. The crossover is seamless as many of the tools for those at a physical campus are actually housed in a virtual setting. This enables those on the journey to further their study online throughout the week and interact with others from their class.

Christ Fellowship's Discipleship Journey is a relationally based, mentor-driven model for equipping people to grow in their relationship with God and others in their church family. It is an intentional journey of faith guided by trained mentors and supported by online resources that empower participants to impact their world with the love and message of Jesus Christ. The effectiveness of this program is evaluated by believers who are connecting, growing, and serving in their church and the surrounding communities. Ultimately, the goal is for disciples who are making disciples evidenced by the multiplication of mentors and journey groups that spawn ongoing healthy spiritual relationships.
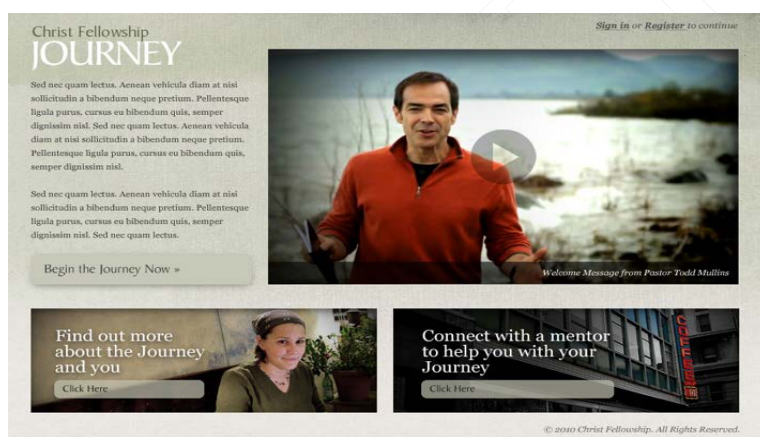
The Discipleship Journey begins with an inviting welcome supported by trained hosts who introduce guests to the Discovery Class, which serves as the starting point for the journey ahead. In this class, participants meet a mentor who will walk with them through a four-week Journey group experience. Each week progressively builds upon the next as the mentor engages with the participant around purposeful topics such as identity in Christ, spiritual disciplines, stewardship, generosity, and core beliefs/values. This happens within the online environment using video chatting and instant messaging based

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[26]Screen shot from Christ Fellowship's Journey class, an introductory, membership class modified for online use through video teaching.

on the video teaching. Additionally, there are "bridges" between the weekly online meetings. These bridges are weekly assignments that the participants complete that give them and their mentor more context in which to process what they are learning. Toward the end of the journey group, each participant completes an online assessment that evaluates their spiritual maturity level within three areas: connecting, growing, and serving.

The purpose of the assessment is three-fold: (1) To gauge where they are in their spiritual maturity; (2) To help them understand where they would be most interested in serving and; (3) To declare their commitment to be a member of the Christ Fellowship church family. The outcome of the assessment provides the participant and their mentor with the best next steps for the participant's spiritual growth. Class options, sermons to watch, and books to read that are all customized to the participant's personal spiritual journey are some of the next steps provided. As participants take the recommended steps in each area, they are able to update their assessment, and new opportunities are provided for continued learning and growth.
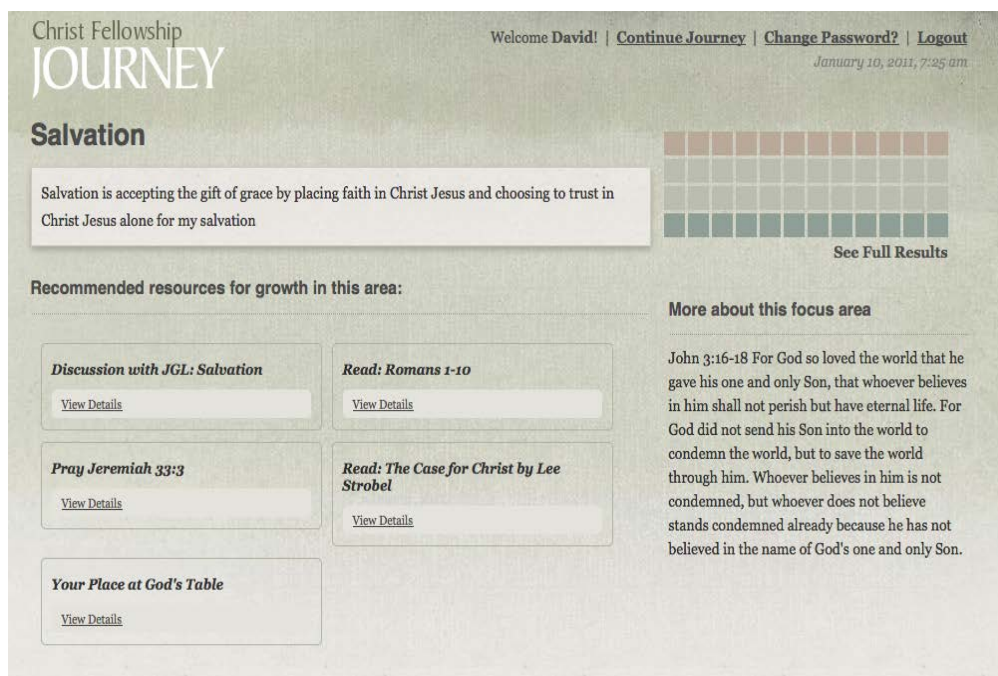
Each stage of the assessment is stored as a part of the participant's online profile, giving the online pastors and mentors great insight to each member's spiritual road map. This tool will help not only those in church online, but those in the church's physical campuses that are using the church's online classes for growth and spiritual development.

The Necessity of Fellowship Online

One of the important elements of any church body is its ability to connect with and care for one another.[28] This issue and how it is experienced at church online has been addressed earlier at length, but it is important to note again here that fellowship is essential to the church so it is equally essential for church online.

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[27]Screenshot of a sample user page accessed by a Christ Fellowship volunteer and user. It's an individualized discipleship plan offering "next steps" for each user based on the information they put into the program after viewing a series of videos and having conversations with the volunteer about both the core values of Christ Fellowship and the doctrines of the faith and where they are in their spiritual journey.

[28]Estes.

To summarize, many opportunities are available for people to connect with one another through church online. The live chat that takes place before, during, and after each service allows members to connect with each other and ask for prayer or advice. Those participating can also ask to speak with a pastor and have almost immediate access to the online pastor and counselors. Online chat hosts help to answer questions and direct people to tools that can help them on their spiritual journey.

Life Groups serve as small groups where people can gather throughout the week via video conferencing to study the Word, pray for each other, and build relationships. Those connected to Life Groups build strong ties to others in the church and are supportive of one another through times of struggle and need. This is very much like the physical church. Those who simply attend but don't connect find themselves lacking deep relationships and care in times of need. Fellowship is a building block of a healthy church.

The Necessity of Ministry Online

God made us to serve others. It is a critical part of any body of believers. The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 2:10, "It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives helping others" (Ephesians 2:10, [*Living Bible*]). This Scripture emphasizes that the lives we have are from God and for His purposes. Ages ago He planned for us to use our lives serving Him and serving others. Just as God has made everything for a purpose, we have been made to serve.

As followers of Christ we have also been saved to serve. Again the Apostle Paul writes in 2 Timothy 1:9, "It is God who saved us and chose us for his holy work..." (2 Timothy 1:9, [*Living Bible*]). That "holy work" is our ministry or service. While church online provides instruction and places for people to learn to serve, serving isn't just what happens "in" a church. The church is made up of people. The church isn't a building or a location. It is people living out their faith every day.[29] Therefore serving doesn't have to take place within the context of a church facility for it to be authentic service to God.

In fact, as discussed before, the church online with its limited needs for volunteers has the opportunity to go and be the church in the world. There are limited needs for service hosts, small group leaders, and mentors. This limitation can actual be a great asset as it can encourage more people to go into the world to serve and love. People not serving in a nursery or cleaning a church facility can dedicate that time serving in a homeless shelter in their town or caring for an elderly couple in their neighborhood. Church members not serving in a parking lot or volunteering in a choir can spend those hours each week volunteering for a crisis pregnancy center. The issue is serving. The focus is on others. This can be done within the needs and ministries of an online church or outside in the community. Both are opportunities to fulfill the calling of God on a person's life.

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[29]Estes.

The Necessity of Evangelism Online

Previously we discussed how the online church is poised to evangelize the lost. Hundreds of millions of people are online who have never heard the truth of Christ.[30] They aren't walking into our physical churches. They are online, and a church online is positioned to reach them in ways that traditional, physical churches cannot.[31] To reach people that no one is reaching, you have to do things that no one else is doing. Church online becomes an tool for evangelism to those that are unreached or hard to reach. Church online can be the church for people living in remote areas where there are no churches. Church online can reach into prisons and evangelize and disciple inmates.

Encouraging the "Net Generation" to become online evangelists and apologists could cause a tidal wave of evangelism opportunities. As these e-vangelists approach everyday life on the Internet through the lens of sharing the Gospel, their influence will have major impact for Christ. As more and more community and social networking takes place online, more opportunities emerge for the church online to have a powerful presence.

Considering Miscellaneous Programs and Ministries

Churches that are just starting out usually begin with the bare essentials for ministry. Weekend worship experiences along with some type of small group connection may be all they have in the beginning. Even a children's or youth ministry may not be a

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[30]See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm (accessed March 11, 2011).

[31]Estes.

part of the beginning focus. However, as that church expands and reaches more people, the expectation to add additional ministries naturally follows.

The church online is in its infancy stages, just learning what is critical for its effectiveness and success. As it continues to mature, there will be the demand and opportunity for auxiliary ministries to emerge. As with any church there is no right or wrong answer when it comes to auxiliary ministries. Nowhere in the Bible does it demand that a church have a children's ministry or a youth pastor. Still, the addition of these ministries is an opportunity to reach more people for Christ.

Since one key target group for church online is those with disabilities and special needs, church online would be wise to consider the full opportunities with this group of people.[32] Those who are deaf would greatly benefit from American Sign Language (ASL) enhancement housed within the online video player. In fact, when congregants surveyed from the author's online church were asked what suggestions they would make for the church's improvement, a remarkable amount of people asked for this adaptation to be made for those in need.[33] Very few online churches are offering ASL during their weekend services. The author's online church leadership has been approached several times with requests for this feature. Once again the argument emerges that if no one is reaching this people group for Christ, this becomes an opportunity for church online to meet a need and speak a language that would invite the deaf, disabled community into a church family.

Additionally, church online could easily facilitate Bible study groups that target a variety of demographic groups including men's, women's, and seniors', for example. By

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[32]Estes.

[33]See Appendix C.

simply leveraging teaching that is being used at its physical locations and training more chat room hosts to lead the online group discussions, more people could connect with each other around the truth of God's Word.

Summary

All that being said, these auxiliary ministry options are just that—options. They are not necessary or critical ministries for church online to fulfill the biblical definition of church. Churches can be the church without a men's ministry. Churches can fulfill the Great Commission without a ministry for the deaf. What they must do is preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ without compromise, hold out the hope of God, and help people become fully devoted disciples of Jesus.

As church online helps people worship God, grow in their faith, serve one another, grow in community, and share their faith, the church online is fulfilling its God-given purpose. As church online matures and is tempted to add additional ministry opportunities, it must always make sure it is accomplishing these five purposes well.

CHAPTER VI

LESSONS LEARNED FROM CHURCH ONLINE

Years of observing and leading an online church have unearthed valuable lessons. These lessons, often in the form of wrong assumptions made, have laid the groundwork for change and enhancement of the ministry through the years. Maintaining a flexible and teachable attitude has allowed for the growth and development of this controversial platform of ministry.

One of the first lessons learned was the extremity of opinions as it related to church online. One would think that every Christian would support the expansion of the Gospel, especially into an area of media that is filled with questionable material and blatant sin. The author's church leadership naively thought they would gain the support of everyone in their church for this new effort. They validated the success that other churches were experiencing. Still the controversy as to whether or not this constituted a "biblical church" was the issue of much discussion.

They learned that the contention came when defining church online as a church in itself. When considered as a supplement for those traveling or ill, there was no opposition at all. Everyone seems to embrace the benefits of helping people who may be bed-ridden or whose career forces them to travel. The contention comes when we attempt to define church online as "church" where no other physical connection to a physical location is required. Even among the author's church staff there is a variety of opinions and

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concerns that church online does not meet the standards and expectations of "biblical church."[1] Those contemplating starting an online church should not expect full support from their church membership or even church staff. Diversity of theological perspectives on the subject can and will lead to differing opinions. However, a solid understanding of the advantages and concerns can lay the best foundation for acceptance and success for the ministry.

The author found that many people's opinions about church online were not based on experiencing an online church, but from their current use of the Internet and social media. Those he surveyed over the age of 50 tended to discount the ability of church online to meet all the requirements of biblical church.[2] They contended that authentic relationship building could not happen in a virtual environment. When pressed on the issue, most in that category were not connected to any environment of social media. Those over 50 that supported the idea of church online were generally more technically connected through the Internet, had Facebook accounts, and had used online video and chat programs such as Skype.

Additionally, those under 30 were almost always on the opposite side of the equation, supporting the idea of church online. However, even still, many of those with traditional church backgrounds questioned if all the functions of the church could be experienced online. The largest group supporting the validity of church online were those under 30 from non-traditional church (or no church) backgrounds. These were the most experienced with online community and the least connected to traditional church

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[1]See Appendix B.

[2]See Appendices A and D.

expectations. Realizing these differences will help the new online church planter know his audience and where his support or conflict may arise.

Furthermore, Christ Fellowship leaders have learned that stories of people changing and growing in the Lord will impact some people's opinion of church online. When the Holy Spirit uses church online to reach someone otherwise untouched by the truth of the Gospel, questions and skepticism are drastically reduced or eliminated. People have a hard time arguing with stories of redemption and hope being shared via the church online. Still the question for most isn't, "Can the Internet be used to reach people for Christ?" The question remains, "Can a church exist in an online environment and fulfill all the functions of a biblical church?"

Throughout this process we have seen that the biggest obstacle to answering that question is the fact that church online is unproven. Online churches are new. Many are still trying to implement substantial discipleship tools much less address all the concerns around building strong community. Internet churches can cite numbers of visitors or hits to their site, but the question of spiritual growth and connection remains unqualified. It will take continued development and applicable measuring tools to validate church online in the years to come.

Church online leaders need to accept that the debate will continue for years to come. Their work online must continue as well. Only as we continue to challenge the concerns and leverage the opportunities will the legitimacy of church online be discovered.

It has also been observed that relatively few people or churches are actively discussing the issues that face church online. Most valid conversations are from churches

engaging in church online or considering starting an online church, and those numbers are still very few.[3] Without compelling dialogue, the issues and concerns will not be fully addressed. Churches engaging in church online need to openly discuss their challenges without attempting to argue or defend their position. An open dialogue may reveal the very answers to some of the questions facing church online today. Blogs and online forums could be the solution for new ideas that would make church online a more effective tool for the Kingdom of God.

One of the faulty assumptions made by the author's church was believing that the congregation for church online would be exclusive to its own campus. In other words, it was assumed that the majority of the people joining in each week online would identify themselves exclusively as members of the online campus. What the author's church came to realize is that church online became a ministry tool for people from the physical church campuses as well. People who travel connect online. People who are sick connect online. People who spend their winters near the church join online during the summer from their homes in the north. These people affiliate themselves with Christ Fellowship and not necessarily with Christ Fellowship's church online. This creates a further obstacle to creating community as temporary users don't see themselves as active participants within a body of believers.

The biggest mistake that the author's church made was attempting to launch church online without adequate staffing or support from key departments such as media or information technology (IT). The online church was launched with one part-time pastor focused on its oversight and development. Within a few months, the online church

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[3]Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, 99-100.

was being visited by thousands of people each weekend. Although all of these people did not each require contact or care, church online was not able to expand or develop with one part-time employee.

Even after designating full-time focus to church online, the online pastor was only able to take on so much. His primary focus was on executing the weekend services and caring for those who asked for pastoral care. In his spare time, he also had to make videos and interact with the IT department to troubleshoot technical issues. The limitations became quickly evident to all.

The author's church has since expanded the online team, but not to the point that allows for continued, extensive development. The obvious lesson is that something of this magnitude that is touching thousands of people every week is worthy of the proper resources. When one considers the potential of church online to reach people with the message of the Gospel and the tools for discipleship, the merit for additional funding only becomes more evident.

Among the greatest lessons learned is that the Internet is not the church any more than our buildings are the church. The church is made up of the people of God gathering together to live out the purposes of God.[4] At church online, people worship together, pray together, grow together, and take communion together. Just as no particular church does all things well, there are some things that church online does not do well. Finding a balance between those strengths and weaknesses is a reality for every church, whether physical or online.

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[4]Estes.

The author and his team have learned that Isaiah 55:11 is as valid on the Internet as it is in person: "So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11 [*New King James Version*]).

As the Word of God has been proclaimed online, it is accomplishing great things for God. It is not returning void. It is drawing people to Christ.

Church online removes barriers.[5] It removes barriers for people who are anxious about coming into a physical church building, allowing them to observe online before visiting in person. It removes barriers such as limited seating and parking spaces. Church online removes the barriers of proximity or location. People living in remote places around the world can participate in a church halfway around the world. Church online removes the barrier of time as multiple services around the clock can help people experience deeper fellowship with God and one another. And finally, church online removes the barriers for the disabled. Countless men and women who have no way to leave their homes are invited to participate in a loving church family. They can finally belong and take part in biblical community.

Some barriers do still exist though. Church online has its drawbacks as well as its benefits. Some functions of the church are more difficult to execute in a virtual environment. Of course it is those functions of baptism, communion, and care that provide the greatest argument against the validity of church online. Just as those who defend church online cannot ignore the concerns, so those who oppose church online cannot ignore its benefits.

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[5]Estes.

Research indicates that millions of people are living life online.[6] They are shopping online, banking online, and building friendships online. In 2010, Generation "Y" (born between January 1977 and December 1997)[7] outnumbered the Baby Boomer generation,[8] and 96% of them belong to a social network.[9] Social media is capturing the heart of this generation. In fact, social media has overtaken pornography as the number one activity online.[10] Also, according to a survey conducted by Match.com, "17 percent of those who married in the past three years met online, making it the third-most-frequent method of introduction, behind meeting through a mutual acquaintance or at work or school."[11] Relationships are being fostered online.

Facebook is the largest online social media tool with more than 500 million active users. On their own Website, Facebook reports that 50% of those users log on to Facebook in any given day. Over the course of a month, people spend more than 700 billion minutes on Facebook.[12] Just a few years ago, Facebook was seen as a Web-based social network that people would use sporadically to try and connect with old or new

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[6]See http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm, (accessed March 11, 2011).

[7]Tapscott, 16.

[8]US Census Bureau: International Data Base; available from http://sasweb.ssd.census.gov/idb/worldpopinfo.html (accessed January 20, 2011).

[9]Tally Weiss, "Kids are Heavy Social Network Users, They Don't Say No to Relevant Marketing Efforts: Online Surveys and Tips for Marketers," (July 8, 2007); available from http://www.trendsspotting.com/blog/?p=165 (accessed January 20, 2011).

[10]Belinda Goldsmith, "Porn Passed Over as Web Users Become Social," *Reuters.com,* September 16, 2008; available from http://www.reuters.com/article/2008/09/16/us-internet-book-life-idUSSP31943720080916 (accessed January 20, 2011).

[11]Ellen McCarthy, "Marriage-minded to do better online than at bars, survey claims," *Washington Post* (April 25, 2010); available from http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/23/AR2010042300014.html (accessed March 1, 2011).

[12]Facebook.com, [web page], http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics (accessed January 20, 2011).

friends. Today Facebook has become integrated into every facet of life. It's no longer a tool to help people connect; it is the way people connect. People schedule parties and gatherings, carry on conversations with friends, and display real-time updates regarding their life and activities.

Understanding this phenomenon, the church online can push past the doubters of online community and leverage the technology to build healthy spiritual relationships online. The author's church has a fan page on Facebook with more than a million hits each month. That is more than one million unique times that users connected with the church and their message of hope and grace within a 30-day period. That arguably makes it the broadest platform at Christ Fellowship's disposal to reach people with the love and message of Jesus Christ.

Innovations the Church Can Use to Enhance Ministry Online

One church previously mentioned that has leveraged technology for the Kingdom of God is Life Church in Edmond, Oklahoma (Lifechurch.tv). Life Church was one of the very first churches to introduce an online church and provide it with staff and pastors.[13] They have even established a virtual church in Second Life, a virtual world where users, called Residents, interact with each other through avatars. Residents socialize, meet other residents, participate in group activities, and even go to church—all in an online environment.[14]

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[13]Surratt, Ligon, and Bird, 147.

[14]Estes.

In addition to launching online worship environments, Life Church has dedicated significant resources in the areas of finances and staffing to create a "Digerati Team." Digerati are the elite of the computer industry and online environments.[15] Believing in the importance of technology and creating online environments, Life Church continues to build and support tools that help people use technology to connect with God and with one another.

YouVersion is a free online Bible application that allows users to access the Bible in twenty-two different languages. Free access via mobile devices ensures that users can access the Word of God anytime and anywhere. Life Church launched YouVersion with the desire to get the Word of God into people's hands. Since most people do not carry a Bible with them throughout the day but do carry their phones or have access to their computers, YouVersion equips believers with the priceless resource of God's Word. Other features on YouVersion allow for churches to upload their sermon notes and take instant surveys during sermons, as well as provide a link for online giving to the local church. Amazingly, Life Church offers this to the body of Christ at no cost.

The spirit of technological advancement and generosity continues at Life Church with OPEN, a resource of magnanimous proportions for the church today. The OPEN Website is available to all denominations of churches and all pastors and Christian ministries worldwide. The site gives access to and usage of an entire library of LifeChurch.tv creative materials at absolutely no charge. Sermons, videos, banners, and creative marketing materials are available for free download. This resource is priceless for the church that has no creative team or graphics department. Churches with no video

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[15]*The Merriam-Webster's Dictionary;* available from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/digerati, s.v. "digerati," (accessed March 11, 2011).

department can leverage these materials to more effectively communicate the message of Christ.

Life Church's Digerati team also created the Web tool ChurchMetrics.com. ChurchMetrics.com is a free Web-based application that helps churches monitor growth in attendance and giving. The structure is set up for churches with multiple campuses as well, allowing leaders to make wiser decisions based upon accurate information. Again, by taking what they have created technically for their own church, Life Church advances the Kingdom of God by giving their technology away free of charge.

BabelWith.me is one of Life Church's latest technological feats. BabelWith.me is an online chat tool that allows users to communication with anyone, anywhere, in up to forty-five different languages. BabelWith.me allows the user to type in their own language and read the responses from the group chat in that same language by instantly translating what is entered. This application is extremely important in the world of church online as the Internet knows no geographical boundaries. Services being streamed online end up in countries that do not speak English. Since the desire is not only to show the service, but to connect with people at their point of need, BabelWith.me provides online pastors and chat hosts to facilitate connection.

All of Life Church's technological initiatives are used to empower the church to connect with God and with one another through the Internet. They see the future growth of ministry online and have positioned their church and resources to advance this opportunity. Life Church even has as one of their key mission's areas "Digital Missions." Their Website claims, "By leveraging technology, we can 'go and make disciples' in new ways. It's not about the tools we use, but about bringing Christ into people's everyday

lives, both near and far."[16] There is no church that even comes close to the intentionality of leveraging technology the way Life Church does. But shouldn't more churches follow their lead?

Embracing New Opportunities for Evangelism

Why should the church always be the late adopters? Why should the church allow the world to lead the way when it comes to using technology wisely for its cause? Usually the church world is limited by vision or resource. Yet when the vision is clearly and convincingly communicated, the resources usually follow. It is time for more churches to get ahead of the curve, to read the culture, and be able to meet culture where it is with the message of Christ.

For too long the church has expected the world to come to them. So we host "friend days" or hold seasonal concerts or programs hoping the world will walk through our doors. It is time for the church to take a new perspective on missions and reaching the lost. Remember, the message doesn't change, but our methods must.

The church understands this reality and has embraced it in the past. With the advancement of radio and television in the 1900s, churches and evangelists put their programs on the air reaching the masses. Televangelists such as Rex Hubbard and Oral Roberts were among the first to place their services on television in the 1950s. Even today, the Trinity Broadcasting Network is the third largest over-the-air station group in

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[16]Life Church, Digital Missions [web page]; available from http://www.lifechurch.tv/causes (accessed February 2, 2011).

the United States. CBS, FOX, and NBC hold the fourth, fifth, and sixth places, according to TV News Check's annual listing of the Top 30 Station Groups.[17]

Still what worked for the church in the 1960s and even the 1990s will not work as effectively today. As more and more people go online for their daily activities, the church needs to meet them where they are. Church online and other online community-building platforms are critical for the church to stay connected with their congregations and the world it is trying to reach. As church online moves forward in its development, the lines between the digital and tangible church will continue to dissipate.

As church online improves its discipleship and mentorship capabilities, more discipleship will take place, virtually opening up broader access and resources to more and more people. As church online continues to develop community-building resources, more barriers will be removed, giving people easier access to connect with God and one another. Greater community and deeper discipleship will result in stronger followers of Christ evangelizing their world. Church online will meet people where they are and strengthen their walk with Christ.

The first step for many churches will simply be the process of placing their resources online. Many churches have discipleship and connection resources available. Putting these resources online will meet people where they spend their time and much of their life. Sermons, classes, and books in an online format will bring the resources to them.

For most churches, the challenge will not be convincing their congregation to use online technology, but preparing their materials for a digital format. The author's online

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[17]TVNewsCheck.com, "Top Station Groups Stay the Course" (April 7, 2010); available from http://www.tvnewscheck.com/article/2010/04/07/41240/top-station-groups-stay-the-course (accessed February 2, 2011).

church is behind in shifting their materials for online use, much less mobile use. For the church to get on the front side of this opportunity, we must change our perspective. Communication of new classes and materials must be built for online and mobile consumption first and then retrofitted for more traditional forms of communication. As the church makes this technological shift, we will position ourselves to meet culture where it is heading.

Church online has the potential to be the greatest evangelical and discipleship tool that the church has ever seen. With millions of people living their lives connected to the Internet, an online church can meet them there. People searching for God and spiritual connection can find trained e-vangelists ready to talk and pray with them, guiding the seeker to truth in Jesus Christ. The ease with which people can connect via video conferencing and instant messaging allows for a personal touch in the process. The ability to move quickly through online resources also aids in the communication of materials. Overall, the church online is a powerful tool to reach people for Christ.

That being said, church online may not be the "ideal church." With the limitations discussed, there are still several obstacles to overcome. A virtual hug or a "smiley face" icon cannot replace a physical embrace or looking someone directly in the eye. Just as a phone conversation cannot replace being there in person, so the connection online has its limitations.

Community care is somewhat limited online. Yes, friends in an online small group can send an e-mail note or video chat to pray together when someone faces a loss or a tragedy. But unless they live in close proximity, they cannot gather together physically to offer a hug, attend a funeral service, or watch the children.

Many of us have friendships with people who live thousands of miles away. As wonderful as those friendships may be, they may not be as vibrant as those with friends that we come in contact with daily. The Christian brothers and sisters that we encounter on a daily basis more than likely are the ones we can count on in times of great need or trouble. An online church may not be able to provide the same level of care and community that one can receive from being connected to a physical group of believers.

Therefore online churches might encourage people to connect with vibrant evangelical churches within their community. Perhaps until some of the current limitations are improved, online church leaders can help members understand the benefits of becoming active in a physical evangelical church in their area. This does not minimize the validity and equality of the online church. It simply further serves the mission of the church as people are growing in healthy spiritual relationships with others, discovering their gifts and serving in the mission of the church.

The author's online church has offered this suggestion on several occasions. As those attending make their identity and location known, the online pastor has encouraged them to also attend churches in their area if and when possible.

That being said, there are millions of people who cannot connect to a physical church in a local community. As stated, many people live in remote locations where no evangelical church exists. Some live in countries where the Gospel is not preached. Others live where it is illegal to worship Christ. For these people, the church online is a lifeline to biblical community and discipleship. Their spiritual growth and encouragement would not be nearly as enriched without the ministry of church online.

Additionally, there are millions of people who are physically unable to leave their homes due to age or physical handicaps. Their conditions and illnesses prevent them from joining other believers in the local church. The online church is a needed source of encouragement and Christian community.

Simply because theologians or church leaders cannot agree about the distribution of the sacraments does not disqualify the validity of church online. Simply because online care or community may not be as rewarding as physical care or community does not mean it has no place within the church today. Perhaps those whose only connection with church is through the Internet should be the ones to answer the question, "Is church online really the church?"

When Jesus would teach his followers, He often used symbols and images of everyday life to build a virtual picture in the minds of His listeners. Sometimes He would use images that were "other worldly" to captivate the listeners' attention and teach them about a great reality, such as the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31. The world that Jesus illustrated for us in Scripture is actually more real and significant than the reality we experience here in our own lives. Jesus explained this world as the Kingdom of God. It is the reality for which we as followers of Christ strive and fervently seek to experience.

Today, many people spend time in both the virtual and physical worlds, treating the connections and relationships equally. Although some prefer one over the other, a combination of both has become the norm for most. Yet both the physical and virtual realities pale in comparison to the reality of God's Kingdom. His Kingdom, His reality, surpasses all other realities and all other worlds.

Conclusion

Survey results and years of conversations reveal that there are passionate and varied perspectives regarding the validity of church online. However, we must remember that church online is still in its infancy. Online churches are just beginning to grapple with the difficult issues they face. It is the author's position that the online church will continue to grow and mature just as a physical church grows and develops through the years.

Rather than attacking the validity of church online, the church at large needs to embrace and encourage its mission. It is through this new medium that millions will be reached for Christ that would never be reached through traditional means. Countless millions will grow spiritually and become students of the Word that may not have otherwise. As the physical church partners with church online, greater accomplishments for the cause of Christ will be realized. Together, the physical and virtual church can truly fulfill the Great Commission and go into all the world and make disciples. What will emerge will not look like the church as we know it today. It will not perfectly align with the church we can see and touch at this moment in history. It will defy traditionalist views. But through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, it will be used by God to reach the world with the message of the Gospel.

Church online is here to stay. Its presence and impact is ever-increasing. It will continue to grow and influence more people as more of life takes place online. As technology advances, new opportunities will emerge for the online church that will only expand its ability to meet the spiritual needs of the people it reaches. Technology that is

commonplace today was not even in the realm of possibility just a few years ago.[18] What new technology is currently being created that will revolutionize the future? What technology is yet to be dreamed into existence?

In 1800, who would have thought that flying a plane on a transatlantic flight would ever be a possibility, much less a daily occurrence? In 1900, who would have dreamed of sending man into outer space and landing on the moon? In 2020, who fully knows what technological advances we will be using in our everyday life? These advances are coming. The question is, "Will the church be on the back side of this progress?" Instead of being a late adopter, church online positions the church to seize these future developments to advance the Kingdom of Heaven.

Still the question remains, "Is church online biblical church?" Absolutely. The church online addresses each of the five purposes of the church. Does it still have areas to develop and expand? Absolutely. But those underdeveloped areas are not justifications to eliminate or invalidate church online. The Bible does not impose only one type of format or approach for doing church. Even though most Christians believe that their expression of church is the best or most biblically accurate, the Bible doesn't say that a traditional church is better than a contemporary church, a contemporary church better than one being held on the Internet. The Bible communicates what must take place within a body of believers, which includes worship, spiritual discipleship, service, evangelism, and fellowship. Fellowship or *koinonia* can take place within an online biblical community. It currently takes place online in biblical communities every day. Care and support are given and received. Prayers are prayed. Tears are shed.

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[18]Estes.

To argue that face-to-face connection is the only valid form of spiritual relationship is to argue that our spiritual connection with God, not yet face-to-face, is lacking or somehow "less real." The Spirit of God transcends space and distance. He is able to usher His presence into the lives of those who earnestly seek Him. One day in heaven our connection with our Creator will be greatly enhanced. We will see Him face-to-face. But until then, our connection with God is every bit as real and profound, or He would change the way we interact with Him because He wants to connect intimately with His children.

The same is true with the body of believers. There is a spiritual connection that comes through the bonds of Christ. His shed blood unites His family throughout the earth. The church online is bound together as well. Yes, there are benefits of face-to-face care and connection that cannot occur in a virtual setting, but the same Spirit of God can unite the hearts and lives of individuals that are bound together in Christ through an online church.

Based upon the findings of this thesis the author holds the position that the church online is the church. The Internet is a tool just like our church facilities. The church is a body of believers united under the Lordship of Christ, living out the purposes of God together. As church online takes its place within the greater context of the global church, the impact for the Kingdom of God will forever expand.

APPENDIX A

Church Staff Survey

User	Age	1. I believe it is possible to receive adequate Biblical instruction and teaching online.	2. I believe it is possible to worship effectively online.	3. I feel comfortable praying with others online.	4. I believe one can effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.	5. I feel that one can connect with a pastor via email or online chat when needed or desired.	6. I believe one can exercise their spiritual gifts online.	7. I believe it is possible to receive or extend to others care during personal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via small or other online social mediums.	8. I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs people need.	9. I believe that members of Christ Fellowship's online campus are engaged in community.	Worship	Sermon/Teach	Employed Pastor/Staff	Children's Min	Tithing	Baptism	Communion	Youth Ministry	Singles Ministry	Small Groups	Young Adults	Cong. Care	Life Studies (Disc Class)	Counseling	Ops to Serve	Mission Trips	Special Needs Ministry	Seniors Ministry	What is Christ Fellowship's online campus' best feature or attribute?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of Christ Fellowship's online campus?
		1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Somewhat Disagree 4=Disagree 5=No Answer Given									N=Necessary U=Unnecessary																			
User 1	30-39	2	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	5	N	N	U	U	U	N	N	U	U	N	U	U	U	U	N	N	U	U	Accessibility	Virtual Life Groups
User 2	30-39	1	2	2	2	2		2	2	3	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	U	N	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	U		
User 3	30-39	2	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	U	U	U	N	U	N	N	U	U	U		
User 4	20-29	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	Amount of times service is online weekly	
User 5	40-49	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	N		Different avenues - podcasts, iphone	Would be great if users could access in other media i.e. Blackberry
User 6	40-49	2	2	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Ability for people to worship and interact with others when not comfortable with face-to-face	None
User 7	20-29	2	2	3	3	2	2	3		3	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	U	U		U	N	N	N	N	U	U	Convenience for current members who are unable to attend in a given week	
User 8	40-49	2	5	5	5	2	3	2		3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	U	Offered at service times and opportunity to see past sermons	None
User 9	60+	2	2	5	5	2	3	4		3	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	To be able to see service if you cannot attend	
User 10	20-29	5	2	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N		N	N	N	N	N	N	N		Have children's programs online as well
User 11	30-39	2	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	U	Live teaching and worship, extra time to interact, and global impact	Focused community gatherings, additional support staff, more live interaction during broadcast from City Place
User 12	30-39	2	3	2	3	5	2	2	4	2				N	N			N				N					Weekend services	Offer personal growth assessment and opportunities for development
User 13	20-29	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Chatting with online pastor and seeing the service	Keep following what God wants to do online and continue to press on.
User 14	40-49	1	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	U	U	U	N	N	U	N	U	U	Providing a church experience for those with no other option	
User 15	30-39	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	U	N	N	U	N	N	N	U	U	U	N	N	U	U	N	U	The development of an authentic community	Continued technical development and production of sacraments online somehow
User 16	60+	3	3	2	3	5	3	3	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		N		N	N					Pastor David's cameos are great and chats are effective in drawing audience in. Both David and Rachel do a great job in engaging the audience.	A "demo" monitor in the Life Center showing live online (no volume). Many people will see it for the first time.
User 17	60+	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	2	3	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Introduction to Christ and Christ Fellowship	More encouragement to attend and get connected with a local church.
User 18	40-49	3	2	2	2	5	1	1	3	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Available services of worship	Student Ministry Bible studies.
User 19	50-59	2	3	2	4	5	2	2	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	Accessibility	I get questions about the start of classes online.
User 20	20-29	1	2	2	2	5	1	1	3	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	U	U	Vehicle for worldwide kingdom influence raising up devoted believers who are actively connecting, growing, and serving in their communities.	Equipping and releasing process for those participating online to impact their communities with Christ.
User 21	50-59	4	4	3	2	2	1	1	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Accessibility to all without pretense	Stay abreast of changing technology and trends
User 22	30-39	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	N	N		N		N		N		N							Live feed of sermon	More classes and access to resources
User 23	40-49	2	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	U	U	U								
User 24	40-49	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	1	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Allows people to connect and feel at home when they are out of town, especially our servicemen and servicewomen. Alternative option for people with busy lives.	If there could be a way that the chat window could be on top while viewing in full screen mode. Keep the full service version available for past services for about a month.
User 25	40-49	2	4	2	4	2	2	3	4	3	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	U	U	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	The new application and online interfaces are great.	More discipleship tools, more pastoral staff or volunteers, greater innovation and experimenting with how to develop fully-devoted followers of Christ online. Making more of an effort to connect with a healthy body of Christ in their area.
User 26	50-59	2	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	3	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	U	U	U	N	N	U	N	U	U	Opportunity to know God that people might otherwise not have.	
User 27	30-39	1	2	1	3	5	1	1	5	5	U	N	N	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	N	N		N	U		Iphone streaming	Online experience needs to be rich. May be possible with additional resources (links to online purchase of books, other videos, additional reading, chat rooms, etc.)

Age

1. I believe it is possible to receive adequate Biblical instruction and teaching online.
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3. I feel comfortable praying with others online.
4. I believe one can effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.
5. I feel that one can connect with a pastor via email or online that when needed or desired.
6. I believe one can exercise their spiritual gifts online.
7. I believe it is possible to receive or extend to others care during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via email or other online social mediums.
8. I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs people need.
9. I believe that members of Christ Fellowship's online campus are engaged in community.

Worship
Sermon/ Teach
Employed Pastor/Staff
Children's Min
Tithing
Baptism
Communion
Youth Ministry
Singles Ministry
Small Groups
Young Adults
Cong. Care
Life Studies (Disc Class)
Counseling
Ops to Serve
Mission Trips
Special Needs Ministry
Seniors Ministry

What is Christ Fellowship's online campus' best feature or attribute?

What suggestions do you have for the continued development of Christ Fellowship's online campus?

What is Christ Fellowship's online campus' best feature or attribute? (selected responses)

- Connection all over the world
- Live services and archives
- That you can hear the message even when you are on vacation.
- Improve home page to be more inviting and more interactive. Worship donations does not match up with the ritual.
- Availability
- Helps people that for any reason cannot come to the church.
- Availability to our current congregation as a supplement when out of town.
- Convenience
- Availability
- Discipleship classes
- Focus on spiritual care and community.
- This is available for those that are not mobile and that it reaches those in other parts of the world.
- Reaching out to those who can't make it to the campus.
- The foundational belief that online campus works. The commitment to technology.
- I like that it gives to everyone all over the world.
- That it is available and reaching people.
- Have sermon notes online and more experiences during the week. Only have welcome videos in the service. The current one comes on every time you enter the online experience.
- Outreach to those far.
- The ability to continue to be a part of the church family off site.
- Ability for church members to stay connected when away, opportunity for window view of the church community, (evangelism).
- Multiple times that it is available for viewing.
- I don't have enough experience with it. I've not watched anything live on it. The only online aspect I have used is the archived sermon.
- Keep posting them to the main church
- How it functions when service is happening, the worship, offering and when Dave speaks and connect to the people.
- More options for people to get to the other ministries.

What suggestions do you have for the continued development of Christ Fellowship's online campus? (selected responses)

- Keep encouraging people to belong to a community of believers.
- Interaction with online campus pastor
- Making services available online.
- Availability and quality.
- Christ Fellowship online is awesome. I love how there is a group of people who can learn and worship online. Life groups online are awesome.
- Keep focusing on life groups and create more discipleship classes. And if we do become a church that baptizes online, then we would send a local believer to do it.
- Breaking down all the different areas of the church.
- Nothing
- Have only used it twice so I'm not sure.

Legend: **1=Strongly Agree 2=Agree 3=Somewhat Disagree 4=Disagree 5=No Answer Given** — **N = Necessary U = Unnecessary**

Column key (belief statements Q1–Q9):
1. I believe it is possible to receive adequate Biblical instruction and teaching online.
2. I believe it is possible to worship effectively online.
3. I feel comfortable praying with others online.
4. I believe one can effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.
5. I feel that one can connect with a pastor via the small or online chat when needed or desired.
6. I believe one can exercise their spiritual gifts online.
7. I believe it is possible to receive or attend to others care during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via email or other online social mediums.
8. I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs people need.
9. I believe that members of Christ Fellowship's online campus are engaged in community.

User	Age	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Worship	Sermon/Teach	Employed Pastor/Staff	Children's Min	Tithing	Baptism	Communion	Youth Ministry	Singles Ministry	Small Groups	Young Adults	Cong. Care	Life Studies (Disc Chat)	Counseling	Ops to Serve	Mission Trips	Special Needs Ministry	Seniors Ministry	Best feature or attribute	Suggestion
User 61	20-29	2	2	5	5	3	2		3	2	N	N	N	U	N	N	U	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	Impacting those outside the US and Florida with the excellence of Christ Fellowship	
User 62	60+	2	2	2	3	2	2	1	2	5	N	N		N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Chat room	Include music
User 63	40-49	1	2	2	3	2	3	3	1	3		N			N	N	N												Easy entry point	Make clearer the measureables.
User 64	50-59	2	2	2	2	5	5	5	5	2																				
User 65	40-49	3	2	2	3	2	2	5	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N				
User 66	40-49	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	The availability	
User 67	30-39	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2																				
User 68	20-29	2	3	2	4	5	2	2	1	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	The ability to connect anytime and anywhere	
User 69	30-39	2	2	2	5	5	2	1	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N		I watched on vacation and voice and visual were not synced. It might have been a one-time thing but it was hard to watch with voices behind.
User 70	40-49	3	3	1	3	3	4	4	3	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Nothing stands out. It's not "state of the art."	It needs to consistently work. I have never watched without a technical interruption.
User 71	40-49	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	5	5	N	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	Availability	
User 72	50-59	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Worship/teaching followed by connection with other believers (community)	Not familiar enough with what is offered online to make a suggestion
User 73	50-59	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	N	N	N	U	N	U	U	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	Availability	
User 74	30-39	3	3	3	4	2	3	2	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	To reach those who may be unable to attend a church due to disabilities or foreign country laws, etc.	I don't know enough of what goes on to share suggestions.
User 75	60+	2	2	1	2	2	3	3	2	2	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	U	N	U	N	N	N	N	U	N	U			
User 76	20-29	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N				
User 77	30-39	3	4	2	4	3	3	2	3	4	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	U	Available to members when they are out of town	
User 78	60+	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N			The ability to watch the service online	
User 79	30-??	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	N	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U		Online sermons	Push life groups.
User 80	20-29	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U			
User 81	20-29	2	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N				
User 82	50-59	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N				Reaching out to many people far away who would like a great church experience along with opportunities to connect and serve	
User 83	40-49	1	1	2	2	2	2	4	5	5		N	N		N		N	N						N		N			Helping those who can't be at one of our physical campuses to connect with others in our church family	After service chat groups and life studies online
User 84	30-39	3	2	2	4	1	3	3	1	3	N	N	U		N	N	N	U	U		N	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	Live services	More video content and online classes
User 85	50-59	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	N	N	N	N	N	N	U	U			
User 86	20-29	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	5	N	N		N	N	N		N		N				N						
User 87	20-29	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	4	1	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Online community family. Thousands depend on online church every weekend.	One to two more staff members, new office for online studio and more online content/classes
User 88	40-49	2	3	3	3	1	3	4	3	2	N	N	U	U	N	N	N	U	U	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	U	U	The worship experience availability	
User 89	50-59	2	2	2	4	2	2	2	2	2	N	N	U	U	U	N	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	I'm amazed at how we keep perfecting what we do online! I love how proactive we are in growing this form of church. It's good! No, it's great!	Keep challenging ourselves as to how we can train our online community in faith, service, and fellowship. I just know they could use more than one service per week to develop them in their walk of faith.

APPENDIX B

Church Pastor Survey

User #	Question #1: Do you believe "church online" is an authentic expression of the biblical definition of church? Why or why not?
1	The "church" is not a building so because of that, online church should be considered an authentic expression. However, I do believe, if watching alone, the corporate element is missed and that is vital. I think virtual church is a good alternative or substitute for a season where someone can't attend a local church, but I strongly believe the corporate gathering is too important to dismiss.
2	I think that if "church online" is a communal experience, meaning that there is a group gathering to interact with the live video feed that it could be considered biblical. My reservation would be if "church online" becomes solely an individual experience preventing accountability, shared emotions, and participation in missions and outreach.
3	The church, by definition, is the body of Christ. It is people living out the biblical principles of Jesus. I believe that can happen in an online context. Through social media, there are so many relationships that are happening and so many needs that are being met through the Internet. There are needs that can be met through the entire world, because of Internet technology. So, church online can be an authentic expression of church. It happens because believers in Jesus Christ are able to meet the needs of others all over the world.
4	I believe the church is defined as a body of Christ followers gathered together in worship. As such, irrespective of their physical presence at a sanctuary, "church online" provides an opportunity for those gathered remotely to otherwise and alternatively experience communion with others around the world who are gathered to praise God, learn and instruct.
5	I believe it is an authentic expression of church just as church on television. With minimal research the following appears to support this position. The whole body of professing Christians throughout the world (1 Cor 15:9, Gal 1:13, Matt 16:18) is the church of Christ. The church to which the attributes, prerogatives, and promises appertaining to Christ's kingdom belong, is a spiritual body consisting of all true believers, i.e., the church invisible. Its perpetuity. It will continue through all ages to the end of the world. It can never be destroyed. It is an everlasting kingdom.
6	I feel that "church online" can be an authentic expression of the biblical definition of church, if done in a way that meets the needs of the people involved. It should serve as a community for people to build relationship, reach new souls, and equip people to do the work of the ministry. It should be a place that draws others into a deeper relationship with Christ and not just an avenue for someone to stop attending church because it's more convenient.

7	I don't know exactly where I stand. I could potentially be swayed to a strong opinion with a deeper study. After some short studying, it seems that a more proper definition in the New Testament for church, would be assembly or congregation. Given that there was no possibility for "church online" in the time period the Bible was written it is certainly difficult to determine its biblical validity. It most certainly is not the preferred mode of church, but doesn't necessarily mean it is un-biblical. Can you assemble the body, or congregate the body "online"? Depends who is defining the words "assembly" or "congregation." My sense is that "church online" is more of a branch of a local church, but it's difficult to think that it could be a "HEALTHY" mode of church apart from a direct connection to a physical, local gathering of believers.
8	Before experiencing it a few times on vacation and watching it when I wasn't able to get into church on a weekend due to my responsibilities, I would have said "no." After experiencing it, I saw the way that I was really a "part" of what was happening here at Christ Fellowship. As Hebrews talks about "where 2 or 3 are gathered," it seems that this is what's happening online right now. I see people that have no other option having an opportunity to be a part of Christ Fellowship, and it excites me!
9	No, doesn't build community, relationships. Doesn't encourage serving others or serving with others. Church online provides an "attendance" alternative for regular attendees when they are unable to attend, for people restricted to their homes etc. and it serves as a way to "experience" a service for people looking for a church.
10	I believe that church online is a great way to introduce people to the church and provide church experiences for people who wouldn't (or couldn't) make it to a physical church location. I believe that church online can provide a place for people to connect and belong to a certain extent. I would say that the fact that a church being online or in a physical location has no bearing on whether it fits a "biblical definition" because there are churches (online and physical) that probably don't meet that.
11	Yes, but I think there is a window for debate over whether it is so for both the universal and local definitions of church. The Epistles, themselves, are an example of the leadership and shepherding a church which existed in various, loosely connected groups in multiple geographical settings. I believe that a church exists in three layers: Essence, Function, and Form. Function and Form are often confused and seen as one level. We see church in the forms to which we are accustomed. However, function doesn't follow form but rather vice-versa. The Function of discipleship doesn't have to look like the form of Sunday School. "Church online" can retain the same biblical essence and function of a typical local, geographically-bound church but have a very different form. Forms are not dictated by Scripture but rather essence and function. An argument could even be made that participants of online modalities of church could hold stronger cultural ties (shut-ins, military etc.) to each other than those within a five-mile geographical boundary.
12	Yes, church online is just as much an authentic expression of church as a video service would be. If the Gospel is being proclaimed and the body of Christ is

	assembled, you have a service.
13	I think it is a valid expression, but incomplete in itself. "The Greek definition of church" ("ekklesia") denotes a physical gathering of called-out ones. The "Church," as God's community of the Spirit, is intended to be the physical manifestation of Jesus' body on earth. I see online communications being vital to the expansion of the Gospel and advancement of the Church. But I think one's experience of God's household would be severely truncated if their interaction with other family members was limited to the online medium. I can only do so much for the hungry, thirsty, naked and imprisoned online. I can only do so much living out the "one anothers" online. online can serve as a critical link and catalyst to our growth, obedience, service and outreach - but more often, I think it is exercise of all the senses through life-on-life ministry that proves to be the culmination of a believer's obedience.
14	Yes because as long as you're stating the scripture and presenting the word of God correctly then Glory is given to Him. I believe that there does come a grey line though as far as when it comes to coming together in person and just sharing life. Person-to-person is very important as well but none the less I don't discredit the worship that one can experience online.
15	I believe church online can be an authentic expression of church as we see it in the bible. I think the key element is whether or not 2 or more are gathered in Jesus' name. Thus, if two or more are gathered together, not electronically but physically, and join others in church online then that is an expression of church.
16	The "church" is the body of Christ interacting together for the purpose of glorifying God and growing together in faith, worship and service. How the church does that is impacted by the cultural context it finds itself in. The early days in Jerusalem where they met in the temple courtyard and in homes, the catacombs became the church in hiding during Roman persecution. During the end of the first millennium the church was preserved in monasteries...for the last two hundred years we in the West have known openness, cultural respect, freedom so our models of church are defined in that context...over the same time period persecution in Asia, Arabian Peninsula, Latin America caused the church to meet secretly where people of faith had to refrain from public expressions of worship and frequently had to isolate themselves from other believers...all of that to say that now 21st Century culture is being defined through electronic or digital relationships and in the midst of that culture the church must find its place. The digital world escapes the bounds of geography, the limitations of time to offer engagement, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship and service to those within the digital culture. I believe it is a normal adaptation to the Gospel of Jesus to find itself expressed in this new culture with this medium.
17	Yes. I really struggle with my answer, because I know that relationship and communication is greatly diminished through chat rooms. We know that so much of interaction is body language, conversing back and forth, listening to the other person, and tone in voice. But, the trade off is that thousands of people can connect to a church family globally. A pastor or leader of an online campus can still say a word of encouragement or counsel to someone tuning in that can

	change their life. Another advantage to online interaction is that some people will feel much more protected and be able to open up to a trusted Pastor/counselor. In written communication, people can sometimes be more direct, getting to the point of their issue, whereas in a face-to-face, people tend to "beat around the bush."
18	I do believe there are elements that represent a biblical definition of church. In an age where "community" is now defined by a new set of rules and standards. The vehicles used to create these communities will be changing. It's not a stretch to think that folks can worship even corporately in an online experience. Connection has become a "relative" term.
19	A church is a gathering of believers. With chat and interaction you are connecting with other believers. The bigger question for me is does the format have to be in person. Can "gathering "be done online? Yes, but I do think there is nothing that can substitute for face-to-face interaction and gathering for worship.
User #	**Question #2: What programs or practices do you think the online church must improve upon in order to be more effective?**
1	I haven't viewed enough to offer improvement points but the things I would think are important are: (1) Audio quality - making sure the listening experience is excellent. That is an important aspect of the experience. (2) Ministry/Response Partners - having enough people waiting to talk or pray with folks.
2	Providing "Meetups" for those worshiping online to gather together for corporate worship experiences. More options for interaction with the local church: membership classes, education classes and a strong life group strategy. Accountability would be on the list along with follow-up and discipleship. I'm not sure how discipleship can work effectively in an online setting.
3	Although needs can be met through the online experience, if that is the only means of communication, one-on-one discipleship or mentorship may be difficult to accomplish. Areas that need improvement: life groups, counseling, marriage growth, daily accountability. I believe that these things may happen in an online environment, but not the full potential that can happen when it is one-on-one, eye-to-eye.
4	If we desire to represent God, who is excellent, then we must reflect that same excellence in how we present the Gospel message. My experience is that church online does not have the proper audio/video resources to make it an excellent experience for the online attendee. It's not just about simply "having" audio or video, but making sure it represents the same quality and desire for excellence that we strive to achieve in the live sanctuary. If we intend for church online to be an extension of the main worship experience, more media resources should be allocated to that purpose.
5	The online church should not be a passive, casual experience used to regularly excuse ready, willing, and able believers from participating in a home church. The online church can and should be used by immobile seniors, immobile handicapped, and individuals who are hospitalized or institutionalized. All of the

	above just as those who physically attend a worship service, should come prepared to enter "The House of the Lord" for a time of worship. To perhaps over simplify the point, "It's time to put on our Sunday best and go to church." This is not said to define church attire, but said to be intentional about the worship service. online church needs to be intentional versus a web-surfing atmosphere.
6	I think two key things that hurt the online church are the worship experiences and the serving opportunities. From experience, worship online is tough. It can be very distracting because of your surroundings, but also because most of the online worship experiences have live chat areas that can be a major distraction. As for the serving aspect, I feel that it is very hard to have serving opportunities for everyone in an online community. Sure, some people can be used for counseling and praying, but for those who aren't gifted in those areas or are uncomfortable with doing that, there really isn't a place for them. Serving is a huge aspect of what church should be because you can only take in so much before you have to give out what God has put into you. Without an outlet for that people will become complacent to ministry. One final thought on this is that being online can also lead to isolation. Even with social media and chat rooms, etc., isolation can be very damaging. The Bible tells us to fellowship with others, to meet regularly, and be a part of the church community. I find that it's rather hard to do that when you don't physically meet with people. That being said, I feel that it can be done well with the right kind of atmosphere.
7	If physically able, continue to challenge the online community to be engaging locally within their physical communities and find a group of believers to congregate with if possible.
8	Continuing to be more "interactive" (life groups, connecting people to others near them geographically who are worshiping online).
9	Develop involvement with a live body of believers - local church, small group, Bible study, accountability group
10	I think that the online churches can provide more opportunities for people to connect and share their story more than "physical" churches sometimes (sharing in chat rooms, etc.). I think online church can improve on making worship (music) a higher quality and trying some different creative things with it.
11	The ordinances of communion and baptism, and possibly even corporate worship, because corporate worship doesn't feel very corporate when you are by yourself with a computer. It is also difficult to manage benevolence well, guarding against fraud.
12	The online community does community online. Chat, online applications, information, video updates, emails, fan pages, etc., are all a part of that culture. However, you can lack most of these elements and still be effective in establishing an online church and creating community.
13	Multiple user interfaces that sync up A/V. Tokbox is an attempt, but the quality is poor. More intentional efforts at real-time interactions and "off-line" follow-up through phone and/or personal connections.

14	Perhaps more interactive components. Vblogs and Responses. Tutorials prior to watching a service explaining to just let the Holy Spirit do as it wants in their home etc.
15	I don't know whether this happens or not, but I would encourage people in church online to gather into small groups wherever and whenever possible.
16	The challenge of the online church is that its membership is made of people who live in multiple cultures. A post-modern Australian thinks differently than a South African black or white. This is multiplied across the world. The method of gathering people is the common denominator as is the worship experience which they have chosen to sign in for but moving attendees/members to applying the Gospel in its transformative power to those of multiple worldviews is problematic. Building genuine community/fellowship where "flesh touches flesh" so that people become transparent moving beyond projected images of themselves requires thoughtful engagement and Holy Spirit power. In physically gathered worship, the Spirit of God manifests itself corporately, creating an environment for people to make spiritual decisions. How is that environment created in the "online" church? The mechanics of gathering people is not the challenge. Christ Fellowship already does that but developing a spiritual atmosphere and growing people in the context of multiple worldviews/cultures, will take the same spiritual hard work that it took to create the Christ Fellowship environment that we enjoy today.
17	Recruit and train more counselors and connectors to be available to those signing on and needing encouragement/counseling. The more one-on-one touch that people can receive, the better. You must move away from making the online experience feel like corporate, or feel like the communication is static or one sided. I believe people would come back and visit regularly if they were going to connect with someone else who can lead them spiritually. It comes back to the basic human need or needing relationship. Also, it would be great if there was a way that people could connect in the same chat room with the same group leader. That way, there is consistency in relationship and trust building: not having to "restart" interaction.
18	I do think we need to incorporate more opportunities for discipleship and growth. As well as incorporating more opportunities for people to serve and use their gifts. There is plenty of opportunity to grow in this new environment. As we learn more and discover the ways that people learn, that will inform our approach to online discipleship.
19	Avenues to serve, children's ministry services online, student ministry services online, live video interaction for prayer, spiritual growth classes, and connecting people who are reached with local churches in their area.
User #	**Question #3: What concerns, if any, do you personally have about doing church online?**
1	The major concern is for people to neglect the corporate/social connect that happens at an actual site instead of a virtual one. To me there is great value in believers connecting face-to-face with other believers.

2	My only concern is that church online could provide a false sense of community and not allow for strong, mature relationships to develop. Participants who attend church solely online tend to live life behind a screen in an almost false reality. I think church online is a great supplement when you cannot get to church because of various reasons such as vacation, sickness, or weather. Church online is also a non-threatening way to experience a church for the first time. Church online could be a great gateway experience for the unchurched or dechurched.
3	My only concern would be the "personal" relationship that those online can truly have. I believe it may be hard to meet the physical needs of others when you only communicate through cyberspace. Otherwise, I don't have many concerns because there are those that are being connected to the "church" that wouldn't have been
4	We must ensure that we implement the same follow-up with new and growing believers, and stress the need for discipleship, as we do for those who attend in person. That may mean more deliberate focus on the "how" relative to the program, or possibly more internal resources (staff and volunteer) dedicated to help facilitate the discipleship vision and core values we hold with such importance as a church.
5	It is not necessarily a concern, but a potential reality that the cyber-world tends to be anonymous and short-term. This is based on trends of the Internet, which continues to be in smaller and faster amounts of bit and bites: we have seen a focus on in-depth 100 page websites to stream-lined 10 page websites, to single page web-blogs, to social media, and down to 140 character instant messages.
6	My first concern would be that it would be difficult to really engage newcomers to the community. They won't always make themselves known, so it would be hard to identify them and reach out to them. Next, I would consider reaching families a big concern. Granted, most of the online community that would do church online are single people, that won't be your only demographic. Reaching the teens of families who get involved online wouldn't be that tough since the majority of them are more tech-savvy than their parents, but reaching the kids in families would be very hard. I'm not even sure how you could go about doing that.
7	There are biblical examples and commands that become very difficult to facilitate in an online community. Not that God won't move through other means, but there are many things we are to participate in with our physical bodies that are symbolic representations. I think of the command that if somebody is sick to gather the elders of the church to anoint and lay hands and pray in faith for the healing of the sick. Is God restricted to healing people only in this manner? No, but it is a command to do so. I know it's a later question, but how do we address communion and baptism? There is also a concern of people using an online community in place of a physical community because they are lazy or potentially fearful of joining a body of believers.

8	The only concern I have is the potential disconnect that comes from not being around other believers. There is a sense of built-in accountability that comes from attending a service and being seen in a service on a regular basis. That accountability has to be more intentional in the online setting. We have to help develop that in those who are attending in that format.
9	It encourages isolation, doesn't build relationships with other believers, and lacks involvement with a local body of believers in acts of service.
10	I don't have concerns. Sometimes it's easier to be distracted when you're online and not in service in person, but I have no reservations about online church.
11	How to practice baptism over the Internet.
12	The only concern is if we are making it "easier" for Christians to feel that they have met some minimum requirement. However, that applies as well to having multiple services, Saturday services and 65 minute services. We are a part of a trend, not setting the trend.
13	I have no real strong concerns. I think the Church overall is doing a good job at communicating how the online experience (except in unusual circumstances) is not intended to be a substitute for one's full-orbed involvement in a local church, but a supplement to it. The concern lies more in the area of church leadership that has not embraced it and others who even deliberately eschew it. That, I think, is ridiculous. The Church should be at the leading edge of how we harness and utilize technology in communicating the Good News. However, leadership should leverage it to direct people into consistent face-to-face fellowship when that is possible, which most of the time it is. If there's any danger, it's people choosing convenience over community. The latter takes more time and intentionality, but it is a must to a Christian's healthy spiritual formation. That said, I don't blame the Internet, social media, etc., as being the cause of "less-than-robust" forms of Christian living.
14	The biggest, as I've stated in the past, would have to be the gray line concerning where do you "draw" the line for when do people need to be in front of people? I do believe that the interactions face-to-face is an important thing.
15	A critical component of church is fellowship in the Acts 2 sense; people coming together, in person, for worship, preaching, teaching, discipleship, accountability, service, etc. We might call this "connecting." I'm not sure we can do that well electronically UNLESS we encourage/exhort those online to gather themselves together with others in house churches if you will.
16	I have the same concerns for a physical campus as I do for the online campus - people becoming real with God and each other. Willing to pay the price to risk a new lifestyle of godly living that seems counter-intuitive to success from a secular, worldly perspective. I think the disciplines developed in cross-cultural missions could be employed in figuring out how to truly connect with the online culture. In other words, the issue is not being online but rather understanding what it means to do the Gospel online.

17	People can't serve in the community. There is no opportunity to come to a community event and serve with other Christ-followers. I guess those that are leaders and self-starters can build relationships in their community and serve together. Of course, the majority who attend church in person don't get involved even when opportunities within the church arise to serve. It all depends on the desire of the individual. Another concern is that people that tend to be online "chatters" do so because they can stay isolated and protected. I would think they tend to be needy, always wanting to be ministered to, but never wanting to reach out and serve. They are a broad stereotype and could be unfair. Again, it all depends on the person.
18	I think it's important to have spiritual leadership, authority, and accountability. Creating that within an online format will take some serious intentionality.
19	People not making personal connections, people not having avenues to serve, and people staying home when they could come in person. Part of spiritual growth is being equipped and challenged by others. Impact is not as much without live interaction.
User #	**Question #4: Do you believe all five purposes (discipleship, fellowship, service, evangelism, and worship) take place effectively in the online church? Why or why not?**
1	I would say that all five purposes take place on some level but I'm skeptical that they would ever reach their fullest potential through an exclusive online experience. There's development that takes place through human physical and tangible interaction that I'm not sure you'd fully receive online (smiles, handshakes, personal greetings, etc.) Babies need physical touch from parents in order to develop and associate. Do we ever stop needing that?
2	I believe some of the purposes can take place effectively, or somewhat effectively, specifically worship, evangelism, and fellowship. However, I think it's difficult to produce evidence that discipleship and service take place effectively. Service is most often a first person experience. Discipleship is often described as doing life together. How much life can be done together solely online?
3	I believe that some of these five purposes can happen online, but not all of them. I think that fellowship can happen online. Social media is one of the main, thriving forces on the Internet today. I believe that perhaps worship can happen online. There are those honoring God with their life on a daily basis through the Internet.
4	Most of the above can occur in an alternative/non-traditional fashion online. That is, all but "service." As most would agree, service to others is a MUST relative to the life-cycle of believers. We see in the Gospel that Jesus was the perfect example of service to others. As Christ-followers, we must all follow that example, which for the online community may be difficult to effectively achieve. The only exception is online giving, which is a means for those attending online to support the various ministries that serve the local church.
5	I believe that all five purposes CAN take place effectively online, if the church is led in a direction that includes the intentional integration of all five versus

	keeping them compartmentalized.
6	Discipleship: Maybe. Just look at online colleges. There is plenty of room to do this effectively. Is it being done effectively? That I couldn't say. I've not seen many, if any, churches that even try to do discipleship online. But it can be done. Fellowship: Yes. It is very easy to see fellowship happening online. Of the few online services that I've watched live, there is always some sort of chat area where you can bounce thoughts off each other and build relationship. I think the community could be stronger in this vein though. I've been a part of a few very healthy online communities not centered around a church, and while they were initiated by a larger community, smaller community happened within. (Which could also be a bad thing because it could lead to dissemination, division, etc.). Service: No. I don't think this is done really well at all except for instances of needing online prayer partners or counselors. Many of the people who "attend" online church are not gifted in those areas and would be willing to serve, but there aren't really areas of service available to them. Evangelism: Yes. With the introduction of the Internet, as with television, the Gospel is being preaching in more areas around the world than ever. I truly believe this will lead to "every nation" hearing the Gospel and leading to the second coming of Christ. Worship: Maybe. As I stated earlier, I feel this is tough to pull off effectively. While you can broadcast a worship experience, the actual experience is not the same as it would be if you were physically in the room where the service was taking place.
7	Discipleship: Yes, one great advantage is the resources available online that people can quickly be given access to. A disadvantage is that discipleship is, in large part, absorbed through relationship. If somebody is guiding or mentoring you in the faith, it is one thing for you to explain to me how to love the sick and dying; it's another thing for you to take me with you to the nursing home and watch how the love of Christ moves in and through you. A lot of knowledge can be gained through an online experience, but side-by-side mentoring is a great concern. Fellowship: Yes, this is one thing that the Internet has capitalized on. Granted it's not tradition, there are many forms of online fellowship that may even prove to be a greater catalyst to open and honest dialogue than being in somebody's physical presence. Many people find it easier to communicate honest feelings when there isn't the fear of physical rejection. Again, a concern is what about physical touch and the affirmation of a brother or sister in Christ embracing you with a hug or ability to console in person? I would say there are great benefits to online, but also a great loss of basic human physical interaction. Service: This might be the most difficult. If you lack knowledge in how to operate computers or navigate the online world, and your skill set is outside of the world of technology, you wouldn't likely be able to do much service for the online community. However, using the web is a great way to get information out to people about service projects or needs. Evangelism: I haven't tried this myself, but I would imagine it would be easy to evangelize online to chat rooms and put together websites that are a great apologetics of the faith. Worship: Yes, to be able to live a fully surrendered life to God doesn't require anything but a

	humble heart that lives each moment in step with the Spirit. As for "attending" a service online, I would say that somebody will get as much out of an online service as they'd like, just the same as somebody attending a physical campus will get as much out of a service as they'd like. This is more an issue of the person's heart before God.
8	I think they CAN take place effectively, but they to do it intentionally. The effectiveness is based on the way the church provides the purposes. Most people who attend online are looking for something. In fact, most of them would be willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish those five purposes in their life if they are directed to do so.
9	No, evangelism and worship only
10	Discipleship- This can take place online if done effectively. You can offer a lot of discipleship tools online and you disciple someone just with a different connection that you have if it were in person. Fellowship - You can connect through chat rooms during the experience and find ways to connect with others outside of church (find people in your area, talk on the phone, meet for coffee, etc.). Just like if you attend church in person, you have to make an effort to meet people and connect with them in "fellowship." Service - There are ways to serve online and you can always serve in your community no matter where you go to church. Evangelism - It's a great way to evangelize. You are reaching people who might not step foot in a church. If you preach the Gospel, it's evangelism. Worship - Worship is a personal thing and I believe you can definitely worship God online.
11	Yes, because they are functions with variable forms. All of these can take place effectively online in creative forms. Some could argue, for example, that discipleship is more effective online because it is more conducive to a busy lifestyle.
12	Yes, however you'll definitely have different levels of commitment. Very easy for people to "opt out" when it is online.
13	To an extent. People can engage in all of these purposes, which demand action to be fully expressed. A person online can grow as a follower and disciple others; they can fellowship with others; they can find ways to "serve" somebody through words of encouragement, they can give tithes and offerings; they can share the Good News; they can worship the Lord effectively online. For me, it's not as much a matter of effectiveness as it is the extent to which they can live out these purposes. If a person is purposefully living out these marks of the Church online then they are probably finding ways to express this in "real-time, real life" ways too. However, I believe a person will miss the majority of what the Lord has for them (and others!) if their outworking of the purposes is exercised exclusively online.
14	I would say that offering online service can get these categories started but there would need to be at one point or another a face-to-face leading or "discipleship." online services may have its advantages towards reaching others, but ultimately I think that being in the community of believers in person has a special component that pleases the Lord.

15	Yes, if people are participating in groups of two or more. Discipleship implies accountability and a mentor/rabbi. I believe in general that people, and God's people in particular, were created for community/fellowship with others who are present in their lives. We can worship with others online, but corporate worship can be so powerful when others, even one another, are actually present. Our fellowship, service, and evangelism are so much more powerful when we are gathered together. Jesus sent out His disciples two by two.
16	Yes they can take place effectively. Just as there are circa 350,000 - 400,000 congregations that meet physically in North America and most of them are ineffective in living out the five purposes of the church so an online church can be ineffective too. But where the church meets is not essential to its fulfilling the five purposes but rather the vision, the creativity, the commitment to grow and learn as we do ministry will determine effectiveness.
17	Yes. Again, they are lived out in an unconventional way. But each could be fulfilled. Discipleship - people can grow spiritually and in the knowledge of the Word. Fellowship - people could build community in chat rooms. Service - people could step up to be a minister/counselor or help to build content and manage the website. People could also create community service projects right where they are. Evangelism - people can share their faith online (It's amazing how much I do read the comments of some YouTube videos or blogs.) Worship - worship is about loving God/our attitude toward God. That can be done through online interaction.
18	Yes I do…although they each look different from the methods and vehicles used up to now.
19	Discipleship - yes with online classes and growth opportunities, but will be limited somewhat without the live interaction. Fellowship - in a limited way thru chat, could improve as technology moves toward more live video communication. Service - in a limited way, could serve others online by helping with prayer requests, etc. but not as much as in person. We are Jesus' hands and feet - visible hands and feet. Evangelism - yes through chat, video presentations of the Gospel, and opportunities for people to accept Christ at the end of a service.
User #	**Question #5: What, if any, theological/doctrinal concerns do you have about performing sacraments of the church (communion/baptism) online?**
1	I would just be concerned that without any training, people generally revert to their own memory or ideas of how they think or feel it should happen. Without specific direction it could drift and then you'd have people explaining and/or performing the sacraments incorrectly.
2	Again, I think church online cannot provide a long-term substitute to the gathering of believers in one specific place. Communion is meant to be a communal experience, and if groups are interacting with church online I think communion and baptism can be experienced the same as if in the local church. Baptism is intended to be a public demonstration of faith and I think the Internet provides multiple ways to make that public.

3	I think that communion could be taken online. Online participants could be asked to purchase their own cracker and juice, because it is a "symbol" of Christ's blood and body. We do teach that baptism is a "symbol" as well, but we also teach the importance of being baptized. I am not sure if someone can baptize themselves. Because baptism is done through immersion it may be difficult to find a place that is appropriate for "total immersion" on your own.
4	I am not aware of any theological reasons or biblical foundation for NOT finding creative ways to perform these sacraments online. That being said, it bears to reason that ensuring the integrity of the sacraments (consistent with church doctrine) is paramount with respect to how they are administered.
5	Church online is outside of the box of the typical bricks and mortar church and if we can accept that individuals come fully prepared to attend a worship service, then we must be outside of the box regarding the implementation of the sacraments.
6	I have no problems showing these practices online, but I think that it is near impossible to get participation from people in an online setting, especially with baptism. Communion could be easier, but without prepping the online congregation beforehand, they couldn't actively participate.
7	My first thought is that neither of these could be performed by the biblical examples we've been given, but that is not to say you couldn't perform them within the intent in which the Bible teaches their symbolism. My ideas on these thoughts are very loosely held at this point and not well studied, but here are my initial thoughts on this issue. It is to the best of my knowledge that ordinances are not restricted to an office of the church having to administer the them. So, potentially people could each in their separate locations physically partake together at the same time with elements they've purchased. I also am wondering, being that the elements are symbolic, could people potentially take an "online" bread and cup? I would have to think through that more, but initially my thought is it may be within the biblical intent and an option. Baptism is tougher. Again, it is symbolic, but it's awfully difficult to baptize yourself. I think there are several things symbolic in baptism, but none off the top of my head that lead me to believe that somebody couldn't be baptized by another believer in their foreign location. It would become stickier if they are the sole believer in their area and unable to proclaim their faith through the physical example of baptism. My greater question is, if you're able to be baptized by other believers in your area, why are you not part of their congregation? Again, could somebody be symbolically baptized online? I don't know my thoughts initially, but I would leave it open for discussion.
8	This is one area I have no concern at all. I don't believe there is anything wrong with performing these sacraments in any setting. The important part isn't the location or surrounding circumstances. The important thing is the heart of the believer and the understanding of the significance of the specific sacrament.
9	A pastor performs the sacraments in the leadership of a congregation so it would be difficult to participate when a person is at home -- particularly baptism. Communion is possible, but the original involved passing the cup for all to drink from and by doing so bonded people together and united their thinking. The

	bonding aspect is lost online.
10	None. You can definitely do communion online. Obviously baptism would happen in person, but it can be shared with your online community (web cam, video it and post it, etc.).
11	No theological or doctrinal concerns, only practical ones. For example, I think a biblical baptism would be someone immersing himself or herself underwater but it would need to be aired online so that it was adequately public profession of faith. This is a symbol, and to some degree, a form of a mandated function. The Catholic church is an example of elevating forms of functions above the functions themselves. We call it ritual.
12	I have no real issues with communion. Baptism is going to require a meeting that is not online. It is also good to have some water.
13	I believe "sacraments" are more events - divine intersections between God and humanity as a result of our obedience to God's Word. A "sacramental event" can transcend time and space. However, the innate physicality of the practices, which necessitates interaction, makes me skeptical about performing sacraments online. For example, a person can't baptize him or herself. However, I think it would be great to stream baptisms so friends, family, etc. can witness this "showing of the Gospel." I believe a person can participate from a distance in communion if for some reason they can't be present to share in the breaking of bread. However, I think this misses Jesus' and Paul's intent in showing us how to "remember" together and love one another in this sacrament. These primary sacraments of the Church are communal by nature, and there are limitations to our experience and expression of the sacraments through the online world. That said, we can't ignore it and need to explore creative ways we can leverage technology as we participate in God's mission in the world.
14	I think it's fine.
15	I'm sorry for coming back to this again, but if two or more are "physically" gathered in Jesus' name and join others in church online, or not, I think the sacraments are their privilege to celebrate. The sacraments are designed for community/corporate and public celebration; especially baptism.
16	The sacraments are meant to be a means of grace to us and they can be administered in different ways. The online congregation can be notified electronically that communion will be celebrated and instructed to have bread and wine (or culturally appropriate substitute like in the mountains of Papa New Guinea we used water and taro, a local staple just as bread and wine were the local staples in Jesus' day). They can join in with the online service wherever they are or special communion services could be scheduled by the online pastor. Baptism can be accomplished by building networks of believers who might partner with the church to administer communion and/or missional teams might travel to various parts of the online campus each year and baptize people. The question for the church is will we be flexible in how baptism is administered because of local conditions?

17	Again, this is VERY unconventional, but it reminds me of Martin Luther, who was challenging years of tradition in the Catholic church. If you get to the very root of the sacraments, it's an issue of the heart. There are MANY instances in the Bible, David, Peter, Jesus, and others expressed worship and biblical obedience in different ways that were questioned.
18	I'm not sure about either of these. However, I do think they are important.
19	Communion - I believe this can be done with proper online explanation up front. Baptism - I do not see how this could happen online. It is a public testimony that needs to be done live in front of others.

APPENDIX C

Church Online Congregational Survey

Question #	Question Detail
1	I am satisfied with the Biblical instruction and teaching I receive online.
2	I am satisfied with the Biblical instruction and teaching I receive online.
3	I am satisfied with the Biblical instruction and teaching I receive online.
4	I am satisfied with the Biblical instruction and teaching I receive online.
5	I worship effectively online.
6	I worship effectively online.
7	I worship effectively online.
8	I worship effectively online.
9	I feel comfortable praying with others online.
10	I feel comfortable praying with others online.
11	I feel comfortable praying with others online.
12	I feel comfortable praying with others online.
13	I feel I effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.
14	I feel I effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.
15	I feel I effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.
16	I feel I effectively receive the sacraments of the church (Communion) online.
17	I feel that I can connect with a pastor via email or online chat when needed or desired.
18	I feel that I can connect with a pastor via email or online chat when needed or desired.
19	I feel that I can connect with a pastor via email or online chat when needed or desired.
20	I feel that I can connect with a pastor via email or online chat when needed or desired.
21	I feel I can exercise my spiritual gifts online.
22	I feel I can exercise my spiritual gifts online.
23	I feel I can exercise my spiritual gifts online.
24	I feel I can exercise my spiritual gifts online.
25	I feel I can receive or extend to others care during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via email or other online social mediums.
26	I feel I can receive or extend to others care during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via email or other online social mediums.
27	I feel I can receive or extend to others care during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via email or other online social mediums.
28	I feel I can receive or extend to others care during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) via email or other online social mediums.
29	I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs my family and I need.
30	I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs my family and I need.
31	I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs my family and I need.
32	I believe Christ Fellowship's online campus offers the programs my family and I need.
33	I feel I am part of a community by being a member of Christ Fellowship's online campus.
34	I feel I am part of a community by being a member of Christ Fellowship's online campus.
35	I feel I am part of a community by being a member of Christ Fellowship's online campus.
36	I feel I am part of a community by being a member of Christ Fellowship's online campus.

Answers

#	Response
1	Agree
2	Somewhat Agree
3	Somewhat Disagree
4	Disagree

Table columns (reading top to bottom, rotated landscape):
Respondent ID | What Country are you from? | How often do you worship with us? | Age Range | Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than on an additional campuses or at another traditional church? | What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus? | What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus? | (numeric response columns 1–36)

Respondent ID	Country	How often worship	Age Range	Why do you participate online	Best feature/attribute	Suggestions
1270123527K	USA		21-30			
1270121414S	India	Frequently	21-30			
1270121402H	USA	Frequently	31-40	If I can't make it to a service, I follow online so that I have attended a service each week.	Convenience	I don't have any suggestions. Online church is first. Thanks
1270124200	USA	Infrequently	31-60	The online service was referred to me by a clear friend.	Coach's sermon	I know others enjoy the music, but I do not.
1270124106	USA	Infrequently	61+	I appreciate the message, music, and convenience.	Message, music, convenience	Make sure that the audio is clear during high energy music. Sometimes the audio overdrives or saturates the small speakers and headphones. (I use professional broadcast quality headphones.)
1270124079	UK	Infrequently	31-40	I am away from home and traveling a lot so I can't go to a regular church.	Solid, biblical teaching	
1270124035	USA	Infrequently	61+	Illness and snow-covered roads often prevent me from going to my own church.	Messages, music	
1270123997	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	If one of the children is sick, we can watch and feel like we are not missing our church.	Availability, convenience	We have been watching church online quite regularly, and I have seen some great changes. The online services provide everything we need. We are seriously considering joining an online life group as we can have our kids with us and not feel like we are causing a disruption for others.
1270123921	USA	Infrequently	31-60	My work schedule frequently prevents me from attending a physical campus.	Availability, high quality	
1270123901	USA, Broward County	Frequently	31-40	We have visited the Gardens campus a number of times, but it is too far to attend on a regular basis.	Watching the service "live"	We really enjoy the service when we watch online, and it is great to view the archived past services.
1270220016	Guatemala	Infrequently	15-30	I watch when I am away from home. I did not get to church today because of home trials I'm having.	The multimedia, interactive experience	It is great.
1270201507	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30	On some Sundays, I can't make it to church.	Easy access	Keep it up! It's a great tool!
1270193115	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60	We attend online if we are out of town or if our kids are sick or participating in sports.	Sermons	
1270182715	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	We use church online if we are ill so we don't miss out on the service.	Easy access	I would like to see a separate link for children so that house churches could provide something for the children to watch in a different room. Perhaps there could also be a good feature for teens who are Christians, but their parents won't take them to church.
1270182331	Puerto Rico	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60			
1270181102	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I am a past member of CF. I moved to Ohio but enjoy staying connected.	Feeling part of something so much bigger than anything we can imagine	
1270180764	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60	My work schedule occasionally prevents me from attending CF. I can view it at work.	Convenience, being able to see what my family saw.	
1270179843	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30	I do not live near a physical campus.	Everything	Continue doing great things.
1270179836	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I am looking for the right church.	Sermons	

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Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
892141931			41-50	We moved away from Palm Beach County three years ago. We have visited a few churches in our local area, however, I can't make the change. CF is responsible for introducing me to my personal relationship with Christ Jesus. With the Internet, I feel as if I am there every week. I just can't let go.	Sermons; live, complete service	Maybe the highlight sheet could be scanned and accessed in the same way the sermon notes are
892141923			41-50	Live in California	Streaming, live video	
892141821			31-40	I appreciate the convenience of the online services.	Online pricing	Everything is wonderful.
892141538			51-60	I suffer from a chemical imbalance that causes depression. Sometimes I can have the house, sometimes I can't.	Worship without leaving home	
892141532			51-60	I have a family member who is unable to go to church. Thank you for bringing the church to us.	Everything	
892141480			41-50	I appreciate the convenience of the online church when I am unable to attend a campus.	Ease of use, convenience of the online streaming	Add an online lesson for kids
892141449			41-50			
892139867			31-40	I sometimes watch an Sunday after attending Saturday night.	Access to the entire service	Keep up the good work. Perhaps you could post the weekly bulletin in an additional to the sermon notes.
892139754			41-50			
892139604			41-50			
892139514			51-60	We participate when we leave town during the summer months.		
892139175			61+	I am 85. I feel like I know the two slowly and am in the way of others at the service when I attend.	Sermons, the one and the music	My only suggestion is for you to keep following the Spirit of God. Also, the pastors need to warn the people of the signs of our time. The end times are coming very fast, and people are not ready. Even those who profess His name do not all possess holiness, which the Bible declares we must have. God help us all.
892139107	USA, NC		51-60	We relocated for a job.	Skype chat following the service	Encourage more small group interaction.
892031177			31-40	My son attends a different church and on the Sunday I work I go with him.	Wonderful fellowship, exchange of thoughts, feeling of really knowing the online family	Pastor David is awesome as are all the members of the technology team. Thank you all for blessing our lives.
893027577			41-50			I loved the 25th anniversary message tonight, but unfortunately the camera person missed all of the cardboard ministry signs. He had the camera on the worship leader instead. I would have loved to have seen the people and where they had been.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
89217/7316			41-50	I have no transportation. I prefer a non-denominational Christian church so I attend CF online.	Sermons, messages that are sent, the sincerity of the pastor, discipline the service provide	I would like to have more sermons and more messages online.
89217/7242			31-40			
89217/7139						
89217/1874			41-50	I attend a physical campus also. I use the online service for convenience when I am traveling.	Awesome pastor, convenience	
89217/1671	USA, FL		41-50	I'd much rather worship on campus. CF online is merely an option I'll turn to when I'm out of town or otherwise unable to get to a campus.	Accessibility	Allow an "audio only" option for continuity of message even with a slow Internet connection.
89216/5774			61+	My husband is ill. He is not saved and does not want to be saved.	Convenience	I don't have any suggestions at this time, but I am thankful that you have sponsored an online study. I do, however, have a problem attending the study all the time.
89216/3278			61+	I live in another state. I listen while I am at work or when I am unable to go to my church.		I love the music and just the sermon with the archives.
89216/4620	USA, FL		15-20	I visit online when I am not able to participate at a regular campus that weekend.	Full screen	The broadcast audio is not always great. Sometimes we are missing a vital part of worship, such as a video or greatly is from the Royal Palm campus because we can't hear it.
89216/4100			31-60	I typically attend church services at the Palm Beach campus unless I am not feeling well.	Spirit, music	The biggest weakness is the lack of programs for women and single seniors. Everything is based on children and families. This creates a feeling of alienation. For that reason, I am considering another church with these programs.
89216/4033			41-50			
89216/3759						
89216/3312						
89216/2998						
89216/2568			15-20 / 41-50	My kids call the online church "Tijuana church." It's just wonderful to stay home and be together one morning a week. It's not only time when we aren't rushing out the door to go somewhere.	Not sure	
89215/4437			61+	I am on vacation this weekend.	Convenience	I see you have [Please support. I would like BlackBerry access also.
89215/3792			51-60	We go to another church "Tijuana church."	All good, music is enjoyed	Make sure some of the bad players are on the screen so we can get acquainted.
89214/6974	USA, TX		61+	We go to another traditional church most of the time after we participate online with you.		
89214/3996			31-40			
89214/3384			51-60			I would like to see diversity in the music. I appreciate the format, but I wish we had a few of the oldies and a few of the not so oldies. I loved the songs of five years ago. Thank you for your faith and hard work.
89214/3149			61+			

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Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
97289319			21-30	I participate online and at a traditional campus, but sometimes I feel like worshing in the comfort of my home.	I think it is great the way it is.	
97293937	USA		51-60	I do regularly attend the FBG Campus. There are times it's not possible to get there as the online service is a marvelous way to not miss a thing.	Convenience of information	
97289317					Overcome obstacles from a pastor	
97283669			41-30	I am a caregiver of someone who had an accident. Previously, I attended CF regularly	Participation in the entire service	
97243302			61+	I attend online when time is an issue.	Live streaming, worshiping with others	Give added value by creating a social media site, www.myig.com.
97242864			51-40			
97242363			41-30	I attend online because of poor health and the inability to drive.		Keep up the good job spreading the Word of God so we can pass it on.
97242345			61+	I have moved out of the area and have not found a church that I feel builds my faith like CF does.	Feels as if I am at the FBG campus	There could possibly be more online activities for those who are not able join a life group in person.
97242248			21-30	I love the sermon and songs and, of course, Pastor Tom and Todd and John Maxwell.	Genuine care, sermons	
97162522			51-60	We live in another country.		
97162447			41-30			
97143303			61+	I do not live near your church. James Duvall is my son. I appreciate God's gift of this ministry so I can see him serve the Lord.	Convenience	
97144926			51-60			
97141631	USA, Ohio		61+			
97143489			21-30, 41-50			
96133598			51-60	I am taking care of my father and don't get out much. With the online church, I have a family for prayer and sharing.	Online family; fellowship	Could you get us some of your other teachers' classes from the other campuses and videotape them? We need more video from other campuses posted online.
97219090			21-30	I love the music. I like the praise/worship questions. I feel at home with CF.		
97218709			31-40	I'm in Ohio, but part of my heart will always be at CF. I do attend a traditional church also.	Connection with my FL family	
97185659	USA, Ohio		41-50	I participate only when I can't get in to church.	Songs, worship, notes for studying at a later time	
92177770			51-60	I cannot go to a campus for some reason. I do not spend enough time with the Lord.		
97217246	USA, FL		61+	I only attend online when I can't get in church.		Start an online Bible study to be held at various times each week.

(The right-hand portion of the table contains numeric coded columns numbered 1 through 36 with scattered single-digit values (1, 2, 3); these values are too faint to be transcribed reliably.)

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
897316159			61+	My grandaughter joined your church, and I went online to see that she was joining a church that was Christ-centered and Bible based. My leg had been injured and I was unable to attend my own church. Now I look forward to the Sunday online service and love sharing with my grandaughter each Sunday about the sermon.	You are doing a great job.	
897316128			51-60	The goal of CF always strengthens me without confining me or limiting me to a congregation.	Participation in	I would like to see an online Bible studies where people use each other.
			41-60		a great church without spirituality, full worship, including the sacraments	
					Intimacy, without condemnation and manipulation	
897313816			51-60	I cannot attend because of the distance	Convenience	
897315983			41-50	I only use the online service when I am going to be late to Royal Palm.		
897313154			41-50			
897315659			13-20			
897315333			41-50			
897315179			41-50	I do attend one of the traditional campuses when I am.	Full service, feeling of being present	
897336992 Canada			41-50	I attend a traditional church because it is important to be part of a family and to serve physically, but I love the message, people, music, and family of CF.	Availability	I would like to have more online courses, such as GHG 301-401, Bible studies, and like groups. As for as I know there is only one, which happens to meet at a time that doesn't work for me. Also, it was not easy to find out about the group. I would like to have opportunities to connect with others. Pastor David is great, but he is the only person I know from online.
897326937			41-50	I usually attend the PHG campus.	Availability, sermons, worship	
897318888			51-60	I attend another church, but when I am unable to get there, the online service is a wonderful alternative.		
897316211			31-40			
897315493			41-50			
897315882			51-60	I do attend service sometimes, but due to health issues and for convenience, I watch online.	Feeling of being there	
897310331			61+	I am not close to a campus.	Appeal	
897310309 USA, Oak Ridge, TN			41-50	I was introduced to your online service through a former member.		
897310317			61+			
897310287			41-50	I watch online because I can.		
897290151			51-60			
897290928			61+			

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in the traditional church?	What is the best feature or subject of Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
126161338	USA	Infrequently	31-40	I am in Texas and am a part of the worship team at my church. I enjoy joining your worship services online so that I can just sit back and worship the God we serve and not worry about being a part of leading worship. My time on Saturday evenings helps me serve others more effectively.	Live worship	You are an incredible job
126161620	USA	Frequently	41-50			
126163660	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50			
126163371	USA Marion County	Frequently	51-60	I attend online services on Saturday nights.	Sermons	Keep doing what you are doing...Great job.
126181414	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30			
126161878	USA	Frequently	41-50	I lived in West Palm last summer. CF is the best church I ever attended. I watch online every week and plan Saturday trips to West Palm to attend every other month.	Repeat teaching	The quality and video streaming is not as good as Calvary's or Northpoint's.
126163737	USA	Frequently	31-40	I am a single mom of three kids.	Can watch more than once, can watch together	I don't have any suggestions. I love it.
126163473	USA	Frequently	51-60	Because of the health of a family member, leaving the house is difficult.	Accessibility	I would like to see more online classes and Bible studies similar to those offered at the other campuses. Can you record them and provide a host to field questions?
909647233			41-50	I actually attend a physical campus and the online service. I am thankful that the online campus feels like a seamless extension of the traditional campus. I feel that I don't miss a thing when I have to miss a traditional service.	Jesus, Pastor Hobbi, pastor allowing God to use him	I would like to see more activity where life groups are concerned. I have participated in some of the online discussions. Maybe future discussions could be grouped similarly to life groups and broken down by gender, age, etc.
897441039			61+	I have physical limitations and the online ministry is a blessing to me.	Responsiveness of the pastor	I would like to have a magazine or publication that features all of the ministries, leader, and members who serve with a blurb about each one. It should include all members of music ministries, choir members, office workers, the technical team, etc.
827317333			51-60	I live in Illinois and the campus would kill me! I since CF when I come to visit my daughter. I can't find a church in my area that sends me the same message that I get from CF.	Convenience since I cannot attend	I enjoy the music when I attend there and wish that when I watch the archives, I could still hear the music.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1265440414	USA, NY	Frequently	41-50	I live in NY and participate when I can't make it to my home church. I attend CF when I am vacationing in FL several times a year for the past 10 years.	Feeling of being connected	I would like to be able to view the entire service in the archives.
1265442341	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	My work schedule prevents me from attending a physical campus	Feeling of being there	
1265442001	USA	Frequently	61+	Attending a physical campus is too difficult for me.	Convenience	
		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60			
1265441957	USA	Infrequently	41-50			
1265441844	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I have exactly of any infant grandson.	Sermons	
1265441839	Canada	Frequently	15-20	I have not found a traditional church in my area.	Lyrics of songs are shown	Make the service louder, especially the music.
1265441808	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	Online is easily accessible when my schedule makes it difficult to attend a traditional campus. I prefer attending in-person.	Easily accessible user friendly	I would love to have links to receive a spiritual quote of the day or something similar
1265441751	USA	Frequently	41-50			
1265441737	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I actually attend the Palm Beach Gardens campus, but when I am ill or out of town, I appreciate having the service to watch online.	Availability, ease of use	I would like to be able to see past services. For now, I am so satisfied with the service.
1265441746	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I usually watch when the service is not available enough to leave the home.	Convenience, availability	Continue the great work.
1265441726	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I only participate online when I am out of town and unable to attend the other campus.	Availability	
1265441721	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60			
1265441510	USA	Frequently	31-40	CF is an EQUIP church. I am so thankful to be introduced to EQUIP.	Everyday	Just continue to follow God
1265441496	USA	Frequently	41-50			
1265441479	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I like the teaching	Accessibility	
1265441463	Bahamas	Frequently	41-50		Availability	
1265441438	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I volunteer at the PBG campus on Sundays. I don't want to have my kids there more often than they can handle.	Availability	
1265441440	USA	Frequently	31-40		Convenience	
1265441400	USA	Infrequently	21-30	I am new to worship to attend a church. I had a lot of hardship last year and need God in my life.	Convenience	So far it is amazing. Thank you for blessing my soul.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263102291	USA	Frequently	31-60	Availability, well produced, feeling of being there	I would say that I like the additional times to watch.	Continue with the strong messages and consider a satellite campus in NC
1263102591	USA	Frequently	61+	Being a part of the services, the worship	I would say that I like the additional times to watch.	
1263102173	USA, SC	Frequently	41-50	My family and I used to attend CF. We moved to SC and are members of a church here. We attend online to stay connected because of the impact you have had on us. We love and miss you all.	Worship experience, not a polished TV show	
1263102135	USA	Frequently	31-40	I'm too far away to attend a traditional campus, and I feel uncomfortable in all of the churches in my area that I've visited.	Multiple opportunities for worship	
1263102137	USA	Frequently	31-40	I live in Michigan, I attend the main campus one or two times a year.	Availability	
1263103107	UK	Frequently	31-40	I couldn't find a church in London that I like as much as CF.	Teach us how to communicate with each other online.	
1263789689	USA	Frequently	61+	I enjoy the total worship experience.	Pastors Tom and Todd Mullins	I would like more from Pastor Tom and less from John Maxwell.
1263725001	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I watch online in addition to physically attending a service at CF.	Worship, messages, availability	I wish my dad/friends could see the services online with an interpreter. They need the services. If they were closer or could drive, they could attend the Gardens campus, but that is not possible.
1263717097	USA, NC	Frequently	41-50	I moved to NC. I love CF and its worship team and pastors.	Ability to watch the addition of numerous service times	I like the addition of numerous service times
1263717057	USA	Frequently	51-60	I participate in another church where I live and visit CF online from time to time.	Too new to respond	Too new to respond
1263703326	USA	Infrequently	21-30	I like the convenience of watching the service at a variety of times.	User-friendly, various service times	
1263702221	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30		Flexibility	
1263702211	USA	Independently	21-30	My work schedule prevents me from attending a physical campus	Flexibility	I love the audio levels of the musicians and pastors equalized. Frequently, the pastors' audio is at a different level from the musicians, and it is uncomfortable.
1263703788	USA	Frequently	31-40	I am able to get my son to watch online. He has a hard time going to a campus, but I am working on it.		It is great to get biblical teaching this way.
1263610232	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30			

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	Have the audio levels of the musicians and pastors equalized. Frequently, the pastors' audio is at a different level from the musicians, and it is uncomfortable	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263134098	USA	Frequently	41-50	I like the convenience of watching online.	Worship, biblical teaching	Cardinal	
1263134082	USA	Frequently	41-50	I am trying to find a local church in my new location. My daughter attends Palm Beach Gardens as I focused in worship with her.	Sermons		
1263134059	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I attended CF and volunteered there for seven years. At one time, I called the church its forms to talk to a pastor and did not get any response. I am trying to reconnect before I join another church.			
1263134043	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	I sometimes attend online.	Convenience		
1263133991	USA, Miami, FL	Frequently	61+	The distance is a problem. We usually attend a physical campus once a month.	Easy access	The connection is now better that in the past.	
1263133978	USA	Frequently	51-60/61+	I attend online when I am sick.	I love the music and the pastor	You are doing a great job.	
1263133977	USA	Frequently	41-50	Worship is important to me and in my family. Having a special needs teenager makes it difficult to physically participate in the service. Online worship allows our family to worship while still managing our child's needs.	Easy access, music and IMrr, archives for devotionals	I would love to have a devotional for teenagers on topics that affect them in their daily lives.	
1263133972	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I watch online when my work schedule doesn't allow me to get to a campus.			
1263133951	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	This is my first time participating online. I have the flu. Otherwise I attend services at the Gardens campus.	Worship with the community		
1263133916	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	I attend on line when I am not able to attend a campus service due to illness and sometimes other circumstances.	Conveniences		I would like to see captioning for the deaf or at least on of the online services
1263133914	usa	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I have transportation difficulties.			
1263133903	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I watch online when I am unable to attend church.	Messages		
1263133901	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60	I watch online when I am traveling.			
1263133725	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60	I watch online when I am not able to attend the PBG campus	Ability to participate online		
1263133805	USA	Frequently	61+				
1263130614	USA	Frequently		I do attend a traditional church.	Lessons		I would like to just hear the sermons without the singing and the announcements

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

Table — Christ Fellowship online campus survey responses

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of the traditional campuses (traditional church)?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1261834614	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	Only when I am unable to attend the church physically do I connect online. Online does not match the actual interaction that I receive at the campus.	Accessibility, pastor's information	Sometimes we lose connection. It doesn't always happen but frequently enough that I thought I should mention it.
1261834610	USA	Frequently	61+	I think it is growth.	Wonderful service	
1261834601	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30	I use the online service if I wake up late or am too busy.	Online Bible	Just get the video and sound streaming at top speed so I can see and hear everything at the same time as it is happening.
1261834390	USA	Frequently	21-30	It is much easier for me as I have young children, and it saved me money and gas. I feel like I get my daily bread by joining online.	Footnotes	
1261834361	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60			
1261834512	USA	Frequently	51-60	Sometimes I am unable to attend my own church.	Staying on track spiritually	
1261834501	USA	Frequently	51-60	I travel away and am now caring for my mom who needs 24-hour care.	Feeling the Holy Spirit	I am unemployed. I requested a break that was offered. I was not able to pay for it in he enrolled. I did not get an answer to my request.
1261834481	USA	Frequently	51-60			
1261834466	USA	Frequently	41-50			
1261834458	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60			
1261834410	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I attend online when I am not feeling well. I don't want to miss the service.	Being part of the service	I see the need for more bandwidth. The picture freezes multiple times, and this happens no matter where I am watching.
1261834391	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	When I am out of town, I attend online.	Convenience	
1261834366	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I watch online when I am traveling.	Convenience	You do an awesome job. We were disappointed we could not stream the service overseas, but that was due to slow Internet services and not your site.
1261834360	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I watch online when I am physically unable to attend in person.	The archives, overall package	
1261834349	USA	Frequently	61+	I moved away from my home church.	Glimpses of the Royal Palm campus	I would like to be able to choose to join the Royal Palm service.
1261834344	USA	Infrequently	51-60	I live in KY.		
1261834325	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I attend the Gardens campus Saturday night but listen online on Sundays to exceptional services.	Instant access	
1261834310	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50			
1261834228	USA	Infrequently	31-40			
1261834190	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50			
1261834189	USA	Frequently	21-30			
1261834172	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	I use the online service as a supplement to the regular services.	Availability, video quality	
1261834101	USA, Martin County	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	We travel so when we are out of four home area, we watch online.	Being part of the service	If the service has already started, I don't want to take the time for the welcome from the pastor.

Respondent ID	What country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the online Fellowship online campus rather than in another of its traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1261441354	USA	Frequently	51-60	I've been unemployed for over a year now and it saves on gas.	Everything, I think it's wonderful	
1261441266	USA	Usually attend A physical campus of CF	51-60	Church too large	comfort	
1261441299	USA	Usually attend A physical campus of CF	51-60			
1261441137	USA	Frequently	41-50	I live too far away to attend a physical campus	Teaching	Perhaps you could offer a daily devotional.
1261441134	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I was led here to hear John Maxwell specifically and really have liked what I have seen.		Is there a way to go back and listen again to previous sermons?
1261441016	USA	Frequently	61+	Busy schedule but need my church	Being there	I think there should be special prayers for online people. They could be sick.
1261341624	USA	Infrequently	51-60			
1261341228	USA, Raleigh, NC	Frequently	61+	I am unable to travel to church because of disabilities. I am so grateful to have CF online in NC. I have met some fantastic Christians online.	Connecting, worship with open hearts, sharing, helpful and exciting programs to include growth in our walk with Jesus.	I would like to have communion the same way we used to have it. I would Also like to have classes to increase our relationship with God and His children. What can we do to be involved in the CF outreach to hurting people?
1261344097	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	15-20			
1261341264	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I watching online today because I am sick.	Convenience	
1261339212	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I watch online because it is convenient.	All of it	I would like to receive text messages saying that you are about to start the online service. My friend reminded me on Facebook.
1261331854	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	15-20			
1261337998	USA, Jupiter, FL	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I utilize the online service only when I can not physically attend the service at the Gardens Campus.	Convenience	Make some upgrades to prevent the video feed from frequently freezing during the sermons.
1261337324	USA	Frequently	31-40	I do both. If I cannot make it or I am sick, I watch online.		
1261315963	USA	Frequently	21-30	The distance prevents me from attending a physical campus.	Live feed, worship, ability to download sermon notes	
1261313946	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I worship online when I am unable to attend physical campus	Live feed of entire service, music, messages	Sometimes the service locks up, and I have to shut down and go back. When that happens, I wish I didn't have to sit through the online pastors message again and then miss more of the sermon.
1261314714	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30	I participate online because it is very convenient for me as a college student.	Feeling of a live experience	

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263148375	Franklin County, North Carolina	Frequently	61+	We attended Royal Palm but have moved to NC.	Connecting, feeling a part of CF	I would like to have Bible study groups online. Perhaps there could be chat rooms? Of course, there are dangers with that.
1263148353	Germany	Frequently	51-60	The spirit of the church is very encouraging and supportive. I am at a transition point and do not want to commit to a standing church.	Clarity of teaching, convenience	
1263148450	USA	Frequently	61+	We like the sermons. We can go back and replay services we have missed and the messages that particularly touched our hearts.	Sermons and messages. We can go back and replay services we have missed and messages that particularly touched our hearts and impacted our lives.	I would like to see more methods for connecting. This survey it a good beginning. I would also like to see more use of e-mail among the participants.
1263148362	USA	Frequently	51-60		Connecting, feeling a part of CF	
1263148359	USA, Hinesville, GA	Frequently	51-60	I have not found a church where I feel comfortable. My sister attends the Royal Palm campus. I love the messages and mission of CF. Therefore, being online is at times as I can go.	Comfort, good audio/video	Just keep doing what you are doing. Its wonderful.
1263148337	USA and Haiti	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	We attend a campus but have a mentally disabled child so sometimes it's more convenient to worship online.	Notes, convenience, feeling connected to the larger congregation	I would like to have online assignments and events during the week that we will allow us to connect with others online. I would like to receive e-mail and have conferencing events so people can meet others who worship online.
1263148351 / 1263148476	USA	Frequently	51-60	I typically attend online when I am not feeling well.	Music, messages, availability	
1263148460	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	I actual attend when I am ask so that I won't mind others.	Convenience, Genuineness, welcome from pastors	
1263148447	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I usually attend the Royal Palm Campus. However, when I travel for work weeks, I am very exhausted, but I do not want to miss the messages.	Availability	
1263148396	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	When I am sick or unable to attend a campus service, I watch online.	Convenience	
1263148354 / 1263148392	USA	Frequently	21-30 / 41-50	I have fibromyalgia and cannot get to church in NC. Get this served up this close so I feel like I am right at church under powerful instruction.	Notes, messages, interaction	Keep looking to God for the answers. Thank you for providing the online service. Thank you for not charging for the archives.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than one of the traditional campuses or in another campus (attend closely)?	What is the best feature or services of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1261852174	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	When I cannot be there physically, I attend online	Convenience, downloading and saving the notes, being able to communicate with a pastor right away	This suggestion is not just for online. When the notes are posted on the screen, they seem to come down just as fast as they go up. Perhaps having a separate screen solely for the notes.
1261847748	USA	Frequently	41-50	I don't have transportation.	Everything	I would like more music.
1261844170	USA	Frequently	41-50	I use the online option for convenience.	Live, on time	
1261844162	UNITED STATES	Frequently	61+	I renewed my faith when I attended CF. When I moved back to NY, I wanted to stay connected with CF.	Connection to my family in FL, discussions with them	I think you are doing a great job of remembering us and keeping us up to date and connected.
1261844107	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	Watching online is only a back-up when I cannot attend a physical campus.	Live service availability	
1261849069	USA, Miami, FL	Frequently	31-40			
1261849037	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I wake up like this morning.	Love it all	
1261849053	USA	Infrequently	21-30	I do not live near a physical campus	Convenience, challenging sermons	I would like to see "Get in the Game" classes online.
1261849005	USA	Frequently	61+	I can utilize the time better by going online and feeling relaxed in my home as I hear the same message.	Relaxing, no rushing	I love the online capability. The signal has improved so much from where it was a year or so ago. I am grateful to all of the pastors and the staff that make the online worship possible. I am a Jewish believer and have been a member of CF since the mid 1990's when I gave my heart to the Lord.
1261844890	United Kingdom	Frequently	51-60	We have been hurt at the last two churches we have attended and feel safe in this environment at this time.	Love from the team, Pastor Tom as a father figure	I would suggest a Bible study to participate in during the week.
1261844744	USA, FL	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I don't have a car right now, and I am working.	Convenience, not feeling to being there, chat with a pastor, notes	
1261844737	Malaysia	Infrequently	21-30	It helps me in my spiritual growth to listen to extra sermons other than what is preached in my church locally.	Worship	
1261844720	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I am a family member of CF.	Availability, feedback	Continue to make our mission for God's glory, helping us to be brothers and sisters in Christ.
1261844714	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	The online service meets my spiritual needs.	Availability, sermon archives	Be sure that the broadcast is always good quality.
1261844707	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	visit online campus seldom, only when I don't go to physical campus	That you can here and view the message live and offer multiple connection opportunities	
1261844332	Martin County, FL USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I usually go to the Smart Campus. Today I was sick in bed. I am so very thankful to watch online!	Love that I can catch the service at home.	It's wonderful. Keep up the good work.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
126364196	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	I attend both, traditional, frequently, seldom	Web	Maybe make the service available at all times of Sunday.
126364193	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	15-20	If I can't get a ride from school, I watch online. I also watch online when I am at home at CF.	Good streaming, notes available giving, chat, online	
126364188	FL	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30	This is my first time participating online.	Good streaming, notes available giving	
126364186	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I only participate online when I am on vacation.	Convenience	
126364138	USA	Frequently	41-50	I participate online when I am on vacation or out of town.	Similar feel but less people	
126364137	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	When either my wife or I am sick, we would online.	Interactive, posted notes about what is going on at the campuses	
126364116	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40			
126364124	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30			
126364107	USA	Frequently	21-30	My boyfriend attended the Sermon Gardens campus. When he moved to my state, we wanted to stay connected with the church.	Availability	
126364101	USA	Frequently	41-50	I attend my home church on a regular basis, however, CF is another form of worship that I enjoy. I depend upon it.	Availability	
126364102	USA	Infrequently	41-50	We had to move from Palm Beach County to Madison, AL, after my husband was laid off from his job.	Is there an online Bible study?	
126364040	USA	Infrequently	61+	I enjoy the messages.	Sermons only	
126364041	USA	Frequently	21-30	I like to listen to John Maxwell.	Best online experience ever	
126364027	USA	Infrequently	51-60			
126364020	USA; Palm Beach Gardens, FL	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	Watching online helps to maintain balance for my wife who works sixty hours per week.	Full service, full screen, feeling connected	David, you are doing a great job. We have much great staff at CF with their hearts for reaching people.
126364017	USA	Infrequently	31-40		Convenience Live service	
126364009	USA	Frequently	41-50			
126363998	USA	Frequently	31-40			
126360290	USA, Michigan	Frequently	21-30	I was a member a few years ago and have moved a few times since then. I currently live in Michigan and miss CF.	Convenience	I would suggest live streaming of the worship on other campuses. Provide classes or guides to other online resources for spiritual growth.
126325354	USA	Frequently	41-50			
126325154	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40			
126324002	USA	Frequently	31-40	I use the online service when I am out of town.		

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126316447?	USA	Frequently	31-40	Sometimes my schedule just does not allow me to make it to church; other times I travel out of the area.	Convenience	If you were to offer ASL services, I believe you could reach hundreds of deaf. Also, you could add a skip to the introduction. Once you see it, you don't need to see again.
126316439?	USA	Infrequently	21-30			
126316418?	USA, Long Island, NY	Frequently	61+			
126316437?	USA	Frequently	41-50	I moved to Kentucky and can't be there physically.	Everything	
126316434?	USA, Sarasota, FL	Frequently	61+	I have not found a church to attend yet in Sarasota. When I am not looking for a home church, I watch CF because I used to be a member there.	Convenience, seeing the whole service	Small group fellowship is very important. It would be good if we could meet with others in the area that are part of the online church so we could have our own small group.
126316434?	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I only participate in the online campus when I am out of town and cannot make it to my regular campus, which is Royal Palm.	Love service	It is great.
126316431?	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	My husband had a heart and kidney transplant. During flu season we attend the online church.		
126316433?	Jamaica	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	15-20	I can't always make it to church.	Love service	Just keep getting better.
126316431?	Jamaica	Frequently	31-40	I attend only when I can't attend a church.	Everything	
126316410?	USA	Frequently	31-60	My children go to your church. I live in Arkansas.	Clarity of teaching, online viewing	None.
126316410?	USA	Frequently	31-60	I honestly don't motivate myself to get to church.	Convenience, inspiration	I would rather develop my desire to attend physically.
126316428?	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30/31-40	I appreciate that the pastor welcomes us to the church family. I feel a part of it. Illness in the family occasionally prevents us from attending in person.		I don't like being cut off as soon at the end of the service. If the time could be extended, I would benefit from it.
126316412?	USA	Frequently	31-60	I attended CF in Royal Palm and felt like it was my forever church. So when we moved, our church moved with us. I do attend a local church to serve God there, but CF is my home where I learn and grow.	Online family	I liked the small groups that discussed the message and applied it. I like small prayer groups, and I hope to find a way to follow up with people who are learning and standing in prayer.
126316429?	USA	Frequently	41-50			
126316428?	USA	Frequently	31-60	The sermon notes always have biblical references, and I like the solid teaching.	Praise and worship, sermon notes, music	Keep doing what you're doing.

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1263186481 USA		Frequently	31-40	I go to the church when I can, but I now have custody of my grandchildren. I also am not working so I have to conserve gas so that I can drive them to school.	Prime, worship, ease of online giving	I have tried using the archives when I missed a service one Sunday but was unable to print out the highlight sheet. I believe this is an integral part of the service.
1263186482 USA, Palm Beach Gardens, FL		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	Sometimes I feel lazy and want to enjoy the service in my pajamas	Chat	I would like to take the same classes online that are offered on campus
1263186478 USA		Frequently	41-50	Convenience	Ease of use	I would suggest more technical help to improve connections and connection options. I would also like to see online or geographical small groups. Online Skype sessions with the pastor would be good so that people can actually talk to him.
1263186477 USA		Frequently	41-50	I attend online services when I am not feeling well. It is better than not going at all.		
1263186476 USA		Frequently	31-40	Online church is convenient for me. I should go to the physical campus more often and meet a woman.	Everything	
1263186475 USA		Frequently	41-50			
1263186473 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30			
1263186477 USA		Frequently	41-50	I attend online services when I am not feeling well.	Everything, the sermons, the pastor, the love I feel	I would like to have the choice to watch a specific campus.
1263186474 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I attend online when I cannot attend a service on a campus.	Video	It is all done very well.
1263186473 USA		Frequently	41-50	I enrolled the Royal Palm campus and got saved there. I moved to MA and am blessed to listen online.		
1263186473 USA		Frequently	31-40		The content	
1263186470 USA		Frequently	61+	We formerly lived in Stuart, FL and have known Pastor Todd for twenty-five years.	Seeing the full service	
1263186465 USA		Frequently	61+	The campus is too far to walk for me to attend in person.	Worship	You do a great job.
1263186447 USA, Palm Beach Gardens, FL		Frequently	31-40	I woke up late so I am attending online.	Availability of the full service	Continue the online ministry. Allow me an option to be able to download the entire service to my iPod/MP3 player so I can watch sharing exercising and listen while driving in my car.
1263186443 USA, Chicago, IL		Frequently	41-50	I live in Chicago, IL	Very few path	
1263186430 South Africa		Frequently	61+	I have physical limitations that prevent me from attending a church.	Convenience	You could e-mail a card inviting online participants to return.
1263186417 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I am only here today because my child is ill. I wouldn't forsake going to a physical campus for anything usually.		I am not an online campus expert so I'm not sure how to continue developing it. I know that CF is a true blessing, and I have shared the site with many of my friends and those that do not have a church home. God bless all of you as you continue to serve with meaning and purpose.
1263186449 USA, Arkansas		Frequently	41-50	I live in Arkansas, but the teachings of Tom, Todd, and John are very powerful.		

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1251822910	USA, New York	Frequently	61+	My daughter introduced me to Christ Fellowship a year ago when she moved to FL. I watch online every Saturday and Sunday and feel I'm getting right next to her having church just like I did in the past.	Connections to the pastors and my daughter, spiritual growth.	
1251821261	USA	Frequently	61+	I am getting a cold.	Sermon	I do not like that the service was cut off abruptly at the end.
1251826343	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I attend CF online when I cannot attend my own church, which is small and does not have online services.	Live streaming, worshiping with others	It is perfect as it is.
1251875528	USA	Frequently	51-60	I live in a small town in TN, and the churches I have attended are not very motivating.	Sermons that are very motivating	
1251867281	USA	Frequently	61+	I moved away from the area after attending CF for three years and enjoy being connected online and feel missing the messages.	Connections	
1251867161	USA	Frequently	51-60, 61+			
1251865841	USA	Infrequently	51-60, 41-50	I live in PA and attend a church that is very fulfilling for me. I experiment CF while visiting in FL and loved the service. I tap into it as much as I can online. The pastors deliver one amazing message after the other. I particularly like when Dr. Maxwell is teaching.	Sermons, music	
1251865133	USA	Frequently	51-60, 61+			
1251865649	USA	Frequently	51-60	We attended CF at Royal Palm for five years before moving to Wisconsin this past June.	Access to our favorite church, versatility of service times	We would like to see a better connection. Our service is interrupted on numerous occasions, forcing us to reload the entire connection with CF. Please help us with this. Thanks so much.
1251865142	USA	Frequently	51-60, 61+	It is too difficult for me to attend physically and I am caring for my mother.	Easy access	Connections to ... I am too new to offer a critique.
1251865071	USA	Frequently	41-50	I cannot always go to a physical campus.	Easy access	Make it possible to watch via a Blu-ray or gaming system online on a regular TV.
1251864921	USA	Frequently	21-30	I used to live in West Palm Beach and attended a physical campus at that time. Now I am in New York. I am in military service and wanted to continue worshiping with CF.		
1251864931	USA		21-30	Usually attend a physical campus of CF.		
1251864927	USA, Buffalo, NY		31-40	Usually attend a physical campus of CF.		

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263827514	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	We go online when we travel or are sick or when someone else is sick, it prevents us from making it to the Christan Campus where we attend and serve with special needs, traffic, and prayer ministries.	Ease in staying connected to the church and inviting out-of-town, unsaved family and friends to watch with us.	You changed something so that now if the computer freezes it defaults back to the introduction instead of going right back to the sermon. It is frustrating
1263886923	USA	Frequently	51-60	We do both. We moved away but wanted to keep the relationships.	Relationships despite distance	I think you should really push the small group studies. Maybe there could be a way to include video links to allow faces to be seen
1263886044	USA	Frequently	51-60	This was my first experience connecting online. I was running late and would never have made it to campus on time.	Connection to actual live service	
1263884639	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I started watching online a year ago when I started taking care of my in-laws and wasn't able to go to church.	Online chat, opportunities, Pastor finding and others	I would like to see a place that showed the sermon notes with the blanks filled in
1263884377	USA	Frequently	51-60	I use the online church service when I am not able to go to the lake.	Availability, personal, printable message notes	Dr. Maxwell's prayer was cut off at the end of the sermon, I feel as if I missed a blessing for the week.
1263884269	USA	Frequently	61+	I live in Colorado and Salt Lake City, UT.	Prayer, sermons, teachings	I don't have any suggestions.
1263883913	USA	Frequently	61+			
1263884172	USA	Frequently		I only attend the online services when I can't attend campus services.	Sermons and sharing of life experience	Continue to keep yourselves that question.
1263883712	USA	Frequently	31-60	We are out of the area and have not found a place of worship that is equal to CF	The whole service	Keep upgrading the internet connection. It was slow in the past but quite good now. I love seminars online
1263883507	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	We attend online when we are sick or away.	No campus distractions	
1263883121	USA	Frequently	51-60	We have lived in the South and it has been very difficult for us to find a church that is nondenominational and nonjudgmental and accepting of people so we have been grateful for your online services.	Sermons where the pastors speak from experience	Continue to have Tom and John there.
1263882391	USA	Frequently	31-40	We drive much from the sermon series.		
1263882593	USA		51-60	I usually attend the Gardens campus, but when I cannot, I listen online.	Conversations	

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus (rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church)?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263902269 USA		Frequently	11-20Yr; 40-41-50:	We travel for work. We are so thankful to have church with you wherever we are. We have young kids and they sing along so loudly and beautifully as they can. They listen and try to take notes. We can repeat the lessons when we miss something.	Availability; no excuses.	We would like to go from our computer to the TV so we can all see better. Also, sometimes there are pauses in the middle, and that gets frustrating.
1263902224 USA			51-60			
1263901499 USA	Frequently	41-50		I hear different things if I listen a second time. I also like to hear the music again.		
1263901172 USA		Frequently	51-60			I would like to have a time when the online pastor can be met with at church.
1263899343 England	Frequently	61+		I worship online when a family member is sick or if I am out of town.	Live service in its entirety, worship.	
1263899015 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50		I also attend church in England. I visited CF when I was on holiday.	Fellowship, worship, growth.	Just continue what you're doing. God will lead you as He always has. God bless you all.
1263897737 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60		Its easier for me because my mom has to drive me. Sometimes I'd just rather be in the comfort of my house instead of with people.		It is actually pretty cool the way it is.
1263897152 USA		Frequently	13-20			Online chat, which provides help from the pastor.	Perhaps you could offer women's classes, Bible studies, or morally highlights to gain a better understanding of God's love for women.
1263896633 USA		Frequently	41-50		I use the online church when I am sick or away.	Availability.	
1263894736 USA		Infrequently	41-50		I enjoy hearing the sermons of John Maxwell most of all.	Online notes for downloading, clear visibility.	
1263893592 USA			61+				
1263893641 USA		Infrequently	41-50				
1263893190 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	13-20	Sometimes I attend the online campus when I oversleep, am not feeling well, or cannot make it to church for another reason.	Convenience.	Remove the new bumper that takes a loud ping and loads every time you enter the online service. If you disrespect or have to rebend the page for whatever reason, you have to watch the clip in which the online pastor offers his greeting again even if you've already heard it.
1263892037 USA		Frequently	41-50	We live in CA. A friend of the family introduced us to you. My family feels so comfortable with the pastor, and we understand your teachings so well. You have a way of making us feel welcomed even 2900 miles away.	We live in CA. A friend of the family going back to you. The site if we get the message the first time	Convenience if it would be nice to have some online teachings like you offer on your campuses.
1263891299 USA		Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	I am disabled and somewhat shut in.	Varying times, flexibility	I don't know at this time.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1261902489	USA, Alaska	Frequently	31-40	I travel extensively, and when I am on the Palm Beach, I can still take part. This is very important to me and I appreciate it greatly.	Family discussions about the service	I think you are doing the best that can be done. With Facebook and Skype, it still makes me feel like I am right there. I am going to try to get more online in 2011.
1261902439	USA	Infrequently	31-40	I live too far from the retreat circle and never attend any other church where I feel close to God when I need your service.	Clear video feed, feel like I am there	Allowing online guest to send an instant message with a question, prayer request, or comments. It will really help out with the interaction.
1261902434	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60	I am disabled and sometimes it's difficult to attend the church service in person.	Easy access	
1261902417	USA	Frequently	31-40	I can avoid the large crowds at the physical campuses.	Availability	Improve the video quality, allowing those who participate online to feel as if they were actually physically present. The resolution you are using now is way low for both live streaming and archived sermons. You should also be featuring a player for the archived that allows the toggle of full screen view. What an amazing difference these small changes could make for the online experience.
1261902101	USA	Frequently	31-60	I attend a traditional campus in Southern California, but CF is where I became a true follower of Christ.	Pastor David, church family, live experience	My suggestion would be the continued improvement of streaming.
1261902402	USA	Frequently	31-40	I participate online when I am on weekdays out of town.	Sermons	
1261902783	USA	Frequently	31-60	I do not have a car. I can ride the Palm Connection, but it costs $3.00 each way.	Availability, worship	Is there anything else I can do online besides seeing the service? If there are groups, etc. I don't know about them.
1261902782	South Africa	Infrequently	21-30	I attend another traditional church.	Live broadcast	Make the videos downloadable.
1261902763	USA	Frequently	41-50	I tend to attend the PBG campus. I am out of a job, and I can't afford the gas money to drive.	Sermons	Everything is perfect for what I need.
1261902729	USA	Infrequently	21-30	If I do not get my act together to make it to the PBG campus, I watch online.	"feel" experience	I would like to have a printout available in take notes.
1261902731	St. Lucia	Frequently	21-30	I feel welcomed and loved by everybody. I feel like I belong, and the music is so great.	I love story feature	I blog that reading testimonies from online viewers would show everyone how they truly bless the hearts of others. The services have touched my heart II changed my life and put me on the right path. I'm not looking back.
1261902691	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I like to hear the preaching.	Preaching	In case I miss a week, I would like to see a few weeks of earlier sermons available.
1261902651	USA	Frequently	31-60	I went to a service last evening that was comforting and it was very sad time this morning as I'm going through a divorce. I felt free/sad to connect to CF again right away.	Need for godly thoughts	Unfortunately, the program is constantly interrupted. I'm not sure if that is on your end or my end.
1261902624	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	I am on oxygen and more comfortable at home.	Availability	Unfortunately, the program is constantly interrupted. I'm not sure if that is on your end or my end.
1261902594	USA	Frequently	61+	I watch online when I am not physically able to attend.	Clarity of the teachings	Continue to make services available for shut-ins and for people who are ill.
1261902351	USA	Infrequently	31-50		Current news	
1261902321	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50			None

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263907283	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40; 51-60	I occasionally can't attend service. I appreciate that I can attend online	Live service	Keep doing what you've been doing.
1263903710	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	I have been ill and not able to make it to the PBG campus.	Wonderful, warm people who are great participants.	I would suggest a forum, a 24-hour prayer and chat room, and online life courses.
1263904005	USA, Palm Beach, FL	Frequently	31-40	Watching online saves me time.	Availability	I'm not familiar with everything you offer online.
1263903921	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	I am currently watching at work on my break.	Personal connection to the live teaching.	Keep up the great work of God.
1263903168	USA	Frequently	41-50	I live in Virginia [beach], and I really enjoy the church when I go home to see my mom. I want to stay connected to CF.	Service, message, being connected	I would like to see the Scripture references on the screen so I can follow along better in my Bible. Also, Instant Messaging (IM) may be helpful to use to connect to others who are also online. It would help us to feel more connected to the Body of Christ.
1263901819	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	Use when I can't get to Church	Ease of use	The few times I use it, it is just fine.
1263903111	Canada	Frequently	41-50	The man who is my whole world attends your services around every Sunday. I cannot be there with him to attend right now, but this way I can share the services with him.	Everything	Just keep doing what you are doing. It's wonderful.
1263902993	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	61+	When I have work related conflicts or when I am not at the top of my game and I did not make it on time for the Pastor Tom message or inspiration, I can watch online.	Availability	I would like to see more information available. I would also like more interaction with Pastor Tom, Pastor Todd, and Dr. John Maxwell.
1263902919	USA	Frequently	61+	I do both. When there is interference that prevents my being in church on time or when I myself am feeling unwell, I watch the service. There is another option, and it remains me. I also like the option of having the archives as well. Praise God for the online service option.	Outreach possibilities, connecting	I think you should continue what you are doing. Maybe you could also provide access for those who do not have the technology and really need it because they are incapacitated or they lack the transportation to get to the physical campus.
1263902935	USA, born in Haiti	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	21-30	I usually go to a traditional campus, but it is very helpful that I can participate online on the days that I can't make it to a campus.	Feels as if I am there	I love it. There is nothing else I can ask for. I am blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of CF.
1263902921	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-60		Worship, availability	
1263901904	USA	Frequently	51-60	I have transportation difficulties.		I would like to have more online communication and interaction.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than on one of the traditional campuses or at another traditional church?	Age Range	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1263920642	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	I attend church online when I have a scheduling conflict that prevents me from attending a physical campus.	31-40	True to the campus services	
1263920610	USA	Infrequently	I participate here when I cannot make it to a physical church.	21-30	Easy access. Good teaching	
1263920638	USA	Usually attend the online church when I am unable to get out of the house. My family is sick today. We don't want to infect everyone else.	I choose the online church when I am unable to get out of the house. My family is sick today. We don't want to infect everyone else.	21-30	Convenience	I usually have nothing that I don't like, but today I really did not like that the online pastor interrupted Pastor John Maxwell during the closing prayer, and I weren't able to experience that. Other than that, I am happy with being able to have the sermons online.
1263920629	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	My work schedule does not allow me to be at the physical services, but I can watch online.	41-50	Messages, private notes	
1263920596	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	I watch online so that I will not miss the service when I am sick or on vacation.	61+	The whole church experience	
1263920444	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF		41-50	Availability	I would like to hear John Maxwell's closing prayer or any of the other pastors' final comments. After that, Pastor David can speak or pray.
1263920233	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	Online church is a way for me to worship when I cannot be at home.	61+	Live church	I don't have suggestions at this time. I just completely enjoy and learn from every sermon.
1263918147	USA	Frequently	I am a member of another church, and I'm not getting fed through the Sunday sermons, but I do get fed through individual Bible studies at my home church.	41-50	Live church	
1263919771	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	There are miscellaneous reasons. Our child is sick today.	31-40	Convenience	I think it is a good alternative. The church does a good job promoting it. I did have difficulty getting onto the online chat. I'm not sure if it was user error or if the instructions were confusing.
1263918163	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	I attend online if I am out of town.	61+		We have many dear friends all over the country who would give anything to be able to watch CF Online in ASL. They are an online and visual culture, and community. Archived versions would be satisfactory. This would be the most incredible gift we could give them as we share Jesus with them. The word would spread like wildfire in the deaf community. Please help us do this and reach so many who need Him so much. Thank you.
1263918167	USA	Frequently	I do both. I am a student, and I can't always get to my church.	41-50	Live chat	
1263918123	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	I have some physical limitations and don't always feel well.	31-40	Easy access	I think you have pretty much thought of everything.
1263918221	USA	Frequently	The online service is an alternative when I am not able to attend the physical campus.	61+	Availability to Pastor Tom and the church	I would like more connections to Pastor Tom, Pastor Todd, and Dr. John Maxwell. I would also like the ability to take notes online and keep records. It would be great to have a summary of all notes from the sermon to fill in when I may have missed something.
1263912969	USA	Frequently	I look forward to watching CF online. It fulfills my spiritual needs in every way.	61+	Everything	Keep up the great online service that your church offers.
1263911471	USA	Frequently	I live in another state but am preparing to move to the WPB area. I have been following online for a year or so.	31-40	Live service, feeling connected	I need to pray about that. CF online has been a major part of my life.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in one of its traditional campuses or in another traditional church?	What is the best feature or attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1254035310	USA	Frequently	41-50			
1254032761	USA	Frequently	61+	I live in Atlanta, GA.	Easy access	
1254002901	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	If our daughter is sick or if we have plans that create a conflict of timing, we use the online service.	Easy access, inspiring, fantastic	I think you should provide online classes. The recordings/archived ones they are played. When I share them on Facebook, it shows just a link and not a thumbnail. I would like it to look appealing to help my friends be interested in watching
1263993763	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60		Speaker	I would like to hear more speakers. Everyone has a story. Perhaps you could let others share their personal stories so that others going through/trying times won't feel so alone.
1263973914	USA	Frequently	41-50			
1263943113	USA	Frequently	61+	We found CF when we were visiting FL. We live in PA and attend your online service for most of the year except when we... the year except when we... the online service for most of the year, the pastor, the teaching, the passion, and the mission of the church. We attend the 12:10 p.m. service online, and my husband even misses part of the Student game if they start at 1:00 p.m.	Pastor, depth of the message, the love of Jesus, the continued challenge to grow on Christ and His mission, the heart of the church.	Sometimes you break away from the main service for communion or for prayer with the online pastor. We feel this interrupts the flow of the Holy Spirit, and we would very much like to remain with the main service. We also would suggest that it would help if the Power Point would be left on the screen a little longer for those of us taking notes. It was mentioned in today's service that you have classes you can attend to discover your gifts. It would be so wonderful to participate in the classes you offer at CF.
1263928356	USA	Frequently	61+		Pastoral support, online fellowship	
1263926379	USA	Frequently	61+	We live in New Jersey six months of the year so we watch online when we are away. Also, if we are sick, we can still attend the service.	Support, fellowship, availability	I would like to see some study programs that could be accessed at any time during the week.
1263923145	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60	We use the online campus when we travel or if we are sick like we are today.	Outreach, ability to stay connected to CF	The synchronization of voice and picture was way off today periodically. It takes away from the message and the experience, and it's very difficult to follow. Otherwise, you do no service an amazing job. And we are very thankful for the online ministry. May God continue to bless and expand His Kingdom here on earth through your online ministry.
1263921163	USA	Frequently	31-40, 51-60	In a household of eight people, there is sometimes illness and sometimes difficulty getting ready on time.	Convenience	I would like it if the closing prayer would not be interrupted by the online pastor's comments.
1263921111	Barbados	Frequently	61+	I am not always physically here to participate in worship on one of the campuses.	Clear sermons	I think it would be helpful to make participation in the sacraments more meaningful.
1263920749	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60			
1263920726	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50		Availability	
1263920713	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	I usually attend at Gardens campus	Availability	I have been very disappointed that when the pastor begins to close in prayer, the service is cut off, and the online pastor takes over. Today, at closing when I bowed my head in prayer, I found it to be extremely disappointing when John Maxwell began his closing prayer, and we were cut off.
1263920684	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	41-50	When it is difficult to get to the physical campus, I gravitate.		Allow the online users to pray with the church and not break away for a separate prayer time. Staying with the church helps me feel more part of the body of the church. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

Survey data table — responses regarding Christ Fellowship online campus.

Respondent ID	What Country are you from?	How often do you worship with us?	Age Range	Why do you participate in the Christ Fellowship online campus as opposed to (or in addition to) participating in a Christ Fellowship online campus rather than in a traditional church?	What is the best feature of attribute of the Christ Fellowship online campus?	What suggestions do you have for the continued development of the Christ Fellowship online campus?
1264097439	USA	Infrequently	41-50	I do worship at a church, but I enjoy some of the sermons you offer. I especially like listening to John Maxwell. I have read several of his books and have seen him speak in person.		I really like the sermon notes that I can print and follow.
1264097382	USA	Frequently	31-40	I visit CF online in addition to my traditional church. I live too far away to attend CF in person.	Evangelistic, positive, courageous	At the present time, I can't think of any thing that could improve CF's online campus. I feel it's already one of the most advanced available ministries.
1264093810	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	15-20	If I am lazy and miss a service, I would watch it online, but I usually always have an opportunity to go to a campus.	Online worship	Please start using subtitles/closed captioning so my relatives who are deaf can worship with CF. It would be more of a blessing to so many than you could ever know.
1264051795	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40			
1264056012	USA	Frequently	31-40	We use the online service when we are away. We never miss a service.	Online chats	Faster buffering would be good, but that is probably an issue related to my phone.
1264064208	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	51-60			
1264061189	USA	Infrequently	31-40	We live outside the area and attend a church locally. We also receive a strong message of praise and worship through the online worship, and it is wonderful to have this tool accessible to our family.	Sharing the service with our family	There is a delay in the buffering while watching, and I wish I had a feature to go back once I missed a message. I only saw the pause button, and once we resumed, I felt like I had missed part of the message.
1264061078	USA	Frequently	41-50	I live in another state and attend a church there, but I also enjoy CF online.	Worship, sermon	
1264061940	USA	Frequently	61+	I watch CF online in addition to attending my own church.	Expressions of God's love	We would benefit from online studies.
1264061921	USA	Frequently	31-40	I live in Daytona Beach and am not supposed to drive due to illness.	Full services online	I am sad too right now. I have followed online since 2005.
1264061920	USA	Frequently	41-50	I do both. Time is an issue.	Availability	You should offer your courses online. Also, I would like more up-to-date information about opportunities to serve my community better. I would also like to know how to develop partnerships with other members.
1264061615	USA	Infrequently	31-40	I do attend a physical church. I enjoy listening to John Maxwell teach, which is why I listen online.		
1264060214	USA	Usually attend a physical campus of CF	31-40	We have a disabled family member who is sometimes unable to attend a physical campus. The online service is a great alternative.	Staying connected to my church	Maybe you could offer some FAQs. For example, I'd like to learn more about communion online. How does that work? I'd also like to learn how to chat or pray with others.
1264060137	USA	Infrequently	51-60	The distance prevents me from attending a physical campus.	Teaching	Perhaps you could put the Scripture references on the screen.
1264056348	Canada	Frequently	21-30			

APPENDIX D

Church Online Pastor Survey

Question #	Question Asked
1	What is your denominational affiliation? - Open-Ended Response
2	Age
3	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - 1. Biblical instruction and teaching can take place online.
4	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - Worship can take place online.
5	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - Praying for one another can take place online.
6	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - The sacraments of the church can be directed and administered in an online environment.
7	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - Evangelism can take place online.
8	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - The commission to baptize can be fulfilled through an online church.
9	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - Ministry to children and teenagers can take place online.
10	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - Counseling can take place in an online environment.
11	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: Persons can exercise their spiritual gifts in an online environment.
12	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: Persons can receive and extend care for one another during pivotal moments of life (birth, death, marriage, hospitalization, divorce etc.) in an online church.
13	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: -The online church should offer the same programs as a traditional church.
14	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: -Authentic community can be built and fostered in an online church.
15	Please check whether you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), or Disagree (4) to the following statements: - Online ecclesia can create koinonia.
16	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 1. Online biblical instruction and teaching
17	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 2. Online worship experience
18	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 3. Online prayer
19	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 4. Directing and administering the sacraments online
20	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 5. Online evangelism
21	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 6. Online baptism
22	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 7. Online ministry to children and teenagers
23	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 8. Online counseling
24	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 9. Online service (congregants using spiritual gifts in online community)
25	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 10. Online congregational care
26	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 11. Offering comparable programs to online church as traditional church
27	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 12. Building and fostering authentic community online.
28	Please rate your online church's effectiveness in the following areas from 1-10 (1= failing and 10= succeeding). If the question is not applicable to you, please leave blank. - 13. Creating koinonia online.
29	How do you define and describe church online? - Open-Ended Response
30	Why does your church provide online church? - Open-Ended Response
31	What is your online church's greatest feature to date? - Open-Ended Response
32	How does your online church administer communion? - Open-Ended Response
33	How does your church perform baptism? - Open-Ended Response
34	What is your online church's biggest obstacle to growth/health currently? - Open-Ended Response
35	What suggestions would you offer other churches starting online campuses / congregations? - Open-Ended Response
36	What is your response to pastors who are opposed to online church? - Open-Ended Response

User ID		Still studying and discovering what it can be; as similar to our Lives experience as is possible.	To reach those far from God. It is a bridge in many who would not consider attending a live service.	Lives public chat as well as private prayer rooms for prayer and counseling.	Suggesting as home replacements to the elements as they can run the live experiences with campuses.	We don't yet.	We need more dedicated staff. The vision is there; we just need more staff to pull it off.	Campus no long term and market online heavily where people hang out.	Very limited vision for what God can do and where He can work.
9522771	Non-Denominational	41-50								Don't let pride get in the way. If Jesus can reach anybody, anywhere, and at any time, why not leverage what you have.
92131473	Non-denominational	41-50	Leveraging the Internet to share the gospel in a world that is technology driven.	Opportunity to reach many people. Jesus told us to go into all the world and preach the good news. Through the internet we can be in many places at once time.	Full worship experience and ability to chat and ask questions, not just a sit-and-listen experience.	We let them online know when we are going to have communion and ask them to have bread or cracker and juice available.	We are now (3 months) at our iCampus. We will subject. We have need usually a summon with a physical baptism in any pastor will direct and our congregation watches and lunch home at the church is beneficial.	For our iCampus to be real, people spreading the Good News and inviting others to join in.	Remember that people online are real people who matter to God. What a great place to be light in a dark world.	
9011105	Non-denominational	XX-30								
9226810	Non-denominational	20-30								
9019701	Southern Baptist	31-40	Church online is like any place church. It provides all of the facts and elements of a brick-and-mortar church and allows people around the world to connect, grow, and serve.	Our church provides online church because we want to reach people that otherwise might not attend a building. There are those that are sick or otherwise unable to physically attend and we want to be there for them. We want to help our own members stay connected when they travel. We want to allow those that have grown up in church or for God a way to reconnect with both in an environment that they are comfortable in.	Our greatest feature is the genuine community that has been created. As far as web-based features, we are blessed to have Spanish translation, a fully interactive children's feature, an online student ministry, and a growing forum where people can stay connected throughout the week.	At the beginning of a communion service, we let our internet campus guests know what they have to obtain once they have the elements like communion. At the point in the communion, the stream where the people take communion, we break away to the campus studio and I lead them through the moment, pause as in the pastor leading them in the live stream.	We baptize two ways, either people come down to get baptized at one of our physical locations or we perform an online baptism. A believer in their seat is to be my hands and knees the other baptizee into the water. I then insert a video feed or baptism with any phone call to them and lead the baptism with them as streamed out to the live world via the Internet campus.	The acceptance of church online as a legitimate form of weekend worship, people are still holding back I feel that community an on Internet-based church.	Make sure the senior pastor fully supports it. Find your online campus pastor first and make sure he/she is a pastor and not necessarily a technical person. Don't worry about having enough money. Pray, start the campus with what you have, and keep the vision for online ministry in front of those that can help how it.	I pray that they would see the power of online church eventually. I wish they would spend less energy fighting online church and more energy helping to figure out a way to make it stronger and more effective.

APPENDIX E

Christ Fellowship Online Church Viewers By Country

February 2011

1. USA
2. Canada
3. UK
4. Bahamas
5. Malaysia
6. Lithuania
7. Columbia
8. Brazil
9. Costa Rica
10. Austria
11. Taiwan
12. Jamaica
13. Sweden
14. Korea
15. India
16. Mexico
17. Trinidad & Tobago
18. Dominican Republic
19. Kazakhstan
20. Philippines
21. Portugal
22. Cayman Islands
23. Puerto Rico
24. Saint Lucia
25. South Africa
26. Malta
27. Ecuador
28. Germany
29. Haiti
30. British Virgin Islands
31. Saudi Arabia
32. Norway
33. Nicaragua
34. Argentina
35. Singapore
36. Nigeria
37. Italy
38. Qatar
39. Hungary
40. Thailand
41. Cyprus
42. Australia
43. Spain
44. Estonia
45. Romania
46. Indonesia

January 2011

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Brazil
5. Philippines
6. Mexico
7. Malaysia
8. Singapore
9. Indonesia
10. Bahamas
11. Jamaica
12. Argentina
13. Columbia
14. Costa Rica
15. India
16. Dominican Republic
17. Thailand
18. Sweden
19. Germany
20. Venezuela
21. Aruba
22. Austria
23. France
24. Australia
25. Portugal
26. Netherlands
27. Puerto Rico
28. Romania
29. Norway
30. Nigeria
31. South Africa
32. Taiwan
33. Hungary
34. Qatar
35. Kazakhstan
36. Spain
37. Korea
38. Paraguay
39. Bulgaria
40. Switzerland
41. Slovakia
42. Ghana
43. Cambodia
44. Saint Lucia
45. Russian Federation
46. Italy
47. Macedonia
48. Malta
49. Panama
50. Armenia
51. Chile
52. United Arab Emirates
53. Trinidad and Tobago
54. Czech Republic
55. New Zealand
56. Lithuania
57. El Salvador
58. Slovenia
59. Japan
60. Vietnam

December 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Brazil
5. Philippines
6. Singapore
7. Malaysia
8. Indonesia
9. India
10. Portugal
11. Mexico
12. Germany
13. Argentina
14. Thailand
15. Spain
16. Puerto Rico
17. Estonia
18. Taiwan
19. Peru
20. Costa Rica
21. Austria
22. South Africa
23. Trinidad & Tobago
24. Bahamas
25. France
26. Columbia
27. Venezuela
28. Japan
29. New Zealand
30. Bulgaria
31. Swaziland
32. Cayman Islands
33. Netherlands
34. Nigeria
35. Romania
36. Poland
37. Kazakhstan
38. Dominican Republic
39. Denmark
40. Sweden
41. Ireland
42. Jamaica
43. Ukraine
44. Uruguay
45. British Virgin Islands
46. Ecuador
47. Saint Vincent
48. The Grenadines
49. Kenya
50. Saint Lucia
51. Korea
52. Panama
53. Guatemala
54. Saudi Arabia
55. Australia
56. Aruba
57. Iraq
58. United Arab Emirates
59. Hungary
60. Norway
61. Greece
62. Moldova
63. Egypt
64. Slovenia
65. US Virgin Islands

November 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. Brazil
4. United Kingdom
5. Puerto Rico
6. Philippines
7. Argentina
8. South Africa
9. Malaysia
10. Germany
11. Trinidad & Tobago
12. Austria
13. Taiwan
14. Mexico
15. Bahamas
16. Peru
17. Singapore
18. Guatemala
19. Netherlands
20. Nigeria
21. Romania
22. Dominican Republic
23. Australia
24. Paraguay
25. Malta
26. Sweden
27. Hungary
28. Japan
29. Poland
30. India
31. Korea
32. Antigua
33. Barbuda
34. Ireland
35. Jamaica
36. Belgium
37. Ecuador
38. Qatar
39. Croatia
40. Columbia
41. Switzerland
42. Bulgaria
43. Ukraine
44. Egypt
45. France
46. Finland
47. Kenya
48. Thailand
49. Kazakhstan
50. Uganda
51. Indonesia
52. United Arab Emirates
53. Bolivia
54. Latvia
55. Cayman Islands
56. Grenada
57. Slovakia
58. Costa Rica
59. Saudi Arabia
60. Jordan
61. Ghana
62. Czech Republic
63. Norway
64. Italy

October 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Peru
5. Korea
6. Argentina
7. Austria
8. Brazil
9. Cayman Islands
10. Saint Lucia
11. New Zealand
12. Singapore
13. Bahamas
14. Malaysia
15. Italy
16. Trinidad & Tobago
17. Ireland
18. Grenada
19. Dominican Republic
20. Columbia
21. Switzerland
22. Spain
23. Australia
24. Romania
25. Puerto Rico
26. Portugal
27. Philippines
28. Mexico
29. Bangladesh
30. Germany
31. Georgia
32. Finland
33. Japan

September 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Korea
5. Bahamas
6. Ghana
7. Brazil
8. Austria
9. Peru
10. Uganda
11. Dominican Republic
12. Singapore
13. Argentina
14. Poland
15. Saint Lucia
16. Mexico
17. Australia
18. Trinidad & Tobago
19. Malaysia
20. Finland
21. Italy
22. Grenada
23. Denmark
24. Ireland
25. Cayman Islands
26. Qatar
27. France
28. Switzerland
29. Philippines
30. Venezuela
31. Romania
32. Nicaragua
33. Spain
34. New Zealand
35. Saudi Arabia
36. Netherlands
37. Egypt
38. Germany
39. Columbia
40. Chile
41. Bermuda
42. Jamaica
43. Kuwait
44. Belgium
45. Macao
46. China
47. Costa Rica
48. Malta
49. Bolivia
50. Georgia
51. Hungary
52. Puerto Rico
53. Portugal
54. India
55. Nigeria
56. Bangladesh

August 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. New Zealand
5. Taiwan
6. Cayman Islands
7. Peru
8. Bahamas
9. Kuwait
10. Trinidad and Tobago
11. Korea
12. Brazil
13. Germany
14. Argentina
15. Sweden
16. Mexico
17. Malta
18. Jamaica
19. Puerto Rico
20. France
21. Philippines
22. Dominican Republic
23. Singapore
24. Australia
25. Barbados
26. China
27. South Africa
28. Belgium
29. Serbia
30. Romania
31. Bermuda
32. Paraguay
33. Norway
34. Bolivia
35. Ecuador
36. Denmark
37. Columbia

July 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Costa Rica
5. Argentina
6. Panama
7. Korea
8. Bahamas
9. Malta
10. India
11. New Zealand
12. Finland
13. Brazil
14. Puerto Rico
15. Peru
16. Cayman Islands
17. Germany
18. Greece
19. France
20. Philippines
21. Sweden
22. Jamaica
23. Australia
24. Austria
25. Dominican Republic
26. China
27. Switzerland
28. Trinidad & Tobago
29. Turks & Caicos
30. British Virgin Islands
31. South Africa
32. Columbia
33. Portugal
34. Poland
35. Denmark
36. Dominica
37. Nicaragua
38. Ecuador
39. Israel
40. US Virgin Islands

June 2010

1. United States	26. Trinidad & Tobago
2. Canada	27. Singapore
3. United Kingdom	28. New Zealand
4. Bahamas	29. Greece
5. Afghanistan	30. Romania
6. Australia	31. Denmark
7. Korea	32. United Arab Emirates
8. Brazil	33. Panama
9. Argentina	34. Aruba
10. Indonesia	35. Germany
11. Cayman Islands	36. Guatemala
12. Philippines	37. India
13. Malta	38. Hungary
14. Sweden	39. Jamaica
15. Japan	40. Norway
16. Dominican Republic	41. China
17. Costa Rica	42. Bulgaria
18. Saudi Arabia	43. Turks & Caicos
19. Switzerland	44. Ecuador
20. Netherlands	45. Poland
21. Puerto Rico	46. Nicaragua
22. Italy	47. Israel
23. Peru	48. US Virgin Islands
24. Taiwan	
25. Columbia	

May 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Brazil
5. Korea
6. Trinidad & Tobago
7. Aruba
8. Jamaica
9. Bahamas
10. Malta
11. Peru
12. Columbia
13. Australia
14. Romania
15. Argentina
16. Germany
17. Sweden
18. Cayman Islands
19. Haiti
20. Costa Rica
21. Botswana
22. Taiwan
23. China
24. Panama
25. Puerto Rico
26. India
27. Guatemala
28. Ireland
29. Mexico
30. Egypt
31. Singapore
32. Austria
33. Bulgaria
34. Paraguay
35. Ghana
36. New Zealand
37. Indonesia
38. Dominican Republic
39. Spain
40. Italy
41. Norway
42. Kyrgyzstan
43. Luxembourg
44. Israel
45. United Arab Emirates
46. Nicaragua
47. Philippines
48. Netherlands
49. Japan
50. Estonia

April 2010

1. United States
2. Canada
3. United Kingdom
4. Sweden
5. Australia
6. Brazil
7. Puerto Rico
8. Columbia
9. Trinidad & Tobago
10. Kenya
11. Peru
12. Bahamas
13. Germany
14. Philippines
15. Malta
16. Argentina
17. Korea
18. Finland
19. France
20. Norway
21. Jamaica
22. Portugal
23. British Virgin Islands
24. Ecuador
25. India
26. Costa Rica
27. Mexico
28. Austria
29. Romania
30. Malaysia
31. Botswana
32. Cayman Islands
33. Barbados
34. New Zealand
35. Dominican Republic
36. Thailand
37. Slovenia
38. Netherlands
39. Haiti
40. Japan
41. Singapore
42. Taiwan
43. Aruba
44. Spain
45. Paraguay
46. Burkina Faso
47. Israel
48. Macao
49. Cyprus
50. Liberia
51. Sri Lanka
52. Ghana
53. Slovakia
54. China
55. Kuwait
56. Switzerland
57. Unite Arab Emirates
58. Saudi Arabia
59. Egypt
60. South Africa
61. Qatar

March 2010

1. United States
2. South Africa
3. Philippians
4. Canada
5. United Kingdom
6. Malaysia
7. Germany
8. Jamaica
9. Bahamas
10. Malta
11. Trinidad & Tobago
12. Brazil
13. Columbia
14. Australia
15. India
16. New Zealand
17. Israel
18. Puerto Rico
19. Dominican Republic
20. Spain
21. Sweden
22. Japan
23. Poland
24. Korea
25. Taiwan
26. Mexico
27. Ecuador
28. Singapore
29. Peru
30. China
31. Netherlands
32. Denmark
33. Romania
34. Thailand
35. Costa Rica
36. Finland
37. Norway
38. Indonesia
39. Portugal
40. British Virgin Islands
41. Italy
42. Switzerland
43. United Arab Emirates
44. Guatemala
45. Kenya
46. Venezuela
47. Austria
48. Argentina
49. Greece
50. Ghana
51. Panama
52. Slovenia
53. Saudi Arabia
54. Ireland
55. Belgium
56. Haiti
57. Lebanon
58. Czech Republic

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More*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000.

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VITA

J. Todd Mullins

PERSONAL
- Born: September 17, 1966
- Married: Julie Davisson, June 20, 1987
- Children: Jefferson Todd II, October 24, 1995

EDUCATIONAL
B.A., Taylor University, 1987
MAR, Liberty University, 2006

MINISTERIAL
Ordination: February, 1987, Christ Fellowship Church, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

PROFESSIONAL
Student Ministries Pastor, Christ Fellowship Church, 1987-1997
Worship Pastor, Christ Fellowship Church, 1987-2005
Executive Pastor, Christ Fellowship Church, 2000-2010
Lead Pastor, Christ Fellowship Church, 2011-present

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES
Board Member, Place of Hope Children's Home, 2001-present
Board Member, Place of Hope International, 2000-present
Board of Trustees, Palm Beach Atlantic College, 2010-present
Pastoral Advisory Chair, First Care Crisis Pregnancy Centers, 2009- present
Associate Trainer, EQUIP, 2009-present