INTERNET TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS
TO MEET PASTORAL CARE NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

INTERNET TRAINING FOR LAY LEADERS TO MEET PASTORAL CARE NEEDS

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A review of current literature and ministry websites demonstrates that very little material is available online to assist ministry leaders and teachers with the pastoral needs issues they face in their ministries. Most ministry websites are information based rather than education based. Based on surveys and questionnaires sent to leaders and teachers, the project reviews educational website material and takes the reader though the process of developing a ministry educational website for their own ministry. The result is an educational website that may be further developed to equip for meeting pastoral care needs encountered in ministry

Abstract length: 96 words.
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INTRODUCTION

This research is designed to determine whether the internet can be used to effectively equip cell group leaders, deacons, ministry team leaders and teachers to meet the pastoral care needs that arise in their ministries. This practical theology project seeks to find if we can move beyond the information-based church website to an equipping-based website.

Many people are using the internet.¹ They already spend an average of 15 hours a week on the internet and youth use it as a matter of course. “Today, one out of every six adults (16%) spends some time visiting faith-oriented websites during a typical month. This is especially common among evangelicals: 41% visit such sites, compared to 18% of all other born again Christians and 10% of non-born again Americans.”² George Barna predicts that by 2010, 50 million people may be going to the internet seeking faith-based

¹ Aubrey and Michael Malphurs, Church Next (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 8, 95.

² www.barna.org, “More People Use Christian Media Than Attend Church”, March 14, 2005
experiences. 38.4% of all internet users are Christians and the internet poses tremendous challenges and opportunities for the church.³

People connect to the internet to gain information and to communicate. The most common activities according to a UCLA study were:

- Email
- Instant messaging
- Web browsing
- Entertainment
- Purchasing products
- Reading the news
- Requests for prayer

25% of internet users search for religious material.⁴

The internet offers another opportunity for churches to equip people for the work of the ministry. Communication, entertainment, games, information, shopping and training are a few of the uses people make of the internet. Why not use internet for ministry just as we use concerts, revivals and Vacation Bible School to meet people where they are? We must understand the cyber-seekers, the medium itself and determine how the church is going to respond to the growing influence of the Net on the world. We can seize the power of the net to supplement flesh and blood ministries.⁵

Internet ministry meets people where they are spending their time. Many people complain of having no time, they are so busy. Part of the reason they are so busy is time spent using the internet. Over the years in counseling the writer asked people who tell how busy they are, “How many hours of internet and television do you use each day?”

³ Andrew Careage, *eMinistry: Connecting with the Net Generation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), “8.4% (38) of all internet users are Christians (22) and the internet poses tremendous challenges and opportunities for the church (23).

⁴ Ibid., 121.

⁵ Ibid., 23, 25.
The common answer is, “Not much, just the news which sometimes I read on the internet and one or two programs.” Note they answer what they “do” rather than to answer the question as to how much “time they use.” Therefore, the writer summarizes and says, “You mean two to three hours a day?” to which they answer in the affirmative. That is 14-21 hours a week! With child rearing, personal care, house/yard management, and work hours, no wonder people are so busy. That is a large chunk of time out of the available 112 waking hours each week.

The writer would like to tell you that he has been successful in convincing people that they can free 1-2 days worth of time a week for other activities by limiting their internet and television usage, however, this has been by and large unsuccessful.

The internet can be a place of ministry as many receive ministry from Christian radio and television if not attending church programs. As more and more are disappointed with television content and are looking for a more interactive experience the popularity of the internet is growing. The internet is interactive, not passive. An example of interactive ministry is written web page sermons which incorporate hypertext links to passages, visuals, audio clips, and other online resources for an audience that wants to be involved and engaged.  

A casual survey of church websites reveals that most churches use the site to provide information about the mission, vision, programs and schedule of the church. A few in comparison provide online sermons that one can listen to. 19% of church website provide Bible study helps, and only 13% provide sermons in streaming audio. 

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6 Ibid., 37.

churches take their website a step further to provide training in topics of interest through a venue that is available 24/7?

Around the world the house church movement is spreading. Cell group ministry emphasis is expanding in the United States. In these smaller intimate gatherings people’s personal needs are going to come to the surface to a greater degree. Where will the leaders go for information to biblically minister to the pastoral care needs?

MY INTEREST IN THIS STUDY

As minister of Pastoral Care at First Baptist Roanoke the writer is interested in exploring the internet for training teachers and ministry teams in meeting pastoral care needs of others, also, to continue an international ministry to pastors through Medical Ministry International (MMI). The MMI ministry has taken this writer to five continents with new and return visits requested. The internet allows an ongoing ministry with the many wonderful people that relationships were established with on the trips. Currently the writer provides the internet Bible study to MMI staff and participants worldwide.

The writer is presently illiterate as to the educational training capacities of the internet. He merely e-mails a Bible study to be read. Through this research the writer hopes to become competent in web design especially in its educational and training capacities. The design developed will be tested with the teachers and ministry teams leaders at First Baptist. If effective the design may encourage other churches to expand their ministry in the internet realm.

The rationale for this project is that we are in an information revolution. The writer hopes this work will pave the way for ministries to expand their internet usage for
equipping purposes. Furthermore this can assist churches in their follow-up training of people touched by their mission endeavors.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question is: Can internet websites be developed as an effective training tool to equip people to assist in meeting the pastoral care needs of others?

This project will seek to:

1. Understand current capacities for internet training
2. Understand the limitations such as the average modem speeds of users
3. Understand the training needs and interests of the ministry team leaders and teachers at First Baptist-Roanoke, VA.
4. Develop a website to provide pastoral care training
5. Test the effectiveness of the training compared to class room training
6. Make appropriate adjustments

DEFINITIONS

There are a number of words whose definitions will clarify their use in this paper.

- Internet: an electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world. ⁸
- World Wide Web: a part of the Internet designed to allow easier navigation of the network through the use of graphical user interfaces and

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⁸ Merriam-Webster, m-w.com
hypertext links between different addresses — also called Web.\(^9\)

- E-mail: a means or system for transmitting messages electronically (as between computers on a network). Messages sent and received electronically through an e-mail system. (receives a lot of e-mail). The e-mail message itself (sent him an e-mail).\(^10\)

- Website: a group of World Wide Web pages usually containing hyperlinks to each other and made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization.\(^11\)

- Practical theology: the study of the institutional activities of religion (as preaching, church administration, pastoral care, and liturgics).\(^12\)

- Distance learning is the delivery of educational services where students are in one location and the instructor in another. It can include educational services delivered through cable or satellite hook-ups, the Internet, or an institution's intranet.\(^13\)

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid.

\(^11\) Ibid.

\(^12\) Ibid.


The world wide web and e-mail are two distinct parts of the internet. A website on the world wide web may have a provision for using e-mail, but they are two distinct functions.

LIMITATIONS

This is a practical, not a futuristic design. Current capacities include iPod download, streaming video and many others. These will be identified for future reference. However, they will not be used in the training design since the average computer user’s capacities do not currently include these. Certainly compact discs and iPod downloads for additional equipping of the participant may be made available, but go beyond the scope of this study. This study will not provide training to cover all of the many pastoral care needs-only one.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Three theoretical areas are combined in this research.

Missiology--the study of ministry commissioned by a religious organization to propagate its faith, in this instance going where people spend their leisure time.

Educational theory--the field of study that deals mainly with methods of teaching and learning, in this instance using the latest tools and techniques to train.

Pastoral care counseling/discipleship—Encourage and equip people to maturity in their relationship to God and to one another.

14 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, m-w.com.

15 Ibid.
METHODOLOGY

The methodology for the research of this paper is fairly straightforward. At the current level of general internet usage will lay church leaderships and teachers benefit from training placed on a website or not? The method follows:

1. Learn how to set up a website.
2. Learn the current website capacities.
3. Survey the ministry team leaders and teachers. Ask what is the most frequent pastoral care needs they encounter that they would like training for. The initial sample will be about 130 surveys.
4. Survey their level of usage and technical capacity for internet training.
5. Prepare the training.
6. Place it on the website.
7. Test and evaluate the effectiveness of the training.

With this procedure it will be determined if church websites with current technical and user limitations can be used for effective leadership and teacher training.

SUMMARY AND CONTENT OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction. The introduction will include the statement of the problem, the statement of limitations, the theoretical basis for the project, a statement of methodology, a review of the literature, and a draft copy of any research instruments and letters to be used.

Chapter 2: Website design and set up operations. This chapter will explore the techniques of setting up a Christian ministry web page.
Chapter 3: Distance learning website design. This chapter will research the components of effective distance learning design to be applied to the pastoral care website.

Chapter 4: Pastoral Care website set up. This chapter will relate the experience of presenting the survey, the response and the results. Then a website will be designed and set up based on the researched criteria and the survey results.

Chapter 5: Evaluation of Results. The effectiveness of the website is evaluated with a follow-up survey.

Chapter 6: Conclusion. Summary and recommendations for future study

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is no lack of material on the educational use of the internet, or pastoral training. Literature searches combining the two areas resulted in no finds. The closest find with “internet pastoral care training” was the result of a Google search at http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/pastoral.htm. This website provided links to other websites offering articles, syllabi, or academic opportunities. None were found that provided actual training.

The head start website on technology and education provided a complete bibliography which was augmented with the latest books from Amazon.com and Google searches.

The need for this project is demonstrated by the fact that not one title on developing a Christian ministry training website could be found. However, a Google search revealed hundreds of sources of Christian website designers. Surely one of these
could develop a website for a price. Many may wish to use this approach. However, like car repairs, some are just willing to take it to the mechanic and tell them what they want done. Others might like to understand the mechanics and technology before going to the mechanic so just the necessary work is accomplished.
INTRODUCTION

If the writer were to summarize his experience with web page design it would be summed up in one word—none. The purpose of writing this chapter is to gain experience in ministry web site design. Coming from a large church that has a web design and maintenance team, one might wonder why go through this exercise. The writer believes he can better work with that team when he knows some about web design himself. Others with little or no experience with web design may profit by going though this experience as well.

Jewell recommends that one learn the lessons of Digital Entertainment Network when designing a webpage: 1. Understand the group you propose to reach; 2. Be absolutely clear about the message you intend to send; 3. Understand the technology you intend to use and availability; 4. Have a plan and principles of delivering message; and 5. Have all your team on board.¹

He further suggests, that the rush to implement technology is a rush to mediocrity.² Planning includes: Develop a total ministry plan, develop a total technology

² Ibid., 72.
plan, involve all stakeholders in the plan, plan to address resistance, develop a plan for implementation, and develop a plan for maintenance.  

Although the writer knows little about web site design, He has visited many websites and they all present pretty much the same. The sameness includes the name, side bar, link buttons, even search buttons. The visitor may read their headlines or if looking for something special, the visitor might follow the links or read their next pages.

Good designs are simple, and inviting. They involve you. The catchy websites have a headline, start the article on the front page and like a newspaper or magazine lead one into the inner pages. Then they provide an index or archive of other information.

Careage writes, “The internet is interactive not passive. Written web page sermons incorporate hypertext links to passages, visuals, audio clips, and other online resources for an audience that wants to be involved and engaged.”

Links to other web pages lead viewers away from their website. They are not like a reference to another book or article that you have to go find on a bookshelf or magazine rack. Links are a mouse button press away.

It is important to focus on a target audience rather than trying to reach everyone with everything. The more precisely your target audience is the more efficiently and effectively information can be presented.

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3 Ibid., 79-82.
5 Andrew Careage, eMinistry: Connecting with the Net Generation (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001), 37.
6 Williams and Tollet, 81.
With these observations and the desire to learn, there are some questions that need to be answered. These are based on Careage’s and Jewell’s suggestions along the conversations with Will Sawyer, a teacher who increases communication with his students on a website. The writer calls them tough questions because it is easier to plow into the design and end up in appearance like every other website.

THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

The questions to be answered before the web design takes place include:

Who do you want to reach?
What age range?
What level of maturity?
What culture?
What level of computer expertise?
What computer speed?
Why do you want to reach them?
What do you want to say to those you reach?
What is the best way to present the information?
What is the way that they will most likely respond to your outreach?
Will they want to return to your site? Why?
How will they find you (your site)?
Will they remember how to return?
How much do you want to spend?

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7 John Jewell, New Tools for a New Century (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002). Jewell suggests planning by asking questions. The writer has expanded the questions in conversations with Dr Will Sawyer.
In design

In promotion

How much do you want to make?

How much time do you have to design the page?

How much time each week do you want to maintain the page?

How much interaction do you want?

How many emails can you answer?

Do you have people to monitor the chat room?

Who can help you?

Have you thought about spam from your email address?

How much time in prayer have you spent on this matter?

Would you like to pray with these questions in mind?

How do you pray?

Do you want this to be another information providing web site or one that reaches people and results in a spiritual change to the glory of The Lord? Questions beg for an answer. The writer’s considerations and ponderings follow.

Who do you want to reach?

What age range? The writer wants to reach 40 – 60 year olds. This age range is most likely to be the leaders, Sunday School teachers and cell group leaders who would desire the information on the site. They have a similar computer literacy and usage compared to the 20-40 year olds who are more sophisticated in their usage, or the n-
generation. These seem to think computers and the internet are body parts along with the cell phone.

**What level of maturity?** This is not an evangelism website, it is an equipping or training website. People come here not to be entertained, but to learn, not that learning cannot and should not be entertaining. Since it is learning interaction is important.

**What culture?** The writer is not attempting to reach the youth culture, but is interested in the site reaching Christian leaders and teachers in different cultures where he has ministered, the Caribbean, Western and Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia, Ghana, and Peru, as well as the USA. Careage writes, “Seize the power of the net to supplement flesh and blood ministries.”

**What level of computer and internet expertise?** People connect to the internet to gain information and to communicate. The most common activities according to a UCLA study were: e-mail, instant messaging, web browsing, entertainment, purchasing products, reading the news, and requests for prayer.9 The intended audience will probably have used the computer and internet for:

- Email
- Instant messaging
- Web browsing
- Entertainment
- Purchasing products
- Reading the news
- Requests for prayer
- Editing pictures

They are less likely to have used the internet for:
- Listening to sermons

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8 Careage, *eMinistry*. 25.

9 Aubrey Malphurs, and Michael Malphurs, *Church Next* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2003), 121.
- Watching videos of the news
- Downloading music on an iPod
- Downloading sermons on an iPod
- Chat rooms
- Blogging

They are more likely to spend time at a website if it is:
- Fast
- Has few pictures
- Has interaction
- Has a lot of reading
- Has questions to interact with
- Can email questions

**What computer speed?**

Most other countries are limited by speed and money. They pay for phone line time and internet usage minutes separately. High speed to them is 56 kbps. That means the website needs to be designed for quick download.

**Why do you want to reach them?**

As minister of Pastoral Care at First Baptist Roanoke the writer is interested in exploring the internet for training teachers and ministry teams in meeting pastoral care needs of others, also, to continue an international ministry to pastors through Medical Ministry International (MMI). The MMI ministry has taken the writer to five continents with new and return visits requested. The internet allows him to have an ongoing ministry with the many wonderful people he has established a relationship with. Currently he provides the internet Bible study to MMI staff and participants worldwide. A pastoral care website for training will be available 24/7 for reference.

**What do you want to say to those you reach?**
People’s concerns and questions are teachable moments. Knowing how to assist them in these times becomes discipleship opportunities. They remember these brief moments with you more than many sermons. Years later they will remark on how you helped them and even repeat what you said. This is important to grasp these moments and provide biblical wisdom. It is the sum total of these moments, life experiences, time with the Lord in His Word and prayer, and many sermons that moves people to spiritual maturity as much as we might like for maturity to happen in a week.

What is the best way to present the information?

On the front page present a weekly featured question that people might ask a leader like, “I know I should pray, but my mind wanders. What can I do about that?” or “I would like to take that leadership position you mentioned, but I have so much to do, how do you get it all done?” The front page will also provide the content to draw them into the training process so they go to the next pages.

The following pages continue the training with a practical suggestion for the person to do. The writer has a list of scores of these types of questions from years of counseling. The third part is an archive of other questions previously covered. The purpose of the weekly theme question is to keep it interesting so people return to the site. This would also provide a progressive way to develop the site.

What is the way that they will most likely respond to your outreach?

The writer hopes that it is interesting and practical enough that the teacher or leader applies it in their own life, then they will be most prepared to share it with others. Secondly, having the archives there they can return to the site for review.
Will they want to return to your site? Why? Will they remember how to return?

What address will they remember?

They will want to return because real life questions are addressed with scripture in a practical way. There is a new feature question each week. There is an archive for review. Some ideas come to mind such as www.caretraining.firstroanoke.com if the writer attaches it as a sub website to our church’s website. Other ideas include www.biblecounsel.com. Hopefully people will make it part of their favorites.

How will they find you? (your site) How are you going to promote it?

The four ministries the writer works with either on the Board of Directors or as Staff reach about 30,000 people. There will be links on Medical Ministry International, Ministry to Evangelize and Equip International, First Baptist Church- Roanoke and Total Life Counseling. Also since the writer is doing seminars for the SBCV they may be interested in linking to the site. The writer does not envision buying magazine or radio advertising.

How much do you want to spend? How much time do you have to design the page?

The writer would like to keep the design cost at less than $200. The writer does not have a promotion budget. The writer plans to maintain the site himself so he does not need a $45,000 a year webmaster, thus income is not necessary. It is hoped that two work weeks to design the site and place it on line will be adequate.

How much time each week do you want to maintain the page?
Websites must always be new and fresh or people will stop coming to them. It is hoped that two hours each week to update with new material will be adequate. The material will be from classes the writer teaches.

**How much interaction do you want? How many emails can you answer? Do you have people to monitor the chat room?**

My skills are face to face, so minimum email is desired. The writer hopes to develop a web site where people interact with the scriptures as it relates to pastoral care needs. A chat room is not in the plans for this web page.

**Who can help you develop the site?**

Teams should be composed of people with theological understanding and some with technological expertise. It is paramount to keep in mind community with your planning, theology, and biblical foundations. Helpers will include:

- Will Sawyer has a ministry oriented web page.
- Keith is the chairman of our church’s web ministry team.
- Sammy Vargis, my son in law, is a web designer.

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10 Malphus, 120.


12 Ibid., 41-43.
Mark Peterson, my son, is a Manager of Information Services for a corporation.

**Have you thought about spam from your email address?**

Yes, how can this be managed? The writer’s church email address appears to be fairly well protected. The new hosting sites also have spam filters. By using several email accounts for differing purposes such as personal email, correspondence with students and another for commercial purposes may reduce spam to the personal and students accounts.

**How much time in prayer have you spent on this matter? Would you like to pray with these questions in mind? How do you pray?**

We are instructed to pray without ceasing.\(^{13}\) This practice is enhanced by adding “LORD” to one’s thoughts. For example, “What should I wear today... LORD?” “That guy just cut me off I would like to get him!... Lord.” When one involves the Lord in daily life perspectives change very quickly.

The “That guy just cut me off I would like to get him!... Lord.” Turns into, “And Lord, I pray that he will get to where he in going safely, and that if he does not know you that someone will share with him today.” Attitudes change very quickly adding, “Lord”.

In developing this paper, website or in facing any tribulation wisdom is available upon request.\(^{14}\) When the creator of the universe wants to provide wisdom it only makes sense to seek it.

\(^{13}\) I Thessalonians 5:17.  
\(^{14}\) James 1:3-7.
The acronym “ACTS” is a useful method to use for more intensive times of prayer. It stands for A-Adoration, C-Confession, T-Thanksgiving and S-Supplication. The writer has used this for years. However, in light of the Lord’s prayer he has felt that the acronym was incomplete. While studying the Lord’s prayer a year ago a new acronym became apparent to him using the that prayer as a model. The acronym is P.R.A.Y.E.R.S.\textsuperscript{15}


**R-Respect.** "Holy is your name.” Nehemiah 9 gives us the content of respect. Blessed (honored, happy, content) be your glorious name, may it be exalted above all blessing and praise.\textsuperscript{6} You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you. "You are the LORD God, who chose people to serve you. You have kept your promises because you are righteous.” The passage continues listing fulfilled promises.

**A-Ask.** “Give us today our daily bread.” God is pleased when our prayers include benefit for others as well. “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock

\textsuperscript{15} Matthew 6:5-15 NIV.
and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! 12 So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, (Matthew 7).

Y-Yield. "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
Today, I present my body holy and pleasing to you. Today, I present my mind to know and do your good, acceptable and perfect will. Let me assess myself realistically in this situation and rely on your working. (Romans 12:1-5).

E-Empty sin. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."
Today I forgive ____. Forgive me for _____. Colossians 3 gives use areas to empty in confession and forgiveness.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

R-Request guidance. "And lead us not into temptation,"

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives
generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. 6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, James 1.

S-Succeed “but deliver us from the evil one.” Satan brings death, deceit, and destruction. God brings life, truth and construction. “4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.” (I John 5)

This acronym is going to be presented on the practice website.

Do you want this to be another information providing web site, or one that reaches people and results in a spiritual change to the glory of The Lord?

Spiritual change is desired. It is important to remember that 25% of internet users search for religious material. Internet users prefer online teaching to any other online religious endeavor. 16 This site will be developed with teaching in mind.

Are there other questions I need to answer?

What does my web provider offer as far as templates, space, for the cost? 17 This will be further researched.

DOING THE EASY TASKS

In this section research will determine what makes for effective website design. Web pages of churches or ministries will be examined and evaluated against the researched items. The information for the practice website will be written out and the

16 Aubrey and Michael Malphurs, Church Next, 136-7.

page will be designed. A web designer or web program will be found. A domain name will be chosen and registered. And the site will be placed on line for viewing.

**Reading about web page design**

For this study the writer placed this step after the planning questions for he did not want to be influenced by the approach others have taken before he researched the topic. Here are some pointers the writer thought were important from the research. To have a fast download:

1. Use few graphics.\(^{18}\)
2. Use several small pages rather than one large one.\(^{19}\)
3. The initial pages should be small, the latter pages may be larger.\(^{20}\)
4. Use **bold** graphics and colors.\(^{21}\)
5. Be clear, you have ten seconds to make an impression and spark interest. Do not use a personal greeting, get to the content.\(^{22}\)
6. Choose 640x480 resolution.

Other important considerations include:

1. Making a GIF graphic for the headline limits the search ability.\(^{23}\)

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\(^{19}\) Ibid., 70-72.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 73.

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 78.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 89.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 31.
2. Don’t make people guess what’s new on your site, promote it, display it and lead with it.

3. Don’t let the front page hide your content. Make it the content itself. 24

4. The front page is the place to start experiencing your content immediately. 25

5. Regular new content builds a relationship with your readers. 26

6. Remember hypertext leads people away from your website. 27

All these suggestions make common sense, although the writer has never thought of them. Ministry websites do appear to attempt to accomplish too much on the front page and as a result may lose their audience unless they are looking for something specific. If the website visitor is looking for something specific they will go deeper into the site beyond the simple front page. A front page that captures the surfer may lead them into more interest. Next, ministry websites will be examined in light of these suggestions.

**Study of other web pages**

This section examines how other training websites are designed with view to training, or secondly, how informational websites include the training aspect. This is no way intended to be critical, but evaluative of these websites as a learning experience. These are sites of friends or visited often by the writer who has not evaluated the effectiveness of websites until this time.

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24 Ibid., 96.

25 Ibid., 97.

26 Ibid., 100.

27 Ibid., 108.
Hopefully the reader, if they are as lacking of a discerning eye as this writer has been, will examine their own favorite sites and build better ones.

The first website examined is Dr. Will Sawyer’s. The writer thought that his would be close to what he envisioned as Sawyer explained it.

**Evaluation**

What was found in evaluating Dr Will Sawyer’s web page was that he:

1. Uses few graphics.
2. Uses several small pages rather than one large one.
3. The initial pages were small, the latter pages were larger.
4. Uses no bold graphics and colors.
5. Uses a personal greeting--and the greeting is wordy and confusing.
6. Choose 640x480 resolution.

Other important considerations include:

1. Makes people guess what’s new.
2. Hides content.
3. The Hypertext leads people away from the website.

The following websites violated most these suggestions. Some did have headline content presented such as Barna’s website. However, the headline is lost in the maze of all the material. The front page is packed with articles, updates and hyper links. It is almost three pages long.

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28 Dr. Will Sawyer’s Web page http://www.rev.net/~wsteach/ssclass.htm

29 www.barna.org.
One would think of George Barna’s website as being educational for many go to it to get research information. With the headlines are on the front page the search is not easy.

Dr. Tom Constable’s web site\(^{30}\) provides a Bible commentary. The front page is attractive, simple, and invites one into deeper study. He provides only one hyper link away from the site on the front page. Dr. Constable uses few graphics, several small pages rather than one large one and bold graphics and colors.

The American Association of Christian Counselors offers much training, however it needs to be purchased, it is not available on line. The AACC Webpage is essentially a clutter of advertisements.\(^{31}\) It has too much information. The site uses many graphics. Instead of using several small pages it uses one large one. It does use bold graphics and colors. If it takes ten seconds to make an impression and spark interest this site fails. People would have to guess what’s new on this site though there is much promotion. The front page hides the content. There is no obvious new content apart from events. The hypertext leads people away from the website.

The Immanuel Bible Church Web\(^{32}\) page is an attractive church site which offers teaching with on line listening and iPod downloads. They are not easy to find. They do change their site regularly. Sometimes it is clear and sometime it has too many confusing pictures.

\(^{30}\) http://www.soniclight.com/.

\(^{31}\) www.aacc.net.

\(^{32}\) www.immanuelbible.net.
The Heritage Baptist web page\textsuperscript{33} offers no headlines pictures or graphics to draw one in. It appears to be a site for information for the members.

First Baptist-Roanoke\textsuperscript{34} is another pretty maze of information with nothing to draw one in. It is even had to find information one is looking for.

These websites are continually changing and the evaluation was helpful.

\textbf{First attempt at a webpage design.}

The writer has never designed even the basic personal website. The steps taken to build a simple beginning website are recorded here so that other novices might be encouraged that God can do more than we ask or imagine even though us.

The writer wondered, "What does my internet provider offer?" My provider is sbc.yahoo.net. Here is the email the writer sent and their reply.

\begin{quote}
Do you provide a personal website as part of my monthly fee? How many MB of space? Do you provide me with a FTP to communicate with my website? Can I register a domain name of do you assign me one?

Thank you,

Dave
\end{quote}

Their reply:

\begin{quote}
Dear Dave,

Thank you for contacting SBC Yahoo! Email Support.

I understand your concern regarding this matter.

I would like to bring to your notice that you can setup your personal web page at www.geocities.com, you are allotted 15 MB of web page space for your personal web page, and it is free with your SBC Yahoo! account. Please visit \url{http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/geo/} for further information on setting up your personal web page at www.geocities.com. In addition, FTP is a premium service that means that you have to pay for
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{33} www.heritagebc.net.

\textsuperscript{34} www.firstroanoke.com.
using FTP. You may contact one of our customer care representatives at 1-877-469-7847 for further information.

If you wish to set up a completely professional and commercial website with your own domain name, I suggest that you contact SBC web hosting service. Visit the link www.webhosting.com to obtain information about what SBC web hosting service has to offer. You may want to contact one of the customer care representatives at 1-888-WEB-HOSTING to find out that package suits your needs the best. You may want to visit http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/webhosting before calling the above-mentioned number as the link contains most of the information that one may need to set up website hosting through Yahoo!.

This should take care of your issue. However, if your problem persists, please contact us and refer to Case ID 105484801.

Please remember to visit our help-site at http://help.sbcglobal.net/ for resolutions to the most common problems. From that site, you may contact our Chat Support anytime by clicking Online Chat under the Contact Us section. You may also call us anytime 1-866-SBC-DIAL.

It has been my pleasure helping you today. Thank you for using SBC Internet Services.

Sincerely,
Cathy
SBC Dial Tech Support Specialist

Other information is provided on how to find and register your website in Malphur’s, Church Next, pg 144.

The writer went to http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/geo/ and followed their simple instructions starting with “build your own website.” Templates were provided for the use of the website builder. There was a space for a headline, picture and content. One could use their provided picture or import their own. The writer imported one from his own pictures file. Text on prayer was transferred by cutting and pasting from a Word document. It was very easy and required little help to set up a website.

If the reader goes to the site by clicking
They will see advertisements in the right column including at times for prayer shawls. These are not the writer’s ads, but those that Geocities places on this site in trade for it being “free.” The purchase of one’s own web site for a monthly fee, or the attachments on the church web site removes these ads.

Thus, using the provider, a web design program was found. The written material on prayer (P.R.A.Y.E.R.S.) was transferred. A domain name was chosen and registered. And the site was placed on line for viewing.

THE DISCIPLINE OF MAINTAINING A WEB SITE

The discipline of having a website is to maintain it, promote it and improve it. Adjustments and improvements are made by going to http://help.yahoo.com/help/us/geo/

If one wishes to edit a file, you can either choose the editor or the file first. All of the editors can be launched directly from the GeoCities homepage, or you can open the File Manager to choose the file first, then the editor.

Editing can be accomplished by using the html or the original page maker. Html stands for hypertext markup language. It is used to create hypertext and hypermedia documents on the World Wide Web incorporating text, graphics, sound, video, and hyperlinks. A sample of the html follows:

```html
<html>
<head>
<title>on PRA YERS</title>
<meta name="generator" content="Created Using Yahoo! Wizards 2.61.65">
</head>
```

35 www.m-w.com.
The writer is glad that websites can be made and adjusted without knowing HTML. He uses the page maker.

Information for the maintenance of the website can be found through the statistics. Statistics about the website can be found by clicking "stats" at GeoCities homepage. Here we find:

Summary Report
This report highlights the overall page statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total page views to date</th>
<th>2 in September 201</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest monthly page views</td>
<td>100.00% use MSIE 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most popular browser visitors use</td>
<td>63.34% have 1280x10:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most common screen resolution visitors have</td>
<td>100.00% of visitors link fro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This page is linked to most often from this URL</td>
<td><a href="http://www.geocities.com/dpeterson@prodigy.net/on_PRAYERS.htm">http://www.geocities.com/dpeterson@prodigy.net/on_PRAYERS.htm</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marketing can be accomplished by sending your site name to a number of sites.

Filing one form may be sent to as many as fifteen directories.\(^{36}\) These are available here for future reference.

**Website Search**

- Fast to Deploy. Easy to Manage. Get Google For Your Website.
- Boost your traffic with website directories - A Promotion Guide
- Website promotion tips: How to get into website directories.
- www.apromotionguide.com/director.html - 18k - Cached - Similar pages
- Free website promotion tutorial - A Promotion Guide
- Offers free website promotion advice on search engines and directories.
- www.apromotionguide.com/ - 24k - Sep 12, 2005 - Cached - Similar pages
- Search engines, website directories, international website ...
- International website directory and search engine with list of website

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directories
and search engines from world wide, chat, top site, traffic builder, ...
www.bhanvad.com/ - 30k - Cached - Similar pages

Website Directories
A list of directories in which to list your website.
www.mediacollege.com/internet/promotion/directories.html - 6k - Cached - Similar pages

The rush to implement technology is a rush to mediocrity. The writer desires to present a site that is interactive, useful, and biblical. This is a practice site before expanding to a distance learning educational pastoral care website.

Conclusion

At the commencement of this project the writer had browsed and entered many websites. He did not evaluate them, nor know how to make one. Until this time he had no need to. Now at the conclusion of this project he not only knows now to develop and maintain a web site, he has one to build upon with knowledgeable evaluation. Furthermore he now knows enough to begin interacting with the church website ministry team.

In my dissertation the writer plans to expand next to a complete training page that is tested and evaluated by a sample of about 120 Bible study teachers and church leaders.

INTRODUCTION

In this section the essentials of effective educational website design will be considered. Other names authors use for this design include Web Based Training (WBT), Web Based Distant Education (WBDE), and Web Based Distance Learning (WBDL). These will be used interchangeably.

The effective educational website design is more than an informational source, such as one might observe on many church websites, which do more to inform their congregation than train them. These websites provide information on time and place of services and activities. Some websites offer articles or sermons online to equip the internet user, but these are not featured on the home page and are located deeper into the website.

The effective web page design goals identified and utilized in previous chapters in this paper are the basis on which the educational website is built. In review, first the front page needs to provide the content that will draw the student into the learning process, and ultimately deeper into the website. On the front page, a weekly featured question may be presented that people might ask, such as, “I know I should pray, but my mind wanders.”
What can I do about that?” or “I would like to take that leadership position you
mentioned, but I have so much to do, how do you get it all done?”

Secondly, the following pages continue the training with a practical suggestion for
the person to use in meeting the pastoral care need. The third part is an archive of other
pastoral care questions previously covered on the website. The purpose of the weekly
d regularly question is to keep it interesting so people return to the site. This would also
provide a progressive way to develop the site.

The purpose of this paper is to design and provide pastoral care training. The
learner is not motivated by grades, finances or professional advancement. The learner is
motivated only by the desire to effectively minister to others. Therefore, the
equipping/training to meet these needs is at the forefront of this web page design and the
effective website lessons learned in chapter two are utilized. In addition in this chapter
the writer is seeking to understand the distinctive of web based learning.

The design of a distance learning website or web based learning has additional
factors to consider:

- The distinctive of web-based learning
- The approach
- The framework
- Organized learning sequences
- Activated learning
- Tests and exercises
- Motivated learning
- The evaluation

Distant Learning Websites will be examined and development questions answered.
UTILIZE EFFECTIVE WEBSITE DESIGN LESSONS

The lessons learned in earlier chapters of this paper about web page set up and design apply to this distance learning design as well. They follow. To have a fast download:

1. Use few graphics.¹
2. Use several small pages rather than one large one.²
3. The initial pages should be small, the latter pages may be larger.³
4. Use bold graphics and colors.⁴
5. Be clear, you have ten seconds to make an impression and spark interest. Do not use a personal greeting, get to the content.⁵
6. Choose 640x480 resolution.

Other important considerations include:

1. Making a GIF graphic for the headline limits the search ability.⁶
2. Don’t make people guess what’s new on your site, promote it, display it and lead with it.
3. Don’t let the front page hide your content. Make it the content itself.⁷
4. The front page is the place to start experiencing your content immediately.⁸

¹ Jeffery Veen, Hot Wired Style (San Francisco: Publishers Group West, 1997), 65-69.
² Ibid., 70-72.
³ Ibid., 73.
⁴ Ibid., 78.
⁵ Ibid., 89.
⁶ Ibid., 31.
⁷ Ibid., 96.
5. Regular new content builds a relationship with your readers.⁹

6. Remember hypertext leads people away from your website.¹⁰

A front page that captures the learner or surfer may lead them into more interest.

UNDERSTANDING THE DISTINCTIVE OF WEB BASED LEARNING

What sets an educational website apart from an informational website? Web Based Distant Education (WBDE) strategies are best understood in comparison with traditional learning strategies—lectures and printed materials. These will be considered from the perspectives of the source (instructor) the information management and the receiver (student).

In a lecture the instructor sets the content, duration, environment, place, style, time, testing and transmission. The student determines alertness and may ask questions for clarification. In WBDE, the role of the instructor is different than in traditional classroom-based instruction. In classroom-based instruction, instructors actively teach the class, and the communication is Source originated. In contrast, WBDE puts the teacher in a more passive role. The communication is student originated, and the role of the instructor is more of a course manager than teacher.¹¹

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⁸ Ibid., 97.
⁹ Ibid., 100.
¹⁰ Ibid., 108.
Lecture

The instructor in printed material sets the style, content, and transmission. The learner/receiver chooses the time, place, environment, duration and has more control in the testing. The learner/receiver forms opinions about the content.

Printed material

The instructor in a web-based distance education only suggests style and content. The learner chooses the place, environment, content, transmission and testing. The learner asks questions, forms opinions and may publish a blog about the course. Even the computer equipment the learner uses can have an effect on the performance of an online
class. There is no guarantee that the learner will select the message intended by the instructor.

Web Based Distance Education

SOURCE               INFORMATION MANAGEMENT            RECEIVER

Internet communication involves constant two-way feedback. In traditional communication models, feedback occurs after a message is received. It is also usually implied that feedback originates from the receiver. With Internet communications, both the source (the web site) and the receiver (student/user) constantly change roles. When users request information, they are the source and the web site is the receiver.

Conversely, when the web site transmits the information, it is the source and the users are the receivers. Neither can function without constant feedback. The Figures illustrate an internet communication model compared to the traditional. The user interface is very prominent for all communication must first go through it.

Effective web based education must then be learner based. The learners (receivers) initiate the communication when they want, for how long they want, in what order they want, and in what form they want. Unlike other forms of communication, the

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
learner controls the most variables. For example, in television and radio, the communication is released at a set time and is delivered in a format that is not controllable by the receiver. When the broadcast ends, the information is no longer available to the receiver. With Internet communication, the receiver controls all of these variables and maintains access to all of the information all of the time.14

Distance learning may be highly structured with a lot of interactions and monitoring of the learner. On the other hand, the learner may have full responsibility for proceeding with the course, evaluating and mastering of the material or the skill.15 The latter represents the approach of this writer, so the material needs to be highly motivational. Adult learner preferences are consistent with the less structured website learner approach. The adult learner prefers hands-on activities, observations of the process, and questions and answers. They prefer graphics over text.16

The benefits of this type of distance learning is that the learner learns at their own pace in a convenient locale. They may learn about subjects not learned in classes. They learn according to their preferred mode of learning. They practice using different technology, and they direct their own learning.17

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14 Ibid.,


16 Ibid., 10.

17 Brush, Effective Web Design, 13-16.
People remember 10% of what they hear, 50% of what they see and 90% of what they do.\(^{18}\) Therefore, it is important to have practice on how this is applied in the learner’s sphere of influence.\(^{19}\) Web learning uses more senses.\(^{20}\)

Studies reveal that there is no significant difference between classroom, correspondence or web based training in effectiveness.\(^{21}\) However, both have their advantages.\(^{22}\) Show them. Tell them. Let them try. Repeat the process\(^ {23}\) works well in both contexts.

Howard Hendrick’s statement is true especially in Web-based training, “The teacher is primarily a stimulator, not the player, but the coach who excites and directs the players.”\(^ {24}\)


\(^{19}\) Ibid., 82.

\(^{20}\) Porter, 39.


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 55.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 15.

DESIGNING A DISTANCE LEARNING WEBSITE
HAS ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER

• THE APPROACH

Set the teaching objectives. These include the following: 25

The learners
The results
The application
The degree of success

The learners in the pastoral care training are ministry leaders and teachers. The desired result is to be able to use scriptural pastoral care solutions for people’s concerns. How is this applied? Leaders and teachers will have access to online biblical resources and counsel online. The degree of success will be measured by when teachers and leaders routinely seek information to give biblical counsel to meet pastoral care needs.

• THE FRAMEWORK

The course name importance lies in learner’s ability to predict the goals, approach and subject matter just by reading the title. 26 Easy navigation is also imperative in the framework of the website. Regardless of how good a site looks and how much useful

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25 Horton, Designing Web Based Training, 12.

26 Ibid., 73.
information it offers, if a site doesn't have a sensible navigation scheme, it will confuse visitors and turn them away.  

The material must be important, relevant, interesting, moving, colorful and appealing. "Traditionally, the aesthetics of course materials are left to professional print publications in the form of a textbook. In WBDE the instructor is often called upon to not only design the course sequence, but also the visual presentation of the material being taught. It may sound like a trivial aspect of higher education, but the visual appeal and usability of the information being taught does affect how willing a student is to use the material. This is one reason that textbook publishers release new editions of their books every few years."  

The assistance of a web-designers in the development and maintenance of the Distance Learning Website was discussed earlier. The purpose of this exercise is to understand the plan and workings or the process so the author can better work with a team.  

Readability is important in the initial impression and continuation with the website. The presentation of textual material on a computer monitor can also be a significant source of distraction and pose problems not encountered in print material. Because computer monitors, particularly laptops, have a resolution inferior to that of the printed page, reading text on a computer screen is more difficult and time consuming than reading printed text. As Bill Hill, a typography expert working for Microsoft,

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27Ibid., 12.

28 Brush. PAGE NUMBER
observed,29 “The text should be 3” wide using 12 point fonts.” The solution to the resolution problem in WBDE is to present textual information in a font size that is larger than usual. A 10-point font is standard for printed text, but online text should be presented in a 12-point font to compensate for the resolution difference.” 30 For text-heavy pages, it is less strenuous to read if the text is constrained to a few inches of width with ample spacing between the lines (Williams, 1998).31 More pages are better than packed text.

The website should be active, participatory, and have a fast download of 6 sec. “Download time is the amount of time it takes for a web page to completely display on a user’s computer screen after entering the web site’s address. The industry standard of a good download time is six seconds or less. If a page takes too long to download, a student may lose interest in the class and discontinue the session. To keep download times short, graphics, animation, and music should only be used when they are pertinent to the lesson.”32

It appears that most websites home pages violate this principle by trying to see how many pictures and how much text can be placed on one page.

Organize for the receiver’s convenience and purpose. “A well designed user interface should move a user through a lesson or activity as efficiently as possible, with a

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30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.
minimum of disorientation (noise), and with as clear of a purpose as possible. 33 If the site does not address their purpose, why try to have them hang around? They probably won’t anyway.

Avoid hypertext. Hypertext can also be a significant source of distraction in WBDE. The ability to link to resources off of the class web site is an asset, but it can lead to distraction in the students. As soon as a student clicks on a link that takes them offsite, the instructor loses control of the presentation of information. The instructor also risks losing the student completely. 34

Delivery methods include: Audio, simple text, video, graphics, animation, real-time applications such as chat rooms and web conferencing, and any combination of these. All are all options for delivering course materials to students in a WBDE environment. 35

The mode of feedback is the method of interaction. Can the student interact with the instructor, other students, technical help, or tutoring? E-mail, instant messaging, online chat rooms, list servers, telephone, and video conferencing are all methods of interaction.

Without feedback, there can be no communication over the Internet. Feedback from the user tells the source when the user is ready for the next bit of information to be transmitted. Likewise, feedback from the source tells the user what information is available. No Internet communications model could exist without feedback. 36

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
Create the course with short self-contained modules, usable pieces of information that the learner can find quickly.\textsuperscript{37} Use large graphics and multimedia.\textsuperscript{38}

- ORGANIZED LEARNING SEQUENCES

William Horton in \textit{Designing Web Based Training} identifies the sections important to the learning sequences. Those useful for our approach include: introduction page, the "featured example" page, the "event play back" page, the procedure page, related resources page, the summary page, and the feedback page.

The introduction page establishes the subject and characteristics of the lesson. It prepares the learner for the activities of the lesson. It motivates. This page includes a complete title, context, goals, requirements, preparation, menu of the contents and invitation to continue.\textsuperscript{39}

The "featured example" page presents a single example or case study with commentary to present life-like reality. The commentary answers the questions. "What does the example show?" "Why is it important, how typical is it?" "What should I notice in the example?" "How can I learn form what the example showed?" \textsuperscript{40}

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Porter, \textit{Creating the Virtual Classroom}, 129.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Horton, \textit{Designing Web Based Training}, 59.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 151-152.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 158-159.
\end{itemize}
The “event play back” page lets the learners review a previously recorded live event, like a sermon or lecture. This page includes the event title, presenter, photograph of the presenter, icon to play the event, transcript and summary.41

The procedure page provides clear instructions on how to do something. This page guides the learner through the steps in a process. This page includes a title of what the procedure accomplishes, the prerequisites if any, confirmation indicators of success and trouble shooting.42

The related resources page provides pointers to information the learner may need. It may include background concepts, basic fundamentals, treatments in greater detail, complete real world examples, and practical applications on the subject.43

The summary page recaps all the important ideas. It is concise with instructions to the learner to act, mnemonics to make the key points memorable and formatted in a way it may be printed out for review.44

The feedback page invites the learners to evaluate the effectiveness of the lesson and suggest improvements. It captures comments and suggestions while they are fresh in the learner’s minds and provides buttons to submit feedback.45

• ACTIVATING LEARNING

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41 Ibid., 163-164.
42 Ibid., 166.
43 Ibid., 154-155.
44 Ibid., 156-157.
Proven and flexible classroom learning techniques are applicable on the internet. These include lectures given by webcast, reading of material on the web browser, drill and practice activities, guided research, case studies, role-playing scenarios and hands-on activities.

Webcasts use a network to transmit a traditional training event. The format may be a lecture or a sermon followed by questions to be answered by the learner. Other forms of webcasts may be a debate, interview, question and answer, or panel discussion.46

Reading of material on the web browser may include a power point slide show, video tape or portions of a book or notes.47 Drill and practice activities can be used for vocabulary important to the subject, or variations of counseling problems presented for solution.48 Guided research may be facilitated by directing the learner to other websites and books for study.49 This, however, takes the student from the site.

Case studies give the learner opportunity to abstract useful concepts and principles. This is especially good for developing judgment skills important in pastoral care issues.50 Role-playing scenarios give the learner the opportunity to observe how a situation is played out before they experience it in real life.51

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46 Ibid., 195,198.
47 Ibid., 199.
48 Ibid., 202.
49 Ibid., 207-208.
50 Ibid., 226-227.
51 Ibid., 235.
Hands-on activities afford the learner practice as they are learning. Learning activities can teach, test, and exercise knowledge and skills. They give the participants the chance to learn by doing.

- TESTS AND EXERCISES

Since the participant in the web based learning is not receiving a grade apart from application in real life, exercises can be motivational learning devices. It may be prefaced with “How much did you learn?” The benefits allow the learner to gauge their progress. Focus on what is most important, apply and learn the material more deeply. True and false questions and multiple choice would be most useful in the pastoral care format. Answers would be provided with explanation for self learning and immediate feedback.

- MOTIVATING LEARNING

Positive motivators for the pastoral care learning are different than the normal motivators of money, advancement, pride of accomplishment, competition, or credentialing. Ours is the joy of learning, ministry skill improvement and serving people thus motivating will come mostly internally and on the quality of the presentation. Internal motivation may be increased by asking for a commitment and appealing to their sense of responsibility to assist another’s well being and other real world value. The site

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52 Ibid., 246.
53 Ibid., 272.
54 Ibid., 283.
55 Ibid., 316.
56 Ibid., 419.
will need to be fun and interesting by provoking interest, using motivating words, ensuring high quality, and involving the learners. It helps to vary the content and the presentation keeping the learner posted of the changes. 57

- EVALUATING EFFECTIVE DL WEBSITES

Lynnette A. Porter poses several questions to ask in preparation on the web based training. These Questions are drawn from her suggestions. 58

Who wants or needs this course?
Where else can they take this course?
How else can they take this course?
How does this course meet a currently unmet need for this type of instruction?
How can the intended audience be made aware that this course is being offered?
How is this course offering equal or better to and other similar course offering?
How much of the course content is based on memorizing facts of a core body of information?
How much of the course content should rely on activities such as skill practice, observation, demonstrations and application?
What is the primary method of instructing the learners?
How much of the coursework should be completed by the learner themselves?
Who is the trainer?
What are his credentials?

57 Ibid., 438.

58 Porter, Creating the Virtual Classroom, 86-90.
In summary additional questions useful in evaluation of the finished product include:

Does the front page draw the student into the learning process?

Does the course title inform?

What is the motivation?

Are small pages used rather that large ones especially initial pages?

Does download take 6 seconds?

Are graphics and colors bold?

Does hypertext lead people away from the site?

Is the site learner based?

Does the site include hands on activities, Q and A, and observations of the process?

Is there repetition?

Is navigation clear and easy throughout the site?

Is the site aesthetically appealing?

Is the site readable with 12 point fonts and three inches wide?

Are there methods of feedback to the instructor?

Is the course organized in short modules?

Is there a summary page?

Is there a feedback page?

Are webcasts used?

Are case studies used?

Is reading material used?
Is there a test?

If the writer might digress for a moment. These questions cause one to think of God’s “Distance Learning Course” made available to us.

Who wants or needs this course? All do. (Romans 3:23)

Where else can they take this course? Only one way. (John 14:6)

How does this course meet a currently unmet need for this type of instruction? We need forgiveness and relationship with God. (Romans 6:23)

How can the intended audience be made aware that this course is being offered? The Holy Spirit convicts and participants proclaim. (John 16:8-11 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-19)

How is this course offering equal or better to and other similar course offering? It is the only course. (John 14:6)

How much of the course content is based on memorizing facts of a core body of information? An important part. (Psalm 119)

How much of the course content should rely on activities such as skill practice, observation, demonstrations and application? A large percentage is observations of others or case studies in their application of this course.

What is the primary method of instructing the learners? Stories, reading, divine guidance.

How much of the coursework should be completed by the learner themselves? All of it but it takes a lifetime (Philippians 2:12, 3:13-14)

Who is the trainer? God

What are his credentials? He is LORD. (Jeremiah 33:3)
Does the front page draw the student into the learning process using? The love of the saints are the front page. (John 13:35)

Does the course title inform? It’s God’s Word.

What is the motivation? Relationship with God.

Are small pages used rather than large ones especially initial pages? NA

Does down load take 6 seconds? A prayer away. (James 1:1-7)

Are graphics and colors bold? The red blood of the Lamb. (Matthew 26:28)

Does hypertext lead people away from the site? There is none but the world, flesh and the devil attempt to insert. (Ephesians 1:1-10)

Is the site learner based? Yes. (I Tim 1:5)

Does the site include hands on activities, Q and A, and observations of the process? Yes. (Mt 22:18-22)

Is there repetition? Yes. (Deuteronomy 6:7)

Is navigation clear and easy throughout the site? Yes.

Is the site ascetically appealing? Sometimes.

Is the site readable with 12 point fonts and three inches wide? Sometimes.

Are there methods of feedback to the instructor? Prayer. (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Is the course organized in short modules? (Books and epistles)

Is there a summary page? Romans

Is there a feedback page? No

Are webcasts used? No

Are case studies used? Many

Is reading material used? 66 books.
Is there a test? The judgment. (Revelation 14:7)

Praise God!

EVALUATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL WEBSITE.

Many Distant Learning Websites were examined by the writer. The Kodak site\textsuperscript{59} comes closest to meeting the criteria established above. Thus it is used as a model.

Only a portion of the site is presented here for the visual is very important. Please note compliance with the Kodak copyright.\textsuperscript{60} Note how clear and simple the front page is. It has a compelling headline. The learner is invited into deeper levels of understanding and practice right on the website even with out a camera. All the instruction is not on the front page. It is on the back pages. The learner can choose the order of their learning.

\textsuperscript{59}http://www.kodak.com/eknec/PageQuerier.jhtml?pq-path=38/39&pq-locale=en_US.

\textsuperscript{60}Kodak Copyright. The Site and the Content are protected by U.S. and/or foreign copyright laws, and belong to Kodak or its partners, affiliates, contributors or third parties. The copyrights in the Content are owned by Kodak or other copyright owners who have authorized their use on the Site. You may download and reprint Content for non-commercial, non-public, personal use only. (If you are browsing this Site as an employee or member of any business or organization, you may download and reprint Content only for educational or other non-commercial purposes within your business or organization, except as otherwise permitted by Kodak, for example in certain password-restricted areas of the Site and in our Frequently Asked Questions). With the exception of the Sample Images, you may not manipulate or alter in any way images or other Content on the Site without specific permission from Kodak or the copyright owner.
Top 10 Tips for Great Pictures

Do you wish you were a better photographer? All it takes is a little picture-taking tips. Then grab your camera and start shooting your subjects:

1. Look your subject in the eye
2. Use a plain background
3. Use flash outdoors
4. Move in close
5. Move it from the middle
6. Lock the focus
7. Know your flash's range
8. Watch the light
9. Take some vertical pictures

Evaluation:

Who wants or needs this course? Anyone who takes photos.

Where else can they take this course? Take a course at a community college.
How else can they take this course? Read a book.

How does this course meet a currently unmet need for this type of instruction?
The course is offered on the internet.

How can the intended audience be made aware that this course is being offered?
Though the products Kodak sells.

How is this course offering equal or better to and other similar course offering? It provides hands on training on the site, which cannot be offered in a book.

How much of the course content is based on memorizing facts of a core body of information? If one wants to have the material available when they need it, it would be best to memorize it.

How much of the course content should rely on activities such as skill practice, observation, demonstrations and application? A high percentage, please note, “Try it yourself. Good focus lock technique takes some practice. Try it yourself with our [online camera](#).”

What is the primary method of instructing the learners? Observation of picture examples using “good” or “better.”

How much of the coursework should be completed by the learner themselves. All of it.

Who is the trainer? Kodak.

What are his credentials? A long reputation in providing cameras and photographic supplies.
Does the front page draw the student into the learning process? Yes once you find it. This section is not clearly available on the Kodak home page http://www.kodak.com. It was found with a Google search-“Kodak distance learning.” The front page draws one in.

Does the course title inform? Yes. “Top 10 Tips for Great Pictures”

What is the motivation? Become a great photographer.

Are small pages used rather that large ones especially initial pages? Yes.

Does down load take 6 seconds? Yes.

Are graphics and colors bold? Absolutely.

Does hypertext lead people away from the site? There are none to other sites.

Is the site learner based? Yes.

Does the site include hands on activities, Q and A, and observations of the process? Observations.

Is there repetition? No.

Is navigation clear and easy through out the site? Yes.

Is the site ascetically appealing? Very.

Is the site readable with 12 point fonts and three inches wide? Yes.

Are there methods of feedback to the instructor? No.

Is the course organized in short modules? Yes. After the initial instruction other pages are available. “Learn more about group pictures and portraits.”

Is there a summary page? No.

Is there a feedback page? No.

Are webcasts used? No.
Are case studies used? Is an sense with pictures.

Is reading material used? Yes.

Is there a test? No.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter the characteristics of effective Distant Learning Websites were identified. The importance of the learner’s part was established. An effective model of a Distant Learning Websites was evaluated. The methods used in the Pastoral Care Website will include case studies, power point graphics, Reading, interviews, a sermon, Q and A, a guided questionnaire and questionnaire (How much did you learn?). These will be in fast download modules that the learner can choose the presentation and sequence.

In the following chapter these guidelines will be used in developing a pastoral care distance learning website.
CHAPTER 4
DISTANCE LEARNING WEBSITE SETUP

INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the elements of effective distance learning website design were considered. In this chapter the steps in setting up the Pastoral Care website are recorded. This is provided so that a church or ministry with the desire to set up an educational website might follow the model established here. These include survey distribution, website content preparation, website construction, and hosting set up.

SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

A survey was distributed to the church council, deacons, ministry team leadership, and teachers of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, VA. 165 surveys were provided at meetings, and by email. 86 responses were received. The purpose of the survey was three fold:

1. To introduce the leadership and teachers to the concept of a pastoral care website and request their help in this study.
2. To create interest by inviting their input on the first topic to be covered,
3. To access their current internet usage and connection capacities.

The response indicates that there is an interest in having this type of website available. However, the usefulness to them is yet to be determined in their response to the
actual website. In the introductory portion the motive for providing the pastoral care website was explained, the need for the website was expressed and their assistance in planning the website and evaluation was requested. The intent to use this information to meet Liberty University graduation requirements was identified.

"January 12, 2006

RE: Pastoral Care Resource Website

Dear Bible Study Leader,

As minister of Pastoral Care at First Baptist Roanoke I am interested in exploring the internet for training leaders, teachers and ministry teams in meeting pastoral care needs of others, also, to continue an international ministry to pastors through Medical Ministry International (MMI) and Ministry to Eastern Europe.

IMB, MMI and MTEE ministry has taken me to five continents with new and return visits requested. The internet currently allows me to have an ongoing ministry with the many wonderful people with whom I have established a relationship. On an ongoing basis I provide the internet Bible study to MMI staff and participants worldwide. I would like to expand to a training website that would be available to First Baptist Church as well.

Your help is requested so that I can develop this training website and meet my dissertation requirements at Liberty University. Your participation and evaluation on one topic is desired before expanding the website to many topics.”

The second section was to create interest by inviting their input on the first topic to be covered. It is not in the scope of the study to evaluate why and particular area of interest was greater than any others. This in itself might be a future study one might utilize to understand the teaching/preaching topics for their audience. This information is to create a high level of interest for the first installment of what may be many topics to be covered as the website expands. Overwhelmingly the area of greatest interest was “understanding God’s will in a decision.” Forty four participants requested this topic.

The second most popular topic was dealing with “worry.” Thirty three choose this topic.
“You may choose the first topic.
Please read all the choices and then number your top choices one to three. Please hit “Reply” above before you answer:

____ What do you say when a person says, “I am trying to find God’s will in a decision?"

____ What do you say when a person says, “I try to confront problems with people, but I don’t seem to get through”?

____ What do you say when a person says, “I need help with my prayer life?”

____ What do you say when a person says, “I’m worried a lot about……..?”

____ What do you say when a person says, “I’m angry about ……..?”

Training will be available online in 2006. You will be notified and have two weeks to participate within your schedule. There will be a brief evaluation to return by email. If you do not have internet access, a class will be provided for you, so your choice of topic is important.”

The third section, the technical information request” was most important in the design of the website to access their current internet usage and connection capacities. The website needed to be designed at the level of current usage so that it would meet the criteria established in earlier chapters as effective distance learning website design.

“If you would answer some technical questions it would be helpful in know at what level to design this website, I would appreciate it.

Technical information request.

____ I do not access the internet, but would appreciate this training in a class.

____ No interest.
Questions for internet users. (Please check all that apply regarding your usage):

- Email
- Instant messaging
- Web browsing
- Entertainment
- Purchasing products
- Reading the news
- Requests for prayer
- Listening to sermons
- Watching videos of the news
- Downloading music on your iPod
- Downloading sermons on your iPod
- Editing pictures
- Chat rooms
- Blogging

I am more likely to spend time at a website if it is:
- Fast
- Has pictures
- Has interaction
- Has a lot of reading
- Has questions to interact with
- Has a chat room

My internet connection is by:
- Phone line at 14.4
- Phone line at 28.8
- Phone line at 56 kbps
- By DSL
- By satellite dish

Name __________________________ Phone _____________ email

Ministry __________________________

Please press “SEND” Thank you for your participation.

Dave Peterson”

The responses follow.

69 used Email.
14 used instant messaging.
59 browsed the web.
8 sought entertainment.
49 purchased products on line.
39 read the news.
26 made requests for prayer.
13 listened to sermons.
6 watched videos of the news.
2 downloaded music on iPods.
2 downloaded sermons on iPods.
19 edited pictures.
2 participated in chat rooms.
2 blogged.

They are more likely to spend time at a website if it is:

56 said fast.
26 liked pictures.
18 liked interaction.
8 enjoyed reading.
20 wanted questions to interact with.
2 liked chat rooms.

My internet connection is by:
2 had modem speeds of 14.4 Kbps.
6 had modem speeds of 28.8 Kbps.
26 had modem speeds of 56 Kbps.
26 connected by DSL/Cable.
10 connected by satellite dish.

The design conclusions are to make the site entertaining. Provide reading and opportunity to listen to sermons. Allow the purchase of products. Instant messages, videos, iPod downloads, and chat rooms are not important for this audience.

People are more likely to spend time at the site if it downloads fast, has pictures, interaction opportunities, and reading. 74 out of 86 have internet connection speeds of 56K or higher. This pastoral care site will be developed with a 56 K modem speed download capacity in mind.
WEBSITE CONTENT PREPARATION

A message and Power Point presentation was prepared and presented on the “Will of God” to two Sunday morning Bible studies. The message was based on Romans 12:1-5. The message outline emphasized two points in knowing and doing God’s will, God’s part and our part. God’s part included extending “mercy and transformation.” Out part included, “Offer your body, renew your mind, think of others, and act together.” The recording may be heard and the power point may be seen on the pastoral care website.

This message was taped on a Palm based Sony Clie handheld pocket computer. This provided a digital recording that could readily transferred to a PC computer for the website.

Following the development and presentation of the message for taping, an article was written using a humorous experience that pointed out the difference in the “good acceptable and perfect” will of God. This article become the introduction to the website and may be seen at on the pastoral care website.

After the initial presentation at the Bible Studies an opportunity was given to ask questions. The questions and answers were presented the next week in the Bible study. These too were written up in a Microsoft Word document for the website. These may be seen at on the pastoral care website.

At the question and answer session the classes were asked to write their experiences with knowing and doing God’s will. Certain ones were selected and written up in a Microsoft Word document as case studies for the website.
Books on God’s will were chosen from Amazon.com. An account was set up with Amazon.com that would allow them to be purchased from the website. The books chosen were known and/or read by this writer.

A guided Bible study on God’s will expressed in Colossians 3:8-17, “Let Peace Rule,” was developed. This study emphasized putting off the old nature and putting on the new nature in our relationships. This was also in a Microsoft Word document and may be read on the website.

A survey was prepared to capture the website participant’s evaluation of the effectiveness of this style of Distance Pastoral Care Learning. The questions included

“Was the treatment of the topic complete enough to be useful to you? (incomplete 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 complete). _____

Do you feel competent after this training to use it with a person? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes competent) ______

Was the training accessible at your level of computer usage? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes) ______

Did the training exceed your computers internet capacities? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes) ______

Would you want to access more training like this as needed? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes) _________

Thank you for your participation.

Dave Peterson”
WEBSITE CONSTRUCTION

Samuel Vargas, a web designer, assisted in the preparation of the Pastoral Care website. The following steps were followed.

Available domains were examined and various domain names were considered. Many posting options were considered as well as different posting companies. Superb Hosting was chosen. Although others may have offered free software and free templates, for the price they didn’t offer as much traffic space and space to put the website on. Many of the sites with free software and templates did not allow for moving the site to a new host. Furthermore, the templates would provide the standard “cookie cutter” approach to design.

An outline for the site was developed. Then a pseudo map and sketch of the layout of the site was made to have an idea of where the Main Page and all the sub-pages were going to be.

Non-copyrighted images and pictures were sought on the internet. Images and pictures were chosen for the site from Stock Exchange. The selected images and pictures were downloaded. Using Photo Shop the images were cropped, resized, and edited to fit on one page.

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3 www.sxc.hu.

Buttons were created with these images. Text was blended with images from Stock Exchange and sized up for the buttons. These are the buttons that you see on the Main Page.

The Main Page or the Index Page was developed so when someone types in www.CounselofGod.com this is the first thing that they see. The computer interprets it as the Index Page, but most people call it the Main Page.

Amazon.com\(^5\) is a retailer of books. A link can be made to their site after registering as an associate to sell books on one’s own site. When the book link is made it recognizes that it is coming from another website and credit is given to the associate website when a book is sold. After registration the books were chosen from many available on the topic to be made available on the site.

Macro Media\(^6\) was used to make a template for all of the pages off of the Main Page. The PowerPoint presentation was converted to HTML. This way, regardless of the computer, if it has PowerPoint installed on it, one can view the presentation. This made the presentation from PowerPoint to plain text and images.

All the text from the guided Bible study and from his article was integrated into the site along with the pictures and the banners of the site. All these steps were tested on another website to make sure that everything was working properly.

HOSTING SET UP

After a few tests, registration was completed with Superb Hosting and the fee was paid.


\(^6\) www.macromedia.com/software/flash/about.
The message recording on God’s will was converted it to an mp3 file to compress it. This way it wouldn’t use up too much traffic that was available to us. It also availed people with slow connections such as on 56 K or less to be able to stream it into their computers and listen to it while it downloads. Otherwise, if it had been too big of a file it would cut off often. We were able to compress it and keep high the quality.

To make the mp3 files stream, rather than download, we used an m3u file which most audio players on computers do recognize. This mp3 is the size of about 12 megabytes, so on a 56 K connection, this would take anywhere from 10 to 20 minutes to download. Since the length of the message is about 30 minutes, it is downloading while they listen to it. This way, a person doesn’t even notice that it is downloading – they think they’re just hearing it.

Superb Hosting’s form maker was used to make the feedback form. This comes free with the personal package. We then uploaded the site to Superb Hosting.

This name site address, CounselofGod.com was chosen for several reasons. The site will provide counsel and search engines will identify it as such. This site is not intended to be a Christian counseling site per say that may or may not be based entirely on biblical content. This site is a pastoral care site based on God’s word. Thus “Counsel of God.”

The personal plan was chosen which provides 1,000 megabytes of disk space and 50 gigabytes of monthly traffic. That means that when people access this site, bytes of traffic are used. The more of the site they examine the more traffic time the use. They can use anywhere from 60 kilobytes, if they only go to the front page. They use thirteen megabytes if they go through the entire site including the mp3 file.

7 www.superbhosting.net.
The domain was submitted so that when people type in the address to their internet browsers, the computer will know where to send them so they can access the website.

A meta line was developed. This is part of the address with as many words associated with the website address for the search engine to pick up. In the case of this website the meta line includes, “Counsel, God’s Word, God’s will, decision, David Peterson, First Baptist Church. Medical Ministry International, and Ministry to Eastern Europe.”

For this information to spread out to the entire internet, it took about three days. So in about three days it could be accessed from virtually anywhere in the world.

We then set up an e-mail address to receive all the feedback information. Anytime people go to the feedback page and click the submit button, all the information that they input gets sent to our email address. This entire set up process took about 29.5 hours.

**EVALUATION**

The Pastoral Care Distance Learning Website is now online. Does it meet the criteria of an effective distance learning website?

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8 vancouver-webpages.com/META.

9 No charge was made for this work. UCR is $40/hour. Bathroom remodeling assistance was provided willingly by the author in this whole process.
Counsel of God

Read an article

Listen to a message

Guided Bible Study

Case Studies

Questions & Answers

Power Point Presentation

Book Suggestions

Give Feedback

“How do you know God’s will for your life?”

David Peterson, ThM
The questions posed by Lynnette A. Porter used in preparation for the web based training. These questions are drawn from her suggestions for evaluation purposes.  

Who wants or needs this course? Any one interested in knowing and doing God’s will.

Where else can they take this course? Perhaps at a Bible school or seminary may have this course.

How else can they take this course? A Google search for “Will of God course” does not offer much. One entry, “A Free Course Offered By Indus School, The Will Of God, by Allan Turner” provided 4 readings with “test” questions at the end.

How does this course meet a currently unmet need for this type of instruction? The response on the initial survey presented to FBC leaders and teachers revealed a significant interest in this topic.

How can the intended audience be made aware that this course is being offered? Hyper-links will be placed on websites of the organizations the author of this paper is affiliated with.

How is this course offering equal or better to and other similar course offering? Analysis has not been made. It is designed to assist leadership and teachers minister to these needs.

How much of the course content is based on memorizing facts of a core body of information. None.

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10 Porter, Creating the Virtual Classroom, 86-90.

How much of the course content should rely on activities such as skill practice, observation, demonstrations and application? The application is in using the material to minister to others.

What is the primary method of instructing the learners? Written material, Question and Answer and lectures.

How much of the coursework should be completed by the learner themselves. All of it.

Who is the trainer? David W. Peterson.

What are his credentials? Master of Theology, Licensed Professional Counselor, Doctor of Ministry Candidate.

In summary additional questions useful in evaluation of the finished product include:

Does the front page draw the student into the learning process? Yes is allows them to choose the method of receiving information.

Does the course title inform? “How do you know God’s will for your life?”

What is the motivation? Sought after information determined from the survey.

Are small pages used rather that large ones especially initial pages? Yes. The initial pages are one page in length.

Does down load take 6 seconds? Less even with 56K.

Are graphics and colors bold? Bold Blues, greens and brown.

Does hypertext lead people away from the site? No. there are no hypertext away from the site except for the purchase of books from Amazon.com.
Is the site learner based? Yes. The learner is given choices as to the means they prefer for the material presentation. They may choose the order.

Does the site include hands on activities, Q and A, and observations of the process? Yes.

There is a Q and A section as well as a guided Bible study for the participant to fill out.

Is there repetition? Yes. The article gives an overview. The message and power point are specific.

Is navigation clear and easy throughout the site? Very. Hypertext to the paragraph titles and each area has a return to the “homepage.”

Is the site aesthetically appealing? Yes.

Is the site readable with 12 point fonts and three inches wide? Yes.

Are there methods of feedback to the instructor? Yes. Emails may be sent.

Is the course organized in short modules? Yes. An article, a message, a guided Bible Study, a power point presentation.

Is there a summary page? No.

Is there a feedback page? Yes. Responses and questions can be emailed to the site.

Are webcasts used? No.

Are case studies used? Yes. There are 6 case studies.

Is reading material used? Yes. One article, Questions and Answers section and a guided Bible study.

Is there a test? No. There is no credit given for the course apart from the usefulness to the student.
CONCLUSION

A church or individual with the desire to set up an educational website might follow the steps established here. These steps include survey distribution, website content preparation, website construction, and hosting set up. The website was designed with the survey results in mind.

The site is designed to be entertaining, allow the purchase of products, provide reading and opportunity to listen to sermons. Instant messages, videos, ipod downloads, and chat rooms were not important for this audience.

The site downloads fast, has pictures, interaction opportunities, and reading. 74 out of 86 have internet connection speeds of 56K or higher. This pastoral care site was developed with a 56 K modem speed download capacity in mind.

The website was then evaluated against effective distant learning website design conclusions. The website may be viewed at www.CounselofGod.com.
CHAPTER 5

DEVELOPING CONTENT FOR THE PASTORAL CARE WEBSITE

INTRODUCTION

The process of developing this content is included to encourage the reader that their current ministry opportunities not only provide content, it provides opportunity to test the material in real time. One might also find themselves testing and utilizing new and varied teaching techniques that will enhance their counseling, teaching and preaching.

UTILIZE EFFECTIVE DISTANCE LEARNING WEBSITE LESSONS

In Chapter 3 “DISTANCE LEARNING WEBSITE DESIGN” the methods identified to be used in the Pastoral Care Website will include case studies, power point
graphics, reading, interviews, a sermon, Q and A, a guided questionnaire and questionnaire (How much did you learn?). Preparing the website using ministry opportunities may expand one’s teaching methodologies and thus communication effectiveness.

UTILIZE TEACHING OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP THE SITE CONTENT

In the pseudo-site preparation and site mapping the opportunity to consider the how the material might be presented to most interest the student was considered. This is based on the understanding from chapter three that the student can determine to leave the site at any time. A story that would normally be used as an illustration was developed into an article that might capture attention, entertain and create interest in continuing in the rest of the site.

The story made into an article, “What should I do? A Practical application of God’s will,” contains questions at the end to create more interest.

“I’m a good guy. I wear a white hat. I don’t do the filthy five, the nasty nine or the dirty dozen. I pray, I read the word, love my wife and four children and work hard. So should I buy a new car for my family or not? What would God have me to do?

I prayed and the only message I received was, “Buy the car you want to.” I don’t know what I wanted to do, except buy a convertible sports car. My wife and four children could squeeze in somehow. What does God want me to do?

“Buy the car you want to.” Where was this message from? It wasn’t a verse in the Bible. It wasn’t a note I found. No angel appeared. It was just my mind after I prayed.

I searched the scripture and only found two mentions of cars. Both were too small for my family. “The news of David’s ‘triumph’ spread throughout the land.” “And they were all in one ‘accord.’”
I thought I would get some wise counsel. I asked my parents, who went through the depression. They told me I should have kept my first car, a 1953 Ford, and saved my money. It would have had a quazillion miles by now. I talked with some friends-car dealers. Each one was sure they knew God’s choice of a car for me and they happened to have one at their dealership.

I asked my pastor, he laughed and said he wished he could afford a new car. What should I do? I decided to go with the impression I had when I prayed, “Buy the car you want to.” I mean it’s not like I was going to have to rob a bank for the money. There was no neighbor’s car that I coveted. I didn’t need to bear false witness on a loan application. So I concluded I must be free to buy whatever car I could afford and would meet the needs of my family.

I decided to do some research. I concluded a mini van would work real well. We were going to Michigan and I arranged a trip to a plant of the manufacturer of the van I was interested in. It was really fun for the family and there were these wonderful assuring signs pasted in the plant. “We Do Excellence Here.” “Quality First.” I heard that you shouldn’t believe everything you hear, but these signs were so reassuring. I ordered a mini van.

The mini van finally came. It seemed like forever. I drove it home from the dealer. It was fine. It smelled so good. I was just the right size. Surely this is what God intended.

At home the family gathered around eager for a ride. I helped them in. They loved the new car smell and all the space. I closed the sliding door. There was a strange sound on the ground after closing the door. Parts fell off onto the driveway.

On the way back to the dealer the turn signal lever came off in my hand. That was timely. I could get that repaired too.

I was glad to pick it up again. All was well until I was exiting off a freeway when the cruise control came on by itself. I almost ran into the car in front of me. More repairs.

Then there was a strange sound under the hood. I raised the hood and looked. The engine parts were out of line and the belt that drove them quickly being chewed up. Did I misunderstand? Did I push my freedom too far? Was God punishing me? Did I have wrong motives? Was I out of God’s will? Wasn’t I giving enough? All these questions went though my mind.

There were more questions. Did I do something wrong? Was purchasing that van illegal, immoral or unethical? I examined my heart. There was no conviction of the Holy Spirit. I’ve done wrong things before and I know
conviction. I don’t sit around wondering if I did wrong, I know when I do wrong. So I concluded it wasn’t the wrong decision to buy the van.

Then asked, “Did I do something foolish, that is something destructive, harmful or bad judgment by buying the van?” Again the answer was no. After all I didn’t buy a Hugo. This van was manufactured by one of the big three automakers. There was no standard in scripture that I was violating. I could afford the car, and meet any financial obligations.

Well maybe I made a mistake, a bad decision. Well maybe, or maybe I just got a lemon.

Perhaps this is what Jesus met when He said, “In the world there shall be tribulation.” He got that right! We can have tribulation even when we make the right, wise, good decisions of receiving Christ as Savior, praying reading the Bible, going to church, giving and serving. He went on to say, “But fear not I have overcome the world.” That’s a clear statement of God’s will. “Fear not.”

I decided I would make a good, right decision for sure. I would “fear not.” That’s God’s will. Instead of reeling in accusation, “Are you sure you did the right thing?” I was going to solve the problem.

Satan’s approach is to make us doubt, make us fear, paralyze us from action, blame us, separate us from God. Rather I was going to “Exalt” in this tribulation. Exalt means leap for joy. Why? God was building perseverance, proven character, hope and love in me. Read all about it in Romans 5:3-5.

With God’s confidence not fear, I took the car back to the dealer and told him I didn’t want it. You could sum up his reaction in two words, “Tough bananas.” I asked him if he would put it on his lot and sell it for me. He agreed. I bought a used station wagon until the van sold.

No I did not make a wrong, or foolish decision. Maybe it was a bad decision in retrospect to buy a new model that was just being introduced. Even a bad decision with trust in God, knowledge of his word and prayer became a building experience of perseverance, character, hope and love.

Not only that, this has been a useful true story used to help people understand God’s will. God gave us Ten Commandments, He summarized them in two. There are some others that clarify these. If we do these in the power and direction He gives, when we walk in relationship with Him by reading his Word and praying always we ARE in His will. Accusations that we are not come from the enemy who wants to separate us from God through fear. “Fear not. I have overcome the world.” Jesus.

LESSONS
Did you observe we have freedom to make choices when we are obeying God’s commands?

Do you understand that tribulations may not be judgment or discipline, they may be to build perseverance, character, hope and love in us.

Do you understand the difference between accusations of Satan and convictions from God?

Do you see that God does not want us to live in fear about being out of his will, but boldness, faith and relationship with Him?”

A message was developed based on an exposition of Romans 12:1-5. This website has biblically based content and teaching God’s word is paramount. The message was presented to a Bible Study class. A Power Point presentation was made for the presentation and downloaded on the site so the listener to the streaming video could look at the Power Point as well.

The actual Power Point Presentation can be seen and the message can be heard on the pastoral care website. The website visitor can view the Power Point presentation while listening to the message. Note the web address is not given here because the reader might leave the reading of this section and go to the site. This is why great care must be used with hyperlinks on a website as well. The outline used in the Power Point follows.

“Welcome

Knowing and doing God’s will

Suppose you were asked, “How do I know God’s will in a decision?”

What would you like to know before answering? Write down your questions.

God’s will in a word
Today the big picture of the Bible in a word—Relationship

The Ten commandments in a word—Relationship

The greatest commandment in a word—Relationship

Rom 12:1-5 in a word

Romans 12

1 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.1

Romans 12

3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. 4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”2

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1 Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

2 Ibid.
Romans 12 in a word

- Relationship

- What other words would you add?

Two parts to knowing (test and approve) God’s will

- God’s part

  - Mercy

  - Transformation

- Your part

  - Offer your body

  - Renew your mind

  - Think of others

  - Act together

God’s part

- Mercy

- Rom 11:32 “For God has imprisoned all in disobedience, so that He may have mercy on all.”\(^3\)

- Imprisoned until we see that we are in trouble

God’s part

- Transforming

- 2 “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

- God gives us a new outlook-faith, hope and love

\(^3\) Ibid.
Your part

- Offer your body

- “offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.”

- Our body isolates us

- The spirit frees us

Your part

- Renew your mind

- “but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

- Feed the spiritual perspective rather than the physical and all that supports it-family, economics, socialization.

- The spirit puts all these in perspective

The spirit puts all these in perspective

- The perfect will are absolutes like the Ten Commandments. Who are they good for?

- The acceptable will is God’s wisdom. These are standards to live by. Proverbs, Epistles.

- The good will is God’s direction when we “ask, seek, knock”
• RIGHT Legal, Moral, Ethical
Response: This is the right thing to do.

• WISE Constructive, Common Sense, Good Judgment
Response: This is wise.

• FREEDOM Best, Good, Bad, Worst
Response: I made a mistake, or I did something good.

• FOOLISH Pointless, Harmful, Destructive
Response: I’m sorry. I behaved foolishly.

• WRONG Illegal, Immoral, Unethical
Response: I did something morally wrong.

Your part

■ Think of others

3 “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

You are interdependent on God and others—faith, hope and love

Your part

■ Act together

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4 Ibid.
so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.\(^5\)

We are better together

**Summary questions to ask**

- Am I willing to do God’s will over my desires, needs and wants?
- Am I willing to research a course of action in the Bible and through prayer that may be contrary to the world’s view?
- Do I know without doubt the God-approved right, wise and good course of action as it relates to others?”

The fifty two students in the Bible study class were asked for their questions regarding God’s will. This provided material for a follow-up class and useful relevant material for the website. The questions are presented here and are followed by the answers provided for the class the following week and on the website.

“Questions and Answers

**How do I know without doubt God’s will in a decision?**

The emphasis in this question is “without doubt.” There are a number of courses of action that you can know without doubt are God’s will.

You can know God’s will if you choose to obey the Ten Commandments. He tells us His will in the Ten Commandments. Therefore, if we face a situation and then do what God wants us to do, that is His will.

\(^5\) Ibid.
If I had an opportunity to steal, but I did not, that would be God’s will. One day I walked into an office. Nobody knew I was coming, nobody knew I was there and there was nobody in the office. I walked past the receptionist’s desk, looked up and down the hallway where there were a number of other rooms and there was nobody in those rooms — the place was empty. As I turned around to walk out, here was a drawer in the receptionist’s desk that was open just filled with cash — just loose cash. Nobody knew I was there, nobody knew I was looking for anybody. There I was!

What was God’s will for me at that moment? Yes, to keep walking. I didn’t have to say, “Now, Lord, is this a provision for me in my financial need? No, I didn’t need to do that! When you do God’s will, you know you’re in God’s will.

If you have a situation where you could have lied, but you didn’t and then you lose your job; you might wonder, “Was that God’s will?” The answer is “yes,” it would be God’s will not to lie.

If I was spending a lot of time wanting something and I realized I was spending too much time wanting something and I stopped coveting would that be God’s will? That would be God’s will.

If I had an opportunity for an affair, but I chose to work on my marriage is that God’s will? That is God’s will. So many people think, “Well, I made a mistake” or “I need to bail out of the marriage because we have grown apart”. Well, you might have made a mistake, but I know what God’s will is for you. I know what God’s will is for your mate, too. God’s will is to work on your marriage.

Of course, it takes two to work on the marriage, and if one chooses not to work on the marriage, unfortunately marriages do end. But, as far as I am concerned, I know what God’s will is, therefore I will do God’s will work on the marriage whether my spouse does or not.

By following the Ten Commandments you can know God’s will about a number of things. First of all, you can know what religion to be a part of. We are told to love the Lord your God. There is only one religion that worships God. What is that? Christianity! Some of you are saying Judaism, too, but Jesus came along and he said, “I am God” therefore there’s one religion.

There is one practice — no idols. We are told not to have an idol, so if you might be in one religious practice, but it has idols, then you would say, “Wait a minute that would not be the particular practice that I would want to be in.”
The Ten Commandments tells us what kind of language to speak. What kind of language do we speak? Truth and love language with no profanity. Is using expletives and profanity God’s will? No! So we don’t have to wonder whether we need to emphasize a point with an expletive! The answer is no – we don’t need to do that.

The Ten Commandments tells us God’s will regarding parents. What is God’s will regarding parents? Love and honor them. Honor your parents – honor your father and mother.

The Ten Commandments tells us God’s will regarding work. Work six days. Don’t steal!

The Ten Commandments tells us God’s will regarding truth. Tell it!

The Ten Commandments tells us God’s will regarding enemies. Don’t murder them!

The Ten Commandments tells us God’s will regarding wants. Don’t covet!

The Ten Commandments covers a whole lot of areas of God’s will. This gives us real guidance. When we make those decisions in the framework of God’s will, then we know we are in God’s will. This really simplifies things.

Now, God has not given us a rule about everything. He has also given us freedom. He said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free”. That truth is knowing there are Ten Commandments. There is guidance and in the other areas were there is silence are called “freedoms”.

Other clear commands to know that you are in God’s will are:
1. Receive Christ – God is not willing that any should perish. He wants everybody to receive Christ.
2. Share Christ. Witness– preach the Word in season and out of season. We don’t have to sit around wondering, “Should I tell them about Jesus.” We know that is God’s will.
3. Pray – when should I pray? Always. We don’t have to wonder about that – pray always.
4. Study His Word – I Timothy 3:16 – “Study to show yourself approved”.
5. Give thanks always and in everything.
6. Teach your children – Deuteronomy 6 and Ephesians 6. I wonder if I should instruct my children – well, it tells us. Some of you have adult
children. Adult children are still children. Where in the Bible does it tell you to stop giving them instruction? You don’t have to sit around wondering, “Should I say something or not?” Say it. They might not like it, but say it! I told mine when they were 18 years old, “I’ve got some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that I can’t find anywhere in the Bible where it tells me to stop giving you advice.” And you know that I have given my kids some amount of advice, don’t you? I remember one time telling one of my children that we needed to go to his room and talk and as we walked down the hall, he raised his hands and said, “Why do I have to have a father who is a counselor?” So I said, “The bad news is that the Bible does not say to stop giving you advice. The good news is that you can leave it. You are an adult now. Well, understanding that, I find it amazing how often they call me for advice. They don’t even give me an opportunity to give it without their asking for it! They ask for it because they know they are going to do what they want anyway. They are adults, but at least it is good that they ask for it. But if they didn’t – guess what? They’d get it. Why? Because they are still my children.

8. Restore your brother – Galatians 6
9. Do good – Galatians 6:9
10. Pursue unity – Ephesians 4, Colossians 3
11. Forgive one another
12. Avoid sexual immorality
13. Encourage one another
14. Do not associate with the disobedient
15. Let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no.

When you do these things you are in God’s will. Interestingly enough, I gave you in that short summary a lot of the commands in the New Testament. I didn’t give you all of them. The list is not long - and how many of them are good for us? All of them – they are all good for us.

This is the value of continually being in His Word, continually reading it, because then it is continually being refreshed in your mind and as it is being refreshed in your mind, you just go through life knowing that you are in the will of God. It is a wonderful assurance to know that because He saved me, because I am empowered by the Holy Spirit, because I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me – I can do these things. I can do these things, therefore I will do these things and when I will to do these things, I am in the will of God. Isn’t that assuring?

I receive much assurance about this. I do not believe that God is up there saying, “Let’s see how close they can get to my will and I’ll pull it out away from them. We’ll just keep that carrot three feet in front of
them." That’s not the case at all. He wants us to know His will. He gives us the power to do His will. He has written it down. We do not need to walk around wondering, “What is the will of God?”

You can know the will of God in most areas of your life. What about the areas that are not clear? We will talk about those in a moment.

**After I pray, how long should I wait for an answer?**

In the Old Testament, it tells us “wait on the Lord.” There is a difference between Old Testament waiting and New Testament waiting. In the Old Testament, they did not have the completed Word of God. Therefore they had to wait, to perhaps talk to a prophet – or they had to wait for a special word from God, maybe a dream. We are told about Daniel who waited – he prayed and he waited three weeks for the answer to come. He waited on God for that answer.

Do you know what the New Testament word is instead of wait? Study. You see, we have the completed Canon. We have it – it is there. So in answer to the question of how long do I wait for an answer, I would say, “Wait long enough to get into the Word and study it. Jesus said, “Ask and you will receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it will be opened unto you.” So you ask God what is your will on this particular matter – that is asking. The next thing is start seeking – it’s in the Book. And the Book is not really that big and if you are in it every day (and I’m not trying to be legalistic here – what a privilege, we get the instruction book from the Lord God. It’s right there – it’s on our desk, it’s by our bed – just open it and spend some time in it). Let it work through your mind. You will know then where to go when you are seeking for particular answers. It just really works well, and then you will know that you are in the will of God.

So how long do you pray for an answer. Immediately go to the Word and find your answer. It is there. So wait long enough to find the answer you are seeking for in the Bible and it probably won’t take long.

If you go to others for advice, (“There is wisdom in a multitude of counselors”) their wisdom should be biblically based. They should be able to direct you to a particular passage in the Word of God. There are all kinds of opinions out there. There are all kinds of Christian opinions out there. So when you get a Christian opinion, make sure they can substantiate it with chapter and verse. I think that is very, very important. We have the instruction book.
What if it is not in the Word such as “Should I take a new job?” That isn’t in the Word of God is it? No where does it say in 2006 you should take a new job. It is not there. I’ll save your looking for it. So you might say this is an opportunity that I have and how do I know whether it is God’s will or not. Are you ready for this? It may be your freedom. You got that? It may be your freedom. What do you want to do? Well, I want to do God’s will. Well then, work hard, tell the truth, and honor your boss that is God’s will. Now, because you did all those things, you may get more opportunities. They appreciate you and they make the mistake of telling another boss what a good employee you are. Next thing you know, you get a phone call. The question is, what do you want to do?

God gives you the freedom to make that decision. He gave us intelligence, he gave us creativity, he gave us the power to analyze and evaluate. Now, at this point, I think sitting down with a piece of paper, listing pros and cons, getting the input of your spouse and family and maybe some close friends is helpful. Certainly this is an area to be praying about because we are to “pray always.”

The Lord knows about this new work situation. He knows whether this is a situation that would be good for you or not. So as you are doing the pros and cons, as you are evaluating it, you are also praying because you “pray always” and you know that is the will of God. I believe that is why God gives us freedoms because there is relationship with Him in the freedoms.

There is not necessarily relationship with God in the Law. Again, I did not have to pray about whether I should rob a bank or go to work. Right? We know that. So the relationship is in the area of these freedoms. We do want to talk with Him about our freedoms because He knows things that we don’t know. He is the Lord God. He knows the hearts and minds of these people. So that is where our relationship is, not in the Law.

This was the big issue that Jesus had with the Pharisees. They had made everything Law – black and white – so they didn’t need to talk to God – they didn’t need relationship because they knew everything! They knew they ought not to take that ox out of the ditch. They knew they shouldn’t move the ladder more than three steps. They had 540 laws – that’s more than 10. They made things laws and when we make things laws, we don’t need to talk to God.

God gave us ten, and summarized them in two. He said, “I want a relationship with you – let’s talk and I’ll guide you through these opportunities that you have in life like new jobs, new houses, new cars, new washing machines, new dishwasher.” He will guide you; He will guide your thinking. That’s where the relationship is.
What are the indicators that you are not in God’s will?

One indicator is that you will know that you are violating the Word of God. If you know not to steal, and you steal, you know you are out of God’s will. That is quite simple. Secondly, there is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit convicts us. In John 16 it says He “convicts us of sin, of righteousness and judgment.” Have you been convicted by the Holy Spirit about something? Did you sit around wondering whether it was the Holy Spirit convicting you, or did you know?

I don’t know about you, but the Holy Spirit, I find, does a real good job of convicting. I don’t have to sit around wondering whether I violated God’s law. He does a thorough work of convicting.

Sometimes we can get that messed up with accusation. Who accuses? Satan. There is a difference between accusation and conviction. Accusation is generally a question. Are you really a good enough Christian? Aren’t you being hypocritical? Did you show enough love? He comes in with questions and with doubts. It all started with Adam and Eve. What did he say? “Did God really say...?” You see, that is the way he operates. He doesn’t want to convict you to do right. He wants you to feel guilty, oppressed, depressed, anxious, and far away from God. He doesn’t want you to be assured of God’s will. He wants you to feel burdened and heavy and troubled. That is how you tell the difference between an accusation and a conviction.

When you pray for wisdom (James 1) how do you know it is the voice of God?

“Lord, should I talk about a certain problem with a person.” When you pray for wisdom there will be impressions that are consistent with the Scriptures. Another thing I find helpful when asking for wisdom is I ask for a divine appointment. In other words, Lord, I feel that I should talk with someone (there’s no clear indication in the Word that I need to talk with them) so I ask for a divine appointment.

It is amazing, the number of situations where something happens that brings two together – it is the right time, the right place – you don’t wonder whether it is a divine appointment. There are certain situations where the divine appointment never occurred. I remember seeing a man in class on a Saturday out running around town with an attractive woman while his wife was out of town. I knew his wife was out of town. I prayed about that and I thought about what’s going on with his wife being out of town.
I prayed for a divine appointment and it never happened. And then I learned that he had two attractive daughters and he was out with his daughter. Boy was I ever thankful that I didn’t make that appointment. I looked for a divine appointment to confirm that a meeting should take place. God protected me. If we do see someone doing something that is questionable or is of concern and not to our knowledge clearly wrong, then ask for wisdom.

As Christians we do carry a concern about what our brothers and sisters are doing. If this brother was doing wrong a confrontation to restore him would be appropriate (Matthew 18). Since I didn’t know if he was doing wrong, I asked the Lord to help with a divine appointment and that made the difference.

**What if God’s will is contrary to my desires?**

Didn’t He say that He would give me the desires of my heart? Right and what verse is that – Proverbs 3:5-6 “Commit your way to the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” You see, we want the second part, but we forget the first part – commit your way to the Lord. That is, “Lord, I want to be within your will, I want to do your will, I am doing your will – and when you are, you will have desires and God will honor that, but commit your way unto the Lord comes first.

**Isn’t peace important in knowing God’s will?**

There are people who say, “I am not going to move forward on this particular thing until I have peace” and they quote Colossians 3. It says, “Let the peace of God guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Now the peace in that passage is talking about Church unity. It is not talking about decision making. Therefore the question is should we have peace if it is God’s will. I don’t know about you, but there are times when I have known something was God’s will and I sure thought, “Man, this is a step of faith. This is stepping out on a limb. This is a “man-of-God” type thing. This is going to be a miracle or a disaster.”

Peace? I don’t know if I would call that peace! It’s scary, it’s out there and it’s an act of faith. Well, I think sometimes there are those moments. I think the peace is the fruit that comes after you do God’s will. After being in God’s will you will have peace, but I don’t think that peace is an indicator. You see, the lack of peace is just a natural part of decision making.

If somebody is downtown right now casing out two banks to decide which one to rob on Monday, and they make a decision, they are going to leave with peace. Do you know why? The state of indecision is
an uncomfortable state so once they make that decision, then they are going to feel peace. Now is that the peace of God? Definitely not! But it is a psychological peace. The answer to whether peace is important in knowing God’s will is “no”, Peace is in doing. As you are doing God’s will the peace will come.

What if Christians give conflicting advice?

Sometimes that happens, doesn’t it? I remember facing a situation in a rental situation where our landlord decided she wasn’t going to give us the rent deposit back because there were heel marks on the stair risers in the back hallway.

I had spackled the walls, repainted, I had done all kinds of things because I knew this person was very particular, but those little marks in those stair risers – that was worth a lot of money to her. Well, anyway I thought you were supposed to walk on those, but who knows?

I went and I talked to some different Christians – one said “Take her to Colli’i”. Another said go to small claims court. I got several kinds of different advice. Then I went to the Bible and the Bible told me to settle before you go to court.

I talked with the landlady again. She said “If you will shampoo the carpets again, (“again,” was the operational word, I had already shampooed them once) then I will give you your rent deposit back.” So I thought – this is going the extra mile so I rented the shampooer and shampooed those carpets again. She must have sat there under conviction because she gave me my rent deposit check and said, “I apologize for giving you such a hard time.”

We had shared Christ with this person on a number of occasions and she was never open until after that date, and then she was open. So Christians might give conflicting advice. That is why I say, nail it down with Scripture. Christians will give you all kinds of advice, but it needs to be based in Scripture.

I did the right thing and things got worse. Why?

Several of us could have written that question, couldn’t we? Why? Why did it get worse? Jesus said, “In the world there shall be tribulation.” For Christians you stand up and you do the right thing and there shall be “persecution.” You do the right thing and it is not always easy. Jesus also said, “Fear not, for I have overcome the world” and with His help we are overcomers.
Sometimes things seem to get worse because God is building perseverance proven character and hope in us in love. We need those things to build in us – Romans 5 – so He is doing this and we are stronger for it. There are things I go through in life now that I don’t even blink at, but at one point in my life they were major crises. Why? Because now I know you persevere and there are green pastures later. You persevere and God builds your character.

There are things now that probably don’t bother you at all that used to bother you. Why? Because you know that God’s in control, its okay, and you find that you are able to be more loving towards people, and that you’re not falling apart like you used to. All of that is a demonstration of what God is doing in your life.

Is the Sermon on the Mount for us today or is it for the Millennium?

As you look at the Sermon on the Mount, what wouldn’t be for us today is the question. Be a light, speak the truth, don’t call people names, keep your marriage intact, and settle before you go out to court. I mean, what wouldn’t be appropriate for today. I think it is all appropriate. “Be anxious for nothing,” it is filled with things that I think are for today.

Why does God close doors that were once open and not open another door?

Again, I think it goes back to He’s building character, and I think often we see that He’s always on time. Sometimes we wish that He would be a little bit earlier, but He is on time. And again, it is because He is building our trust in Him. He is building that communication with us. When we’re waiting for that next door to open, what are we doing? We’re talking a lot to God, aren’t we? And God is saying, “It’s good to hear from you.” He likes that. So maybe I’ll talk more and maybe I’ll get an answer sooner. He wants you to talk to Him.

Does God punish by illness?

Yes, He does. Is all illness punishment? No, it’s not. In James 5, it talks about illnesses that come from sin. We know there is certain conduct that will produce illnesses. Too much alcohol produces alcoholism, too much food produces obesity, any sex outside of marriage may produce a broken marriages and the diseases.

Isn’t it interesting that within the marital framework you can have as much sex as the two can agree on, and you have no fear of any disease. We step outside of that framework just once, and it opens up the door to all kinds of diseases. So can God punish by disease? Yes, He can.
can discipline by disease. James 5 says if you have one of these diseases that are a consequence of sin, go before the elders who will anoint your head with oil that you might be healed of that particular disease.

However, again, not all disease is due to sin. Disease may come from living in a fallen world. Also in the case of the man born blind, disease can be an opportunity to glorify God. Sometimes illness is because we live in a fallen world, sometimes it can be used to glorify God.

Do you have to know all of God's will before stepping out in faith?

Sometimes I am glad I don’t know all of God’s will. I don’t know all of what’s ahead. Sometimes I would like to, but no, you don’t have to know everything. What you have in the Word of God is enough. When you move forward in the Word of God, you can be comforted in that He will take you the rest of the way.

It is like being in the Chemistry Lab. We would have these experiments with a hundred or more steps in them. That is a lot of steps. It would take weeks to go through these experiments and you would just want to know - am I on the right track? If you got to step 30 and you had a white precipitate and that’s what you were supposed to have, that was comforting. You didn’t have your final product, but you did have a white precipitate.

You get to step 50 and you’re supposed to have an orange solution, and you have an orange solution – whew, 50 more steps to go – we may get there! God does give indicators along the way that you are on track, but we don’t always know the ultimate outcome.

Another message in a church service provided the material for a guided Bible study. This was then made available in printed form for the congregation to use, but also was placed on the pastoral care website.

"Let Peace Rule
God’s Will for Relationships
A study of Colossians 3

If you had a choice of entering two relationships, which would you choose?
A. A highly emotionally charged, critically divisive living in the past relationship,
OR

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B. A loving, forgiving productive group beginning different abilities, gifts and talents to bear forward toward a common goal? A or B?

What kind of relationship does Christ want us to have?

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. Colossians 3 (NJKV)6

Definition of Carnality from vs. 8-9
- The strong emotional feeling resulting from my not getting what I want. A
- You are going to hear about it. W
- I'll get you back. M
- You are ...... (character assassination, we are created in the image of God) B
- Expletives. Filthy l
- Assign motives, build straw men, impugn guilt by association. L
- Is there any thing such as “righteous anger.” See James 1:20
19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.7
What does this say about anger? 

Some of the issues people have anger about include:
- Our worship, their worship. G nor Jew,
- Our practice their practice. Circumcised nor u
- Dignified or expressive. B, Scythian-
- Different socio-economic levels. Slave nor f
- Even different leaders and teachers. I’m of Apollos, I’m of P
Could you imagine the Corinthians saying every thing was fine until Paul came along?

“Christ is all and in all”
How does Christ view these differences? 

6 “Scripture taken from the New King James Version. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”
7 Ibid.
12 "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Are you God's Child? Are you in the "Christian" family? What are your characteristics (see verse 12)?

Chosen, A,B. Then put on the appearance of God's child.

Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, l__________; Not Anger.

Put on bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ f__________ you, so you also must do. Not Character assassination.

But above all these things put on l______, which is the bond of perfection.

Speak the truth in l__________. Not Lies.

Put on the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Not Anxiety. Be T_________ for differences. Remember a body has different parts, preferences and functions. Feet prefer shoes over a hat. They walk and don’t think about where. Would you like to do with out them?

How do you put on Christ?

• Though the Word not men’s opinion. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, “

• In your manner. “teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. “

• In your words and actions. “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

• Are you a thanksgiving person

• Your words and deeds are “the final answer.”

If you had a choice of entering two relationships, which would you choose?

A. A highly emotionally charged, critically divisive living in the past relationship,

OR

---

8 Ibid.
B. A loving, forgiving productive group beginning different abilities, gifts and talents to bear forward toward a common goal?
A or B?

Want to Put on Christ/.
What kinds of words do you need to add?

What kinds of deeds do you need to do?

CONCLUSION

In Chapter 3 "DISTANCE LEARNING WEBSITE DESIGN" the methods identified to be used in the Pastoral Care Website will include case studies, power point graphics, reading, interviews, a sermon, Q and A, a guided questionnaire and questionnaire (How much did you learn?). The process of developing this content is included to encourage the reader that their current ministry opportunities not only provide content, it provides opportunity to test the material in real time. One might also find themselves testing and utilizing new and varied teaching techniques that will enhance their counseling, teaching and preaching.
INTRODUCTION

One has great anticipation as one researches, plows unknown ground, sows, waters and awaits the harvest. In this case the harvest is the responses of those who taste the product. Are they going to say that is good? Are they nourished? Will they want to return for more? The survey begins to give the answers. Only long term usage is the real measure. The survey results are encouraging enough to proceed with the expansion and continuation of the Pastoral Care website.

Trigon, Inc. a health insurance company, developed a one question survey that revealed the effectiveness of providers. The question was, “Would you refer a friend or family member to this practice?” More questions were asked than just one in the survey, however, several volunteered they were forwarding the website to a friend.

SURVEY DESIGN

This website was developed to provide training to meet pastoral care needs presented to cell group leaders, ministry team leaders, pastors and teachers. Thus it was important to find out if it accomplished that task in view of the content and time of exposure to the material.

Furthermore, it was important to know if the site was usable at their level of internet capacities and user competencies. Also this site is designed to be expanded to
cover other pastoral care needs. Thus it was important to know if the design and content of the site invited return visits.

SURVEY AT END OF TRAINING

The following survey was developed to answer these questions.

“Was the treatment of the topic complete enough to be useful to you?
(incomplete 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 complete).____
Do you feel competent after this training to use it with a person? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes competent)____
Was the training accessible at your level of computer usage? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes)____
Did the training exceed your computers internet capacities? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes)____
Would you want to access more training like this as needed? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes)____

Comments or Content to be posted on Case Studies

Thank you for your participation.

Dave Peterson

SURVEY DISEMINATION

E-mail addresses were collected from those responding to the original survey.

Therefore this follow-up survey could be sent with the following explanation.
"Can you help me with your evaluation?

The website on "Knowing and doing God's will" is complete. If you would take a few moments to go to www.CounselofGod.com, review the site; then evaluate the site with five brief questions at the "give feedback" section and then press "submit" I would greatly appreciate it.

This will provide information for the completion of my doctoral work and give direction for the future expansion of the website designed to assist you in meeting the needs of those to whom you minister.

Thank you so much for your participation.

Dave"

A follow-up email was sent 1 week later.

"Sunday School Leaders:

Twenty three leaders and teachers viewed the pastoral care website at www.CounselofGod.com and pressed the feedback button to make their evaluation. I appreciate their participation so much.

If 23 more could do the same I would be very grateful. If you have not, would you take a few moments to view this site and give feedback?

Thank you for your help.

Dave Peterson"

SURVEY RESPONSES

The response from the 43 viewers in ten days was encouraging. This is half of the initial survey responders. Two indicated they did not understand the survey. Surveys continue to be received and probably will for some time.

"Was the treatment of the topic complete enough to be useful to you? (incomplete 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 complete). The average was 9.24.
Do you feel competent after this training to use it with a person? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes competent) The average was 7.57.

Was the training accessible at your level of computer usage? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes) The average was 9.216.

Did the training exceed your computers internet capacities? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes) The average was 1.54.

Would you want to access more training like this as needed? (no 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 yes) The average was 8.22.

**EVALUATIONS**

The survey results indicated the goals were largely met. The treatment of the topic was complete enough to be useful. Viewers felt competent after this training to use it with a person. The training was accessible at their level of computer usage. The training did not exceed their computers internet capacities. They desired to access more training like this as needed.

Student evaluations included the following comments. Spelling and grammatical errors are not corrected:

"Good website, great graphics and easy to understand and navigate."

"We both found this study to be very helpful. Kathy especially is a visual learner and appreciates this format. May our Lord continue to bless you, Dave, as you feed His sheep!"

"Good start. I do have some observations. I was a little confused by the Bible study. Also in your Q and A question on the will of God, you contrasted conviction and accusation. You gave a very clear definition of accusation, but didn't do the same for conviction. Finally, in the case studies section, you use a numerical key to identify the topic for each paragraph. Since the keys stand for just a single word each, wouldn't it be
clearer and just as easy to begin each paragraph with the word instead of the key? this study and material is excellent! Great resource.

Mark

"Thank you for your effort here. Giving people access to your experience and counsel is a wonderful idea. Also, I commend you for your use of the Internet."

"Please consider these thoughts in love; I don't mean to discourage you--keep up the good work.

- May want to make it more interactive than just reading what you've written
- May want to check out some high end websites for ideas on how to train through the web (I like www.answersingenesis.org)
- Your questions above call this "training" but I didn't get that feeling when using the site; more like Q&A

-Sorry but I think the website name is a bit pretentious. Reminds me of the old Children of God cult which was anything but godly. Although there are good insights the name implies the author is speaking for God and I don't think any of us can speak for God with 100% accuracy, He is bigger than our understanding. How about www.Biblicalprinciples or www.Christiancounsel.
- Would much prefer to see people directed to a Christian bookstore/website for books rather than Amazon. If someone wants to buy it on Amazon then they can look up the site themselves.
- It's a very visually appealing and is well organized.
- Didn't notice any answer key for the fill in the blanks which would be helpful.

It is good to use the internet for christian growth opportunities. I am unsure the audience this is for but the level presented is very practical and should appeal to a broad range of viewers"

"There is a wealth of useful and character building" info here--I'm pressed for time now. Will return soon. PTL"

"This is some really good and practical advice on God's Will. I loved the website and recommend a Christian friend to go there and check it out. We were just talking extensively yesterday about her husband and her seeking God's will in a decision. Thanks."
“This is great. Thank you for sending it to me. I did come to a few of your classes at church and enjoyed them tremendously. Great service.”

“I really liked the method of teaching. I thought your use of examples greatly enhanced my understanding of this topic. I find this very useful and is definitely something I would recommend to our class since they seem to understand things better if an example is given.”

“Very professionally done!”

“Use a different picture for the case studies. That fellow looks creepy!”

“The case studies didn't flow like I thought they would. I expected to have a little more dialog or narrative and less bullet points.”

“The article was really great! (you do have a typo in there though- in the paragraph just before the mention of Jesus' words about tribulation. The word 'met'is in the first sentence it should be 'meant'). Not trying to be picky Dave but want you to put the best foot forward. Take Care and good luck!”

“This was very good! Very interesting and very easy to use, (user friendly) You did a great job!
You did a great job!

I am impressed.

DB”

“The website is well organized. It uses very good and up-to-date components to present the material. In some cases underlining seems to indicate an internal link but does not. The printer version of the Bible Study should be spell checked. The Case Studies are very brief. A little further elaboration might help. The audio presentation is quite good especially with the provision to concurrently watch the PowerPoint slides. Will the site visitor spend 37 minutes listening or go to the PowerPoint slides to get a summary? Can you get Lehay's book for one cent?”

“Overall--the site is professionally done and has good content. The visitor will want to return again. Frequent updates will induce the visitor to return.
For the visitor who will use this material in their ministry there will be willingness to listen for 37 minutes and return regardless of the frequency of the updates. Good Job!”
"Dave, I always enjoyed your teaching, and this web site is so nice. The only problem I see with it is that the dark background makes it hard to print. I would like to keep these in a notebook and include my notes from class with them. This is very precise and love getting these to print out. Sometimes I miss getting down, in class what I need in my notes, and don't want to hold you up from your lesson. Thank you for this. Susan"

"I am looking at this on my computer at work and I have power point. I do not have power point at home and don't think I could have seen that power point presentation there without that program. I also think that if you incorporated one of those buttons of "Would you like to send this site to a friend?" button it would be a very useful outreach source. Was there a place for comments? or requests for topics?"

"Dave
The site looks great. I wished that I could have been able to do a better recording of the class. If you would like to record more of the lessons to put on the site lets try to get a better tape recorder.
John"

"I think you have done a wonderfule job with this site."

"Pastor Dave,
Did you really mean to say that the Commandment says we are to work 7 days? Or did you put that in there just to see if we were listening? (Exodus 20:8-11) (Ezek. 20:12) (Luke 13:14)"

"very well done!!
This is a great means for additional Bible study and for help with friend's/family's relationship needs/questions. I enjoyed all of the information and the suggestions for reading. Thanks so much for developing this very informative web site. I will recommend it!"

"I esp liked the Book Suggestions, the Lessons were terrific and I thought the Q&As were very specific and relavent! Super-duper!!! I will check this from time to time as life is full of tribulations to "wean us from the world"!
Thank you Kathy"

CONCLUSIONS

The research, development and response to this dissertation project has been very satisfying. The encouraging responses to the site are motivational enough to improve the site and expand to other pastoral care concerns.
It is the writers hope that the development steps are clear and simple enough to encourage pastors and ministries to follow this distance learning path. The responses indicate that the conclusion of Horton is correct. “There is no significant difference between classroom, correspondence training and Web based training.”\(^1\) The Internet does provide another means to get our message to the world.

\(^1\) Horton pg 25
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