

# Online Evangelism Report

## What We've Learned in 2+ Years Developing an Online Evangelism Platform

In this presentation we share experiences, ideas, and insights from 2+ years of developing an Online Evangelism Platform. After reading this we hope you'll have a better understanding of how you can better use technology to fulfill the Great Commission.

***"82 million Americans use the internet for spiritual and religious activities" (2004 Pew Research\*)***

Does God use the internet?



The time on the screen read 3:00 AM. Garette could hardly stay awake, yet he couldn't shake the feeling that he needed to add the last few lessons to the website before taking a nap. Finally, a little before sunrise, he added the last one and hit publish. There. All done!

The Prayer Explosion 2016 Revival was already on the way. Garette had just recently acquired some web design skills as he attempted to start an online business, and he wondered how the web could be used to advance the work of soul-winning. The rest of the team was very skeptical about the idea, but Garette felt it was worth a try. Now, after several days of working on it in his spare time, the site was ready.

Making his way to the daily team meeting a few hours later, he wondered if anyone had found the website. “No way.” He thought, “It will be days before anyone finds that!” In any case, there was no time to check now; he was already running late for the meeting. Once there, he pulled out his laptop and navigated to the website. Garette could not believe his eyes. In the three to four hours that the lessons had been online, someone had registered and completed several of them!

A few days later he watched with excitement as his first online student, along with several others, demonstrated their faith in Christ through baptism.

Insight: God used the printing press in the 1800s to spread the message. Today, He’s demonstrated that He is just as willing to use the World Wide Web. It might take all of that to get the message to “all the world”. Just as the Lord gives us more light he also gives more insight into how to use technology to fulfill His work.

## What the data tells us

According to a 2004 Pew Research, nearly two-thirds of online Americans use the Internet for faith-related reasons. This represents nearly 82 million Americans. Among the most popular and important spiritually-related online activities measured in this national survey:

- 38% of the nation's 128 million Internet users have sent and received emails with spiritual content.
- 32% have gone online to read news accounts of religious events and affairs.
- 21% have sought information about how to celebrate religious holidays.
- **17% have looked for information about where they could attend religious services.**
- 7% have made or responded to online prayer requests.
- 7% have made donations to religious organizations or charities.

(2004 Pew Research\*)

This was in 2004!

Insight: A few churches and ministries got an early start on utilizing the internet for spreading their messages. Their members learned to embrace and use this new medium for consuming and sharing spiritual materials.

## 2020 - The Tipping Point

A 2019 survey by the Pew Research Center found that the number of American adults who consider themselves non-religious is growing.

“But the pandemic may just be reversing that trend, ... in part because the move to online services has helped make it easier for people to participate.”

(BBC Pew Research\*\*)

It took persecution to persuade the early church to pursue its mission of taking the Gospel to all the world. For many churches, the pandemic formed that catalyst for expanding their ministries beyond their four walls.

Northeast SDA Church was one of them. In 2019, Northeast did not even have a YouTube channel! Looking back, it's hard to justify neglecting something so simple that could have such far reach. Within one week of closing, they had their YouTube channel set up and live streaming to the world. Now every message that is presented has the potential to reach thousands over several years.

But while virtual attendance and YouTube subscription increased, the members were not involved in ministry. Without ministry participation, it wouldn't be long before restlessness kicked in and people began church hopping. They needed to do more.

Garette was contemplating this when Coach K called. With almost uncontrollable excitement she related how a congregation she was doing ministry with was doing outreach and reaping a harvest - via teleconferencing!

That immediately sparked his interest. Ministry is not dead, it just looks different! "We could do what they are doing, but why not take it to another level?"

Northeast's pastor and the elders caught the vision as soon as it was shared with them. Over the next week, Garette worked feverishly to create a website with interactive lessons, progress trackers, attendance tracking, Zoom integration, and more.

Next was developing a program that included a healthy dose of teaching, discussion, and fellowshiping.



**Bible Discovery Center Live** became the place to learn the Word, fellowship, and do ministry on Sabbath afternoons at 5 pm EST. Participants were encouraged to complete the online lessons on the website before each session. The presenter would then base his presentation on the lesson. The topic would be further reinforced through group interactive discussions.

The big hit in this programming was the breakout groups. With questions carefully crafted to stimulate discussion, participants would come back to the main session excited and connected.

Throughout the 15-week series we had:

<b>Average attendance:</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Lesson Completions:</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Baptisms:</b>	<b>4 (+2 out of state)</b>

This was the largest baptism for Northeast, a fairly small church, in several years - and it happened during the peak of the pandemic!



## Little Disciples Bible School (KidsBibleSchool.com)

At the end of this series, Bible Discovery Center partnered with Northeast's children's ministry to develop a similar program geared towards children. This had its own website, lessons, and teachers. After 11 exciting weeks:

<b>Participants:</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Average:</b>	<b>20+</b>
<b>Lesson Completion:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Baptisms:</b>	<b>2</b>

Throughout the 2 years since its launch we've had:

<b>Participants:</b>	<b>167</b>
<b>Average Att:</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Lesson Completions:</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Baptisms</b>	<b>14 (across 4 states)</b>
<b>Coaches Trained</b>	<b>30</b>

Insights: If we thought the first online conversion was a fluke, these results provide ample evidence that the internet is a viable tool for doing outreach.

## Incremental Improvements

We could have waited to get started. In fact, one of our biggest supporters at first thought we should take a few months to cover all the bases. Instead, we rolled out the first version within a few weeks, and constantly evaluated the service and made improvements. Even today we continue to work hard at improving the platform and adding new features.

"I can't get on!" That's something we heard time and again. The issue was simple enough - participants needed to log into the website in order to see the "Join Live Meeting" button. Many participants forgot to log in - therefore they could not get on.

Another observation was that participants sometimes click the registration button rather than "Login", which led to much frustration since they can only register once with each email.

We experimented with several options including more verbose instructions and larger buttons, that seemed to improve the situation.

Insights: Though virtual, this effort required significant time and effort in planning; for example, the coordinator and his assistant met for at least an hour each week to plan and rehearse every detail of the program. Online doesn't mean autopilot! Everything requires effort - and God rewards that effort with fruits.



## Building a Team

Pulling together a team of nearly 20 individuals from different states in the US isn't an easy task - except if you're Coach K.

Coach K has been involved in Bible work - both in the field and as a Bible Instructor/Trainer and Evangelism Planner for over 36 years. Her decision to join forces with Garette to develop the Bible Discovery Center brought new life - and interests - to the platform, after a lull following the first season.

Through her influence the number of Presenters/Coaches tripled within just a few months.

Through her Friendship Evangelism Training program, and our weekly team training, we believe we have one of the best equipped evangelistic teams around.

## Strengthening the Foundation

Not all our activities are evangelistic - that is, geared towards unbelievers. Our brand new (and transformational) series "**The Journey ...4 Steps Out of Laodicea**" along with prayer and health series which we hold regularly, are geared primarily towards strengthening and equipping our team, existing participants, and church family. Not only do these help us to grow in our relationship with God and with one another, they also help tremendously in solidifying our team. These series are also available to local churches and ministries. See our website for details.

Insight: Cultivate a spirit of unity and love among the team. There is no surer way to impress hearts with the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 13:35; 17:21).

## Moving Membership Back to Discipleship

One ministry that has kept active during this Covid pandemic is the prayer ministry. At Northeast, their regular Wednesday night service has grown from six regular attendees to an average of over twenty each week.

One reason is clearly the leadership of the prayer leader and her team, and one element of that leadership is getting as many people involved as possible. Their rotation of participants in the service includes almost every member of the church. With the meetings being held online, it is much easier for anyone who desires to participate in the service to do so.

Insight: During the pandemic, ministry participation has waned drastically. Leaders will do well to structure their programs so as to involve as many members as possible. For online meetings, this could lead to a significantly higher turnout, and a return to ministry, which is crucial to discipleship and spiritual growth.

## Networking for Reach and Impact

Did you know that there are several animals that are bigger and stronger than lions? Yet lions remain king of the jungle. Why? Because they know how to work together.

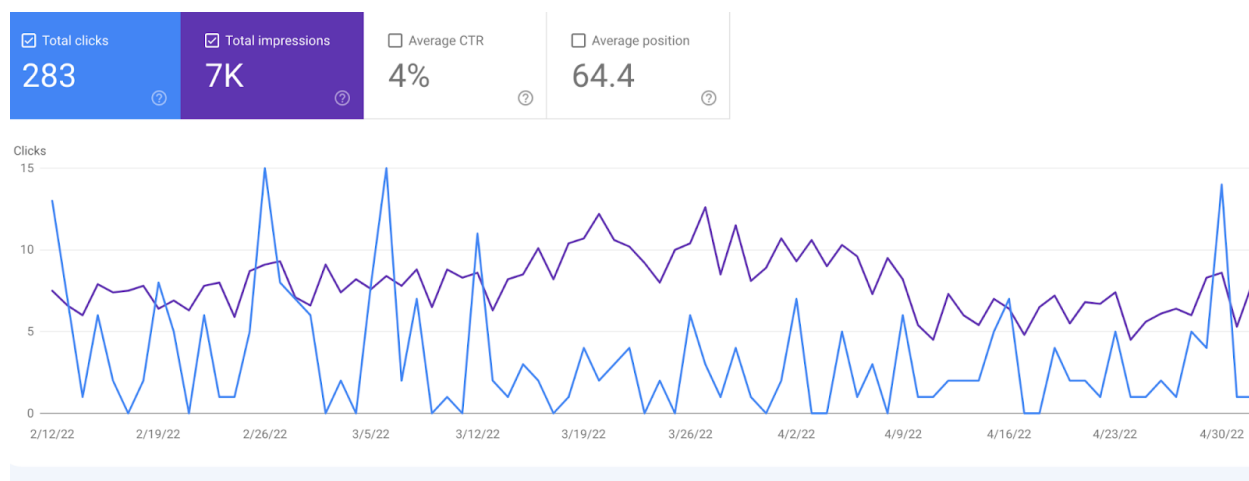
Bible Discovery Center benefits greatly by collaborating with a number of other ministries. These ministries provide resources, support, and expertise that allow us to minister in ways that we could not do otherwise. Over the past two years we have come to work very closely with ministries such as **When We Pray Ministries International** and **RestoreLife Wellness**. These ministries all have one goal: to impact this world for Christ!

Insight: "We're better together".

## Growing Small - A Perspective Shift

For the first 18+ months one major goal was to increase participation in our Bible Discovery Live meetings. Over the past few months our focus has shifted more towards growing small groups and supporting local congregations in their online evangelism effort. God has blessed this effort and we have seen two participants in our small-groups Bible study give their hearts to Jesus. We've also had the privilege of having two churches utilizing our service. If you would like more information about the services Bible Discovery Center offers, please visit our website, [www.BibleDiscoveryCenter.com](http://www.BibleDiscoveryCenter.com).

## Improving Search Engine Visibility/Ranking

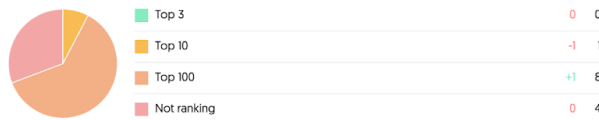


Most of our website visitors have come through invitations - participants invite their relatives, friends, and church family. Moving forward we are hoping to increase website visits through search engine (eg. Google, Yahoo). This we'll do through content creation, keyword optimization, and getting more links to our website (link building). As you can see in the chart below, we have a lot of room to grow.

#### KEYWORD RANKINGS

A summary of how your tracked keywords are ranking in Google. APR 13, 2022 - MAY 13, 2022

3 Keywords moved up 4 Keywords moved down

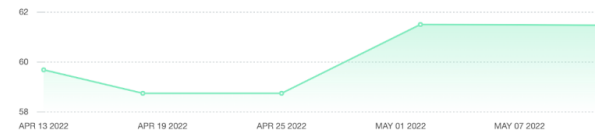


View Rank Tracking →

#### ESTIMATED TRAFFIC VALUE

The estimated value of your site's organic traffic at a given moment in time based on the cost of getting the same traffic through Google Ads. APR 13, 2022 - MAY 13, 2022.

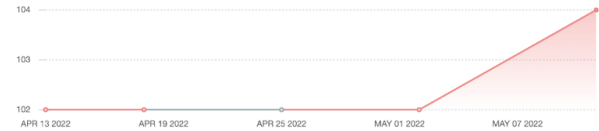
**\$61.48**



#### BACKLINKS

The number of incoming links to your site from other sites on the Web. APR 13, 2022 - MAY 13, 2022.

**104**



See Backlinks →

#### ON-PAGE SEO SCORE

Your overall SEO score based on an analysis of all pages on your site. APR 13, 2022 - MAY 13, 2022.

**71** GREAT



Improve SEO Score →

Every Search Engine Optimization (S.E.O) expert knows the power of link building. It's where one website links to another allowing site visitors and search engines to discover the linked content. It also helps search engines (ie. Google, Yahoo, etc) to determine how high to rank a webpage.

**Do you have a website? If we could ask one favor it would be for you to add this link [www.BibleDiscoveryCenter.com](http://www.BibleDiscoveryCenter.com) on your website. Thank you!**

### Lord, be with the fingers...

In pre-covid times those doing the opening prayer would often pray "Lord, hasten the feet of those who are on their way". In a recent meeting someone prayed "Lord, hasten the fingers..."

We are living in very different times than pre-pandemic. Whether we like it or not, we'll do well to take advantage of the opportunities the current situation provides.

Today, more people than ever use the internet for spiritual and religious activities. What does this mean for you and your congregation? How willing is your church to recognize and embrace this new reality? How effectively are they using it to fulfill the church's commission?

There are huge opportunities to reach more people in your area - and even to widen your mission field. On the negative side, if you are slow and ineffective in your use of media, you could place your flock at risk of being pulled away by those who ARE using the internet effectively.

Most importantly, an effective online strategy enables your congregation to once again engage in ministry - something we identified as a critical component for a vibrant church.



With just a little extra investment of time and resources, churches could double - even quadruple - their reach. The good news is that now is always a good time to make a great move!

## Have You Considered Bible Discovery Center?

[Bible Discovery Center](#) is an innovative new online platform working in collaboration with local churches and ministries to reach people where they are with the Gospel.

Features	Ministries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Trained Bible Instructors/coaches</b></li> <li>● <b>Customizable Web Page/Domain</b></li> <li>● <b>Small Groups Bible Studies</b></li> <li>● <b>Interactive Online Lessons</b></li> <li>● <b>Printable Lessons</b></li> <li>● <b>Interest/Attendance Tracker</b></li> <li>● <b>Prayer/Support Groups</b></li> <li>● <b>Dynamic Ministry Network</b></li> <li>● <b>Kids Bible School / VBS</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Friendship Evangelism training</b></li> <li>● <b>"The Journey" End Times Events Series</b></li> <li>● <b>When We Pray Ministries International</b></li> <li>● <b>U-Turn for Better Health</b></li> <li>● <b>The Simplicity of the Gospel daily devotions</b></li> <li>● <b>Online Vacation Bible School - VBS (KidsBibleSchool.com)</b></li> </ul>

For more information about our online platform, services, and features, please visit [www.BibleDiscoveryCenter.com](http://www.BibleDiscoveryCenter.com)

## References

\*<https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2004/04/07/64-of-online-americans-have-used-the-internet-for-religious-or-spiritual-purposes/#:~:text=April%207%2C%202004-,64%25%20of%20online%20Americans%20have%20used%20the%20Internet%20for%20religious,represent%20nearly%2082%20million%20Americans.>

\*\*<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55419894>