

Training In Cybermissions

Theory of Cybermissions – Cybermissions 101

Guide To The Course

The enrolment form and course details can be found at:

<http://www.cybermissions.org/training/>

Most of the course will take place in the Interaction Center at:

<http://www.cybermissions.org/interact/>

Objective: To encourage and equip Internet evangelists and cybermissionaries to work effectively and strategically in using the Internet to fulfill the Great Commission.



Instructors: John Edmiston is the course coordinator, facilitators include experienced members of the Internet Evangelism Coalition Global Forum. However the course is meant to operate in a community-based adult-learning mode where we teach each other and where all real learning is due to the work of the Holy Spirit.(see Matthew 23:8).

Organization: Cybermissions.Org is a division of the Asian Internet Bible Institute (<http://www.aibi.ph>), which is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based in Los Angeles California. The AIBI is a member of the Internet Evangelism Coalition.

Who Can Enroll?: Great Commission Christians over the age of 18. You must agree with the Nicene Creed.

Educational Method: Online classes, readings, forums and reflective journaling. Each week's lesson shall consist of three readings plus six additional links to websites that illustrate the points in that lesson. Students shall discuss the readings and links together in the class forum and personally reflect on the course in their journal. The course facilitator shall simply prompt and guide the process of adult reflection. Readings vs. Links - Readings are for in-depth discussion. Links are for quick scanning and browsing. We expect you to spend 20 minutes going through each reading and just five minutes looking quickly at each link. (Hint: Don't get bogged down with some of the links, such as Usability.com, which offer vast amounts of information - bookmark it and return to it later.)

Time Commitment: Around 4hrs a week depending on reading speed - 1 hour to read the 3 articles, 30 minutes to visit 6 links at 5 mins each, 30 mins to write in the forums, 30 minutes to write in the journal, 1 hour to work on the strategic plan for your ministry.

Cost: \$37.50 - There are two reasons for the cost:

a) Personal Motivation - people who donate tend to press on to complete the course and do the assessment while people who do it for free tend to stop half-way.

b) Gratitude - all those Scriptures about oxen threshing etc. This ministry costs around \$6500 a year to run in overheads alone. Your donations are a real help.

You can pay by IKOBO , Paypal or by cheque on a US bank

Scholarships may be available for students in developing nations. Please email me at johned@aibi.ph to ask for a scholarship

Texts: Print texts tend to be expensive or unavailable in many countries so we have deliberately not set a compulsory textbook. The closest thing we have to a textbook is the online Web Evangelism Guide by Tony Whittaker (who will use it during take weeks 2, 3 and 10). Quite a few of the set readings are from it. However **Perspectives On The World Christian Movement** edited by Ralph Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne and **E-vangelism** by Andrew Carrega would both be very helpful in this course.

Assessment:

Cybermissions 101: A 2000 word (4 page) essay on the topic: *"The concepts, possibilities, limits and strategic utility of Internet based Christian ministry.*

This paper should draw on the readings and links that you examined during the course and demonstrate that you have mastered the course material.

Hint: Do 1 page on each of the four headings:

- a) concepts
- b) possibilities
- c) limits
- d) strategic utility

of Internet based Christian ministry.

You will submit your assessment by email to johned@aibi.ph

Outcome: A strategic plan for your online ministry. You will also receive a Certificate of Completion from the AIBI. This is similar to in-service courses in the workplace.

ONLINE CLASSROOM

- The Interaction Center is where your online classrooms are located and where you participate in forums, use a reflective journal or upload certain files. You will find links to these on the left-hand side of the relevant subject area.
- The **forums** are public discussion areas for each subject. They will have topics - and you are expected to contribute a reply/replies to the question being asked. The whole class can read the forum and so it becomes a place for Christian discussion and debate (in a spirit of mutual edification). Personal attacks ("flames") are not allowed.
- The **reflective journals** are for your personal reflection on the course material. Only you and the lecturer get to see what is written there. You can freely express yourself.

Rules, Disclaimers etc

By enrolling you acknowledge that you realize that the following activities are banned at both the AIBI and Cybermissions.Org:

1. Unsolicited commercial e-mail or "spam". Multi-level marketing. Attempting to fund-raise from students or faculty.
2. Uploading viruses, exe files, pif files, pornographic material, music files or copyright material or sharing such files with fellow students.
3. Abusing, harassing or "flaming" other students or faculty.



The **AIBI or Cybermissions.Org** cannot be held responsible for the actions of third-parties such as other students or spammers or ISP's or those who post offensive material. If you notice such material on a forum or in a class-related email by all means bring it to our attention and we will check it out, and if necessary, remove it from the website.



Using The Interaction Center / Doing The Course



1. Go to the Interaction Center then find Cybermissions 101, double click on the blue link - on the left you will see small yellow folder icons labeled – Week 1, Week 2 etc
2. Double click on the folder for the week you are studying.
3. In each folder you will see a number of readings (3 or 4) and about half a dozen recommended links.
4. Study the readings in-depth (20 minutes each); just browse the links and take notes (3-5 minutes each)
5. Open the Forum (Cybermissions Forum)
6. Comment on the readings and links in the Forum. If someone else has commented on that reading before you then post your comment as a “reply”. This keeps all the comments on an article in one “thread” and it is much easier to follow the discussion.
7. Sometimes, with long comments, you can lose contact with the server (which times out) and your masterpiece will vanish into cyberspace. Therefore do your posts in a text processor (such as Notepad) or a word processor (such as WordPerfect or Word) then cut and paste the text to the Cybermissions forums. Remember to save your work to your hard-drive.
8. If you cut and paste from a Word document you can sometimes get “funny characters” appearing in emails or text based forums. To prevent this save as: “text with line breaks”, close the file, re-open (it should look different and be in Courier font), then cut and paste.
9. You will also notice a Reflective Journal. You can use these for personal musings about the Cybermissions course.
10. If you have difficulties you can email me in johned@aibi.ph - if you do not get a response in 48 hrs then feel free to email me again as sometimes emails go astray.
11. If you get behind for some reason, or if you have to travel, then you can catch up. Just go back to the point where you were in the forums and add your comments. The forums will still be up for eight weeks after the course so you have 20 weeks in which to do the 12-lesson course. However you will get more from the inter-student discussions if you can keep up with the flow.
12. Please remember to pay the \$37.50 fee if you can afford to. The donation link is:
<http://www.aibi.ph/aibi/donate.htm> and you can pay by credit card using Ikobo or Paypal, or by check. Make checks out to:
AIBI-International, 514 E. Desford St. Carson CA 90745 USA



In the **Interaction Center** in week one you will see something like this (The illustration below is just an example - don't try clicking on the links here, they will only work in the Interaction Center):



Week 1 + Ideas: The Nature and Theology of Cybermissions



  [Reading 1](#) - Overview of Cybermissions
1
[url](#)



  [Reading 2](#) - Theology - Socio-Technical Humanity
5
[url](#)



  [Reading 3](#) - PowerPoint that overviews Cybermissions, its potential and its strategies.
10
[url](#)



  [Link 1](#) - John Paul II - Internet A New Forum For Proclaiming The Gospel
15
[url](#)

  [Link 2](#) - Useful Links to Internet Research (Association of Internet Researchers)
20
[url](#)

  [Link 3](#) - Wired Churches, Wired Temples: Taking congregations and missions into cyberspace
25
[url](#)

  [Link 4](#) - Internet Activities Chart - who have EVER done...
30
[url](#)

  [Link 5](#) - Internet Acitivity - Average User, Average day
35
[url](#)

  [Link 6](#) - Theology of Cyberspace
50
[url](#)

  [Link 7](#) - A very post-modern graphically rich site on theology & cyberspace
55
[url](#)

Click on the links and read the material

Then comment on what you have read in the FORUM

The FORUM is located on the left hand side and has an icon that looks like a small stack of books. Click on the FORUM link and post a message about what you have read.

You will follow this procedure for all six weeks of this course.

You will submit your assessment by email to johned@aibi.ph

The Course

*Cybermissions.Org recommends Tony Whittaker's online "Web-Evangelism Guide" at:
<http://www.web-evangelism.com>*

Week 1 - Nature & Theology Of Cybermissions

Overview of Cyber-Missions

Socio-Technical Humanity

Missional Helix

These readings and links give you an introductory overview of the subject. The overview of Cybermissions article was written at the beginning of 2003 and gives a picture of how things stood then. Socio-Technical Humanity is a theological article on the basis for using technology in ministry. Some people find the Missional Helix article very challenging but it will help you think about designing cross-cultural online ministry.

You should post three sets of comments this week.

1. One entitled Introduction – "John Smith" (or whatever your name is) that tells us a bit about yourself and what you want to get out of the course. Feel free to say as much or as little as you feel comfortable with.
2. An analysis of and reaction to each of the main readings.
3. A couple of quick comments on two of the recommended links.

Some questions to keep in mind:

- How can technology serve ministry?
- Should Christians minister in cyberspace at all? Is it irredeemably evil?
- What are some of the theological considerations in online ministry?
- What are some of the cross-cultural implications of ministering to 40 countries at once?
- Is an online faith decision a "real" faith decision?

Week 2 - Who Is Online & What Do They Want – Web Demographics

Pew Internet Cyber-Faith Report

Global Internet Statistics

Push Or Pull?

Many people are “finding God online”. More and more the Internet is becoming part of everyday religious experience as people share prayer points, find out about Christian events, buy Christian books, do bible studies and read Christian articles online. Some Christians belong to online communities of faith, egroups and cyber-churches that are quite significant for them. The Internet is the place where people find out “private information” on politics, health and religion, that they may feel uncomfortable about asking in a group situation or face to face. The Internet is not a broadcast “push” medium – the material remains on the server. Rather it is a “pull medium” and visitors to websites are seeking a specific service, piece of information, or personal connection.

You should post two sets of comments this week.

1. An analysis of and reaction to each of the main readings.
2. A couple of quick comments on two of the recommended links.

Some questions to keep in mind:

- How are Christians using the Internet?
- What is the nature of the Internet as a communications medium?
- Is a cyber-church a real church?
- How do visitors navigate the web to your website?
- Check the Internet statistics on China – 90 million at last count
- What are the main languages used in cyberspace (you might be surprised!)

Week 3 - Decisions In Cyberspace – Bridge Strategies, Revised Engel Scale etc.

Web-Evangelism Guide Main Page

Effective Church Websites

Wired Churches - Pew Internet Report

Tony Whittaker is back with us this week and his Web Evangelism Guide is a useful resource for all those involved in Cybermissions. This week we will look at mono-cultural evangelism - that is evangelism where there are no major cultural barriers such as language. How can we have effective evangelistic church websites? Tony will tell you about the Bridge Strategy of using a neutral interest area to gain the attention of non-Christians, and then to link to the gospel.

As usual you should post two sets of comments this week.

1. An analysis of and reaction to each of the main readings.
2. A couple of quick comments on two of the recommended links.

It is also recommended that you start work on your final paper – the strategic plan for your online ministry. Start jotting down a few ideas that you will develop later.

Some questions to keep in mind:

- How can a local church use the Internet to lead local people to Jesus?
- How do we get non-Christians to come to Christian websites?
- What would a seeker-sensitive website look like?
- What processes does a person go through before making the decision to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior?
- What kinds of gospel presentation might work best online?

How can you follow-up people who make a decision for Christ online?

Week 4 - Online Community, Virtual Teams, Relationships In Cyberspace

Community

Email Relationships

Virtual Teams

This week we look at cyber-churches, online communities, email relationships, and virtual teams; a mixture of theology and sociology that examines how we interact with each other online. Central to this is the concept of the Word – God communicating with us through Scripture and through Christ. Can words alone build an effective relationship? Visit a few cyber-churches and online communities and make up your mind. Also seek to understand how visitors to your website will relate to you and to each other and how that can be improved.

You should post two sets of comments this week.

1. An analysis of and reaction to each of the main readings.
2. A couple of quick comments on two of the recommended links.

Some questions to keep in mind:

- How is community formed online?
- What sort of functions can online communities serve?
- How would something like an online book discussion group work?
- Can you actually worship online?
- How is the Cybermissions course a temporary community?
- How can a team of experts, from different countries work together via email, discussion groups, and online alternatives?
- How is the website related to the community that forms around it?
- What website ideas and designs might best help the formation of online Christian community?

Week 5 - Writing & Communicating Online, Metaphors, Chat, Cultural Sensitivity

How To Write For The Web (Nielsen)

Writing Online (Guide)

The Web is still mainly words and writing online differs in important ways from writing in print. So if we are to communicate the gospel effectively in cyberspace we will have to present our information for people who scan and scroll. The Nielsen article gives good material on readability online and knocks some common assumptions on the head. Tony Whittaker's article in the Guide is excellent as usual.

You should post two sets of comments this week.

1. An analysis of and reaction to each of the main readings.
2. A couple of quick comments on two of the recommended links.

Some questions to keep in mind:

- How do people process information online?
- How should written information be presented so it is best understood?

Week 6 - Post-Modernism And Youth Culture Online

Gospel And Culture

Leonard Sweet - 21st Century Youth Ministry

Newbigin

Post-Modern Evangelism

There is also a large cultural divide in Western culture between modern (generally over 45) and post-modern (younger than 45) values. Post-modernism is very skeptical of absolute truth such as claims of an inerrant Bible. However it is very relational and experiential and relies heavily on the Internet for all sorts of information. It presents unique problems of incarnating the gospel in a culture. However the Internet is a proven tool for reaching post-moderns and it is said that 85% of visitors to post-modern churches come through the church website.

As usual you should post two sets of comments this week.

1. An analysis of and reaction to each of the main readings.
2. A couple of quick comments on two of the recommended links.

Some questions to keep in mind about post-modernism:

- How are gospel and culture often in tension – even within a single culture?
- How can the gospel be made clear to post-moderns?
- What kind of website design seems to appeal most to post-moderns?
- What is the danger in trying to make the gospel “relevant” rather than trying to make it clear? How can this lead to compromise?
- What does Leonard Sweet’s EPIC acronym mean?
- How is community important to post-moderns and how can you build community on a website?
- How can post-modern music and worship be incorporated into a website?

Reminder: Please submit your assessment by email to johned@aibi.ph

Congratulations on
finishing the Training
In Cybermissions
course!