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The Cyber Church: How it is understood by its participants, with special reference to the Ethiopian Christians Plus all Room in Paltalk.

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Praise Lord!!

Abbreviations

CET	Central European Time
ECIM	Ethiopian Christians Internet Ministry
ECPA	Ethiopian Christians plus All
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church
MWC	Mulu Wongel Church (Full Gospel Church)
PC	Personal computers (desk top)
PM	Private Message
VOIP	Voice over Internet Protocol

Vocabulary

Admin	A chat room administrator with specific rights and privileges, to disable the right of the participant in a time or fault and misbehave
Admin, Super (Super Admin)	A person who is an administrator of the cyber room with a more Responsibility over the room admins such as banning a person from entering the room or assigning new admins etc...
Ban	To restrict a person from joining the room for a specific period of time or permanently.
Bounce	To disconnect the person from the room for the limitation of 24 hours starting from the minute he/she is bounced
Habesha	A name given by the Arabs (in most Middle Eastern languages including the Quran) for Ethiopians, at present refers to the Ethiopians and Eritreans in Common especially in the Diaspora.
Lobby	The writing platform or space / board which is prepared to exchange text messages available to all participants
Log in	To join the chat room
Member	ECPA participant who is attending ordinarily
ECPA guideline	The administration rule of the room that any admin agrees to adhere to and follow before he/she will be approved as an admin.
Nick Name	A virtual name a cyber-church participant uses instead of real name. for example my given name is Yohannes Teffera and my Paltalk nick name is "Malkam" which means good in Amharic, the official language of Ethiopia, Paltalk requires a logging nick name to join the rooms which is not necessarily to be your given name
Paltalk	A cyber service program that provides text chatting, audio and video communication.
Pente	A short form of Pentecost used as a derogatory name given for the first Pentecostal Christians by the clergy/members of other Christian denominations.
Private message	A system in Paltalk for exchanging texts, voice and video communication between two or more people, which is not visible for other uninvited participants
Participant	Anyone who is in the ECPA room at a particular time.

Red	Restricting a participant not to use a microphone or to send text messages in the room lobby.
Relog	To come back again in the paltalk, room after a sudden interception due to network problem or power interruption or any unspecified reasons.
Tabot	Pronounced as “ta boat” a replica of the Ark of the Covenant
Texting	Conversation in writing texts in the Lobby or private window
Un-red	To reinstate the participation right by removing the red which restricts the participation of a participant in the room and to allow the person in the cyber Church to write a text or take the microphone and to speak again.
Whisper	A text message in the lobby destined to a particular person which is only visible for that person Selected by the sender

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Since the introduction of the Internet, organizations and individuals from all over the world and people of different cultures have used cyber for connection, communication and to enhance and simplify their day-to-day lives. The existence of cyber or Internet creates an arena not limited by time or location, but rather an environment intended for the interaction of different ideas from around all over the world (*Partridge, C 2005).*

In modern society today, it is common that individuals use email, discussion forums, chat rooms, live discussion and communication videos and others forms of communication to build connections and establish groups based in a variety of endeavours some include professional advice, supporting forums, online trade, promoting solidarity around illness, sharing experiences about relationships and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ via paltalk and other social medias. Cyber communities find a foundation in common values, visions, interests and ailments (*Campbell, H, 2005)*. Connections developed in the cyber world help individuals cope with their lives in the physical world; people take the information and advice they acquire online and apply it to their everyday lives outside of the Internet.

The cyber church is progressively covering all areas of life in the society in a very rapid manner. Like the transport, defence, research, social and advanced computers and robots cover educational sector, the spiritual dimension of the society is also not immune from that. Church going is may not be the usual term for the future generation since going to a building which we call a church my not be a relevant issue for them. The Church is not immune to that. People who claim to have an online Church are nowadays dominating the traditional method of Church function. The long trip covered by missionaries and preachers to reach out people is replaced by having a smart phone or laptop connected to the internet and can reach may people from many countries at the same time As Internet is a late comer to most of African countries compared to the west especially to the people of the horn of Africa, specifically, to the people living far from the cities. The Ethiopians and Eritreans who have been dislocated from their land due to war, social unrest

and other many reasons end up living in Diaspora where there is a foreign situation compared to theirs which created isolation spiritual vacuum. As people of religious conviction while living at home, these people may find it difficult to live without practicing their faith on a daily basis as it is used to be at home.

The internet is seen very negatively as the primary purpose and activities are activities are viewing pornography resulting in negative consequences, It is important to show how it can be redeemed and be used for many positive contribution in the society one of those benefits being a tool for evangelisation and Cyber Church for the needy.

Therefore, it seems that many are interested in religious issues and subscribed to various religious groups in social Medias and that the benefit should be researched studied and documented for the benefit of others who will follow in the future and those who are interested to join in serving these peoples group, whose numbers are very significant. Since groups who are not seen positively among the Christian community dominated the World Wide Web the Church was not seeing the positive side of the new achievement, which sooner or later has to dominate the world including the religious domains.

This thesis is focussing on the role that cyber Church has in the spiritual life of the believers who at the same time are participating in the local Churches and those who do not have access to the local Churches with different reasons such as the prohibition of Church services do you the policies of the governments the believers live in. Therefore, study was initially defined with the objective to study the impact of cyber church on the local church and its mission.

1.2 Motivation

In our era of 21st century, Internet is very important to different kinds of activities, institutions, organizations, and churches and even for our daily personal life. In both cyber and local churches the internet is relevant to many activities and programs including evangelization both re-evangelization and new evangelization as well as traditional missionary work. In addition the internet is also relevant in providing education, news and information, apologetics, governance and administration, as well as some pastoral counseling and spiritual direction to the believers, followers and the public at large.

In this digital data age, the development of online virtual worlds created a new space that allowed people from all over the globe to meet, connect, learn, pray, and preach the word of God from all

parts of the world. Although the virtual reality of cyberspace cannot substitute for real interpersonal community, the incarnational reality of the sacraments and the liturgy, or the immediate and direct proclamation of the gospel, it can complement them, attract people to a fuller experience of the life of faith, and enrich the religious lives of users. It also provides the Church with a means for communicating with particular groups—young people and young adults, the elderly and home-bound, persons living in remote areas, the members of other religious bodies—who otherwise may be difficult to reach. Even though, there are a lot of information and research studies on the areas of cyber, it is difficult to find studies that have been done on the impact of cyber church to the local churches and mission. Since I have been engaged in the cyber ministry for the last 15 years, I have decided to study the impact of the cyber Church in the overall mission of the local Church and the misunderstanding, and the exaggeration about cyber church.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The Ethiopian Christians Plus all room in Paltalk which is the main Christian Room online among the Ethiopian and Eritreans is selected for the study, highlighting challenges, achievements shortcomings and dangers associated with the cyber church. The study is to show how the cyber Church positively contributes to the overall mission of the Church.

There is a great difference of beliefs between the enthusiasts of the new cyber Church and those who are either condemns everything modern and new and especially when it comes to the religious spheres or who considers the cyber Church as a threat to the local Church. Those who fear that the Cyber Church might be the future replacement of the local Church as everything is going to be replaced by the new technology. This study will try to find out what the Cyber Church role is in the whole sphere of ecclesiology and how it can contribute to the mission of the Church as a whole. This study will answer the questions like; what is a cyber-fellowship/Church? How is it affecting the Local Church and attracting its members? How did the participants find it to call it a Church and devote themselves in that area as the traditional church goers devoted themselves in their local Churches?

This thesis is designed to investigate and find out how the cyber Church is impacting the world and what are the basic similarities and differences with the local church and what the cyber

Church participants will say about it. In the light of the modern technological achievements of mobile technology and Internet connection, is the Church going back to the first era where the believers were connected all the time together? And what are the advantages and the disadvantages of the cyber Church compared to the local traditional Churches?

1.4 Research questions

This study was undertaken to answer the following research questions.

Main research question

The main research question is, Do the members of the cyber church understand it as a Church?

Secondary research questions

The secondary research questions are

1) What are the similarities between the local Church and the cyber church?
2) What are the differences?
3) Can the cyber Church play the role of the local Church?

1.5 Objective and Purpose of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1.5.1 To do a research among the cyber Church members, how they understand the cyber Church as a Church.

1.5.2 To find out if the cyber church can stand by itself as a Church or is it a part of the local Church?

1.5.3 To find out the negative and positive impact of cyber church on the local existing churches of Ethiopia and its mission

1.5.4 To identify and propose possible recommendations to improve the cyber Church.

1.6 Method

Bryman (2012:36) in his book argued that qualitative research method is a method that usually emphasizes a word rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Therefore, taking the main research question of this study in to consideration qualitative research method is used to undertake the study. Further, Bryman (2012:72) defines a research strategy as a structure that leads or guides the researcher in gathering and analysing data. Considering the research questions of this study a comparative research design method, which entails studying two contrasting cases using more or less identical method, was used.

This research design helps to understand the social phenomena in a better way when they are compared in in relation to two or more meaningfully contrasting situations (Bryman 2012:72). To collect data for this study an interview data collection method was used and structured and semi structured interviews were employed. Among the interviews both group and individual interview will be used. To explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on the research questions individual interview were used. The researcher made the group interview to save time and money by carrying out interviews with a number of individuals simultaneously.

To compare and contrast the historical context of the research as well as how this research is different or original from what others have been done and to realize the rationale behind this research, a literature review has been done. Additionally, to use literatures as a secondary source of data a review of literatures were done. Materials like textbooks, articles, journals, magazines and the Bible was used. These materials helped me to lay a foundation for my thesis by understanding the researches and the knowledge available in this field and the cyber church in which I was conducting my research.

To select the respondents of this research a purposive sampling method was employed with the goal to sample respondents in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being presented (Bryman, 2012:418). This implies that the respondents had to be relevant to the research and there had to be a correlation with the main research questions. Accordingly, church pastors, church elders and participants of the Ethiopian Christian Plus All Paltalk room (both those who have administrative role in the room and those who don't have any role in the room) were included as respondents of the research. This means the people had to be relevant to the study and in my case this group included: youth members, youth leaders, church ministers, youth patrons and the church council.

1.7 Structure of the thesis

This paper is organized in to eight chapters, including chapter one above.

In chapter two, is the theory used in this thesis and used to testify and interrelated the findings of this study. The chapter defines church and tried to examine church from different points of view. It also gives information about the cyber church and globalization. The church as a

body of Christ is also indicated in this chapter.

The third chapter is the presentation of the cyber church. In this chapter Ethiopian Christian Plus All Room in Paltalk Room (ECPA) is presented. The services given in the ECPA, number of participants, geographical distribution of the participants and other information's related to ECPA is highlighted.

In chapter four, the Church in the Ethiopian Context is discussed. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Lutheran and the Catholic churches in Ethiopia is highlighted in the chapter.
The Fifth chapter shows the methodology that was used to undertake this study is indicated. The method of data collection and data analysis method are among the topics indicated in the chapter.

The findings of the study conducted using different data collection tools indicated in the in chapter six of this work. The responses of the respondents (the empirical findings from the field are showed in the chapter.

Chapter seven is a discussion of both the theory and empirical findings, which also were discussed under different themes in the theory. The final chapter Eight is a conclusion of the whole research. My recommendations also included in this chapter.

Chapter Two

Theory

2.1 Introduction

This part presents a review of different books, scholarly articles, and any other sources relevant to this study which will be used to evaluate this work in relation to the research problem. Further, this part will help to critically summarize the current knowledge in the area under investigation and In addition, it will also help to provide the context within which to place this study.

2.2 The Church and its definition

The Church is an institution built by Jesus Christ to function on this earth in wining people to the kingdom of heaven. The body of believers gathered in one purpose and goal being Christ the head of that family. The Church is alive for the last 2000 years on this earth and will continue to exist until the return of the one who built it and commissioned it for a great purpose.

The Church is the community of all true believers for all time" (Grudem , 2000:853) In the Greek language, the word Church derived from the word kuriakos, "belonging to the Lord" and the New Testament classical Greek the word ecclesia which has the meaning of " an assembly of the citizens of a polis (state)" (Erikson, 2013:955) The Greek word ecclesia which has the idea of an assembly of believers (Matt 16:18,18:17 and "the community of disciples " (Marshal:2008 :37). The meaning of this Greek word ecclesia are as follows (1) meeting in a general sense as a gathering of citizens' assembly (Acts 19:32); (2) as the assembly of people of the Israel congregation (Heb,2:12); (3) congregation meeting as the assembled Christian community (Rom, 16:5);and (4) church as the totality of Christians living in one place (Acts 8:1); (5) church as the universal body of believers (Eph 1:22).

In her book *Religion and Technology in the 21st Century; Faith in the E-World*, (George, 2006: 144-145) notes four different functions of the church: out-reach, in-reach, up-reach and down-reach. By out-reach is meant that the Church is involved in teaching out those outside the church (evangelism missions). The In-reaching function of the Church employs the teaching practices in to those inside the church (encouragement, fellowship). George further

explains the Up-reach and Down-reach functions as an up reaching of the church to God (praising and prayer) and the power of God to teach the church through Bible study and listening to the Holy Spirit. George's categorization of the function of the church has an overt implication on how the teachings of the church have expanded. The term «reach» implies that there has been a mechanism of communication among individuals, groups, congregations, etc. to expand the Word of God.

In a similar manner the two Hebrew words " Qaha" perhaps derived from the Word voice, refers to summon to an assembly…and the term "edah" which appears in the Pentateuch, suggests as congregation of Israel came into being with the command to celebrate the pass over, and leave Egypt" (Erikson, 2013:955)

According to Jonathan Hill the Church can mean a number of things, First, it can mean a single Christian, second, it can mean the building in which they meet, third it can mean the denomination in which the community belongs and fourth, it can mean all Christians everywhere" (Hill, 2006:532)

2.3 The birthday of the Church

Though the Bible does not specifically tell us the exact Birthday of the Church it is from all perspectives regarding its establishment and set up it is understood that the day of Pentecost is the birthday of the Church The day the Mission of the Lord Jesus is completed on the cross, His baptism and starting of the ministry, His triumphal entry to Jerusalem, His ascension in to heaven promising his second coming and others can be considered as a start point of the Church but not satisfactory in the same way as the day of Pentecost where His promise of sending the Parakletos, and empowering the weak disciples to minster to a hostile crowd whom they were afraid and hid in a closed door earlier, but now on this day they were able to function with full power and authority makes it very ideal to be convinced that the day of Pentecost is the birthday of the Church.

The instruction of the Lord to His Disciples saying that, "but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49) is an indicative instruction, which shows an expected event, will happen soon. Another indication is also that Jesus, with his

conversation with Peter about his Church he said I would build my Church that also indicates as a future event that also directs to a future date which might be the day of Pentecost.
In Acts: 20:38 … "Be shepherds of the church of God" which he bought with his own blood" the Apostle's words showed that the Church was bought by the blood of Jesus for a new testament for those who believe and follow him.

2.4 Theological foundations of the universal Church

"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18). This verse is believed that it shows clearly who is the founder of the Church is without any doubt. Though many theologians consider the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost, The Church in its initial stage didn't stand by its own as we see it today. It was developed and gradually got its identity while it was using the already existing Jewish setup. The first century Church was started in the home of Jewish people (The Mother of Mark and John's house was a prayer room according to Acts 12:13. We can also read a similar story where a gentile convert named Cornelius used his house as a gathering place to start prayer and people were filled with the Holy Spirit right there. The Jews who were filled by the Holy Spirit were the first converts in the synagogues of the Jewish people and were the target of the gospel (Jerusalem Judea, Samaria and ends of the earth) The first century church developed its theological identity while still praying and gathering in the Jewish synagogues and temples, Jesus himself preached at the synagogues (John 12:42) We read in the book of Acts that the Apostle Paul met the Jews in their synagogues and have conversation about the Lord Jesus the synagogues.(Acts 17:17)

The Apostles in the first years used to go to the synagogues possibly not to pray as the same way the usual Pharisees prayed but according to the prayer the Lord taught them to pray.
Therefore, The Church as a building wasn't initially known as identical physical building like we see it today but instead it was known as a fellowship of saints gathering for the same purpose.

2.5 The Church as the body of Christ

Theologian Millard Erikson considered "The Church at once a very familiar and a very misunderstood topic" in which he emphasised that "part of the misunderstanding results from the multiple usage of the term "Church" (Erikson, 2013:950). The uniqueness of the church is

that “The Church is not a sum or composite of the individual local groups; instead the whole is found in each place” (Erikson, 2013:956). Any number of congregations either in mega churches or in few numbers represents the kingdom of God in the same equal manner.

The Bible portrays the Church as the Body and Christ as its head. “..And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church” (Eph 1:22) that they are inseparable parts of one body without the one the other cannot function. This allegory of body and head is a fundamental unifying factor of the believers to dwell together in harmony, in the house of God (Church). When the Lord prayed in John 17 as the father and the Son am one I believed he prayed for the body he built on earth to function in unity and in harmony while he leave.

Christ’s mission on earth was to find the lost one and return it to the former glory that was lost by the sin committed. He brought people, he selected anointed and commissioned people to find the others and bring them back to the kingdom of God. “I in them and you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity” (John17:23).

2.5.1 The invisible Church: Ecumenical Pertaining to the whole Christian church

Christianity started 2000 years ago by the coming of Jesus Christ in this world as a human being to reconcile the World. He taught, delivered, and freed the prisoners of sins and bondage as the early tradition understands it, “It is summed up as communion, koinonia, “ Tillard draws a conclusion in a way that “ local churches, diocese, and parishes will constitute the church of churches, which is the communion of saints in its full sense” (Tillard, 1987: 29). The Church is built and constituted by its founder Jesus Christ in a position that “the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matt 16:18).

Historically, the present shape of the buildings, the traditions and liturgies were developed gradually in different times depending on the culture and the geographical situation of the region the Church is established, which doesn’t have any specific formula either to its physical buildings or spiritual organizational shape from what we see at present. In fact, the first churches were in the houses of individuals as we read “So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.” (Acts 12:5) “When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.” (Acts 12:8) We can see that the same place where prayer was

conducted is addressed as a "Church "and "the house of Mary the mother of Mark" , at the same time. In the similar situation, we read that the Apostle Paul in his book of Romans addressing each church in each house using the name house and Church in an alternative /synonymic way, "…Also greet the church in their house." (Rom 16:5) referring the local Church in particular location while "Christ loved the Church and He gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25 is also referring the invisible universal Church irrespective or geographical or ethnic barriers.

The fundamental idea and principle of the Church is to shelter all the believers in all times being Jesus the founder and owner as he was calling it as his own as his own "I will build my Church "(Matt 16:18). As the believers in the Bible firmly believes that the Church grown to its present capacity among the nations and the people by the special intervention and guidance of the Lord. The History of the Church as many theologians agree starts on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell upon the gathered believers as promised by the Lord Jesus before his ascension in to heaven.

Those present at that day of Pentecost in Jerusalem were from about 15 Nations, different nations who speak different languages, counting the people group mentioned in Acts 2 will make it to 16 different nations. (Acts 2: " the Church consists of those of every race, every land and every age who have been chosen by God, the Father, purchased by Christ's blood, and sanctified by the Holy spirit" (Prime 2011:129).

2.5.2 The universality and locality of the Church

" The Church is the community of all true believers for all the time" (Grudem, 1994: 853) The Church is found by the Lord Jesus Christ, as He himself said "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."
It grew day by day by adding people through difficult times of persecution initially by religious bodies and later by the Roman Authorities.

The growth of the Church was given credit fully to God "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts2: 47. The Church is also understood as a social organization that is considered a "human community of persons in relationship with one another" (Van Gelder 2000:25).

2.5.3 The visible Church: the Church believers gather in person

The Idea of God's people and the God of Israel is derived from the Pentateuch like "I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." (Leviticus 26:12) God made a covenant with the people of Israel, to be their God and they will be his people. Jesus also applied this covenant in more concrete way by giving himself. Jesus' words "I will build my Church" (Matt 16:18) has similar voice as the God the Father said "if my people who are called by my name" (2 Chr. 7:14) The New Testament writers have also signified this concept in many places, "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God" (Exodus 29:45).

2.5.4 The Church as the Temple of the Holy Spirit

Jesus promised to his disciples "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." (John 14:18= One of the most important features in the plan of salvation of God is that believers are not just saved and left by their own but the Holy Spirit is given to them to be encouraged, strengthened, not only from a far distance but from within " Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit," 1 Corinthians 6:19, in this context " the Church is now indwelt by the Spirit, both individually and collectively" (Erikson, 2013:950) no doubt that the Church means the believers inside who are gathered and assembled by the call of God." Paul clearly put emphasis on it by saying that "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?" (1Cor 3:16)

2.6 The Church in different contexts

Contextualization is the way to adapt a particular idea or concept in to a local situation with harmony to the local culture tradition and system. "Contextualization is the art of translating ideas into a particular situation, place or culture. "(Moreau, 2012). According to David J Bosch, "the word contextualization was first coined in the early 1970's in the circle of theological education fund" Bosch further elaborates that the "two major types of contextualization the indigenization model and the socio economic model" (Bosch 2012:P. 431)

The indigenization model is the most important issue in the missionary endeavour in non-western cultures from South America to Africa and Asia. When the missionaries came to Ethiopia they brought their culture and even their liturgies and songs while there was already

a rich indigenous culture on the ground. The melody was foreign for Ethiopians who already had a church liturgy in their own context.

2.7 The Church at the era of globalization: - Globalization and Communication theory for missiology

When we think globalization the first thing that comes to our mind can be the economic and cultural globalism of the 20th century that challenged the physical borders of countries and societies in a global level. As Jean Chrétien the former prime minster of Canada said "we can't stop globalization, we can only adapt to it" (Urmetzer, 2005: 20)

From the experience of the iron curtain and the cold war where the west and the east were separated for many years there is a temptation to think that globalization is a new phenomenon which appeared in the 80s or in the 90s but the fact is that "globalization dates back to prehistory" where a country opened its door to other cultures and civilization and when a country conquers another one which crosses from one culture to another in all fields of social, economic or political spheres.

In a similar context God is a missionary (Missio Dei) (mission of the God) who is concerned for all people "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." (Matt 28:20). In fact in another chapter in the book of acts Jesus said "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The term farthest parts of the earth indicate the global nature of missiology that is out of the physical border of a single nation. Apart from Judaism, which was for particular race and people, Christianity started with a global vision of reaching the whole mankind. Jesus himself said to Paul that you would stand before which was in another continent.

2.8 The Church, the Internet and communication

Ten years ago, your friends were largely people you knew personally, neighbors coworkers, former classmates and your Church family. Today many relationships are formed online, Some of our most trusted voices are people whom we've never met" (Bailey,2007: 59) In the advent of the internet facilities which revolutionized human communications, instantly human communication became faster and advanced as never before in the history of mankind.

The world became more connected with the social Medias broadcasted on the Internet, any event especially religious related issue is received as it happened on the follower of the religion even if they live thousands of miles away from the place where the event took place.
The reactions of cashmere Muslims on the Palestinian intifada, and the sensitivities of Christians on issues extinction of Christians in the Middle East can be good examples for that. If it had been not in the era of Internet communication these issues would have not observed and created such reaction.

2.9 Communications and the Church

The Church can be translated as a communication, since the Greek word Ecclesia is "sent out" the center of the word is a message. Most of the New Testament books were messages to churches and church leaders. Therefore The Church is always in the middle of sending and receiving messages with the possible available medium throughout its existence.
The Apostle Paul was sent to Damascus with a letter which was the best available means for distance communication at the time (Acts 9:2).

The Church though it is mostly the last to adapt new discoveries to its use, It has been benefitted from all communication methods to its purpose. In the past missionaries throughout the world used rapid communication systems such as train ships and chariots. After the introduction of printing, television and the Internet the Church uses those new means for the advancement of this mission.

2.10 The Christian understanding of fellowship

In the Christian context unity and relationships are the central part of the worship and fellowship of believers, which is called the communion of the saints. The first Christians were selling their houses and bringing the money for communal consumption while they stayed together studying the Word and living in unity.

The Judo-Christian tradition of relationship in the form of living together is based on the Biblical verse "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"
(Psalm 133:1) Verses like "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait there..." (Acts 1:4) created an image of continues fellowship and unity among believers prompting them to stay together as much as possible. One of the main reasons I believe is that since Jesus taught his disciples day

and night while living with them since then the Church schools, later on the monasteries and covenants etc… worked towards a tight relationship among the brethren which even in excess of being day and night together in many instances avoiding basic working habits that was negatively affecting their communication with the outside world limiting the outreach ministry and economic production.

"Apotaktikoi" (Ferguson, 2005:229) which the term in Greek applies for those who live together in cities, towns and villages were in a close relationship together separating themselves from other people especially from those outside the Christian faith. Grudem also highlighted that the Church as "Rather the community of God's people meeting at any level can be rightly called a church." (Grudem, 2000:857).

2.11 The era of Internet and people's relationship

Apart from the scientific exploration, researches and educational purposes of the Internet is also opening a good opportunity for the society to meet without any physical hindrance, geographical location or social barriers. In the advent of Internet communication has become simple and effective. At the moment just visiting any web related chat room or discussion group will immediately displays that the members in each group are assembled with the same viewpoint. Groups are extremely polarized and cannot even communicate easily unless he/she is familiar with that particular group's doctrine or itinerary find their respective websites helpful.

Particularly when it comes to the cyber religious groups, things are much polarized especially among the Ethiopian and Eritrean groups in terms of doctrinal issues. The Eastern orthodoxies (Coptic) that are a predominantly Christian population in Ethiopia and Eritrea, at the moment have a very polarized situation and it is very visible. Politicians, seculars and different religious groups have their own cyber chat rooms that attracts those who are interested in the particular topic. In the rooms I have just visited in order to have a balanced view about the topic, I observed that a person with a slight different view is not tolerated. In both religious and the secular cyber rooms he/she will be bounced or red dotted so that he cannot use the microphone any more.

There is some misunderstanding regarding unity of Christian Fellowship since the traditional concept of fellowship is more in the physical terms while the Cyber Church is on the net without a physical contact. In order to understand the concept of fellowship once should examine the purpose of the fellowship of Saints.

2.12 The cyber Church

The Bible says, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations…" the going indicates the movement of the messengers of the gospel where people are. At present a considerable number of people are found on the net, as now people are mostly have internet access, "there are more than 7 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide, up from 738 million in 2000. Globally, 3.2 billion people are using the Internet," [1] therefore the Internet is one of the mission fields where one can find lots of people to reach out. Based on that many churches and missionary organizations are approaching the Internet to use that form of media for out-reach purposes.

Craig Detweiler, a professor of Fuller seminary, commented about Joel Hunter's web related services "Paul's itinerant preaching kept him connected to the congregation in the same way the webcasting allows a pastor Like Joel Hunter to send a letter to his congregation" (CT page 53) [2]. The Catholic Church has the awareness of the social Medias impact on the future of the Church, "The Church sees these media as "gifts of God" [1] which, in accordance with His providential design, unite men in brotherhood and so help them to cooperate with His plan for their salvation"[3]

2.13 Contextualization in cyber church

As the cyber Church is the reflection of the people in the local Churches many similarities can be found in many ways. However there are many peculiar aspects in the cyber Church that makes it different from the local Church.

"Contextualizing the Gospel is inherent to the mission of the Church" (Flemming,2005:26) One of the characteristic features of the cyber Church is its functioning with members from different geographical locations. The participants of the cyber Church though they are in one

[1] http://www.itu.int/net/pressoffice/press_releases/2015/17.aspx#.WPdVwoiGO71 viewed on 19.04.2017 14:23 PM
[2] Christianity today magazine September 2009 issue p 53) online edition viewed 20.02.2017 13:45
[3] http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_23051971_communio_en.html

cyber room together they are found in different geographical locations which has a time difference and in some cases be the difference of a day, (By the time I am writing this sentence it is 10:00 PM Thursday in Oslo Norway while it is 6:00 AM Friday in Sydney Australia and yet participants from both cities can be in the same room attending same program while the Oslo person is getting ready for bed when the Sydney man getting ready for his breakfast. In the case of Middle East an Early Friday morning is a holiday while the same day is an active working day in the rest of the World. In some African (definitely sure for the horn of Africa) and some Middle Eastern countries the Internet speed is very low which doesn't support video chat and voice transmission that breaks between lines that requires a great tolerance from those of us who live in countries where the technology is advanced.

The 3G and smart phone that support Internet communication is not easily available for every one everywhere. If the availability on the market cannot be doubted the affordability also to be considered. Availability of Internet access at the work place is not imaginable for some people who lives in Africa and the Middle East. Some people log in online from Internet cafes where there is no freedom of talking as loud as they can which limits their participations.
And above all the awareness of the opportunity the Internet provides is not widely understood.

The cyber Church has more freedom of addressing more operating area more than the other cyber groups with the opportunity of serving both the Diaspora and the people at home. Due to the limitation of political freedom and undeveloped democratic practices in the horn of Africa other political rooms especially those who criticize the present regimes are not enjoying a free participation in fear of reproach from the government and their spies. The cyber Churches focus on religious affairs that are not endangering their missions since religious freedom is relatively good at present.

In conclusion of this chapter, I believe it is important to point out the basic things a person needs in order to join a cyber-fellowship can start with any phone which has an internet connection, laptop computer, desk top computer, I Pad or tablets which have an internet connection and a microphone to talk and camera if video chat is required.

Chapter 3

Presentation of the cyber Church

3.1 Introduction

The Internet has been a medium for different types of groups depending on the Internet and aim of the group moderators and the group members. In general the cyber world has different branches depending on the aim, vision and interest of the participants, at the moment when we observe from the daily participation of the participants of Paltalk among the religious groups For example the Ethiopians and Eritreans presence is much lower compared to the Muslims and non-religious groups specifically political and social groups in which the Christians presence is very low.

3.2 The Ethiopian Christian Plus All Paltalk Room (ECPA)

The ECPA was established in May 2002 initially, which was an individual effort to reach out to people who are out of the four walls of the local Church and mostly found on the cyber world. Later on in its first year a vision starts to develop in the mind of the visionary to make it in an organized manner as a supporting organ to help the mission of the local Church. It was a vision based on the following Word of God "Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD" (Zechariah 6:15) The reason for its establishment was that many people started joining the cyber groups, most of them were engaged in politics and other topics while the presence of Christians to share the spiritual aspects was not visible at that time.

The Room was first opened as Habesha Christian room in order to make it available for a wider group than naming it Ethiopian which looks excluding Eritreans. In practice, in the Christian community we found out that the name doesn't play much role since the Christians believe and fellowship beyond the border of ethnicity. In fact unlike the old days at the moment, the Name Habesha started to be used as a common name for Ethiopians and Eritreans together.

We found out from the participants that the name Habesha didn't attract either Ethiopians nor Eritreans and the name Ethiopian is more attractive to both people, to at least come and see

what is going on in the room opened, With an open meeting with participants we agreed and decided to name the Cyber Church room as Ethiopian Christians" but the " Plus all " was added in order to create a welcoming atmosphere to all people and all religious groups who are not Ethiopians to participate freely and allow them included.

The reason the "The Ethiopian Christians plus All" room has "Plus All" as part of the name, because of the following three reasons. The first reason is that though the room functions in the Amharic language which is the Ethiopian official language, there are also many Eritreans and Somalis who fully or partially speak or understand the Amharic language which the term "plus all "will include them as well.

The second reason was that since the vision and the purpose of the room is to reach all mankind not only Ethiopians adding the "Plus All" in its name is believed and proved to create a welcoming atmosphere for all non-Ethiopians.

The third and the final reason is that as the only Ethiopian Christian Room in Paltalk in the year of its establishment in 2002-2003, I believed that adding the term "Plus All" on the name of the room sends a message that all Christians especially the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who are almost more that 35% of the already 100 million population and other religious groups including the Muslim population of Ethiopia also makes them feel at home to join it without feeling excluded.

3.3 ECPA Administration

Due to Geographical and time differences it is not easy to lead the Cyber Church in one leadership structure. Therefore it was organized in 2 administrative divisions. In order to have freedom of working both leaderships perform their activities independently.

Europe and the rest of the World leadership: - The Europe and the rest of the world program is from 06:00 GMT to 24:00 GMT **North American and Canada leadership**:- The North American and Canada program is from 24:00 GMT-05:00 GMT.**, Others (regions such as the Middle East, Africa Asia and son on)** these regions have only few participants in terms of the distribution of Ethiopian diaspora at these regions. A large number of Ethiopians live and work In the Middle East, a large number of Ethiopians live and work

there. Most of those are women working at homes of wealthy and ordinary Arabs as housemaids that did not allow them to participate in a leadership level other than participating. Therefore these regions are administered under the European leadership. On both regions mostly a same kinds of program are taking place.

3.3.1 Recruitment of administrators and minsters

ECPA has a mechanism where we can monitor all the 24 hours activities of the room with the following procedures. First, the room is administered by an assigned administrator (s) which we call Admins, and before they are promoted from an ordinary participant or member to admin or Super Admin position they should produce) Make it obligatory that the person who wants to serve in ECPA a) has to identify her/himself with his/her real name , not the nick name we use in Paltalk and other chat rooms b) Provide his/her physical address where they live, which church they worship in so that we know they real identity. c) Provide his/her telephone number so that I will ring, talk to him/her and have a conversation with him to find out that the basic things are in place. At the end he/she will be sent the Admin guide line which has 22 points [4]which he should abide to serve as admin in ECPA, when he/she reads and confirms his/her agreement by return mail he/she will be given the admin status which allows him/her to join the room with the letter @ before his/her nick name which authorizes him/her to have a special status to control the room.

Second, for a person to be approved and assigned to minster online the same routine procedures have to be followed. The testimony of other cyber Church members also has a weight in approving the person to be a minister in the room.

3.3.2 Discipline of minister's admins and the participants

The Cyber Church is a voluntary unity of people who live in different parts of the world but it does not mean everyone is free to act as he/she wish in the cyber Church. There is a strong discipline in terms of time management, taking and discharging responsibility in the room, admins and ministers of the Board and the visionary /the room owner will take the proper action if the minster found guilty.

[4] See the admin guide line attached at the appendix

For ECPA participants the disciplinary action depends on whom the person is which means all people in the room may not be Christians at all, so if they commit a mistake the action we will take depends on the person's background. In General if the person misbehaves in the room a verbal warning or text warning in the lobby will be send to him/her. If he/she don't respond and behave inappropriately, he/she will be red dotted. If a person is red dotted in the room he/she cannot use mic and cannot even send text messages in the lobby. b) Next to the red dotting if that particular person doesn't behave and continue creating problem in the room he/she will be bounced, that means kicked off from the room and cannot return before 24 hours unless his nick name is removed from the bounce list by an admin. c) If a person is not regretting for his mistakes and intentionally joining to the cyber room and found being a threat to members and especially to new believers and sometimes harassing female members with abusive words or deliberately enters to spread malice and false teachings then he/she will banned from the room that means he will never get access to come back again unless the room owner remove his name from the banned list. Banning a person from the room can only be taken by the room owner or by a designated Super admin.

Banned, when the above to measures can not the person to behave in the room, the owner of the room will ban the person which he will never join the room unless his nick name is removed from the banned list. In addition to that the ECPA board which is mentioned earlier will take special disciplinary action against corrupted minsters, to the extent of permanently banning them after notifying the members for educational and transparency purposes.
In fact some church leaders and members appreciated and even praised the disciplining mechanisms of ECPA as more stronger than the local Church.

3.3.3 The none-stop 24/7 service

When I opened the ECPA room in 2001 it was intended opened to operate for few hours a day when I get free time from work and other church related duties and responsibilities. When I was free from work and have spare time I used to open the room and invite interested people from my close friend online. Gradually when the number of participants increased people started taking administrative responsibility to enable the room stays opened as long as possible, mostly in my absence. Starting from 2006 the room is opened 24 hours a day 7 days a week throughout the year with the help of volunteers from every walk of life and every continent and country.

3.3.4 The name of the cyber Room

The reason the "The Ethiopian Christians plus All" room has "Plus All" as part of the name has the following three reasons. The first reason is that though the room functions in the Amharic language that is the Ethiopian official language there are also many Eritreans and Somalis who fully or partially peak or understand the Amharic language which the term "plus all "will include them. The number. The second reason is since the vision and the purpose of the room is to reach all mankind not only Ethiopians so the "Plus All" will create a welcoming atmosphere for all non-Ethiopians. The third and the final reason is that as the only Ethiopian Christian Room in paltalk in the year of its establishment in 2002-2003. I believed that adding the term "Plus All" on the name of the room sends a message that all Christians especially the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who are almost more that 35% of the already 100 million population and other religious groups including the Muslim population of Ethiopia also make them feel at home to join it without feeling excluded.

3.3.5 Number of participants

The Room that started initially with the participation of few people (15-20) has grown steadily for the last 15 years. In the first two years the number of Attendees were in average of 50-70 and starting from 2011 onwards the number of participants is about 150 on average. The highest attendance varies depending on the program of the day and the hour. At the moment the highest attendance is on Sunday evenings at 20:00-22:00 GMT which is a testimony time. The Ethiopian and Eritrean Christians especially those in the Diaspora are very much interested to hear the testimonies of others such as how God helped them and when the prayer was done and how they were answered.

3.3.6 Geographical distribution of Participants

Though there wasn't a concrete study to find out the exact distribution of the number of participants worldwide my estimation from my encounter with participants and with my frequent visits to members living in different parts of the world the demographic distribution of participants can be classified as follows:- Europe 60%USA 20% , Canada 5%, Middle East 10% , Africa including Ethiopia 2%,and the rest of the world 3%.

3.3.7 Age distribution of participants

Due to the anonymous nature of the cyber church members It is hard to know the age and complexity of the members, From my personal experience with meeting many of the

participants of the cyber Church in different parts of the world during our annual conferences which is held annually in a selected cities in different parts of the world and also in weddings of members which I attended at least 6 of them I estimated the maximum participants are between ages 25- 45.

The least participants are those under 18 and above 60 years of age. There are three generations of participants in one family from Italy where the lady in her mid-70s is actively participating while her son and his granddaughter are active administrators of the room. There is also another family from GA, USA where the lady in her mid-70s actively participates while her daughter is an active administrator of the room with her two sons participating in singing and sharing the Word of God with other children at the weekly children program which is held every Saturday from 16:00-18:00 GMT. It is worthwhile to mention that these children from Atlanta Georgia, USA are singing in the morning hours and finish around 11:00 AM while their friends in Europe are hurrying to go to early bed time which is 5:00 PM CET.

3.3.8 Gender distribution of participants

We can also estimate the gender of the participants when they speak on the microphone from their voice, and those who don't hold a microphone we can guess based on their feminine nick names such as the Biblical Deborah, Phoebe, Martha and the traditional names Aregash, Almaz and Sofia, is a feminine name, Based on this understanding I can assume that that 2/3 of the participants are women, the reason for that being that Ethiopian & Eritrean women are more working more in homes while the men are engaged in fields and outdoor works with a limited internet access.

This is very true with participants from Middles East, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, and the Mediterranean countries Italy, Greece, and Spain etc. In these countries women are employed to work in residences and institutions where they have Internet accesses. In addition, a considerable number of women in the west stay at home taking care of children while men are working to earn the bread of the family which gives more chance to become on line participants than their male partners. Maternity leave also plays the best opportunity to mothers to log in to the cyber Church and take part at least as listeners even though they couldn't take the microphone and actively participate as required due their situation with a new born child.

There are also some misleading events regarding the nick names used in the room, These events may be for the following reasons, Sometimes people may log in by their spouses, or children's nick name, In this case when they raise their hands to stay on queue to wait for their turn to speak, the administrator may introduce them as a sister and inform them to take the mic and when they hold the mic they say " I am sorry I am not she, I am he but using my wife's or my daughter's nickname." In other ways some gender free nicknames such as Victory, Truth in love, True Gospel, Bright Hope etc. are hard to guess for which gender this nicknames belongs to until the person holds the mic and we hear his/her voice.

3.3.9 Nationality of Participants

At the first three years of "The Ethiopian Christians Plus All room" there was nothing called as such as Eritrean or Ethiopian even though the Room name is called Ethiopian participants from Ethiopia and Eritrea were participating without any reservation. We can roughly estimate that participants at the moment are

Eritreans 25%

Ethiopians 70 %

Others 5% these includes Somalis and many other nationalities with mixed nationality with Ethiopia who understand Amharic; among these many Ethnic-Arab nationalities are attending the room.

3.4 Services at ECPA

Initially "The Ethiopian Christians plus All room" was started to help the Christians who log online to be protect them from heresies and from the influence of other teachings that are contrary to the Christian teachings. This is primarily to help the Church of Christ in helping its members to have a safe stay on the net. Gradually with the number of participants growing and the awareness of the Ministers to use paltalk and particularly ECPA to minster the people who are on line these days, gradually different services started to be organized and appear mentioned below.

3.4.1 Prayer

People who are aware of the presence of Christians online, especially those who have a burden and concern to pray for others, started bringing prayer requests.

Most of these people are especially women working and living in tough living conditions in the Middle East and some parts of Europe who were looking for comfort and support. Taking prayer requests and praying on line on microphone while others agreeing with the person praying on line with the microphone by saying Amen and hallelujahs attracts and encourages many participants to bring their prayer requests.

Initially praying in public on the microphone was done randomly when someone asks for a prayer or when some of the people who are in the room felt to pray. Gradually based on the need and the demand of the people for more prayer a special prayer time was allotted in different parts of the day mainly in morning and evenings. At the moment Prayer is the most attractive program in the ECPA having daily programs as follows: - Daily (05:30-06: 30 GMT) (18:00-19: 00 GMT), Tuesday and Thursday (14:00-16: 00 GMT and every - Wednesdays and Fridays (09:00-16: 00 GMT), which is a prayer, associated with fasting time. As it is mentioned above the testimony time is associated with the prayer and fasting program since those who are giving testimonies are those who have been prayed for and their prayers are answered and vis-à-vis.

3.4.2 Worship

Based on the experience on the local Church, in the same manner at the cyber Church worship takes a prominent position in the programs of the all the services.

I asked there pastors in Norway how the worship and the word sharing time have been for the last 30 years in the Norwegian free churches. The answer is that in the older days there was more time located for the preaching while singing and worshipping is in the secondary stage but at the moment the time allocated for sharing the Word of God is pushed every time and nowadays it is less than 30 minutes at average. In the same manner for the cyber Church participants, worship is an integral part of the cyber Church service, which is done in 2 ways.

The first one is live worship that is where singers and worship leaders take the microphone and lead the Participants in worship songs. This is done randomly depending on the availability of worship leaders at the times where there is a free time or in the absence of the assigned program leader (preacher teacher etc.) This can also can also be seen in 2 categories which is when singers with singing gifts take microphone and lead in worship. When anyone feels blessed and wants to sing praises in the room also takes a microphone and worship. The other way of worshiping with recorded songs as a transition from one program to another and

it has become customary to play selected songs from a CD or a video clip. Many participants raise their hands and stay on queue to play their favorite songs or songs they have been comforted with to enable others also to be blessed in the same way.

3.4.3 Discussion sessions

Discussion sessions are a very important part of the cyber Church service that is not available at local Churches. Here people will come and discuss on discussion topics prepared in advance by the Administrators of the room or discussion moderators.

On this session sensitive national and ecumenical issues and daily Christian life related issues are discussed. Members raise their hands and speak on the topic at their turn depending on the time allocated for each speaker based on the number of people raised their hands to speak,

The discussion session is: Monday to Friday Daily (16:00-18: GMT) Monday and Tuesday's are Family and marriage related topics, Wednesday-Friday, General issues Just to give a hint how the discussion topics posted to the public partition in Amharic and English languages looks like this,

" ቤተ ክርስቲያን በወንጌል ዕዉነት ላይ ሳትቆም እንዴት አገልጋዮችን መምከር ወይም መገሰጽ ይቻላታልን?

የሽማግሌ አመራር ያላት ቤተ ክርስቲያን መሪዎቿ በወንጌል እውነት መስማማት ባቃታቸው ቁጥር ቤተ ክርስቲያን መከፈል አለባት ወይ ?

በአሁን ዘመን በቤተ ክርስቲያን ውስጥ ፍርሃት የነገሰባት ለምንድን ነው?
እባክዎ በገላትያ 2 :14 ባለው ቃል ላይ ተመርኩዘው እንደ እግዚአብሔር ቃል ይናገሩ::

"How can the church admonish its ministers while it is not walking on the biblical principles? Does a Church under elders leadership should be divided every time the elders have different opinion in an issue? Why is fear dominating the Church of our time?" Please speak according to the word of God especially in reference to Galatians 2:14

3.4.4 Teaching

One of the significant contributions of the cyber Church to the members is that arranging a teaching session on special issues by very renowned Bible teachers and biblical scholars who are available to serve on line. A Pastor from Baltimore area, USA, Taught Christology on every Friday of the week continuous 3 years, a Pastor From USA, (PhD from Fuller) Taught

Christology on every Tuesday of the week on Pneumatology for almost 2 years and a teacher from Germany (PhD) is still teaching every Monday and Friday about the end times and the Church based on the Book of Revelation (from 19:00-20:00 GMT)

3.4.5 Holistic services

This service is dedicated to reach out people who are suffering in sickness and other kinds of problems as much as the potential allows doing so. With this service sick people have been helped to get medical help, in two separate cases overseas medical treatment has been provided by money collected from the cyber church members. Different financial assistances for sick and needy people have been provided.

3.4.6 Children's service

The children of cyber Church participants have a special program on Saturday from 16:00-18:00 GMT. It is very lovely to hear children from different parts of the word communicating in English. At the same time it is wonderful to hear them singing in the languages of the countries where they live such as Hebrew, Turkish, Dutch, and Italian French and etc.

3.4.7 Testimony time

The second most attended program is the weekly Testimony time where members of the cyber Church give testimonies of answered prayers, healing and blessings from God through prayer and supplication. In this program people from different regions (countries and cities) gather either to share their own testimony or to witness the testimonies of others.

In this program most of the testimonies shared are those who have been healed, comforted or prayer answered in the ECPA especially on the bi-weekly prayer and fasting programs.

3.4.8 Weekly Talk show program

This program is designed to raise very important vital issues of the Ethiopian Churches at home and the Diaspora where current issues are discussed and guests related direct to the issues are invited and share their opinions and convictions.

For Example at the exact time of finalizing this thesis, The Topic for the talk show is the gift of prophecy, prophets and the current situation in the Ethiopian protestant Churches and the invited guest was Pastor Bekele Wolde Kidan who is a renowned pastor among the Ethiopian

Churches, and the pastor of the indigenous[5] Mulu Wongel Church (MWC) the main Branch at "Ketena 2" (Zone 2) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

I general, the ECPA is functions as an alternative to people who are living outside the reach of the Church and who want more of fellowship and spiritual support outside the ordinary church hours. Though it was a taboo and Christians were reluctant to accept that the Spiritual realm can be reveled through this new technology at the moment there is much understanding of accepting that people are comforted, reach out and blessed in the cyber Church as it happening in the local Church The 24 respondents 12 of them participated on the interviews and 8 of them in the Focus group discussion asserted that the cyber Church is playing the role the Church they expect. These respondents who are included in this study have expressed what the cyber Church means to them and how it functions as a Church in their spiritual life.

Prominent church leaders and teachers who also participated in the focus group discussion of this research and very few local Church leaders have more or less agreed that the positive role of the cyber Church (though some were reluctant to call it cyber Church) in the life of believers and the local Church mission in general.

[5] The MWC unlike from the other Protestant churches who have been established in the missionary effort of the Europeans (mainly Sweden Norway and Finland missions) The MWC is established by young university students consciously avoiding the help of foreign missionaries in order to avoid the influence which comes after the help rendered by these missionaries especially in adopting their doctrine, liturgies and administrative influences in decision making and other related issues

Chapter Four

The Church in the Ethiopian Context

4.1 Introduction

"Few African countries have had such a long, varied, and troubled history as Ethiopia. The Ethiopian state originated in the Aksumite kingdom, a trading state that emerged about the first century A.D" [6] It is a country located in the horn of Africa. Ethiopia is the only ancient African country which has never been colonized and has its own alphabet. Though The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) claims that there were Ethiopians on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem and that Christianity is preached in the country after the Ethiopian Enoch (Acts 8:27) returned back home to Ethiopia, The official year in the recorded history is when "Christianity became an official religion of the country later in AD 350 when King Ezana was converted and ordered that Christianity had to be the official religion of the country. (Ferguson, 2005:237)

4.2 The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC)

According to the EOTC Faith, Order of worship and Ecumenical Relations, The Church as a community of believers and as a building has a central place in the religious tradition and order of worship of the Church. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church (EOTC) members touch and caress the outer wall of a Church building when they are not able to enter inside, and remove their shoes when they enter to the Church buildings to show reverence and respect. They bow their head and greet the Church building while they became face to face from any distance. Since majority of the evangelical Christians are those with a background from (EOTC) the meaning of the Church as a building has special place in the minds of many people. "The church building centres on the Tabot, pronounced as "ta boat" a replica of the Ark of the Covenant) that has been sanctified by a bishop" (Appiah, & Gates, 2010:437).

According to EOTC there are at least four attributes which in order to be called a Church, "the attributes which make the Church different from all other structures are 1) Bishops consecrate it, 2) It is anointed with Myron 3) It is the place where the Ark of the covenant is kept, 4) the sacraments of the Church are conducted there" (EOTC Faith, order of worship..1996:62).

[6] https://workmall.com/wfb2001/ethiopia/ethiopia_history_introduction.html (viewed on 15.11.2017 00:03 AM)

“Mass shall not be celebrated in the house of the bishop, nor in the house of the member of the faithful but only in a consecrated Church” (Fetha Negest, 1968:12). With this in background it makes it very interesting to research that how the people perceive the essence of a Church in cyber Space. In addition to that it is a matter of interest to research and find out what their impression and understanding of the cyber Church is among its participants in particular and among the members of the local traditional church members and its leaders in general.

In practice the difficulty is clearly visible for a society grown up with that kind of sacred image of the church mainly as a building when encountered with virtual communion of people on the internet claiming as cyber Church while the internet and its relation with spiritual matters in under question as far as this traditional religious groups is concerned.

It is worth mentioning that the EOTC liturgy has a prominent place in the Church as an living organ praising it in the same manner they praise and pray for saints and martyrs, and the Church teaches and expect all members to adhere for the teachings of Prostration, kneeling and bowing while entering a Church refereeing Psalm 28:2, (EOTC, F& W 1996:91).

The church Building, unlike many other denominations, is highly regarded as integral part of the faith where each part of the building has been given a series of codes and meanings related to the New and Old Testament rituals. For example the Eastern gate and the western gate, where ladies and gentlemen are coming in and out of the Church in different separate doors designated to each gender and the Four corners of the wall, the roof and the pillars are decorated with different pictures with deep expressive icons and pictures with verses of scriptures accompanying each picture. The pillars are considered as the ladder which Jacob saw in his vision in the wilderness, (Gen 28:12)

In the EOTC context when we talk about the Church we are not talking about a hall designated to accommodate just a number of people for a meeting purposes but a holy and sacred structure and building carefully designed to reflect the scriptural and cultural expectation of the Ethiopian people which is deeply rooted in them with many centuries’ long judo-Christian traditions.

With this in mind we need to see the present Church which I will touch in depth in Chapter four about its definition and. how the society looks the local Church and the cyber Church with a mind-set of highly expectation of the term Church which is not only seen as a place of meeting but a more deeper meaning in the spiritual and cultural expectation. One of the best examples is that for that the society Churches are the identities and the origins of people. For Example Big cities are named after Churches such as Debre Markos, (Monastery/mountain of Saint Mark) Debre Brhan (Monastery/mount of the Light) Hagere Mariam (Mary Land?) etc. The following lines are taken from the liturgy of the morning devotion of the Day of Good Friday adoring and praising the Church, which I myself translated it from Geez.

1.

Your foundation is Saul (Paul) and your roof is Kepha (Cephas /Peter)

Your doors are the prophets of the Alfa,

O Church the provider of hope, we greet you

2.

Multitudes of people bow down before you,

They seek your favour in front of you

O church the abode of the king, we greet you

3.

Greetings, greetings O Church our mother

Make peace in our midst; and protect us from the power of the enemy

And may your help live-forever among us, we greet you! [7]

The central position of the EOTC in the way it is viewed and adored by the many books of prayers of the church, the clergy and laity has a significant influence towards the Cyber church in order to be considered as a Church.

4.3 The Roman Catholic Church in Ethiopia

"Traditionally the Catholics and Eastern Orthodox have held that the Church furnishes the right interpretation of scripture, though scripture as the depository of divine revelation must always be esteemed by the Church" (Bloesch,2002:30). This view of the Catholic Church still actively survives in believing that the Church as a successor of Christ with full authority. The

[7] (http://www.ethiopianorthodox.org/amharic/seasonal/sikelet/Tselot%20Zenegih01.pdf) viewed on 10.06.2017 07.01 AM

reformers view is different from that "contending that the scripture is above the Church" (ibid)

The catholic Churches official line regarding the Church is "The human person and the human community are the end and measure of the use of the media of social communication; communication should be by persons to persons for the integral development of persons".[8]

This stand of the Church will make it difficult for the cyber church to be accepted as a Church.

4.4 The Lutheran and other Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia

According to the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Eyesus Church, which is, Lutheran, a Church first planted in Ethiopia by the Scandinavian Lutheran Church missionaries. I asked a seminary dean of the Mekane Eyesus Church, who can start a church and he answered "a local Church can be established at any location irrespective of who owns the house or where it is located. The only requirement is that the people who can start the Church should be believers who believe in the Bible and are baptized."

To my knowledge most of other protestant denominations in Ethiopia do not have different doctrines for the establishing of a local church as far as the person or people who are starting that particular local Churches are not known for having different teaching other than the orthodox teaching of the Bible and have a good testimony among believers and the people around them.

8 http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_ethics-internet_en.html

Chapter Five

Methodology

5.1 Introduction

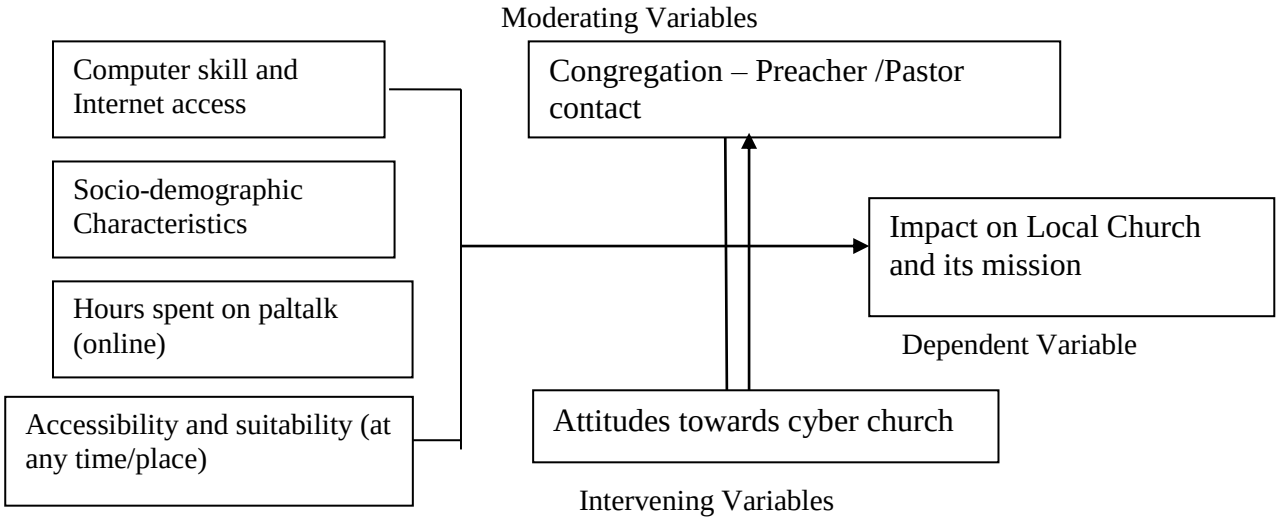
This chapter discusses the methods that have been used in the collection and analysis of data to answer the main and sub research questions of the study. It explains the research design, sampling techniques and data collection methods used; and describe how data collected from the research has been analysed.

5.2 Research Method

There are various means and literatures and data available about the emerging Cyber Churches and Internet churches in different areas of the World. The scope and focus of this research has been limited and explicitly designed for a specific target group, which can give empirical research in the form of interviews with different groups of people participating in the service. "qualitative researchers are concerned to explore 'what, where, and when', in that they frequently engage in descriptions of what is happening at certain events or on particular occasions," (Bryman, 2012 Therefore, the study used the qualitative research method approach to understand and answer the research questions of this study.

This kind of research strategy focuses on narrative (word explanation) rather than quantifying the collected data during analysis (Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman (2012), research design is a structure or frame that guides the researcher in collecting and analysing data. Therefore, taking the research questions into consideration and comparative study design, which entails studying the impact of cyber Church on the local church and its mission, was used in this instance.

5.3Research paradigm



Source (Author, 2017)

The above research paradigm was used in this study; the independent variables are computer skills, socio-demographic characteristics and hours spent on paltalk online/offline that may influence the local Church Access to Internet, computer and mobile phone are thought to make it easy for participants to use and join a paltalk room at any time and place. Socio-demographic characteristics include elements such as gender, age, number of children and marital status, education which play a role in cyber church participation. These socio demographic characteristics, may affect the participation level at the local churches, as well as the married individuals impact on local church compared to that of unmarried individual.

Impact on local church and its mission is the dependent variable in this study and show how a local church and its mission vary based on the independent variables. Hence, attitude that deals with the overall perception of Cyber church (Ethiopian Christian Plus All Paltalk room) and hence influencing cyber church is the intervening variable. Regardless of the variance of the independent variables, the intervening variable's influence is constant. Pastor (priest) – congregation contact is the moderating variable that provides the interaction effect where it moderates the relations between the independent variables. The Local church and its mission in a cyber-church setup can be influenced by varied variables either positively or negatively.

5.4 Research Strategy

Qualitative research method will be used as a research methodology. According to Bryman (2012. 380) qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Accordingly, this study will emphasize in narrative term in the collection and analysis of the collected data.

5.5 Sampling Method

Purposive sampling strategy was used to select respondents (participants) of the study. According to Bryman (2012. 416), the aim of purposing sampling is to sample participants of the study (respondents) in a strategic way so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being presented.

The researcher will select sample cases or participants in a strategic way, so that those samples are relevant to the research questions that will be answered. Participants will be selected based on their knowledge and participation in cyber church (Ethiopian Christian Plus All Room in paltalk). Bryman (2012: 418) argued the purposive sampling method is essential when researchers are studying a specific characteristic, feature or function. Therefore, to study the activities of an evangelical cyber ministry called "Ethiopian Christians Plus all" is based on a social media outlet called the paltalk, an internet based social media service hosting different social and ethnic groups who share and use for different purposes, including different kind of religious, social and political activities. This is done in categorizing the target groups in four different categories. The purpose is not just to add a category to widen the topic but to cover different parts of the society in order to produce a representing data to analyse all possible direction to avoid any gap, which will not be covered in the research.

5.6 Methods of data collection

As data collection method of interviewing will be employed to collect data from the participants. As Bryman (2012, 469) argued an interview is the most widely method of data collection used for qualitative research. Therefore, as this study is a qualitative study interview will be used as a method to collect data that will help to answer the research questions. Among the interview both group and individual interview will be used.

5.7 Individual Interview

To explore the views, experiences, beliefs and/or motivations of individuals on the research questions individual interview were used. The researcher believed a deeper understanding of the research area would be obtained from the individual interview. Born again Christians who are active participants and administrators in The ECPA room in Paltalk were interviewed. Additionally, born again Christians who are not active participant of the ECPA were also interviewed. As an interview guide, a list of questions have been prepared and used (see my structured questionnaires).

5.8 Group Interview

The focus group technique is a method of interviewing that involves more than one, usually at least four, interviewees. Essentially it is a group interview. The researcher was undertaking the group interview to save time and money by carrying out interviews with a number of individuals simultaneously (Bryman, 2012. 501). Accordingly, a group of five people who are the leader of churches and pastors were interviewed in a group. As an interview guide, a list of questions have been prepared and used (see my structured questionnaires).

5.9 Sample Size and Sample Population

The sample population of this study was 500. According to Bryman (2012: 425) to be able to support convincing conclusions, it is likely to have a vary sample size from situation to situation in purposive sampling, and qualitative researchers have to recognize to balance it. Based on this, to balance the sample size of the study and to have a convincing conclusions, a sample size of 25 were taken and as a respondents of the study. The respondents were selected purposely and the highest priority was to those who attend the local Church and the internet Church in assumption that since they have the first-hand knowledge of both Churches; it will give us a good opportunity to gather the information which will help us to understand in depth about the subject.

5.10 Data Analysis

Before starting the analysis, the collected data was cleared, sorted and checked for its completeness and internal consistency and the actual data was analysed. Then, the collected data was coded and reviewed. A grounded theory data analysis method that involves the

construction of theory through the analysis of data (Bryman, 2012, P.568) was used to analyse the collected data.

5.11 Research Reliability

"Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure of a concept." (Bryman, 2012: 169). In choosing the interviewees which are 24 among the 500+ active participants, was taken seriously in order to, choose those who could, clearly understand the questions and answer them independently without bias or partiality. As I personally have a leadership role in the cyber room, and to avoid bias of respondents in favour of me, an interviewer was employed and data was collected accordingly.

5.12 Validity

"Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research" (Bryman 2012: 47). The study accordingly was conducted among the cyber Church and local Church participants as well as pastors and church leaders whose observations and reaction to this new phenomenon is essentially reflected and analysed throughout the process.

5.12.1 Internal validity

As validity establishes the relationship between the data and the variable or construct of interest, it estimates how accurately the data obtained in a study represents a given variable or construct in the study (Mugenda, 2003). Further, as mentioned by Mugenda (2003), an instrument is valid if it measures what it was intended to measure and covers all research issues both in terms of content and detail. Therefore, to ensure accuracy of the data the researcher pre-tested the interview questionnaires (interview guide) and analysed the results and made corrections on the questions that were not clear. The interview questionnaires /guide provide accurate data due to the process of pre-testing in the selected sample to maintain validity. The researcher visited the sampled study participants to make them aware of the need of the study. This ensures validity of the data collected and the research undergone in this project.

5.12.2 External validity

The Internet has already become an indispensable part of our daily life that is also reflected in the realm as well influencing the Church and its mission. The cyber world is dominating the share of the traditionally known daily life in many ways. People are not shopping in the same

way they used to do a decade ago or before. Society is becoming cashless and paperless, virtually relying on the net to avoid the need for physical contact, which was essential part of the society, especially in the Christian context quiet few years back.

While we welcome the good things of the cyber communications in terms of saving time, shortening distance of travel to a location to meet someone, or to have a fellowship with people as it used to be earlier, and almost avoiding travel, time and costs in most cases, it has to be researched more to assess what the consequences of the cybernation have on the present and the future Church. Therefore, this research will contribute something for the future researchers in showing the "Since there is evidence that cyberspace may be inducing a new way of being religious or at any rate may be facilitating and accelerating changes in religious sensibilities that are already underway in late modern societies." (Morten & Warburg. 2007:16)

The role of internet is very visible in the daily life of our society, it seems that the cyber age is undermining the role of religion and replacing it with postmodern scientific thoughts by taking the place of religion in the human mind and replacing it with technological jargons and scientific ideas. However, in reality, one can see how religion is coming back into the public sphere with advancement of internet and the social Medias. This is the time where "negative and positive rights" (Ingram: 2010) has been very much exercised in public as never before where the Internet is playing a major role. Most of the main Social Medias such as Facebook, twitter, pal talk and so are very much used to promote ideas and interests of different groups. .I believe this research will contribute and serve as a stepping-stone for future researchers who will be interested to study the development, the structure and the impact of the cyber Church in general.

Chapter Six

Presentation of the data

6.1 Introduction

Under this chapter, I will present the findings of the study from the collected data. The data is collected from different groups who are active in the cyber Church and in the local Churches and both. At the same time the leaders' reaction and perception was also collected in order to understand the real impact of the cyber Church. The result from personal observation during this study will also be presented in this chapter. Therefore, this chapter will present the findings of the study conducted using different data collection tools indicated in the previous chapter.

6.2 Knowledge about Cyber Church /Church

According to the finding of this study about the knowledge of cyber Church and how, they came to know the cyber Church, the responses of the respondents vary much depending on the geographic locations.

Accordingly, those respondents who live in the Middle East, as housemaids in isolation from the Ethiopian and Eritrean diaspora, were more attracted to the cyber world as the Internet is the only possible out let to the outside world. While those who live among the big immigrant population from Ethiopia, in the west didn't pay much attention to the Cyber Church apart from using during leisure time or hobby for looking for information when it is required.

In my personal observation during my visit to USA (in 4 states) and Canada (4 major cities) in 2006 I observed, and in fact surprised to know, that many of my colleagues, including some among my close relatives, didn't have an email address and they considered the use of computers as something advanced knowledge which they believe at the time that they didn't qualify or did not have the need to use. In contrary, I noticed that many Ethiopians and Eritreans Diaspora in the Middle East and Africa where life was harsh coupled with economic constraints, were active users of all available facilities in the Internet. In fact, living in Norway, which is one of the best countries in the world to live in, I was and am always surprised by being informed about new functions and new better social media presence from these people who live in the Middle East and Africa. They always come and recommend a better application, better software, and a better social media group that is more compatible

and convenient. Without any exaggeration I was informed by these people about the existence of VIBER, IMO, WHATSUP, and at very recently another social media outlet which is called TELEGRAPH.

The study found that, respondents of the study came to know about ECPA in different ways. One of the reasons is Professionalism in Information technology field. Three respondents came to know about ECPA because of their professional life. They were very familiar with different rooms on social media. This is because the respondents were working in the field of information technology branch and spending a considerable time on line every day. According to these respondents, on the process of their daily work in the IT branch, during their surfing to all available cyber services, they were able to find out about the fellowship of Christians on the cyber space who gathered for worship and fellowship purposes. They indicated that, they had information about the cyber Christian services much earlier before they found out about ECPA. However, they were not aware of the presence of such a Cyber Church on line until they got information from the people who were following the paltalk programs in which they were attracted to and joined immediately.

A respondent from Ethiopia shared his experience how came to know about cyber Church when people at his work place started talking about it which helped him to know about the existence of a cyber-Church on line. The respondent later joined the cyber Church and has remained as an active member until this day.

The study has also identified that one respondent came to know about the Cyber Church when the information about the news and the activities of the cyber Christian fellowship was very much circulating at the regular services of the local church where he is a member. There was a woman who gave a very positive report about how she was blessed by the prayer support she was getting from the cyber Church members who were living in different countries, all coming together on line to attend the different programs.

In addition to that the respondent asked the same woman who gave her testimony for further explanation that she promised to call her and guide her in downloading the program on her personal computer. Since then, this respondent has become an active participant in most of the programs that are held at times relevant to her work schedule.

One respondent came to know about the cyber Church through an elder of her church she used to attend while studying in one of the major cities of central Europe, This particular respondent's experience who is now back living in Ethiopia after completing her studies is very interesting since it was unlikely at that time for a church elder/leader to introduce a cyber-Church to its members since most of the church leaders and elders especially at the time when the respondent was in Europe didn't a have much positive attitude towards the cyber Church. Generally speaking, that time was the time we Ethiopian and Eritrean Churches were suspicious of any fellowships taking place on cyber space as being a positive influence. This was due to the fear based on the assumption that the Cyber Church was a threat to the local churches at that time. At present as I observed closely during the meetings with church leaders in national and international levels (elders as well as pastors) the positive understanding of the cyber Church as part of the God's kingdom is much higher than ever before.

The response from pastors and elders of different churches from different continents and countries who were included in this study shows that, they came to know about the cyber Church (in paltalk) through members of their churches. The members of the churches introduced their pastors and elders to the Internet services. Two of the pastors further expressed that church members introduced them about this Internet service and also were even given some airtime to share the word of God and pray for the participants. Similar to the other respondents it is revealed that some pastors and elders also came to know about the cyber Church while surfing on the web.

One respondent who is very active in leading worship program, and also engaged in the weekly children services at the time this study was conducted , came to know through the information she got from her mother. She said when her mother told her for the first time about the existence of such a service on the Internet she didn't take it seriously. She later tried to join and when her mother further explained to her that the service was 24/7 nonstop ministry, composed of different programs, but she only did so to make happy. But things became quite different after she joined, at the first logging, she said "I stayed for 24 hours opened the room none stop and kept it for days and days and weeks and weeks then months to months and years to years until now."

The feeling of loneliness and living away from relatives and beloved ones also was identified as a one of the forcing reasons to find someone to talk and have fellowship online which also led to a way to learn about the cyber Church. According to one of the respondents, he said "I was already cyber space engaged with evangelism using MSN and other text chat groups before I joined this cyber Church or Paltalk."

In general, this study revealed that, the majority of the participants of the study have a unique personal experience in each of their testimonies. They all have commonly indicated that they just came across the Cyber Churches while they joined the internet like everybody else while they were in search of information and related issues.

6.3 Reasons to join the Cyber Church/Church

The following findings from the respondents explain why they were attracted toward the cyber Church. One of the respondents who live in Ethiopia said that she was living in one of the Gulf countries and she was looking for any kind of Christian fellowship online. She said "The need for a Christian fellowship was vital and enormous which seemed that I couldn't survive in my Christian faith in that environment without a particular fellowship at the time."

As it is understood that in the gulf countries, where the Ethiopian immigrant workers who mostly engaged in domestic house work do not have the possibility to allocate their free time to find a Christian fellowship (if any) after working hours which is in most cases is late at night where everybody want to sleep and be ready for the next long working day. At the same time the fear to move around as a woman and the restriction in travelling alone by herself was a big hindrance to safely search a place for a physical gathering for worship. In fact that it is was considered as illegal or unacceptable to have a mixed meeting of different genders outside their living areas made the internet the best alternative to find and meet people either to socialize with and for having safe spiritual fellowships.

Another respondent, a single mother who lives in one of the central European cities, responded that since saying that "my work is running a day care for children at my own residence which I am always part of the Cyber Church since it doesn't hinder me from performing my job at all, unlike the TV and You tube the paltalk service I don't need to be physically present in front of the TV screen or the PC monitor, it can be heard from a distance

without interrupting at my work. " She continued to say, "the Cyber Church is a place where we build up our life on a daily basis by the Word of God and by the various gifts God He has put in His children. There is an urge in me to be part of this blessings all the time which I don't want to miss it even for a single day"

Another respondent who lives in Ethiopia also said that " the longing to grow in the spiritual blessings of God and the desire to share what is inside me urged me to look for any place I can be part of the spiritual blessings. That was the reason I came to be part of this cyber Church"

A respondent who is a mother of two teenagers described the reason why she was attracted to the cyber Church as "The reason that made me to join this Cyber Church was that because I was looking for God's help through the hard times of my divorce period. This cyber Church was useful and easy to access at any time of the day to get help from people around the world. The most attractive part is not the availability of the people but the more attracted me was the possibility of to stay anonymous for both the speaker and the listener which gave me a safe atmosphere in order to keep my identity hidden at least for some time. "

Another respondent a young man at his early 30s described why he decided to join ECPA is that the place where he personally experienced the love of Christ through other believers. According to him, "most of the cyber-fellowship members don't even know each other outside the internet platform, yet they have very strong bond and love. The moment I became the part of that unconditional love and understood it was the love of God through human beings, and then I didn't hesitate to join and remain regular participant."

The other respondent who is active among the Christian community in his local city and the local Church he attend responded as follows, "It was the way of ECPA members in reaching the unreached people attracted me to be a part of it. To make it clear, I heard that so many helpless people who are living in the different parts of the world were encouraged to live a better life and heard some of their testimonies too. So, these good deeds helped me not only to join, but also to remain as the main participant."

A respondent from a church leaders group who is a local Church elder said that the Cyber Church due to the vision, the fellowship and the substance in the services attracted him. He also believes that he benefited a lot from the programs in which he participated and the opportunity he is given to contribute in sharing the Word of God.

In order to summarize why people are attracted to the cyber Church, these were my preliminary conclusions as the main reasons according to the people I interviewed. Two of the respondents mentioned the availability of the service 24 hours a day irrespective of where they are located was advantageous for those who move from one place to another and always look for a local Church to join always new people and new address.

Three of the respondents highlighted the 24 hours none stop service throughout the year compared to the weekly or biweekly services of the local churches made it like their hope which they stayed for unlimited an\amount of time make it for them to be attracted to join and remain active in ECPA.

The other attraction repeatedly mentioned by two respondents was the vast international audience and participants with many optional messages and songs from participants living in different countries.

A very interesting issue mentioned by one respondent is related to the option to share personal problems in anonymity which protected her from suffering the taboos and stigmas arising from some issues which culturally creates a question in the society they live in, For example, one stigma would be having invalid child which some consider it as a curse from God as it is mentioned in the Bible that the people asked Jesus “Rabbi, who committed the sin that caused him to be born blind, this man or his parents” (John 9:2). In the same manner when some people encounter a change in behaviour or sexual orientation they find the cyber Church as the best place to share their burdens and frustrations without being noticed who they are in order not to be judged or being out casted in their communities.

6.4 Cyber church as a Church

As it is clearly addressed in Chapter Three about the Ethiopians' outlook about a Church The concept of a cyber-Church is a controversial issue among the people. One of the reasons for that are the taboo disseminated against the Internet as a place of pornography, malicious acts where people without a purpose in life waste their time. Even among those who are active in the cyber Church have a problem in calling it a cyber-church since the image of a Church according to many people is beyond a place of worship or a fellowship of saints. This question is the crucial question to get person's opinion on the impression they have about the cyber Church. It is particularly unique in the Ethiopian context where the Churches' role is deeply rooted in the daily life and culture of the society.

The Church in Ethiopia is part of the daily life of the society intermingled with the daily life of the believers which may contribute a great deterrent which makes it a bit difficult for people to accept the cyber Church as a Church from the understanding of the internet's role in the society we live in and from the tradition of the Church in Ethiopia.

A respondent from the pastors and elders group believes that there is no question that the Cyber Church is a good platform to reach many especially those who don't want to attend traditional church services for any reason they may have but it is also conviction that he can consider the Cyber Church as a Para church ministry. He added that "from the biblical point of view he finds it hard to call a cyber-Church a "Church" "and he "believes that the Cyber Church misses out many important assets to qualify as a Church" He would say that "the number one quality that the cyber church can't provide to an individual could be a human interaction on a personal level.

Three of the respondents expressed their view that it may not be correct to call the Cyber Church a church since it lacks the elements of the church such as the physical fellowship, the breaking of bread together and the performance of the holy sacraments.

Four of respondents from different parts of the world believed that the cyber Church can be called a Church since they are getting the same service even more in terms of availability for more days a week and more hours a day than they get from the local churches.

One respondent prefers to call it a fellowship, as it would define it more as the coming together of many local churches. As she has her own local church and the main responsibility, accountability and submission should be to her local church pastors. But as a Christian she participates with other believers in the cyber room with other believers from different parts of the world to worship God and be edified by the gifts he put in his people and she has the same reverence and love for the cyber church members same as she has for her local church.

Two respondents who are serving in both the local church and the cyber Church said that they wouldn't call a cyber-fellowship a church since they have a church around where they live and are 100% active in their church. However, for those brothers and sisters who don't have a church to attend or not able to attend a church at all, they will not have any problem to call a cyber-fellowship a church as it is certainly a church since the everything that is happening at the local churches are also available in this fellowship except the physical presence of people.

One of the respondents responded to the question in defining the term church in two parts. The first is the idea of the local/physical church that is limited to certain geographical location and contains a certain number of members. While the second dimension of the church is from the perspective of Universal Church (the body of Christ). Therefore he wouldn't call a cyber-fellowship a church in the sense that it doesn't fully replace or/ substitute the physical Church. However, he would consider cyber-fellowship as a supplement to physical churches, as it is a part of the bigger Church (the body of Christ) that waters, cultivates and feeds its members (fellow believers) to grow mentally and spiritually.

One of the respondents who is among the leaders and pastors group felt that it is difficult to answer this question, According to him, part of the difficulty lies in the fact that we do not find any analogy of a church that assembles in the cyber space in the New Testament. Of course apart from its non-physical nature of assembly, its activities of preaching, worshiping, bible study, testimonies, prayers, and the likes are the characteristics and functions of a Church, However, the record in the New Testament seems to indicate that the physical meeting of Christians is the norm because the New Testament prefers the physical meeting of the church in contrast to the cyber one, as the later was non-existent at the time, but simply because unless the church meets physically, it cannot share in the Lord's Supper and the other sacraments which requires a physical presence of the believers , Therefore, he said that with serious look on his face " strictly speaking and according to the scriptures, to call the Cyber Church a church is not acceptable at all " he continued " however, it can function as an

alternative church for people who do not have the access to any physical church it is a very good supplement to the existing the physical church in being a platform to fellowship for Christians who can join it at anytime from anywhere across the globe."

In a similar manner two respondents reacted to this question by saying that they can't call the Cyber Church a Church since they believe that the term church should be used for the place where the physical presence of people is visible not for a virtual one. However the Cyber Church is a good platform to reach many especially for those who don't want to attend traditional church services or for any reason the individual might have. Therefore it is their conviction that they can consider it as a Para church ministry while they find it hard to call the Cyber Church as a Church.

6.5 Similarity between a local Church and Cyber Church

Of the 15 selected respondents said that there are many similarities between the Cyber Church and the local church, the points mentioned by them in a similar manner are, the Bible study, the prayer and fasting time, annual and seasonal conferences, teaching the Word of God, and preaching to the unsaved, and most of the worship songs in the local churches are the same as the songs being sung in the cyber Church

In addition to the above, three of the respondents believe that the similarities among both the cyber and local churches are real, the similarity they identified and mentioned by the respondents includes: - getting together and discussing on mutual issues sharing mutual concerns spiritual, social and material, missionary work, addressing issues related to the needs of believers, prayers together and learning & sharing the Gospel.

6.6 Difference between a local Church and Cyber Church

This is study was also tried to reveal the differences between a local church and cyber church. To investigate this questions that help to know the differences between a local and a cyber-church were prepared and asked. Accordingly, the study identified the following three views of the respondents. Those who believe that the cyber church is an integral part of their daily Christian life that they believe has the same effect as there local churches. On the other hand those who believe that the cyber Church is a God given opportunity to them so that they will be comforted supported and nurtured daily but lack the physical contact that is essential for a Church to meet a fellow member. On the similar circumstance two of the respondents

appreciated the cyber church with the reservations in many areas but expressed their concern that they fear on anonymity of the cyber Church members which may hide their true identity which is vital for accountability and testimonial purposes.

Two of the respondents stated the difference is that the Cyber Church does not allow a physical contact while the local church enables its members to meet in person face to face. Where the cyber Church members are not able to break bread regularly, or benefit from the laying of hands of Church elders and pastors as well as many other services which require the physical presence of the clergy and the lay men.

One respondent stated that the local Church requires its members to assemble at the designated church premises while the cyber church does not limit its members to be physically present at the same at one particular place while it is open and available for the whole day and the whole year.

Two of the respondents indicated that the local church is live and physical which enables it to have an eye contact with the servant of the Lord and His people while the Cyber Church is in audio and video which is far from physical contact even though it provides a longer period of time for the participants or members compared to the local Church. Three of the respondents said that the local Church is composed of believers mainly from one denomination while the cyber Church is composed of people from different denominations.

The respondents were also stated the difference between the local and cyber, as the cyber church having 24 hour service availability. From all over the world it is possible to meet different people in one place and actively reach people with any social problem at any time. If people don't have a local church where they live, they can use cyber church especially those in refugee camps, hospitals and those who are restricted in one area for any reason where a local church is not available, they can freely use this service in any time, as they require.

6.7 Advantages of participating in the cyber service compared with the local Church

Even Though this question was addressed to all respondents, almost all of them who are active participants answered very positively expounding its advantages where in some cases

until it looks like it was very much exaggerated. For example, one of the respondents said "the benefit I am getting from the ECPA cannot be described in words" and she continued again "in time of my desperate need when it was not possible for me to meet up with anyone from my local church, God has used this ministry to comfort, heal and bring me to repentance and guided me through different stages of my life." She said that she considers herself to have grown in the knowledge of God through this ministry and she was also able to minister to others going out of her former situation which she used to have a life restricted in her own four walls.

Two respondents expressed their benefit of joining the cyber Church that they were able to get many friends that they now consider themselves as family members through this fellowship on the cyber Church, they said that they were encouraged, and that they felt as if they would know each other for years and years.

Three respondents pointed out that the people who are not able to attend the regular Sunday or regular Bible study programs on the weekdays can get those services online with the cyber church which is accessible without any time and place limitation which is not possible in the local church set up.

One respondent from Europe emphasized as "especially in the European context people do not have time to attend regular church services due to a work load compared to what they used to do it back home in Ethiopia and Eritrea where a Christian has the possibility to participate at church services at least 2 times per week even more. In his specific situation people in Europe are coming to church mostly once in a week. He continued in explaining that at his church people come travelling from areas as far as a 40 KM radius by public transports to attend the regular Sunday services. Due to these and other reasons they won't be able to come to church every week. That is where this online community would compensate the time they are not able to attend at the local churches and would be help for individual Christian because it is not limited by time and space. People can get the spiritual support that they need for their life.

One respondent underlined that the advantage of the cyber Church is that people are given the opportunity to comment on what is preached or shared in text while the teaching and preaching session is in progress, He said "It is an advantage by itself which is not available at

the local Churches where the formal way is to listen to the sermons and go home without getting the platform to discuss or ask question about the issue preached or taught."

Two of the respondents also accentuated as the main advantage of the Cyber Church is that it made the outreach ministry very friendly and easy. Since the cost of travelling and time consumption for someone to travel for reaching out to people from one continent to another and from one country to another is very expensive and time consuming.

One of the respondents, a lady from the central Europe said that she can name lots of benefits such as how Jesus found her through this ministry and was urging her to draw closer to Him. It was also in this service that for the first time she accepted the Lord Jesus as her personal saviour and started to understand the word of God. Besides that the opportunity to find different people who encourage her many share their opinions and advise which is also a great benefit while she also gets the opportunity to be served by these God's people who bring different topics every day for discussion and make her understand many spiritual truths without leaving her home at the tip of her fingers.

6.8 Weakness of the Cyber Church in comparison with the local church

In this study respondents were allowed to identify the weakness of the cyber church in comparison with the local church. Based on the response of the participants of the study the following weakness of the cyber churches were identified. Almost all of these respondents emphasized that although this cyber Church contributed to the last day's harvest they saw the following few things which needed to need to be added to Cyber Church services in order to make it more effective and productive.

One problem mentioned by two respondents is that some cyber church members are very active on the online services while they are not attending the programs at the local churches in the cities they are living in. Since the cyber Church cannot replace the local church they should also need to be encouraged or be told to join the regular church services at the areas where they live. For this the reason mentioned these members think whatever they get from cyber ministry is good enough for them to the extent that they don't need anything from the local churches which created a mistrust among the local church leaders thinking the cyber church members or participants are not respecting the local churches.

If a Cyber Church needs to be more effective, the leadership should create a kind of network with the local churches' leadership which are found in every city so that there can be a mutual understanding and harmonious relationship towards the cyber and the local church body. Three of the respondents also mentioned that the Cyber Church misses out many important qualities of a church mentioning, that the number one quality is having individual human interaction on a personal level. One of them said, "At least for now, cyber Church definitely lacks a physical/human interaction."

One of the respondent has a concern as the weak point of the Cyber Church seems to him that he is just dealing with people in nicknames and he doesn't know who they are and what their background is in their real life is.

Two of the respondents feel like some of the people who regularly attend the cyber church might tend to view the physical meeting of the church as not necessary or irrelevant. That is the tendency of the participants of the Cyber Church reflected as far as they understand.

One respondent has a concern that people could easily be deceived by listening and accepting any idea from any person behind the microphone, since there is no way to verify the background of the person behind the microphone.

6.9 Sacraments in the Cyber Church

Almost 50% of the respondents have the view that generally it is impossible to perform Sacraments in the Cyber Church depending on what kind of sacraments and the level of physical communication between the two parties meaning the person who is performing the sacraments and the person who is receiving the sacraments. They agree that the process can be started on Cyber Church and continued or finalized in a physical setting. Technically speaking, they believe that, it is possible to perform most of the sacraments via Cyber while it is practically challenging and may be unbiblical for some of them to be performed on line, depending on the type of the sacrament in question.

The respondents also believe that in others situations where believers may not have the way or the means to meet with other believers to partake in the sacramental ceremony, Cyber Church can be a way to perform sacraments like Holy Communion and leading a person to the Lord Jesus if the person, who just gave his life to Christ, lives in a remote rural area where there are no believers or churches. If someone wants to partake in Holy Communion with other

believers and joined a cyber-fellowship to ask someone else to take the communion with him/her they believe that it is perfectly fine and a genuine move to him/her.

Three of the respondents on the other hand believe that there are certain sacraments like marriage and baptism, which are not impossible to perform on cyber setting. In the case of marriage, it requires at least the couples to come together physically on the date of their marriage to exchange their covenantal vows. For baptism, the nature of the sacrament itself mandates physical presence of both parties in order to perform the process biblically. Although there are many interpretation and understanding of the Bible how to carry out baptism, most denominations s require a full body emersion in a water and confession from the person who is being baptized, and the person who is baptizing has to do it in a certain way while saying certain specific things. Therefore, it is technically possible to do sacraments in Cyber setting but it makes sense only in some of the sacraments under very specific and exceptional cases. Also, the level of physical interaction and biblical aspect on how the ceremony needs to be carried out are the two most important things to keep in mind while thinking about doing sacraments on Cyber Church.

One respondent agrees on performing all sacraments except Marriage and Baptism which require a physical presence of both parties, the person to be Baptized and the Baptizer, the grooms and the person who officiates the marriage otherwise we are going to assume virtual marriages where the couple do not need to come to a physical union including living together as in 1 Peter 3.

One respondent believes that it is not possible at all to perform these sacraments online, according to this respondent "performing these sacraments should only be done by the presence of an ordained servant of God who should serve these sacraments in person."

A lady from Europe responded by saying that "I do believe it is doable. If the members don't have a local Church around the area or he /she is not able to go to Church at all, then they can perform the sacraments online. "

6.10 Cyber church as a threat to the local Church

Two of the respondents from the pastors and elders group expressed that as Protestants they believe that they, the universal Church as well as the local are beneficiaries of the advancement of technology since it speeds up and simplifies the work in the field of the harvest of the Gospel. Therefore they believe that the cyber Church should not be seen as a threat for a local Church.

One of respondents considers the cyber church as a threat to the local church, He gave a practical example that he observed in ECPA room, he said " I witnessed myself , in the ECPA room when 2 different people with a very short span of time between them gave a controversial teaching on the same subject which confuses people, I felt that for the audience who were present at that particular time that teaching may remain as confusing and a big work for the church leaders at their local churches that this kind of controversial teachings may have a bad impact on the kingdom of God in general ."

Almost 90 % of the respondents do not believe that the cyber church is a threat to the local church in any way.

6.11 Impact of the cyber Church in the future of the local church

Four of the respondents see a more involvement of the cyber Church in covering the traditional way of Church activities that will force the present local Church services to go more to the Internet. As the churches mission is based on the great commission "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15) understanding that "go" to mean to be where people are, and these respondents believe that, at the moment that, most people are found on the net than at the street at any time, In this manner the tendency of the Church to be pushed more to the digitalised cyber world is imminent which is the influence of the presently flourishing cyber Churches online.

Three of the respondents also believe the cyber Church challenges the administration of the local church in terms of administration and discipline to shape its members. When church members were disciplined for a reason, in the traditional local Churches, the person who was punished he/she obviously would run away to avoid the disciplinary measure instead of trying to serve that in the acceptable manner. Due to such reasons, the local Church is not able to admonish, discipline its members who think there is another alternative where disciplining is

not the issue and where they can come in and out freely without any control. These respondents underlined that at the moment the availability of cyber Church services at his/her disposal, at the tip of his/her finger has made the cyber Church member less respectful and less concerned about the authority of local Church leadership. One of these three responded by comparing the impact of church discipline on the member with a sad look on his face and said "in the old days when we are disciplined by our local churches, we used to pass in an agony since we think we are helpless, there wasn't any other way to go to bypass these disciplinary period except to fulfil the term and conditions that the discipline applied on our life, but at this time It seems like as no problem since there is an online Church as an alternative"

One of respondents from the pastors and Church elders category expressed his view as mentioning that "before modern technology was applied for religious purposes the only source of spiritual food for the member was the Church, however nowadays at our time people have many other means and sources, one of it is the availability of cyber Churches on line" He continued and shared his worries also about the emergence of cyber Churches which teach different doctrines than that of the particular local church the member are attending. These different teachings start influencing and affecting the members attitude towards his local church and leaders since he is which is creating a member who has another source of information and teaching which creates for the local church minsters an additional burden in order to correct and guide such members, who are exposed to different doctrinal teachings in terms of the understanding the Word of God and cross cultural approaches.

Four of the respondents agreed that the local Church is challenged and impacted by the cyber Church since the believers who attend the ECPA services are becoming more active and asking many spiritual questions at their local churches which challenges the leaders to read, prepare more to address the questions of this people which contributed a positive challenge for progress.

Respondents from the pastoral and leadership group who were six people from different countries on the round table panel discussion on this issue expressed their view that the cyber Church has serious negative impacts in the life of individual local church members and also at the ministry of the local church if people take the cyber Church as a substitute to the local church. When that happens they will start to skip from the Christian obligation they have at

their local churches. They are also observed making the cyber Church as a hiding place to avoid some kind of church disciplinary action and responsibility.

They also expressed their fear for the future of the local church if Christians are stacked behind a computer screen all day avoiding the personal interaction and physical contact to fellow believers and their local Church the meaning and the purpose of the church will be lost.

6.12 Problems related to cyber Church

For all of the respondents from Africa and the Middle East the main problem mentioned is lack of proper networking facilities. Besides the network problem that means a good Internet connection the power cut is also a significant problem in using and participating in the cyber Church. A power cut and network interruption in the middle of interesting discussion topic, teaching, worship and prayer etc., is addressed as "very much annoying and disappointing" by most respondents.

In a similar way one of the respondents expressed his view of the problem of the cyber Church facing "it is very likely to get misinformed or hear half-truth. Cyber-Church has more participants than a local church and the challenge is how to filter these volumes of information we receive based on the absolute truth, what I means the absolute truth is the word of God or the Bible". Though it was not mentioned as the main problem, almost 40 % of the respondents expressed indirectly their concern how information and biblical truths are twisted by emotions and lack of knowledge of some cyber church participants which needs to be addressed in order to protect the participants from being misguided people, and drive to conclusions without being emotionally altered by such speakers,

On the other area on the same cyber church problem issue almost 60 % of the respondents conveyed their concern that they have a challenge managing their time and controlling themselves to properly allocate the duration of time they stay online to the extent that wouldn't affect other areas of their daily life which is a great challenge at the moment for them as they stay online more than they wanted to be.

Another area of concern involving the cyber Church is almost 60% of the respondents is the communication using text messages. This is addressed in two ways; one is the English

language itself as being a medium of communications among the Ethiopians and Eritreans participants in ECPA. Due to this reason some members have difficulty understanding what is being communicated via the platform. In other words, there are lots of misunderstandings among members on a given topic due to the language problem that takes longer to resolve therefore taking more time than it could have taken having had a discussion in the local churches which can be done verbally face-to-face.

One respondent has a problem to put in her own words "I have a problem; I am not comfortable when I noticed that people are hiding behind different nick names and insulting people, they insulted me too, in fact that is the biggest problem for me in ECPA."

6.13 Comparing Pastoral care and members follow up of the local and the cyber Church

Three respondents believe that, though pastoral care and members follow up is achieved most effectively and efficiently in local Churches setting than cyber platform they are very much impressed and amazed the way The ECPA visionary follow up issue and provide care for those who require them, They mentioned the holistic services provided for the needy and the counselling and comforting sessions rendered for many who came and asked for help in the lobby and in private.

Four of the respondents believe that they are more satisfied in the pastoral care they see in ECPA than their local churches. One respondent who is among the leaders group believes that "Pastoral care is usually focused in feeding the flock with the proper Spiritual food. Here, the proper food is the Word of God, the feeder is the pastor and the food taker is the flock/, they all need to work in harmony in order to see the expected goal in terms of the spiritual growth of the flock. If this cannot be seen, there will be a very spiritual problem against pastoral care of his pasturing, this all are in place in the cyber church what lacks is the personal follow up which is not possible in the cyber Church while it is the very intended responsibility of the leader/pastor in the local Church."

Another respondent from among the same Church elders group and two respondents believe that the cyber Church does not have any pastoral care at all. At the same time another two respondents believe that there are more of pastoral follow-up in a local church than the cyber Church

One of the respondents said that “there is a very limited effort in providing pastoral care for the cyber Church participant. I assume the reason for that may be the problem in at the internet connection which may limit the movement of pastors from one person to another financial cost to coming on line or any other reason that might hamper them to stretch themselves “.

6.14 The experience of Christian love and fellowship among the members

The study concluded that, majority of the respondents experienced that all sisters and brothers they met on cyber Church have amazing relationship and Christian love fellowship among the groups, with a very high tune and determined voice. They also mentioned that the care on the cyber-Church is more powerful than the local-church. Most of them mentioned that, the Christian love manifested in the cyber Church is beyond physical contact and emotional ties but very real and adorable.

In contrary there are respondents who don´t agree on the above findings of the study. These groups said that the fellowship and Christian love through the cyber Church is limited. The real life relationship is more reflected in the local church where it enables the sharing of one another’s burden. Having said that, the cyber church has also created many opportunities to meet local Christians, where we have been able to have a ministry in hospitals, visiting and comforting needy ones at their homes etc.

6.15 Suggestion to improve the Cyber Church

Respondents were asked to answer a question as what is their suggestion to improve the cyber church services and programs. In response to this question they responded as follows.

As any other fellowship cyber-fellowship works with people and it is not easy to manage people. At local Churches people might be cautious of their behaviour because they fear the consequences of their actions in front of other believers while at the cyber Church it is easy to live with concealed identity, which is difficult to identify it easily, according to the response of from respondents.

One of the respondents who is active in the cyber church suggested that, “should resource allow it, I would also love to see mature Christians monitoring the various programs to ensure containing of wrong teachings none Biblical approaches be stopped before it spreads further.”

Almost all of the respondents among the total respondents suggested that it will very good if there would be a means to identify the real personality of individuals to somehow to filter them before they can get or join the services, so that we can know them in advance before any damage is done.

One of the respondents believes that the cyber Church lacks more advertising. According to him, if advertisements prepared for each and every program and run it between the beginning of the program, people would have a chance to choose a program they want to participate. This respondent added that, since ECPA is a worldwide ministry and people are online in ECPA from different time zone, he think it needs a full-time minister so that that full time minister will have a chance to serve the people regularly. He will protect pal talk from wrong teachings and deceiving people who mostly act in the absence of matured responsible people. Additionally, the respondent suggested the practicality of his idea that the full time minister will be under the visionary of the ministry. The question is, how are we going to hire and pay his salary? He said “God will provide both, so that will be in my prayer from this day on wards.”

This study also identified that the cyber church can be used apart from the teaching for more things such as: -To know one another for the purpose of discipline and helping one another., to speak to the people with a lot of love and respect, To take time to introduce on self in the pal talk for the purpose of helping them when they disappear without any notice, Continued teaching for the purpose to help people in their Christian life to be stronger on this unpredictable world. For example Fasting, praying, gift of Holy Spirit and Christianity knows Jesus and live just like Jesus.

Chapter Seven

Discussion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the findings between the research questions and the empirical data, which is collected from the field. The findings will be interpreted and discussed in contrast with the research main question and sub questions. Analysed Between the theory and the findings in order to help answer the research questions, I will try to analyse the main issue in the findings in focusing in most discussed vital issues as follows.

7.2 Is cyber church a church?

According to Jonathan Hill (2006: 532) the Church can mean a number of things, first, It can mean single Christian, second, it can mean the building in which they meet, third it can mean the denomination in which the community belongs, fourth, it can mean all Christians everywhere". Similarly, from the interviews with the respondents and the panel discussions with the leaders and pastors groups as well as the cyber church members in Atlanta Georgia USA, I fully noticed that the cyber church is gradually getting recognition in different parts of the society. It is gradually getting used in combination of the traditional and the local Church. The pastors believe that the on line services are becoming parts of the main Church services either in broadcasting live or later after the services at home and abroad where the sermons are archived and made accessible to the public after the church services for later use by anyone who surf on the net.

At the moment cyber Churches are not that much popular in the Ethiopian and diaspora context, but the combination of them with the local churches is very visible at the moment. From this study the cyber churches' position in the Christian population is becoming more visible with some limitations which I hope will be improved in the near future., until then the cyber churches should prove that they are out in the cyber world to represent Jesus Christ and fish people (Mark 1:17) and make the local Church accept and trust them as partiers in the fulfilment of the great commission. Since the cyber world is a new phenomenon to our physical world we should understand the existing local church's reluctance to accept the cyber churches as Biblical Churches at once. The cyber churches need to show in practice that the

partnership and unity with the local churches so that the real and the virtual world should work together for the same master, Jesus Christ.

I believe the local churches also should not be always suspicious of anything cyber but instead they should look very closely the mission, vision and the practical daily movements of these blooming and flourishing cyber churches. It is not wrong to ask whether the cyber church is just a fellowship of Christians online or a church. Does it fulfil the Biblical requirements of the church? Which I want to touch again a bit since many had been said in previous chapters.
The most important issue of the answer to the question of whether the cyber church is a church or not, there were four categories of people who have different opinion whether the cyber Church is a Church or not.

Since the primary reason for this research is to answer this question this research found that there are, four kinds of opinions. First, respondents who are not much involved and have information from the distance being not involved much in ECPA have a biased attitude towards it still blaming it for the church division, undisciplined behaviour of members and as a floating organ on the air without any proper attachment to the existing body of Christ.
Second those who are active in both cyber and the local church have a mixed opinion giving equal credit for the cyber church as the same respect, loyalty and dedication they have to both. This group's attitude is that the future is for the cyber Church as it will increase its influence and the conveniences in many aspects makes it attractive and appealing to all generations of people at the moment when the computer illiteracy is increasing.

Third, those who are fully active in cyber church, they elevated their participation to the highest degree considering it as it is more than anything. When they compare the cyber Church with the local church, they magnify it by mentioning it numerous it has attributes and compatibility with the modern Internet technology. They say that it is a Church in deed that fulfils all Biblical requirements of the Church. They put it in to the standards of the first century Church where distance was not a barrier for Philip to reach out the Ethiopian Enoch (Acts 8:29)

The cyber Church participants especially those in ECPA are encouraged and even instructed to be loyal and respectful to the local Churches to the extent of given direct instruction to

leave the room if there is any program taking place at that particular moment.[9] In their local Churches (looks the notice in the cyber room regarding this issue,)

Fourth, the leaders and pastors group who observe from a distance mostly with a second hand information and. They have valid respond when they found out that those who claim a great service in the cyber church are not contributing much while they are with them at the local church making them think “what is going on here?” if the person is claiming a great service on line what makes him such … here?

Those who luckily encounter with cyber church members, who have been encouraged lifted up and in return contribute positively at the local churches, their leaders appreciate the cyber church for enabling such kind of people to be active and energetic which they in return want others to join and benefit from it. In the contrary those who encounter with people, who claim about the greatness of the cyber church and about their role there while nothing visible contribution to the local church as well as in their personal spiritual life is observed, those pastors even warn their fellow members to stay away from on line services since they contribute nothing except wasting of time online behind computers.

Generally speaking those who are participating in both the local and the cyber Church consider it as a supporting organ which contributes for the strength of the Church, with its weaknesses and limitations, for them it is an organ which is contributing a great deal in helping Christians when the local church is not available or even If available the opportunity the cyber church provides is not obtainable since the local church’s opening hours are limited.

7.3 The difference between local Church and the cyber Church

The Other main question to be answered was the participant’s perception on the difference between local Church and the cyber Church that has been discussed earlier. The participants and the church leaders and elders have different opinion on this issue.

Almost 60% of the participants believe that it is the same except the cyber church do not offer the possibility of physical contact.

[9] Welcome dear brothers and sisters in Christ. We are on our weekly “International Evangelical Online service” .This service is Every Sunday from 09:00-11:00 (CET) and designed to those who are living in areas where a local church is not available. If there is a local Church service right now at or near your city we beg you to go out and join there. If your service is not at this moment feel free to stay with us and be part of this blessing.

Almost all the respondents agree on the attributes of the local church is presented in the cyber Church except those who require direct contact with the other person cannot be done such as the laying of hands on the sick, baptizing a person with water, sharing Holy communion from one cup and from one bread, it should be noted that we do a special fellowship time once in a while on line by organizing that everyone preparing his own bread and cup to eat and drink together as the body of Christ but we don't still feel comfortable to call it the Holy communion/the Lords' supper since according to the Bible Jesus shared the symbol of his body and blood breaking it was from one bread and one cup not everyone enjoying his own bread and wine.

7.4 Why are people attracted to the cyber church?

There are lots of popular social media groups on line, these includes, Facebook, tweeter, Instagram, Google, Yahoo, Paltalk etc. These popular social media groups have millions of followers (in the case of Face books and some others, billions) depending on the need and accessibility and availability of the services depending where the person lives. I personally encountered problems in china and Turkey where Face book was not available during my short stay there as a tourist.

When I have started the ECPA in 2002, I found it convenient to use the social media which is called paltalk, which was very much convenient in terms of compatibility with windows which most of our people in the Diaspora are using. Until now the paltalk messenger who is the easiest application for using the paltalk services is not as compatible with the Mac and I phones and I pad as it is with PCs, lap tops and androids.

The paltalk program for Mac products is which the cyber world nowadays as the real world has been categorized in different categories. The Paltalk, which the Ethiopian Christians Plus all room is operating under it, is dividing its users in different categories

In order to use the cyber Church on paltalk there are lots of factors, which are important such as 1) Hardware (laptop, desk top iPhone, I Pad or smart phones, 2) software, windows or other programs compatible to the paltalk programs 3) Internet access 4) Suitable atmosphere in order to concentrate and be part of the services.

There were lots of recorded incidents, which has been encountered by our members in different parts of the world where participants were provoked threatened and even physically and verbally abused while they were participating on line.

When I summarized the reasons why the cyber Church participants are attracted to join and most of them remained loyal attendants of this online service this study revealed that the following reasons were the major stimulating factors for individuals to join or attracted by cyber church.

First and for most is its availability at any time of the day, secondly the chance that they can access it from anywhere as long as they have their devices which has internet connection and thirdly, the affordability (low cost) which at the moment can be obtained with small amount of money depending on the size of the internet line. Ever since its introduction to the public, the internet is widely used in the daily life of the society in a rapid advancement more than any other technology has been appealed to the overall need of the society in all areas.

At the moment, the most known traditional ways of daily business and social communications such as education, all kinds of business transactions and productions, including Banking, the media such as radio and Television services, air transport, shipping lines and ticketing has been almost either replaced or partially taken over by internet based services. To give a simple example that I was amazed when I contacted the airlines agent in Ottawa Canada for my lost luggage, the person who was answering the phone was a local Indian man working from and residing in Mumbai India who successfully led me through all the process until my bag was located and home delivered. This gentleman may have or have not been be in Canada at all but he is working for a company in Canada just living in his own country.

Likewise it is in the same manner people living somewhere else in the world are engaged and actively participate in one cyber Church together as if they live in the same country or city. They no more worry about the absence of a local Church except in few points when they require a physical fellowship.

In Norway, almost the traditional Banking, postal services are declining where Bank and post office branches offices shrinking from time to time. In the same manner as the all the social services the Church also has been challenged by the advent of the Internet that people start to

see the Internet fellowships and cyber churches either as the only means due to the non-availability of local Churches in the areas they are living or even at the presence of local Churches they give many reasons why they are more attracted and prefer to be part of the cyber Church on the internet either as their main Church or as an alternative to the local Church they are already attending .

The second main reason why the cyber church attracted many people is that a physical presence is not mandatory. According to the study many of the active participants the reason many of the members were attracted to the cyber church was that its difference from the traditional way of the local Church in a way of its performing the does not require a physical presence but instead it can be done from anywhere the participant finds himself, Besides that the cyber church program allows a direct involvement of the congregation unlike the local church programs which is done by few people/the clergy and the congregations which has a direct involvement of people is very limited.

If we take local churches like Lutheran and Anglicans for example, their services are conducted based on the liturgy already written in the book or memorized by the members which they should follow when led by the priest or the pastor accordingly, while it comes to the Cyber Church the program is dynamic and open to all where it provides a platform for direct involvement of all participants which most of the ECPA members appreciate and are very fond of it.

Though it is an advantage to have a long hour service on line and at the same time even though it is well appreciated by the members on the cyber Church, It should be considered that there is a problem in this area where families are hurting, children are neglected and people suffering from inability to control themselves to lead their life in discipline by limiting their presence on line. In practical terms not only due to the different time zones but also in the same time zones I observed that some participants may not get enough sleep by being present in the room all the time which might affect the health, family, education or their social life.

When a member or just a participant stays excessive hours on line the participants and their family members especially their children when they stay excessive hours of time on line. I

personally intervened in many occasions as a responsible person for the safety of the members to remind those who stay too long in the room reminding them about the proper usage of this service and to caution and warn those who deliberately ignore my gentle reminder with strong conversation with them in order to help them to use this service properly. For example those who are from the Eastern time zone of USA to go to bed when I see them at 9:00 Am (CET) in the room which is their 3:00 AM or for those from Pacific time zone which is a midnight there. There were also official complaints from spouses directly addressed to me as a visionary/ owner of ECPA to take action to rescue the marriage which is in danger of collapsing unless the member/participant stop being for long hours in paltalk than they want them to be.

The long hours of availability of the service on line, or that is the local churches have few hours of services per week which in some churches even the clergy other than those who are assigned for the day are not able to get a chance to take part due to the time limit allocated for the whole service. In most west European cases the church service is no longer than 2 hours to the maximum including the fellowship time. While we come to the cyber church the service is twenty four hours a day seven days a week with much opportunity to get a chance to serve and be engaged in different activities such as singing, giving testimonies, praying of just greeting people who comes to the room and inviting and encouraging them to come to the mic as the opportunity enables.

At local churches current hot issue are either taboo or considered as politics. By the way it is worth to mention that Politics is one of the issue Ethiopian Pentes /born again Christians / are not comfortable to discuss due to the bad experience most passed at home in the communist /Derg era 1974-1991 and even now they are fearful of any political involvement since ethnicity is more central to the present day politics of the country which is not compatible with the Biblical principle of “There is neither Jew nor Greek.” (Gal 3:28)

The main reason the cyber church members are attracted towards the cyber Church is that the way the programs are implemented. In the cyber Church the teaching of the word of God on special topics that appeal to the daily need of the participants. As one of the respondents said “I found that pal talk is a perfect tool to transfer the Gospel without any restriction, such as, the fear of people opinion” he said he means that on the true nature of Christ his Biblical role and his Deity without fear of prejudices from the tradition and background he came from. The

local Churches function on the services of their minsters who are limited in number while at the cyber Church minsters from all over the world, from different denominational background and educational level serve with variety of program which makes the cyber Church attractive.

In the local church, time is an issue for continuous teaching on a topic or one book of the Bible if the minster starts a continues teaching on ordinary weekly or in some cases bi weekly services the minster may need to have many months to cover his topic while in the cyber Church with the opening time of 24 hours a day, it is ideal to get an extended teaching without any interruption.

On the other hand people feel safe and secured to get something any time they join the cyber church while in the local Church it is open for a fixed period of the week. Apart from the services of the assigned minsters selected audio and video teaching can be played and people will get something any time of the day where ever they are in the world.

In local Church one can see the other fellow and may feel inferior in terms of dress codes and appearance in the middle of Church members. This is not uncommon even in the first century Church the issue was visible which the writer of the book of James " For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment" James 2:2 we can understand that the writer has to mentioned this since it has been an issue of the time while this is not an issue at all in the cyber Church since people are not meeting in person and they are not required to use video cameras to present themselves.

In the same manner in the Cyber Church people are not required to mention their age, which makes no one to feel inferior or superior in terms of age differences. There are many families of 2 generations who actively participate and exceptionally 2 families of three generations each actively worshipping and serving in ECPA.

The teaching the word of God at a local church is again done in a traditional manner where the assigned preacher speaks for 45-60 minutes in Diaspora and 60-120 minutes at home, the part of the people is to listen up to the end and be part of the sermon in just listening. When it comes to the cyber Church I found pal talk is a perfect tool to transfer the Gospel without any restriction, such as, the fear of people opinion on the true teaching of Jesus Christ.

The local church teaching could be restricted, but it depends on the situation. In the local church, time is an issue for continuous teaching. Since time is on pal talk's side stretched for the 24 hours of the day people can be connected any time from home or work. I believe all concerned parties; the local and the cyber Churches have a golden opportunity on their hand to using all methods the old and the new from broadcasting recorded massages to live transmissions and online services to meet their purpose using the cyber Church.

As Churches in Europe have the attendance of older generation, the young feel that the church is not for them but at the cyber Church this difference is not visible at all the reason being the absence of physical fellowship. There was also one point underlined by many which is an autocratic leadership style blamed as a reason some members of local churches to pushing members from the church, especially the youngsters, to leave the local Church and to join cyber churches.

The cyber Church as it is found on the web looks like a disorganized and misguided body that hangs on the air. That is very true in most cases since spirituality and preaching and worship is done freely without much controlling mechanisms. Many prophesy, pray and worship openly on line and participants join and leave the room flowing like a river all the time, this flow of people opens a way for false teachers, for people who swindle and take advantage of innocent people who seek help for their daily problems. In other situations the fact is that most Cyber Churches lack organizational structures to control and guide the activities of the rooms and take the necessary administrational and disciplinary actions as required.

At the Ethiopian and Eritreans local Churches, the question of disciplining members is very visible when unchristian behaviour is reported against a member. When issues which require disciplinary measures happen, the pastor/church leader will call the member and council them. It is also a normal procedure at ECPA that a reported case against a member is taken seriously until it is settled in the right way.

Most participants and members of ECPA are scattered all over the world and they speak the second language the languages of the countries they live in. have problem since all of the participants do not have the knowledge of the English language in equal level. In order to cope up with the problem and to fill the gap in language most use the Amharic language in Latin alphabet that sometimes has a double meaning or lack of the proper sound when it is

written in Latin alphabet. For example the Latin alphabet cannot write the Amharic words like, moon, hair, colour etc. which creates confusion when someone try to write some words in Latin in his own way, since there is no an existing system as such for that.

One very interesting thing to mention when we talk about language is that since the cyber Church members are people who live in different continents and countries those who live in the gulf and the middle eastern countries will insert Arabic while they are talking, those in Germany, they insert Dutch and most of the participants think that the others understand them. To give a few examples, someone who lives in Scandinavia says, "this morning I missed the tog and." And immediately the participants from other regions say, "What is tog? Still, another person will say "oh! Sorry I mean the train." Someone from Germany will say "I was at Hauptbahnhof this morning, and the people from non-Dutch speaking areas say "what??" "What did u say?" And the person immediately says, "Oh, I am sorry I meant the main train station." In such ways it is very normal to hear all the languages of the world mixed with Amharic when people are speaking and live in different countries which shows the diversity of the members of the cyber Churches. Personally, I wish the local Church would also be the same in comprising of people from languages and nations as the day of Pentecost.

7.5 Negative Perception towards the cyber Church

It is found that there are negative perceptions towards the cyber Church. There are many church leaders who complain against the cyber Church blaming its members and participants for the misuse of the cyber Church for the wrong purpose. Different reasons have been given to justify this accusation. The first negative perception about cyber Church is that church leaders are based on my first-hand experience of 15 years in the ECPA. Roughly 40% of the cyber Church participants complain about not knowing who the real are the participants of the cyber Churches are and what is their real identity the real world, whether there is a means or mechanism to identify their real personality and a way to verify these whole issues of identity.

The reason the complainers gave is that a person can claim who he is on line which may be a fake identity without any proof for what he claims in the real world. Because Christianity is a life style and the person's real identity matters in order to accept him as a Church leader or the

servant of God who can be a trusted as the servant of God and his people especially, if he/she is involved in the teaching ministry.

Primarily, one of the main threats or negative perception considered by outsiders and even by some cyber Church members is the issue of controversial topics presented for discussion that have theological roots and cultural reaction.

Just to give one practical example, the Apostolic Church of Ethiopia that we call the "Jesus only Church," have also a cyber-fellowship on line. The members of this group also are active in other orthodox[10] Christian rooms, since their theological differences with the orthodox Pentecostals is a bit difficult to identify them easily. As Lang (2002) [11], indicated that "Unfortunately, it's likely that most Christian laypeople, if they were presented with the orthodox view and the Oneness churches' view, would either shrug off the differences as extremely minor or would not even be able to grasp them." This issue is very relevant in ECPA where these kind of denominations, the Jehovah witnesses, the Jesus only Church members who are accused of intentionally joining the cyber Churches and try to allure new believers to make them proselytize to their faith. There are registered cases where those members of have left the room and joined these denominations.

The other point is that the cyber Church members are blamed of having its members having communication difficulty with a local church but very active in the cyber Church. This is a real threat for good communication between the cyber Church and the local churches.

From theological issues there have been reported incidents that people who do not have a good testimony, for example morally, in the cities they live, have been found as active preachers and members of the cyber Church on line. In some cases, married people, in all reported cases the offenders are men, approached single ladies by promising that they will marry them just to deceive those innocent women who are desperate to get married.

The other point considered and mentioned as a negative perception towards the cyber Church is that some members collecting money from online believers for unjustified and none

[10] It does not mean the Ethiopian Orthodox Church but the Christian Trinitarian denominations
[11] http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2002/april1/22.60.html?start=2

existing projects which could not be verified in Ethiopia and Eritrea to gain dishonest financial benefit.

7.6 Positive perceptions towards cyber Church

According to this research, members of the cyber Church, the local church leaders and members who participated in this study, have different views depending on the group who sees the role of the cyber Church.

One of the positive attributes given to the cyber church is the location independent of geographical and time zone since the cyber Church is online from one location available to anyone from any parts of the world. Though time zones create division, they are also its own qualities.

Though the ECPA is online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the programs are conducted and allocated in advance and posted on the web site and privately distributed for those who are assigned every Sunday starting from 09:00 Am (CET) that program will be missed by a participant from Oakland, California, USA since it is mid night there and a participant from Melbourne Australia which is 6:00 PM in the evening. Here different time and geographical zones can log in one room at one time

The positive issue worth mentioning here is that the cyber Church avoided the time constraint and allowed one-time zone to serve the other defiling the limitation or the restriction of time with a considerable sacrifice paid by the participant of the other time zone in terms of adjusting the program to fit in to the services he /she would like to join. For example, if they work at a night shift and their working condition allows to log in Paltalk they can be actively engaged by the time which was supposed to be used for sleep or other purposes.

The other positive issue of the cyber Church is that it avoids the status in age difference which dominates the in Ethiopian and Eritrean societies where children are not allowed to participate much with adults. Even until recently in some Ethiopian Eritrean cultures children were not allowed to eat with adults.

The age difference between participants also plays a special role which we cannot avoid it. A family of three generations, a lady at her 70s with her son and granddaughter who are administrators in the cyber church, the challenge for me as a leader of the cyber church how to communicate with this three generation of participants in the same language.
The understanding of the term Church by these three generations, of people is not the same, and when it comes to cyber Church, it is much different than we can imagine.

In a similar manner the older generations of Ethiopians and Eritreans as it mentioned in Chapter three have a very unique cultural understanding which sees the churches' building, as a holy sacred place, a place of social gathering, the baptism place, the burial place which has a meaning of the final home. With this understanding of the local Church in mind we can imagine how this culture will have a difficulty to accept a cyber-Church as a Church.

At the traditional local Churches there is not much interaction in the order of worship liturgy except to follow up the Priest from the beginning to the end of the service, while in the cyber Church these three generations interact with one another in worship, discussions, prayers etc., defiling the generation gap. For example, we can imagine when the granddaughter listens the song selected by her grandmother which is mostly from the early or late 70s and by the granddaughter which is probably from the contemporary ones which have a different language, style and tune for the lady in her mid-70s. The cyber Church having mixed generations in one room is helpful to communicate easily.

In the similar circumstances the gender difference doesn't have any influence as it does in the local Churches where in the Ethiopian orthodox Church the entrance gate and the worship space in the church is segregated to avoid a mix of gender in the Church which still is in the minds of the born-again Christians attending the protestant Churches.

The other positive factor, which is to be commended, is that there is no gender discrimination issue at all. As most of the participants in ECPA are women due to various reasons such as most of the immigrant workers in the gulf and many Middle Eastern and Mediterranean countries are women who are engaged in house hold job as house maids, janitor and care takers who have access to internet. Apart from that there are also women in the west who will be in maternal permission who stays home with children and those who are working in shifts,

and many who have possibilities to log in from their working places log in to the cyber church and actively participate.

In fact, most of the participants and active program leaders are women. Traditionally the Church has been a male dominated society and still that it is more visible among the Ethiopian and Eritrean contexts. The Cyber Church eliminates these and the freedom and comfortable atmosphere for women in leading worship, prayer and sharing testimonies is more visible at the cyber Church than the local Church.

One of the areas the cyber Church makes feel people comfortable by avoiding the status of educational standards. It does not mean that educated people are not respected or not heard but it means that uneducated people do not feel inferior because of their lower education level since the ECPA has people from different walk of life. The level of education is varying from PhD from a famous seminary in USA to elementary school that gathered in one common goal just to worship God and share their faith one another.

Sometimes when the educated ones mix English while they talk, pray or discuss those who don't understand it ask in the lobby and even they whisper or come to private window of someone they may think help them to ask the meaning of that English word they don't understand, or appeal to the administrators and the owner so that people will clarify and if possible not to use difficult English words. In the local Churches people might be grouped based on their status but in the Cyber Church there is no status of any kind just a member or a participant.

The very important issue is also the possibility of remaining anonymous as long as the person keeps his privacy for himself, to emphasise this issue a bit, some Ethiopians and Eritreans Shared their frustrations of feeling attracted for the same sex. When they need prayer and counselling for this issue they are very much afraid of how to say it and very much suspicious for whom to say it fearing a backlash if these issue licks out to the community, in this instance, many people are very thankful for the availability of the cyber church where no one can recognize who and from where they are.

7.7 Reaction of the local Churches against cyber church and its participants

As Protestantism and the reformation and the renaissance is connected which I believe the Christian world prospered following the enlightenment period we must profit from the technology, so the online ministry should appreciate and implement it for the Work needed.
This kind of opposition is very peculiar in the Ethiopian context as history tells us that the Church in the late 1950s resisted the use of synthesizer and guitars labelling them as instruments for secular music which should not be used for the holy worship in the Churches.

It is in a very similar manner that the Cyber Churches encountered resistance from many people especially at the advent of the Internet by those who believe that Christians should not be using it. There were evangelists who preached in public associating the www with 666 that is the number of the beast who will come against the Church and the kingdom of God. (Revelations 13:18)

There is a tendency of blaming technology and scientific discoveries for the "mess" of the current situation in the church. I believe that is not a right evaluation of the situation in reality in seeing always the modern technology as it has a negative impact on the churches life. It should be encouraged to see it as positive resource for the common goal they have to serve the same purpose. On my ministry trip that covers most parts of the World, such as USA, Canada, and almost all Western Europe including Turkey, Ethiopia and Israel, to mentions few of them, I had the opportunity to meet the cyber Church members and local Church leaders in person. During our discussion with the local church leaders about the role of our cyber Church members almost 40-50 % of them shared their frustrations referring that some of the people who are active on the net are not that active at their local Churches and some who are famous in the cyber Church are not even known at the local church level.

The other main area three respondents mentioned was the lack of practical knowledge of Christianity by the cyber Church members that they claim that Jesus taught his disciples not only the theory of Christianity but its implementation too. Jesus taught them how they should live their daily life, in prayer, fasting, teaching, mission and also communication with one another in love and forgiveness. In the light of these facts many people we see actively involved in the cyber Church are getting too much knowledge from different sources but it seems it is knowledge without experience.

The other concern of local church is that due to the long hours of participation on different theological issues and available topics on a daily basis in the online programs some members undermine the role of their local Churches authorities and churches leaders responsibility in their life and they give more allegiance to the cyber Church.

During a dinner party at the home of a couple in one of central Europe cities, the family shared with me that in my absence they use to say that the husband when the wife was not responding for any suggestion he makes in any area of their daily life he says to his wife “I know that you will not listen to me like your cyber church pastor, pastor Malkam” which shows that they found out that spouses are most likely to obey my suggestions or even instructions than their spouses. Malkam is my paltalk nickname.

The same issue that some local Church leaders feel that active cyber church members think that they are matured than their leaders and are not in a position to accept instructions from their local Church leaders, as one pastors puts it “ they are not teachable, they think they have now more spiritual knowledge than the spiritual leader”. He continued in expanding his thought by saying that “these kind of attitudes will also destroy the proper biblical relationship between leaders and believers in the Church”. He also added that “ spiritual parenthood relationship is diminishing since you cannot be a spiritual father to those people who think they are getting more spiritual food somewhere on the internet than in the local Church so there is a tendency of people becoming fatherless in the spiritual sense”. While we discussed this issue I noticed frustration and emotional feelings against the cyber church members of his congregation which he continued saying “at the same time they are developing not really living a guided spiritual life under the spiritual authority of the Church, If the church is not the source of their spiritual food, the spiritual instruction and the spiritual knowledge, how we expect these people to submit to our spiritual authority? No way!”

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the short summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and research contributions. In the summary section of this chapter, a bird's eye view of the whole research will be presented. The response to the main and sub research questions will be presented. My contribution to the academic work will also revealed in this section. Finally, my recommendations to concerned bodies (the cyber church and church leaders) will be given.

8.2 Summary

The topic of this study is entitled as "The Cyber Church: How it is understood by Ethiopians with special reference to the Ethiopian Christians Plus all Room in Paltalk (ECPA). This title was selected due to the fact that the existence of difference beliefs between the enthusiasts of the new cyber Church and those who condemn everything modern and new, and especially when it comes to the religious spheres or who considers the cyber Church as a threat to the local church that I examined and research as the owner of the Paltalk room.

The main objective of the study was to find out how church members understood the cyber Church as a church and to find out the negative and positive impact of cyber Church on the local existing churches of Ethiopia and its mission. To get my answers to the focus of the study, this research had three sub questions and one main research question. The sub questions were focused on similarities and differences between the local and the cyber Church, and the cyber Church's role in the local church.

Different materials were used and reviewed in this study. The reference materials I included weretextbooks, journals, scholarly articles, magazines, and different websites to develop the theory statement of this study. This was done to evaluate and compare the results of this study in relation to other studies done in other parts of the world.

A methodology qualitative research method was used as a research method to understand and answer the main and sub research questions. This method was chosen because the qualitative method is useful to focus in on the experiences of people involved, and to attempt to understand the reasons behind the understanding of the respondents of the study. The widely used method of data collection tool in qualitative research was used to collect data. Both individual and group interview were used. Purposive sampling strategy was the strategy that was employed in this study. This was done because of the need to sample those respondents that were relevant to the focus of the study. The group of the respondents were, church leaders, pastors, elders and members of Ethiopian Christian Plus all Paltalk Room. As an interview guide, a list of questions was prepared and used. The study used similar questions to all The study and research concluded that there were some similarities and differences between the theory and the empirical findings of this research about cyber Church. This was due to the existence of differences in the culture and traditions of the respondents of this study and the theory. Further this could be due to the limited knowledge of some respondents of the study about the cyber Church.

Regarding the question and understanding to consider the cyber Church to be a church or not, this study consisted of two groups of respondents. The first one was a group that fully accepted cyber Church as a church and they gave equal credit for the cyber Church as the same respect, loyalty and dedication they have to both. This group fully concluded that the cyber Church is considered to be a church. They indicated that a cyber-Church is a gathering of all believers spiritually with the objective of one idea like the local church i.e. “praising the Almighty God” or preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In contrary, the other group agreed that the cyber Church is not considered as a church because the cyber Church has no proper attachment to the body of Jesus Christ to be considered as a church. Lastly, I understood that, this difference existed due to the lack of proper knowledge and information about the cyber Church.

8.3 Response to research sub questions

In this part the response of the sub questions will be presented.

8.3.1 What are the similarities between the local and the cyber Church?

To understand and find out the difference and the similarities between the local church and the cyber Church, one must get a basic definition of both the cyber Church and the local

church indicated in the theory part of this study. To find out the similarities and differences between these two churches, local respondents were asked about the issues. Accordingly, this study concluded the following:

This study revealed that both the cyber Church and local church focus on the gospel of Jesus Christ. The programs that are going on in local churches are also undertaken by cyber churches. Both churches have bible study, prayer and fasting programs, annual and seasonal conferences, preaching of the Word of God, worshiping God and sharing mutual concerns (spiritual, social and material, missionary work), and addressing issues related to the needs of believers, fellowship and counselling are among the programmes both churches have in common.

8.3.2 What are the differences between the cyber Church and the local Church?

In contrary to the similarities, the study also revealed that the cyber and the local church are not far apart in their differences. The major difference that I discovered was that the anonymity of a member of the cyber church is included. This means that knowing the actual and true identity of the member of the cyber Church is very difficult and untrustworthy unlike the local church.

Furthermore, the availability of the cyber Church throughout the twenty-four hours makes a big difference between the local and the cyber Church. Attending the programs of the cyber Church while being in the hospital or living in refugee camps, and in areas where local churches do not exist, is also the difference revealed between the cyber and the local church in the study.

In addition to the above the main difference is also the sacraments which needs to be done in the presence of the person who will be committing himself for the action, This action cannot be done in the cyber Church since it is lacking the physical contact we observed in the Bible, For Example, the water Baptism which should be done in the presence of the Baptizer and witnesses, prayer in laying on of hands, and the ceremony of matrimony, which requires the vows of both the bride and the groom.

8.3.3 Can the cyber church play the role of the local church?

Concerning the role of cyber Church as a local church, there are two different ideas that have been revealed by this study. The first conclusion indicated that the cyber Church could fully

play the role of the local church, because physical attendance of a member of a church does not matter to undertake all the programs and activities that are going on in local churches. Therefore, a cyber-Church can play all the roles of the local church, according to the results of this study from these groups of respondents.

The second conclusion drawn from this study is the opposite of the above conclusion. Physical presence of a person could have a vital role in the local church because this will help the local church to identify the true identity of the person. This in turn helps the church to give the required services according to the need of the people or individual person. Therefore, according to these groups of respondents, cyber-Church cannot play the role in the local church.

In general, the study concluded and found out that there are two extremely polarized opinions of the respondents concerning whether the cyber Church can play the role of a local Church or not. Both groups firmly defend their positions almost in equal terms. The study believes that this polarized opinion resulted from the conviction of the respondents on the role of the cyber Church.

8.4 Response to the main question: Do the members of the cyber church understand it as a Church?

The main research question of this study was seeking to know how participants of the cyber Church or members of cyber Church understand the cyber Church to be a church. Based on the responses of the respondents of the study, the following conclusion or summary has been taken. It is presented in the theory part of this study church can be defined in different ways. As Jonathan Hill defines it as “a single Christian, the building in which they meet, the denomination in which the community belongs, and it can also mean as all Christians everywhere.” (Hill, 2006: 532)

The study identified two different opinions about the cyber Church considering it to be a church or not. These differences might have arisen from the lack and availability of awareness and information about cyber Church. The differences also existed between church leaders and congregation. The groups include:

Group with hesitant attitudes

The first groups of the respondents have a hesitant attitude towards cyber Church and are reluctant to consider the cyber Church as a church. These groups agreed that the cyber Church has no proper attachment to the physical body of Christ at the local churches; therefore, they concluded that cyber Church is not a church. This study concluded that, this might have happened because of the misunderstanding of the meaning or definitions of a church, both from biblical and literature aspects. As it is indicated in the theory part, that a church is not only the building, but rather it is also the community of all true believers for all time" (Grudem , 2000:853) or as bible (Act, 19.32) define church in a general sense as a gathering of citizens' assembly, which includes the gathering of cyber Church members. The findings of the study revealed that these groups are mainly included the leaders and pastors of local Churches who observe cyber Church from a distance mostly with a second-hand information.

Group that consider cyber Church as a church equally with the local Church

The study concluded that, the members of the cyber Church (those who are active in both cyber and the local church) have a mixed opinion giving equal credit for the cyber Church as the same respect, loyalty and dedication they have to the local Churches they belong. These groups fully concluded that the cyber Church is considered as a church. They indicated a cyber-church is a gathering of all believers spiritually with the objective of one idea like the local church i.e. "praising the Almighty God". Further, this research summarized that the main objective of these groups is the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is on-going in both cyber church and the local one. It is concluded that these groups agreed that cyber church fulfils all Biblical requirements of the Church. They put it into the standards of the first century church where distance was not a barrier for Philip to reach out to the Ethiopian Enoch (Acts 8:29).

8.5 My Contribution to the research

In the research I tried to find out what other searchers had concluded and what their impression was of the participants in the cyber Church and the role of cyber Church on the local churches. I recognized that the difficulty of finding similar studies in other parts of the world. Even though there are not similar studies in the area, there are few numbers of studies conducted in related matters. For example, there are studies on globalization and church that are done in the USA and in Europe. These studies did not specify the impression of church members in cyber and local churches.

In this study, I tried to find out the impression of participants in the cyber church, specifying to the Ethiopian Christian Plus All Room in Paltak (ECPA). Therefore, my contribution to the academic work is that this study has revealed the areas where the cyber Church members are engaged in fulfilling the commission and mission of the Church with full commitment considering their role in the cyber Church equal to the local church on the cyber space where billions of people are found at the moment. The study made it clear that the use of the cyber Church has simplified the missionary journeys to areas hostile for mission by eliminating the difficulties encountered by earlier missionaries.

The study also revealed that the participants of the cyber Church consider it as a Church since they have the possibility of worshipping, fellowshipping, and studying the word of God being in any part of the world with the other fellow believer from any part of the world feeling as being together under one roof which avoided the need to travel long distances in search of a church or a fellow believer.

In similar circumstances the study found out the holistic service of the church has been transformed beyond the wall of the church and beyond one city, has united believers from all corners of the earth allowing participants to contribute to a physical need of a believer or to support the mission of the Church.

The study also revealed that the previously difficult areas which were hostile for the work of the mission have been reached out to. Participants of the cyber Church from these restricted areas acknowledged that they were able to worship and be part of the universal Church through the cyber services.

8.6 Recommendations

I draw recommendations both for cyber churches and local church leaders.

The following recommendations are given to cyber churches: -

As far as the issue of the doctrinal background of the speakers, and those who are assigned to serve in leading prayers, discussions and other programs, there is a need for that speaker to be investigated before they can use the microphone to serve since it would be difficult to correct it once it was already broadcasted.

Cooperation between local Churches and those who are engaged in the Social media on cyber space, and on the ground, should increase bearing in mind that they both work for one purpose. The cyber Churches should be mindful of the local churches in the way they operate, in the manner they perform their programs, and in respecting the boundaries, especially in respecting the authority of the local churches. With all the good contributions the cyber churches are making to the advancement of the Gospel, if it is supported and blessed by the local Churches their work will prosper more than it is seen at the present. Therefore, an understanding and cooperation will help to win the confidence and blessings of the local Church leaders and members who are the vital part of the overall mission.

The cyber world is the medium of communication, while in reality, it is the sum of each household. Although local churches play a significant role in reflecting the love of Christians around unbelievers and amongst believers, cyber networks have become the mainstream media where people pay attentions to measure the characteristics of others. In this information age, cyber-Churches can be big driving forces to shine the love of Christ, both amongst fellow Christians and unbelievers around the globe, especially in cyber space, which has billions of people in it. Remember, if social Medias were countries, they would have more than the population of any country on earth. "If Facebook were a country, it would be substantially bigger than China. The size of Facebook's user base translates to almost two in seven of the global population using it each month - around 1.9 billion people." (WEF: 2016)[12]

In a country like Ethiopia many people do not have access to Internet services. Even those who live in areas where Internet is available, its affordability is also questionable to the majority of the people. Therefore, local churches who have the financial capability, even a little bit extra from the vital need of their own ministries, should invest in internet related services so that they will benefit from the contacts and services of the cyber Churches who are in the frontiers of the cyber world.

People living in some countries like Ethiopia have technical problem, power cut every now and then, is one of the common headache to the cyber participant. Secondly, to get internet access as required is another problem. Even when the internet access is available, they have a problem financially affording to pay for the internet connection costs. Many of the people I

[12] World Econmic Forum 2016

talked with, even though they have the desire to log in and participate as much as possible, they are restricted themselves from using the Internet while they have a great desire to use it because of the economic hardship. I appeal to technicians, professionals, internet and computer specialists, investors and those who are blessed with material and professional blessings should work diligently to support the IT services in the Church and those visionaries who are out for outreach in the cyber space.

One of the problems the respondents mentioned was a network interruption and the Pal talk application which is mainly the problem with the Paltalk software compatibility problem with their smart phones and laptops, upgrading Paltalk software to be compatible with Apple products is very essential to have uninterrupted service online. For example, in my personal experience and the experiences of my colleagues in Paltalk Compared to android programs, it is a bit difficult to use the Paltalk application on Macintosh and Apple products such as IPhone, IPad, and MacBook etc., which are not friendly with Paltalk. Either the manufacturers or Paltalk itself should find a solution so that so anyone with these devices can use Paltalk without any problem.

The following recommendations are given to the local church leaders: Since one of the misunderstanding lies in the background of cyber church ministers, so it is recommended that, both local and cyber Church leaders must act to cooperate in exchanging information and in taking actions when required to elucidate the doubt about the minister's background and personality. After doing that, the local churches should take a step forward to bless the cyber Church ministers and acknowledge and recognize their effort and make that public, so that people may have confidence in using the cyber Church.

The polarization is resulting from the lack of mutual connection and lack of common platform to remove the tendency of both heading to different directions. Therefore, it is my sincere recommendation that the local Churches and cyber Church leaders try to find a common ground in discussion to clear issues which divide and separate them to come closer to understanding each other. This can be done during an annual meeting of all Ethiopian church leaders or through video conference. Further, it can be implemented in collaboration through Evangelical Christian Fellowship of Ethiopia. Travelling ministers and those who have access to the local and diaspora Christians can play a role in facilitating this effort.

At Last my strongest recommendation is that the cyber Church is becoming popular and attractive for the new generation, Therefore, local churches, besides their traditional way of performing church services, they need to be prepared to go to the cyber world to reach out those on the internet.

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Appendices

Appendix I

List of available rooms main Category

Most videos		
Whats Hot		
New and noteworthy		
Most Gifted		
Elite Rooms		
SHOUTCAST Radio Rooms		
Adult		
Help		
Friends Love and Romance		
Radio & TV		
Social Issues and Politics		
Unites States and Canada		
Europe		
Africa		
Asia and Pacific		
Vietnam		
Central and south America		
Ethnic groups		
Religion and spirituality		
Arts & Entertainment		
Family and community		
Health		
Computers and Technology		
Sports & Hobbies		
Business and Finance		
Education		
Music		
Games		
Miscellaneous		

All the above table shows main categories have different sub categories which comprises of large groups of rooms with different topics and agendas for Example is Europe comprised of rooms and groups under heading of “European” when you click it on the paltalk network all available rooms in Europe will pop up alphabetically listed from A-Z

Appendix II

Regional groups Africa

Africa

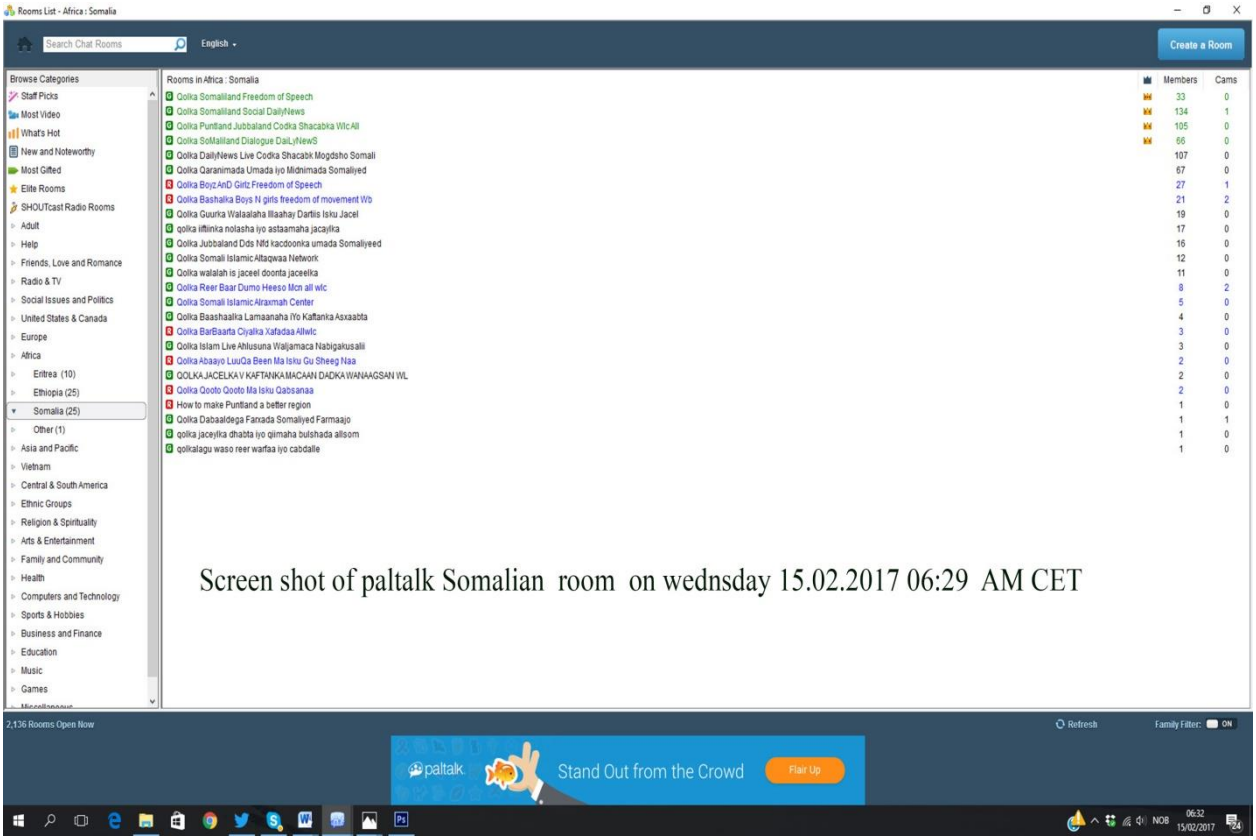
African Rooms comprised of rooms and groups under heading of "African" and all rooms open with related the name Africa are alphabetically listed from A-Z

Africa	
Eritrea (10 Rooms)	
Ethiopia (25 Rooms)	1 additional room in another language
Somalia (25 Rooms)	Hara Ethiopia Free Discussion Forum All Welcome
	United Ethiopians Political Discussion Forum
	Ethio Love for All
	Ethiopian Christians Plus All
	Ethiopian in Diaspora Discussion Forum
	Ethiopia Muslims Interfaith Dialogue for Justice
	Ethio Tigray Discussion Forum
	Le Qonjoch ena le singles
	Ethio World Pal
	Ethiopia Muslims Dauselamn Discussion Forum
	Lekonjo wubochina lelatewoch
	Ethio Chrstians Broadcasting Network
	EthioIslam Daru Bilal Dawa Tahfiz Quran
	Save Ethiopianism
	Ethiopia Bole Tej bet music and fun Room
	Ethio geza tegaru Young style
	Ethio Harar Mudai Alam Huluq Ziashir Kilahot Arra
	Ethiolove for all 2
	Good news Bible based Teaching Worship Discussion
	Ethio Muslim Wotatoch Dawa Group for all age
	Oromo Chrstian Minstry Room
	Ethiopians make new friends
	Hadnet Eritreawuyan and Tegaru discussion forum
	Ethiopian Tigray develeopmnet peace and freedom for all

Appendix III

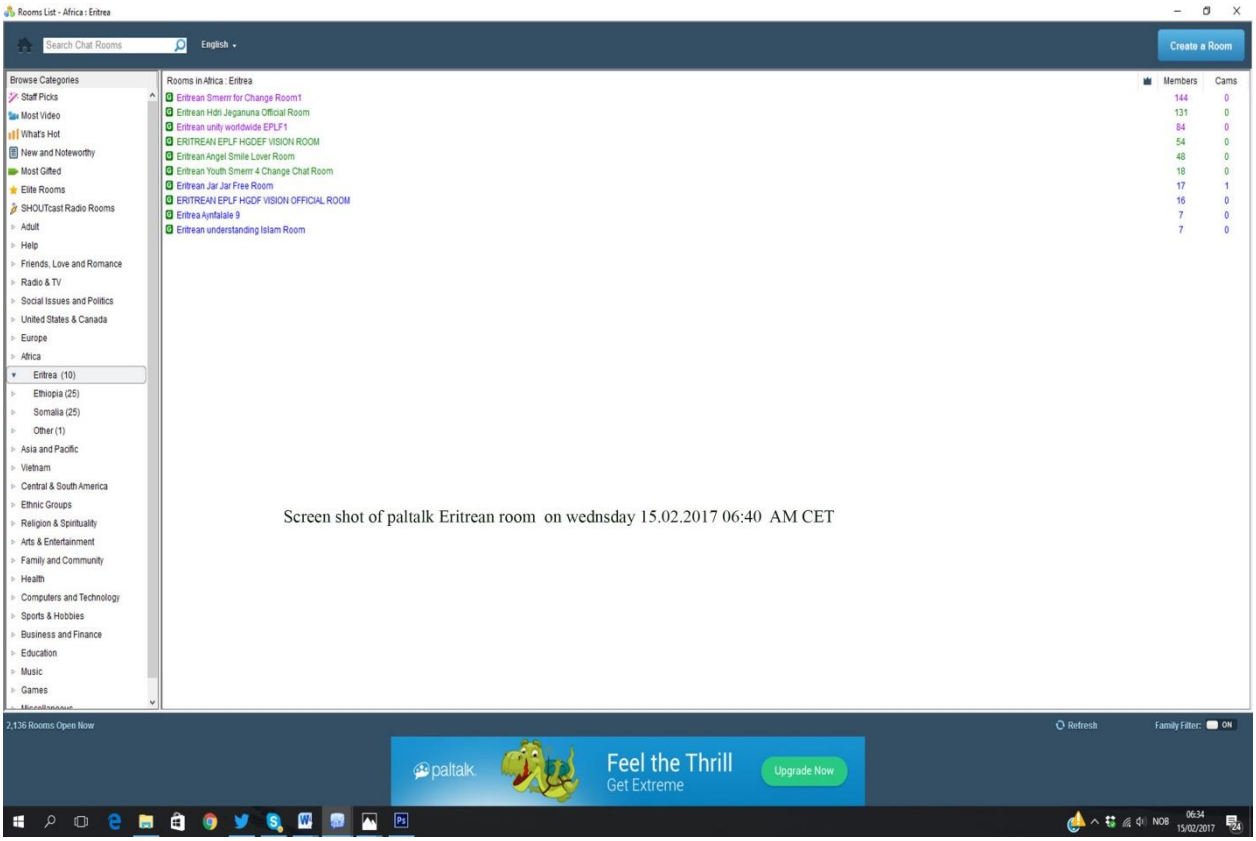
The following is a screen shot typed for easy access of the information, which was shot. At a particular day, which shows the categorization of the room users in region, is working in the following manner. In random observations on Wednesday 15.02.2017 which is a mid-week normal working day morning from 06:00 -06:30 CET the partitions look like the following.

Copy of the screen shot of main East African Rooms in paltalk as observed on February 15, 2017, 06:39 AM



The above table shows that under the category Africa the most populous rooms in that category which are the Eritrean , Ethiopian and Somalian Rooms , These are the open rooms when the screen shot was taken.

Appendix IV


Rooms List - Africa : Eritrea
Search Chat Rooms
English
Create a Room
Browse Categories
Staff Picks
Most Video
What's Hot
New and Noteworthy
Most Gifted
Elite Rooms
SHOUTcast Radio Rooms
Adult
Help
Friends, Love and Romance
Radio & TV
Social Issues and Politics
United States & Canada
Europe
Africa
Eritrea (10)
Ethiopia (25)
Somalia (25)
Other (1)
Asia and Pacific
Vietnam
Central & South America
Ethnic Groups
Religion & Spirituality
Arts & Entertainment
Family and Community
Health
Computers and Technology
Sports & Hobbies
Business and Finance
Education
Music
Games
Rooms in Africa : Eritrea
Members
Cams
Eritrean Smerrr for Change Room1 144 0
Eritrean Hdri Jeganuna Official Room 131 0
Eritrean unity worldwide EPLF1 84 0
ERITREAN EPLF HGDEF VISION ROOM 54 0
Eritrean Angel Smile Lover Room 48 0
Eritrean Youth Smerrr 4 Change Chat Room 18 0
Eritrean Jar Jar Free Room 17 1
ERITREAN EPLF HGDF VISION OFFICIAL ROOM 16 0
Eritrea Aynfalale 9 7 0
Eritrean understanding Islam Room 7 0
Screen shot of paltalk Eritrean room on wednsday 15.02.2017 06:40 AM CET
2,136 Rooms Open Now
Refresh
Family Filter: ON
paltalk
Feel the Thrill
Get Extreme
Upgrade Now
NOB
06:34
15/02/2017

Appendix V

Interview and interviewees participated in this project.

	Country	Participation in Church	Position in local Church	Interview place	Language used during the interview
1	Canada	Cyber & local	Pastor	Telephone interview	English
2	Switzerland	Local Church	Pastor	Telephone	English
3	Belgium	Local Church	Pastor	Telephone interview	English
4	Germany	Local Church	Pastor	Telephone interview	English
5	UK	Cyber & local	Member	Telephone interview	English
6	UK	Cyber & local	Elder	Telephone interview	English
7	Ethiopia	Cyber & local	Member	Telephone interview	English
8	Ethiopia	Cyber & local	Member	Telephone interview	English
9	USA	Cyber & local	Member	Telephone interview	Amharic
10	Germany	Cyber & local	Elder	Telephone interview	English
11	USA	Cyber & local	Member	Telephone interview	Amharic
12	Ethiopia	Cyber & local	Member	Telephone interview	English

Appendix VI

Panel discussion participant Pastors

	country	Participation	Position in local Church	Interview place	Language used during the interview
1	Canada	Local Church	Pastor	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
2	Canada	Local Church	Pastor	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
3	Canada	Local Church	Pastor	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
4	Canada	Local Church	Pastor	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
5	Canada	Local Church	Pastor	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
6	Canada	Local Church	Pastor	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic

Appendix VII

Group discussion participants

	Country	Participation	Position in local Church	Interview place	Language used during the interview
1	USA	Cyber & Local	Participant	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
2	USA	Local Church	Participant	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
3	USA	Local Church	Participant	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
4	USA	Local Church	Participant	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
5	USA	Cyber & Local	Participant	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic
6	USA	Cyber & Local	Participant	Atlanta Ga. USA	Amharic

Appendix VIII

Guide line of the administration rules for ECPA Admins

የኢትዮጵያ ክርስቲያኖች ኢንተርኔት ሚኒስትሪ
Ethiopian Christians Internet Ministry

" የእግዚአብሔርን ቤተ መቅደስ ስራ ለማገዝ " ቅ. ዘካርያስ 6.15
" To help build the temple of the Lord " Zach.6:15

ቀን .....
Date 13.02.2009
ቁጥር .....
Ref. No ECIM09/02/2009

በፓል ቶክ የኢትዮጵያ ክርስቲያኖችና ሁሉም ክፍል
<u>የክፍል መሪዎች (Adminstrators/Admins) ጊዜያዊ የአገልግሎት መመሪያ</u>

በጌታ የተወደዳችሁ በክፍላችን ውስጥ በአስተዳዳሪነትና ጌታ ጸጋውን ባበዛላችሁ መጠን በሁሉም መስክ እያገለገላችሁ ያላችሁ ወንድሞቹና እህቶቹ፡፡ከእግዚአብሔር ከአባታችን ከጌታችን ከኢየሱስ ክርስቶስ ጸጋና ሰላም ይባዛላችሁ፡፡ እስካሁን ድረስ በፓልቶክ ክፍላችን በታማኝነት ስታገለግሉ በመቆየታችሁ እግዚአብሔር እናንተን ለመንግስቱ ስራ እጅ ለእጅ ተያይዘን እንድናገለግለው ኢጋዥና ደጋፊ አድርጎ ሰለሰጠን ስሙ ይባረክ፡፡የክፍላችንን አገልግሎት ጌታ እያሰፋ በክፍሉ ውስጥ የሚደረገው አገልግሎት ወደ አለም ሁሉ የሚደርስበት መንገድ እየተከፈተልን ነው፡፡የመዳን ለሁሉም ሬዲዮ እንዲሁም በቅርቡ እንደ ጌታ ፈቃድ የምናትመው መጽሔትና የጭብ ሳይት

1.የክፍል አስተዳዳሪ ወይም መሪ ማለት የተከበረውን የእግዚአብሔርን ሕዝብ እንዲሁም አሁን በጌታ ያልሆኑ ለወደፊት መልካሙን ስራችንን አይተው ወደ ጌታ የሚመጡትን እንዲሁም አሁን በክፍላችን በመገልገል ላይ ሱትን ሁሉ በመልካም ስነስርዓት የሚያገለግል ለሌሎች ምሳሌ የሚሆን ግንባር ቀደም ክርስቲያን ማለት ነው፡፡

2. የክፍል አስተዳዳሪ በማናቸውም ወቅት በክፍሉ ውስጥ በሚሆንበት ጊዜ ክፍሉን ከረባሾች መከላከል አዲስ የመጡትን በተቻለ መጠን ቤተኝነት (feel at home) እንዲሰማቸው የተቻለውን ሁሉ ማድረግ ይጠበቅበታል

3.በጊዜው በፕሮግራሙ መሠረት የተመደበ አገልጋይ ልዩ ፕሮግራም በሚኖርበት ጊዜ በሰዓቱ ለአገልጋዩ (ለዘማሪው ወይም ለሰባኪው) ወይም ለፕሮረግራሙ አዘጋጅ (ለመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ጥናት ፣ለልጆች ፕሮግራም ወይም ማናቸውንም ፕሮግራም ለማካሄድ ፕሮግራም ለተያዘለት አገልጋይ በሰዓቱ ማስረከብ አለበት፡፡

4.በማንኛውም ጊዜ ሰዓት ማክበር፡፡ ለየፕሮግራሙ የተመደበውን ሰዓት ማክበርና በሰዓቱ ጀምሮ በሰዓቱ መጨረስ፡፡

5.ክቤቱ የሚቀርቡ ጥያቄዎችን ለመመለስ በሚገባ ስክሪኑ ላይ የሚጻፈውን ማንበብ ወይም የሚናገሩትን ማዳመጥ

6.ከዚህ በፊት ተሞክሮ ከጥቅሙ ጉዳቱ ማማዘኑ ስለታመነበት ማንኛውንም ዓይነት የሃይማኖት ክርክር እንዲከፈት አለመፍቀድ

7.ሰዎችን ሁሉ በፍቅርና በበጎ ሕሊና መረዳትና መቀበል፡፡ስድብንና መዋረድን ለጌታ ሲሉ በደስታ ለመቀበል የተዘጋጀ ልብ ይዞ መግባት

8.ታጋሽ መሆን፡፡እምነትን የሚፈታተን ስድብና የመሳሰለው ሲደርስብን በትዕግስት ማሳለፍ፡፡ በጣም የሚያስቸግሩትን ቀይ ሰጥቶ እንዳይናገሩና እንዳይጽፉ ማድረግ፡፡ሰዎችን በማስወጣት የምንጠቀመው ነገር የለም፡፡እስካልረበሹንና ክፍሉን እስካላስቸገሩ ድረስ ስብከትም ሆነ እምልኮ እየሰሙ ቢቀመጡ ይጠቅማል፡፡ማን ያውቃል ዛሬ የሰሙት መዳኛቸው ይሆናል፡፡

9.አስተዳዳሪ (Adminstrator) ስንሆን ባብዛኛው በተቻለ መጠን የመዘመርን የመጸለይን ወይም የመናገርን ዕድል

"የዲያብሎስን ሥራ ያፈርስ ዘንድ የእግዚአብሔር ልጅ ተገለጠ" 1ኛ. ዮሐ 3.8፡፡
"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" I john 3:8

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Appendix IX

Interview guide to participants

Interview guide to Participants

The participants are classified in to 5 different groups based on the role they have on cyber and local churches.

1) Composition of participants

A) Participant group I , 4 Participants Who only attend the Cyber church.at the moment with a local Church participation experience earlier

B) Participant group I I 2 Participants who participate in the cyber Church and local Church at the same time.
C) Participant group III 2 Participants Who only attend local churches and do not have much participation on the cyber Church
D) Participant group IV 2 Pastors/Church leaders who have access to the cyber churches
E) Participant group V 2 Pastors/Church leaders Church leaders who do not have either direct access or the opportunity to attend the cyber churches, so that their views will be used to compare and contrast with those actively participating
Group discussion based on the same questioanaire presented to respondents
With cyber Church member (6 members)
With local Church pastors with/with out cyber Church experience (6 pastors)
2) Question to be presented to respondents is as followings

2.1)For respondents who are in group I , II
1) How did you come to know about the church service on the Internet?
2) What makes you want to join this cyber ministry?
3) How long you have been part of this Church?
4) Can we call the internet/cyber fellowship a cyber-Church since the Church in the New Testament is a physical fellowship of believers?
5) What is the benefit you got from this service?
6) What are the things you like most?
7) What are the things you don't like most?
8) What are the shortcomings?
9) What problems you personally encounter in the cyber church?
10) What you suggest to improve the problems on the cyber service?
11) Can you compare & contrast the two (the real and the cyber) churches in terms of
a) The presence of the Spirit of God in the services?
b) In the expected Christian love and fellowship among the members?
c) Teaching, pastoral care and members follow up.

2.2) For respondents who are in group III and IV and Group discussion participants

1) How you come to know about the service on the Internet?
2) How you see it compared the real Church you are serving in?
3) What are the threats of this cyber Church to the real Church? (If any)
4) From your observation and experience or the information you have what good side you can mention about the Internet Church?
5) What impact has this online church in the fate of the local church in the future?
6) What negative effect does it have to the overall movement of the real Church?

Amharic version
ለተሳታፊዎች የቃለ መጠይቅ መርሕ

በቃለ መጠይቁ ለሚሳተፉ ተሳታፊዎች በሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያንና በኢንተርኔት ሕብረት ካላቸው ግንዛቤ አንጻር በ5 ክፍሎች ተከፍለዋል

ሀ) ተሳታፊ ቡድን 1 2 በዋናነት በሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን አገልግሎት የሚካፈሉ ተሳታፊዎችና በተጨማሪም በኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት የሚካፈሉ
ለ) ተሳታፊ ቡድን 2 4 በዋናነት በአብዛኛው ጊዜ በኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት የሚካፈሉ ተሳታፊዎች፣ በሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን አገልግሎት የሚካፈሉ
ሐ) ተሳታፊ ቡድን 3 2 በዋናነት በአብዛኛው ጊዜ በሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን የሚካፈሉና በኢንተርኔት ስላለው አገልግሎት ብዙም ግንዛቤ የሌላቸው
መ) ተሳታፊ ቡድን 4 2 በኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት የሚሳተፉ የሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን መጋቢዎች/መሪዎች
ሠ) ተሳታፊ ቡድን 5 2 በኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት የማይሳተፉ የሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን መጋቢዎች/መሪዎች

የጋራ ውይይት 6 የፓልቶክ ተሳታፊዎች
የጋራ ውይይት 6 ስለፓልቶክ የሚያውቁ መጋቢዎች

ከቡድን 1-3 ላሉ ተሳታፊዎች ጥያቄ
1) በኢንተርኔት ስላለው መንፈሳዊ አገልግሎት እንዴት ሊያውቁ ቻሉ?
2) የኢንተርኔትን መንፈሳዊ አገልግሎት ለመሳፍ ያነሳሰዎት ምንድን ነው?
3) መሳተፍ ከጀመሩ ምን ያህል ጊዜ ሆነዎት?
4) በአዲስ ኪዳን ቤተክርስቲያን የቅዱሳን በአካል ሕብረት እንደመሆኑ በኢንተርኔት ያለው አገልግሎት የኢንተርኔት ቤተክርስቲያን ተብሎ ሊጠራ ይችላል ወይ?
5) ከዚህ አገልግሎት ምን ተጠቅመዋል?
6) ከሁሉም በላይ ከዚህ አገልግሎት የሚወዱት ምኑን ነው?
7) ከሁሉም በላይ ከዚህ አገልግሎት የማይወዱት/የማይመችዎት ምንድን ነው?
8) የዚህ የኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት ደካማ ጎን ነው የሚሉት ምንድን ነው?
9) በዚህ በኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት በግልዎ ያጋጠመዎ ችግር ካለ ምን እንደሆነ ቢገልጹልን?
10)በዚህ በኢንተርኔት አገልግሎት መሻሻል ያለባቸው ችግሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
11)ሳየቢያ ቤተ ክርስቲያንንና የኢንተርኔት ቤተ ክርስቲያንን ከሚከተሉት ጉዳዮች አንጻር አነጻጽረው ይግለጡልን
ሀ) በየአገልግሎቶቹ ወቅት የእግዚአብሔር መንፈስ መገኘት
ለ) የሚጠበቀው ክርስቲያናዊ ሕብረትና የእርስ በእርስ ፍቅርን በተመለከተ
ሐ) የአስተምሕሮ፣ ምጋቤና የአባላት ክትትልን በተመለከተ

ከቡድን 3-5-3 ላሉ ተሳታፊዎች ጥያቄ

1) በኢንተርኔት ስላለው መንፈሳዊ አገልግሎት እንዴት ሊያውቁ ቻሉ?
2) የኢንተርኔት ቤተክርስቲያንና አየገለገሉበት ያለውን ሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን አንዴት ያነጻጽሩታል ?
3) የኢንተርኔት ቤተክርስቲያንስ ሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን ያለው ተግዳሮት ካለ ምንድን ነው?
7) ካለምት ኢንፎርሜሽን ከግል ልምድምና መረዳትዎ አንጻር የኢንተርኔት ቤተክርስቲያን መልክም ጥሮች ምንድን ናቸው ?
8) ወደፊት የኢንተርኔት ቤተክርስቲያን በሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን ላይ የሚያሳድረው ተጽዕኖ ምንድን ነው ይላሉ?
9) የኢንተርኔት ቤተክርስቲያን በሳየቢያ ቤተክርስቲያን በተለይ ሊኖረው የሚችለው አሉታዊ ተጽዕኖ ካለ ቢገልጹልን?