

“Preach the gospel at all times and if necessary use words”

St Francis of Assisi

The gospel is a lifestyle lived but it is also a message communicated through the medium of words.

Mark 16:15

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Go into all the world. Which world?

The planet? Your work world? Your ethnic group?
Your community? Neighborhood? How about a virtual world?

Social Networking - Publically and house to house

I believe that wherever people gather and we have an opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ that we should position ourselves to proclaim boldly the message of salvation.

Acts 2:46

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

Acts 20:20

20 "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

Learn to assess your surroundings, connect, be relevant, and present truth

Acts 17:16-21

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. 17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. 18 Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection. 19 And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new doctrine *is* of which you speak? 20 "For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." 21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Acts 17:22-23

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 "for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

Philip listened in on someone reading and was available to answer some vital questions.

Acts 8:26-35

26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south

along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." 34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

1 Corinthians 9:19-22

19 For though I am free from all *men*, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; 20 and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; 21 to those *who are* without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; 22 to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some.

That fact that Jesus, the Word of God, became flesh and dwelt among us shows that God will go to some pretty extreme measures to get a message to us.

The World Wide Web is an incredible tool that we need to learn how to use to get the message and ministry of Jesus to a developing world community.

Marketing the Church:

This is one of those phrases that can get you in trouble; mostly, because marketing is perceived as a worldly way of doing things.

Here's what you hear, "Except the Lord build the house they labor in vain who build it. We shouldn't have to promote our ministries."

Have you ever heard that before?

Does that mean we shouldn't market or promote what we're doing as a church?

Do you have your number in the phone book? Do you have a sign on your building? Do you have your congregation invite people to special services? If you do you are marketing.

Love was the marketing tool of the disciples. Jesus said, "They will know you are my disciples because you love one another." Marketing is letting people know.

How did the word spread about Jesus?

By the Word of Mouth method. We will see in a bit that this is still one of the most powerful ways of marketing.

How did the message that the Gentile Cornelius and his household were saved and filled with the Holy Spirit? Word of Mouth!

How did the gospel spread? Word of Mouth!

The above methods are all forms of marketing. Most church do some marketing but they don't understand it and how it can work for them.

Definition: Marketing is a social process which addresses peoples' wants and needs. The term includes advertising, distribution and provision of a product or service. Market Research is concerned with anticipating the customer's future needs and wants, and positioning your company, or church and its product(s), ministries and resources to meet those needs

How to make the Internet work for you

The World Wide Web has revolutionized the world. We are in the information age

Daniel 12:4

4 "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

The internet is here to stay and it will affect our lives.

It affects how we buy and sell. It affects how many get educated. It affects how many seek and develop relationships. It affects how we communicate., Find jobs..

Not so long ago if you wanted to check when a movie was playing, you'd consult your local newspaper. If you wanted to find someone to remodel your bathroom, you'd open the yellow pages.

But for an increasing number of consumers, those habits are as dated as a pair of faded bell bottoms.

Today, consumers across all age brackets use the Internet and, particularly for computer-savvy users, the Internet is the first place they'll turn for information about a vendor, a product and yes, even a church

The Internet offers an opportunity to introduce yourself to people exactly when they are searching for your product or services – by appearing in the major search engines,"

A Web site can be as much about customer service as it is about selling products and services.

A Web site allows you to be available to people 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Clearly there are numerous reasons why even the smallest of businesses or churches can benefit from a Web presence, but here are five key considerations:

1. **Visibility:** With more and more consumers logging onto the Web to research products and services, if they are going to find your church or business, your church or business needs to be on the Web.

2. **Reach:** With a Web site, you are no longer limited to a ministry base that is in physical proximity to your church. Your church may be in Ohio, but believers on the other side of the planet can take part in your ministry
3. **Customer service:** When people can log onto your Web site and easily find the information they want – when they want it – their satisfaction increases.
4. **Competition:** A professional looking Web site can level the playing field for smaller ministries trying to bring awareness to their existence.
5. **Credibility:** When you can point customers, partners, even potential employees or investors to a Web site, it tells them you are a serious business.

People are looking for something authentic, not contrived. They are looking for help, not hype.

“Pastor Dave, we gotta have a cool web site!” ... Why? “We want to be 21st century... Because that will make people think that we’re cool!” ...

Ask yourself some questions:

What is the purpose of our website?

Who am I targeting? - Friends and family, Church Members, Potential Visitors, content for training, subscribers, Other believers... all the above.

What kind of site do we need?

An Informational site – A business card type website with times, dates, locations
 To post announcements
 To educate or equip – Is your site to educate people or
 To provide resources (bookstore, audio, video, manuals, articles)
 To we want to be interactive – Do you have a blog, questionnaire, feedback forms etc.
 All the Above....

Who is going to manage and maintain it?

What can we afford?

When you buy a car do you want the cheapest model available? i.e. no air conditioning, with roll-up window cranks, no radio and plastic seats? or are you looking for something that has some extras?

When you build a web site just remember that the more bells and whistles you want, the more it’s going to cost you. You need to determine what this web vehicle you’re trying to create is going to be used for and set a budget for it.

Form and function over Fashion

You need to build a website that is highly functional and highly effective. There are still a lot of people out there who don’t truly understand the Web. They try to directly apply the skills they have learned in offline marketing to the management of their websites. That can be a big mistake.

Imagine you see a friend across a busy street. You wave and shout because you’re trying to get his attention. He sees you and crosses over. Now he’s standing right in front of you. Do you keep waving? Do you keep shouting at him?

It was once said that **offline marketing is about getting attention**, whereas **online marketing is about giving attention**. When someone comes to your website they have crossed the street

and you have thus got their attention. **That's why the vast majority of people feel insulted by Flash Intros, and click "Skip Intro" as quickly as possible.**

The biggest trap a marketer can fall into on the Web is to keep trying to get attention. **People are hugely IMPATIENT on the Web.** They will give your page less than 30 seconds, and if you're not delivering the goods, they're gone. The Web is a brutal, functional landscape, so design a simple, functional website.

People are task-focused when they come to your website. The job of your information architecture is to help them, firstly, **identify the task they came to complete, and then, secondly, help them complete that task as quickly as possible.**

Define Product and Services

Your church must determine what is the product and what service (ministry) is provided.

Do you have a Vision Statement? Do you have a Mission Statement?
Are your Core Values established? Does your congregation know them, believe them, and walk in them?

You have to define who you are and what you can provide....**and be able to deliver!**

Distribution

How do you get what you provide, ministry, product or services to the customer?

Is it, Sunday morning service, Bible School, Seminars? Is it teaching? How do you get it to consumers, through a store, the mail, the internet? All the above?

Advertise

Do you have a comprehensive strategy for letting people know what you're doing?

If you have some great things going on in your midst, great music, ministries, programs etc...How do people know what's happening?

If you don't let people know what's happening, It's like the young man who winks at a girl in the dark. He knows what he's doing but no one else does.

You won't stop people from talking... both about the good or the bad. Jesus understood people. For the most part we can't keep our mouth shut.... It can work for you or against you.

Word of mouth is a huge marketing strategy today. It is not just about people talking... it's about people writing, blogging, chatting, discussing...etc. Whether you realize it or not there are social networks that are growing so fast it's revolutionizing how people are using the web

Listen to this

Making the Business Case for A Social Media Strategy

There has been a revolutionary shift in the media world. The ease and instant gratification of seeing their words on blogs, message boards, consumer review sites, and

other forms of social media at the push of a button has unleashed the expressive urge for consumers. Potential customers are now openly revealing their wants, needs, and motivations. But often senior executives are unsure of the value of this information or how to proceed.

The growth of blogs, discussion boards, and an ever-evolving array of social media impacts brands and reveals consumer behaviors. Companies that listen directly to word-of-mouth (WOM) discussions will create compelling brands, products, and messages.

Learn to Relate

We are commanded to go into all the world. Which world?

How about the world of "My Space? Or Facebook or 2nd Life? Can we even relate to these people?

Jesus used stories and parables that the masses He spoke so that people could understand and relate.

We are relevant when we can take the truth that brings freedom and present it in a way that the audience or the ones we're reaching understand.

The church needs to respond to the needs of our world in a relevant way, while caring out its Biblical mandate to make disciples for Christ. People of our time need to understand how the Gospel of Jesus Christ will make a difference in their lives. They need to see how following a faith that is so counter to today's society can actually bring peace and joy. And, How placing our trust in God is more wise then trusting ourselves.

If we want to relevant we'll take our Christianity to the streets, to the market place, to our neighbors and class rooms. If our goal is to fill a building, we will never become relevant. But if our goal is to communicate the gospel in practical ways so as to touch lives and live out the good news then we will become relevant and as a result... We'll have a full church.

Ask some questions

I asked someone in a blog to give me their opinion on something. Here's the question and response:

Hi Angie,

I'm trying to learn about cyber-communities and social networks on the web. I figured joining one is a good way to start.

If you can give me any of your input or insights about why they are flourishing and what needs they seem to be meeting, that would be helpful to me.

David Beaulieu

Angie wrote:

I think they meet a social need. In my experience, they have helped me keep connected with people that I would normally not stay too connected with (like my cousins or friends that live in different cities). They also have helped me develop a deeper friendship with

people I regularly interact with (I'm thinking specifically about Mosaic blogs here) by giving me an outlet to discuss the trivialities of my day or my deeper thoughts in a non-threatening, interactive environment. The coolest thing about it is that it allows for DAILY involvement in others' lives instead of a one-time, put-on-your-social-mask kind of meeting (like a Bible study or a book club or something of the sort).

Those are some of my thoughts as to why social networks have been meaningful to me, anyway. Hope that helps

Blogs

The ease of "blogging" has created a new form of communications. At its simplest, a blog is an online journal. Companies like GM, Microsoft and Intuit are using blogs to increase customer loyalty and influence. Blogs have become an incredibly important medium for communicating with key audiences including consumers, influencers, shareholders, employees, critics, and the media. By monitoring blogs, companies get an unbiased view of the attitudes and opinions of their key audiences.

Being the subject of a blog may be scary for some churches. Why? Because what people are saying is not always positive. But here's the key. If we listen, we may get a clue about why people are flocking from churches. We certainly don't want to compromise our message but, our motive and methods may need to change so we can reach an audience that is looking for truth in all the wrong places.

Blogs are a terrific place for people to exchange ideas and information. Can you imagine Bible based interaction between believers with different gifts, callings, and levels of ministry experience? What about a place where we can share resources and inspirational insights. Wouldn't that be awesome? Well it's all available right now through the medium of social networking on the web.

There is a cyber world that is still untapped by most churches. A web site can be a marketing tool, a teaching tool, a content/resource providing tool, a communication tool...the list goes on, and on. Shouldn't we be using this tool for the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom?

I think so!

God Bless

David Beaulieu