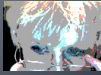


How to write for the web

— What works and what doesn't to fully fulfill the Great Commission

by yvonprehn
www.effectivechurchcom.com



Where I'm coming from

- Fully fulfilling the Great Commission our goal
- We are people of the Word; we have been entrusted with the WORDS of eternal life
- Not a rehash of other books, blogs
- CONTENT is the most important thing!
- *Less is not more, less is less*
- Images *are not* the key to a great site
- Without words, images DO NOT communicate content, *examples follow*





“Nobody reads what we write!”

- Common complaint of church writing through all media: print and the web
- Often true
- Reasons—
 - School Model for writing
 - Advertising school of writing
- Solutions
 - You aren't in school any more
 - You aren't selling but sharing

New realities/Real solutions

- Time crunch, 24/7
 - Doesn't mean less content
 - How we ORGANIZE our writing one of the most important issues in writing for the web
 - Content easy to scan and find
 - All church/ministry info available 24/7:
site as example

■ **Secular society that desperately needs the gospel**

- Do not dumb down, fun down
- Explain clearly, challenge
- More information, not less, to post-Christian
- Honest communication—we have the words of eternal life—see *Beatitudes example*

No matter what the media

Part 2: Good writing is good writing

Write for results

- This will be with the notes
- ***DOUBLE CHECK to make certain these things are done!

"Say it in English and keep it short. Write the way you talk. If you don't talk that way, don't write that way."
— www.effectivechurch.com

Write for results, not just to inspire

Have you ever heard someone describe an idea, "so heavenly minded they write so earthly good?"

In a similar vein, the book of James tells about "his by word, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17).

Number of these statements you don't do what others of being heavenly minded or of having faith, but they illustrate a challenge in their "the word without the work is dead." That challenge is to combine your inspirational messages with a clear call for life-changing action.

There are two key reasons for doing this. First is the example of the Jesus Jesus communicated, and second is the need for clear messages to people's lives today.

Jesus communicated for action

Much of Jesus' communication delivered the very essence of His teaching in a practical call and the asking for action. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7 gives numerous examples of this method:

- Teaching: "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world."
- Action: "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:12-16).
- Teaching: "Why do you worry

About clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin... If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

- Action: "So do not worry" (Matthew 23:27-37).

Like today messages clear communication

If you want people to do something based on your communication, tell them clearly their actions they will figure out when you want to give or volunteer based on your spiritual perspective. People don't have the time.

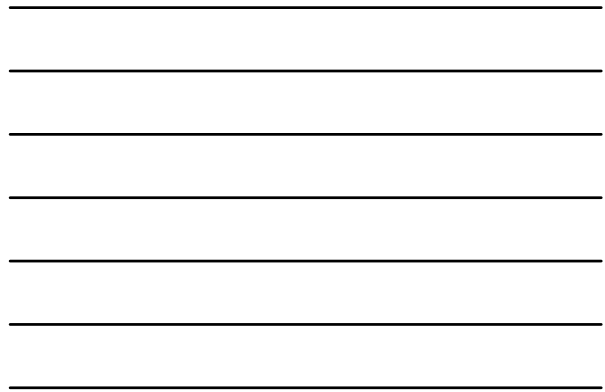
Much writing done by EFP is in newsletters, bulletins, short letters and copies. These pieces need to be concise—ask for it. For example:

- If you are writing to inspire a life change based on Christian teaching, give a biblical lesson and follow with a clear statement of how to apply it to everyday life.
- If you need volunteers, state the need, list clearly how many people you need, what the requirements and constraints are, and what training will be given.
- If you have a financial need, give the background, state precisely what the funds will be used for and then ask for a clear contribution.



Print lesson: People don't consume content in one gulp

- From print, similar websites: 20% won't read it
 - 80% will read **Level One**:
 - Headlines, subheads, pictures and captions
 - 10-60% will read **Level Two**:
 - Short sections of copy, boxed copy, graphs and captions
 - 1-10% will read **Level Three**:
 - body copy
- Decisions made on all levels**
- Best pieces good on all levels**



This is the same article as the one on the last page. But because it has no typographic class, subheads, or other graphic devices for the reader to aim, it's much harder to read.

This is the kind of prose that is all too easy to read later - which means it will most likely never get read.

On the other hand, if you only read the subheads and the boxed material on the next page, even though you may not get the full message, you know enough to respond.

CLAIM YOUR OWN MINISTRY NOW
By Rev. Daniel E. Meach

In my 33 years of ministry here at First Church, I have never been so excited about our church's ministry because we are on the cusp of a tremendous shift in our understanding of ministry. Before I'd like to share with you three reasons for my excitement about our program "Claiming My Ministry."

First, I'm excited about "Claiming My Ministry" because I know how significant my call to ministry is. Here, you say, "You're a pastor, called by God to give himself to others in a special role." Well, yes, that's true, and it is a very special role. But every day, in every way, is closely tied to Christ's ministry in our church. My calling to the ordained ministry came when I was in the following careers in the military and in engineering. But I feel that God called me to ministry long before I became a pastor. And his special calling to ministry is one I claim every Sunday when I enter my Sunday School class to teach.

This ministry which I claim helps make sense of my daily activities. I know I am called by God to do it. There is purpose in my life. Second, I'm excited about "Claiming My Ministry" because I am sure many of you are going to experience the joy I know, as you claim your ministry.

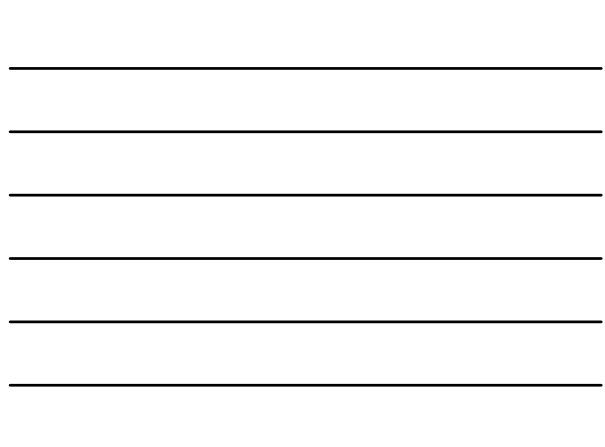
One of the most joyful aspects of being a pastor in our church working with volunteers is all areas of the church's life is seeing the excitement that occurs when someone claims his or her ministry for Christ.

If I know you're excited, as a pastor called by God to lead. This means it "wows" them: in ministry, I know you will enjoy the added meaning in your life which will come to you, for as you claim your ministry, faith takes on an added dimension when you give yourself to a specific ministry. You're in for a treat.

Third, I'm excited about "Claiming My Ministry" because our community has never needed your ministry more than now. Children, youth, single, & differently-abled, all of us have a tremendous need for acceptance, understanding and caring. Only Christ can provide this. As you join your hands with His, you can make an awesome difference not only in our church, but also within our community when you claim your ministry. The goals of our church are basically five-fold: to be involved in missions, to pursue spiritual and personal growth, to engage in evangelistic witness, to embrace the diversity of our work, and to provide a supportive church community. I am confident that you too are called by God to claim your ministry in one or more of these areas. What a difference you can make in our community as you claim God's call on your life.

This is a matter of opportunity. Come on, let us and let God. God is calling claim your part of God's Ministry. You'll be glad you did!

Adapted from PLI/MC



This is the same article as is on the previous page.

Subtle below the headline explains the program - remember you can't always be as familiar with your program as the staff are!

People will always look at pictures and read the caption below them. A great way to summarize your message is to restate it in your caption.

The first sentence of each section was increased in size, made bold, and printed in a different type style than the rest. This jump the subheads and the sentence into a subhead. The subheads lead readers through the article and allow for easy skimming.

The Evangelist
First United Methodist Church

Claim your own ministry now!

"Claiming My Ministry" is a voluntary program for First Church that seeks to recruit and encourage your talents to be incorporated to discover and make their special gifts.

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Applying the 3 levels on the web

- Segment your content
- Work on headlines, subheads
 - Sentences without periods
 - Make them complete
 - Make the scan make sense
 - Think of it as a content layer on top
- See site examples, *Five Steps*

What's new for the web & what's not

Part 3: the effect of non-linear access

What's new in writing for the web

- Non-linear—Google effect
- Reader is in control
 - You never know where people will jump in
 - Can't count on people reading in sequence
 - Context needs to be intentional,
 - YOU structure it for people
 - Need links, "see also",
 - Categories, WP does this for you

What's not new in your writing

- Need for:
 - Information value
 - Clarity
 - Completeness
- "Brochureware" not evil
 - Clear listing of the basic facts
 - Allows for direct access, reader in charge
 - If times and dates aren't accurate, can they trust you for big issues?
- All in manageable chunks:
 - See:
 - *Small group listing*
 - *You can do it videos*

The place of looks and images paired with writing

Part 4: What not to do & to do when adding images to words

Some key mistakes

- Design driven web pages
 - Thinking that the medium (the web) makes garbage (poor writing, little content, lots of images) good
 - All flash, no information, challenge, gospel
- Thinking image is more important than information
 - People go to the web to get information, to solve a problem, answer a question, not necessarily to look at great graphics or see moving images
 - Can they do these things on your site?

Good use of Images WITH writing

- Don't use for looks only
- Can make a site less boring
- Use as a preview of content
- Use to illustrate a lesson
- To illustrate a product
- Preview of a movie
- Site examples: *see overall sites;*
 - *Easter Examples*

How you organize your writing of primary importance

Part 5: the key place of content navigation

Use a system that organizes for you

- Use a Content Management System
 - WordPress.com
 - www.effectivechurchcom.com
- With the Category system, you can't help but be organized, see *Small Group site*
- Consider Blogs, to start, to practice
- With WordPress, it will develop into a website

Never forget who you represent

Part 6: It's not about you

You are an ambassador for Jesus

- Be sure of your content
 - Know the Word
 - Reflect the Word correctly in your writing
 - Comes from time in the Word
- Watch your tone
 - Snarky, cynical, superior characterize much contemporary (even "christian" writing)
 - We are NOT to reflect the world
 - We are to represent our Lord, to walk worthy

Some final thoughts

- Constantly keep in mind your audience
- In all church writing, it isn't YOUR story—it's HIS story
- Pray you tell it well
- When you do you are literally fulfilling Acts 1:8!
- *Show translation; show stats*

Continue to learn

Part 7: Resources

He said we would be HIS WITNESS

- Get busy building your site!
- A new resource:
- Free for ECC members on www.effectivechurch.com
- \$5. for not-yet-members
- Just Part 1—become a member and get them as they are released!
- Preview



More writing instruction

- E-Book: a collection of articles, book chapters, tips on writing in print and on the web
- WILL BE **FREE** for ECC members
- Available on www.lulu.com/yvonprehn
- In e-book and print format

