



**Print and
Digital**
★
**More
Powerful
TOGETHER!**

YVON PREHN

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Introductory quote: All things to all people to save some

“I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:22,23a).

Paul’s words are appropriate for church communicators today who must combine and use every communication channel available if we want to reach our world with the gospel.

At the same time, we have limited time and resources, so we must be wise in our use of them.

In this booklet, we’ll look at the changing and challenging world of church communication using quotes from a variety of sources including: current and past studies, surveys, industry reports, plus excerpts from Effective Church Communications books and articles that are based on decades of observing and training church communicators on how best to communicate the gospel message.

A possible course correction may be helpful in your communication ministry

Today the trend seems to be to shift a large portion of church communications to the digital world and away from print. This is happening for many reasons, but underlying many of them is the unexamined assumption that somehow digital is better than ways of communicating in the past, primarily better than print, and a more effective way to communicate.

This publication will examine that assumption by looking at some of the current research, studies, and commentary on communication channels and what is, based on this research the most effective way to communicate. As you’ll see, though digital and particularly social media is powerful, it is only ONE way to communicate in our multi-channel world and as numerous current studies show, far from the most effective one.

That being said, the purpose of this publication isn’t to promote one or another channel or to say this or that one way to communicate is the best—because as you will see, there is no ONE perfect way to communicate most effectively the many messages of the church to day to the varied audience every church has. However, if your church has gone to digital primarily, you may want to consider a slight course correction if you read the material that follows with an open mind and heart. Our preferred viewpoints must always be open and flexible if we remember we are servants to our people.

The title of this publications is *The Combined Power of Print and Digital Communication* and I trust by the end of this publication you’ll see that it is in **the combination of all the tools** we have available that gives us our maximum power and effectiveness as Christian communications.

In all that follows, remember your people

The quotes and commentary that follow come from a variety of sources and all are worthy of consideration. However, any study, quote, or recommendation (mine included) that claims it is *the* advice to follow for EVERY program and to reach EVERY person in your church or the community in which you work to share the gospel is simply not true.

Every age group, every church, every community is different. You know your people best; your sheep are like no other flock. You are responsible for them, for what works for them, not what mimics a current trend. And you know better than anyone else that your sheep are not alike and no one communication tool will work with all of them.

In all you read that follows, consider, pray, test, record results and always only use what helps *your people and your community* come to know Jesus better and grow in their relationship to him.

You'll get ideas, not consensus from what follows

From the start, know that whatever insights and ideas you get from reading what follows will not please everyone. That is why it helps to have a team of people to implement your communications program at your church. People will naturally want to work on and support whatever communication channel they use and enjoy.

Following are quotes and then commentary on how they might apply to church communications. Hopefully, what follows will spark discussion, creativity and a willingness to try new things or revisit old communication methods in new ways.

Quote #1—The surprising power of Direct Mail over digital media for results

*Direct Mail outperforms all digital channels combined by nearly 600%.
2015 Direct Mail Marketing Association Response Rate Report*

I first read the quote above in an advertisement from a company that sells postcards to churches. I checked out their citation (which I appreciated them including) and found the number is actually higher and well-substantiated.

The quote is a summary of one of many studies in the 2015 Direct Mail Marketing Association Rate Response Report, put out by the Direct Mail Marketing Association. The shock value of such a large difference in performance (the number of people who call, buy, or take whatever action was advertised) illustrates well the mistake of assuming the popularity of social media means social media is the most effective way to advertise to get people to respond. After reporting the response rates, the larger report went on to discuss the need for a variety of media if a company wants customers to buy its products or respond to its offers. That same advice applies to churches.

If you've done away with other forms of advertising of events and ministries and have gone primarily to social media, you may have experienced a drop in attendance at these events. It's easy to attribute that drop to busy schedules and a more secularized world, but part of the drop off could be a result of how you advertise your event.

Reconsider postcards

The direct mail most often sent out from a church is a postcard and the quotes above show that postcards remain a powerful form of communications. Don't be too quick at your church to assume that your social media advertising (which for many churches is limited to a Facebook posting) will have the same results as the postcards you sent out in the past because, as the research above shows, they won't.

However, just because postcards outperform social media, don't stop doing the social media. If you have an active church Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts, if you have people who respond well to text messages, don't stop or cut back any of those communication channels. The best way to get the best response is to continue your social media interaction in all forms, but add postcards back in the media mix if you've discontinued using them.

Quote #2—The rarity of print makes it noticed

People receive so many digital messages all day now, while their stack of mail is getting smaller and smaller. . . A direct mail piece stands out. It gets noticed, it gets read, and its offers and coupons get used.

<http://www.inc.com/comcast/bringing-balance-to-your-print-and-digital-media>

As stated above postcards are a form of Direct Mail that works well to get a response. In the church, postcards are particularly useful for seasonal event advertising and in addition to mailing them out, can double as invitations members can hand out.

They can do even more. They can be a gentle form of discipleship training.

Here's how this can work. People may be hesitant to invite a friend to a "church service," but it's much easier to invite friends to "Christmas Tree Family Fair" or "Community Easter Egg Hunt and Children's Petting Zoo." One pastor friend of mine calls them an "easy ask."

How to use postcards as your "easy ask"

You can either purchase them or the church can print the postcards, which is much more cost-effective (www.effectivechurch.com has lots of templates and designs for you to do your own).

On a Sunday morning several weeks prior to your event, each person in the congregation has five postcards inserted into their bulletin. The Pastor stands up and says something like:

"As you can see, you all have five postcards in your bulletin inviting people to the services and activities the church is hosting for Easter week. Think about and pray about five people you want to invite and either give or mail the card to them with a personal note attached. In addition, by you putting on the postage, you are helping the church support our Food Bank this Easter season (or some other ministry you choose)."

Churches that have done this not only report a great turnout for the event, but a discipleship growth in the participation and enthusiasm of the church members for outreach. If done regularly, the church members know that whenever special events come up they will be part of the outreach of the church and are responsible to invite and bring friends.

One other group that direct mail is very effective with is children. Many children today rarely (or ever) receive mail addressed to them. For special events, ministry or outreach opportunities at church, a mailed-out postcard or letter is a great way to invite and notify children.

Quote #3—Direct mail a staple in corporate advertising mix, partly because it is the easiest to scan

These days, marketing is all about digital. We are emailing, blogging, Tweeting and Facebooking our little marketer hearts out. So, direct mail (the kind that the postal delivery person puts in your mailbox, remember?) must be dead in the water. Right?

Wrong.

. . . . direct mail is alive and working well, thank you.

Many of our clients, including those in high tech, are recognizing this and direct mail is going through a renaissance. They may have maximized their online spend and need to find another channel, or they may enjoy such a high response to direct mail that it's added to the mix from the start. Either way, the results are highly satisfactory and direct mail is becoming a staple in their marketing plans.

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Direct mail doesn't have to be large and expensive to be effective. The U.S. Postal Service found that postcards are the mail format most likely to be read or scanned.

It may be that postcards don't take much time to read. This means that to be effective, the prospect needs to understand your offer within seconds of glancing at it.

<https://www.onlinemarketinginstitute.org/blog/2013/06/why-direct-mail-still-yields-the-lowest-cost-per-lead-and-highest-conversion-rate/>

Note that the quote on the effectiveness of direct mail above, came from the Online Marketing Institute, hardly a group that would promote direct mail without proof it works.

The take away from this quote, outside the already demonstrated one that direct mail is an important partner to social media and digital outreach, is the comment at the end of the quote, ***that it works well in part because it is easy to scan.***

The obvious application is to create your postcards to be easy to scan. This means you don't need lots of explanatory or motivational content on the card. Put a clear seasonal or ministry image and a teaser headline on one side and then the important details on the other side: who it's for, what is happening, when, where, cost if any, and where to get additional information.

It's important to put all these connecting details on ONE side of the postcard because after a card is scanned, and the recipient wants to respond, it is most often put on the refrigerator and unless you have a transparent refrigerator, you can only see one side of the card.

Quote #4—Social media success seldom measured

Not All Marketers Implementing Social Media Analyze Success & Measure ROI

Social media marketing still seems to hold a mystery for a lot of marketers. Of those surveyed in this report, only 19% strongly agree that they regularly analyze their social media activities. Additionally, only 41% say that they are able to measure the ROI for their social media activities.

For marketers to be effective with any aspect of their digital marketing approach, a close eye to the data is essential. By closely watching this information, marketers are better able to adapt and evolve their strategies to meet customer need.

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2016/>

What the above quote is saying is that many professional social marketing experts have no idea how effective their social media marketing is and less than half are able to measure it at all.

Management of a company would be justifiably concerned if they realized how little their marketing department knew about the results of time and money spent on marketing with social media. The concern of a church, who is responsible for the eternal destinies of the people it is reaching with digital and print media should be even greater.

However, I hear about church after church that has done away or greatly cut back from all forms of outreach other than social media or digital communication based solely on reasons related to that seems to be the “in” thing to do these days. The social media advice blasted out by web-based companies promoting themselves to churches to use their services rarely provide more than anecdotal support for the effectiveness of what they recommend. The desire to sell a service or get blog readership isn’t enough considering the importance of the messages the church is responsible for.

You are influencing the eternal destiny of the people you communicate to; you aren’t selling them soap or burgers. A secular marketer may retain his or her job by not measuring effectiveness, you have much more at stake.

You must measure how effective you are with all the media you use to reach people. The measuring process does not have to be complex. Set up a chart on paper or a spreadsheet on your computer (Google Docs Sheets works well in this way):

- Record the date and purpose of the event.
- If you advertise with social media only, record the response in terms of how many people show up.
- If you add a postcard, record the response to that, how many people show up.

- If you add an extra announcement or bulletin insert or flyer record that, how many people show up.
- In summary, what did you do to advertise an event or ministry and how many people showed up?
- What are the different numbers (if any) depending on what media channels you used, how often, and when.

Not only will this tell you what works best for your congregation and community (and there is no way to know ahead of time), but it takes the decision of what type and what mix of media to use out of the realm of personal preference. It doesn't matter if someone on the church staff is convinced that a certain way to communicate is the way to do it, what matters is the recorded response of your audience.

Quote # 5—The lofty goals of social media and the changing expectations of communications

The entire paradigm of social media has altered the basic rules of communication, especially between business and their audiences. The one-way communication methods of the recent past business-to-customer and business-to-business have been replaced by a more robust multidimensional communication model. That model is collectively called social media (also referred to as Web 2.0).

The rules of social media.

To communicate effectively in the social media world means understanding the new rules of the road. People want:

- + To have a say.*
- + Meaningful dialogue.*
- + To be engaged and involved in the process.*
- + Personal interactions with others.*
- + To be listened to.*
- + To help shape what they find useful.*
- + To connect with others engaged in similar activities.*
- + Plain talk.*
- + Communication to be genuine and relevant.*
- + To conduct business with ethical companies who work transparently.*
- + To be in partnership*

<http://www.solari.net/documents/position-papers/Solari-Social-Media-and-Communication.pdf>

This quote has two areas that are worth noting:

#1 Pertaining to online behavior:

Lists like this (and I'm sure you've seen them) are not anything new. Though there is some truth to each statement, they are in large measure glorified ideas of what social media *should* be like. It rarely is. Many comment sections of blogs, articles, and responses to Twitter can seldom be described as "meaningful dialog" or "genuine and relevant."

In reality, it seems going online gives some people permission to shed all civility, kindness, or any ability at all to edit whatever snarky, vile, or inflammatory comment that enters their mind and they feel compelled to share with the world. Sadly, it isn't only the secular world that exhibits this behavior.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't strive for the lofty goals above and for churches this is an area we can challenge our people in. If you are in a pastoral role and are involved in the social media lives of your people, you may find it somewhat shocking and depressing when the online life of someone in your ministry is a far cry from what you feel should characterize a disciple of Jesus. Being online friends on Facebook or Twitter or Instagram followers of some members of your congregation can be a real eye-opener and not always an encouraging one.

We need to talk about this with our people. As an example of how not to cave into outside influences, the Apostle Paul described himself in this way, "My way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4:17).

To live congruent and whole lives as followers of Jesus we need to strive and remind our people to work for a consistency of life both online and off that is honoring to the Lord. A good book on this topic with lots of relevant and practical advice is *#struggles, Following Jesus in a Selfie-Centered World* by Craig Groeschel.

#2 How companies (and churches) are expected to interact because of social media

The guidelines above were written for companies and again many studies show the trend of younger generations to want involvement in decision making and a desire to collaborate in their work. In the business world, that may or may not work out, but you need to understand that those same expectations along with the communication and decision making expectations of the same age group of people who come into your church.

You may not be ready for that.

Though many of the above rules are positive, e.g., we want our "communications to be genuine and relevant," do you really want the people in your church to "have a say" in every decision made by your church leadership? Do you want them to "have meaningful dialog" and "engaged and involved in the process" in all the decisions and directions of the church?

The answer is probably "no" and there is nothing wrong with that.

Here is the challenge—just because new media has certain expectations, doesn't mean these "rules" are Biblical, sound, or even wise and realistic in church communications. Nor do they apply to Biblical guidelines concerning leadership and governing of the church.

Leaders need to understand shifting cultural trends, but there are times when a Pastor must say (of course with kindness, love and patience) something like (in print, verbally, and through social media):

“This is a decision that will be made by the finance or committee of the church, and though we appreciate your input, only the committee has all the information necessary to make the final decision.”

“The stand we are taking on this issue is a Biblical one and though we appreciate and acknowledge the difficulty of it and wish to respond in kindness to all involved, the position of the church is firm.”

“No, we aren’t going to vote on most popular topics for next year’s sermons.”

The last one may seem a little exaggerated, but it is a logical conclusion for people who assume their right to “shape what they find useful.” There are times when church leadership needs to remind those young in the faith that Moses, Jeremiah, (all the prophets), Paul, and Jesus did not shape their message via community input, but from time alone with God.

Quote #6—Consumers don't like being forced to accept digital only communications

Results of a new survey conducted by Toluna Inc. show that a majority of Americans want to retain a choice for paper options rather than be forced into “digital-only” communications.

Chicago, July 21, 2016 – A new survey commissioned by Two Sides and conducted by Toluna Inc. reveals how U.S. consumers view corporate initiatives forcing people into digital-only communication by eliminating paper-based options. The survey also provides insight into consumer opinions on the environmental impacts of digital versus paper-based communications.

Results indicate that many consumers want to retain the choice of receiving paper bills and statements at no additional cost. For example, 79% of respondents want the option to continue receiving printed information as it provides a more permanent record, and 77% would be unhappy if they were asked to pay a premium for paper bills and statements. Other key factors in retaining paper options were ease of reading on paper compared to a screen (79% prefer paper) and unreliable internet access (49%).

From: The majority of U.S. consumers value paper and disagree with digital-only communications, 07/21/2016; <http://www.twosidesna.org/US/The-majority-of-US.-consumers-value-paper-and--disagree-with-digital-only-communications>

The church application for this quote is simple though you may not want to hear it—continue to print out giving and other notices from the church. Don't require people to print them out at home.

Another area this speaks to is your church newsletter. Do you still produce print copies? If not, is there a reason other than it is easier and cheaper to primarily do them online?

But how many of your people read and act on them in an online only format? I'm not recommending you quit doing a digital version. There are many people who probably like that. But how many don't? Do you know? To know how your congregation's real response, you may want to survey your church to see how many people read your church newsletter online and how many would prefer a printed copy.

It may be only a few people who would still prefer a printed version and it may not be efficient to do up that version for them. But efficiency probably wasn't the primary reason the Good Shepard went after the one wandering sheep and it shouldn't be the primary standard for church communications.

If we truly want to serve our people and reach the most with clear communications about the church, we need to look at all distribution channels that will meet the needs of all our people.

Yes, there are cost considerations. The previously mentioned booklet on *The 3 Big Printing Challenges of the Church and How to Solve Them*, will help you in this area.

And then, what about the trees? For many concerned people, the environmental concerns about paper are a factor. If this is a concern for you I would highly recommend the TWO SIDES website <http://www.twosidesna.org/> if you want to read some fascinating research on recycling paper, sustainability of forests and related topics. Here is an introductory quote from them:

Print and Paper is recyclable, powerful and based on a renewable resource. In a multimedia world, it continues to be highly effective and can be a sustainable way to communicate when produced and used responsibly. Explore our website and find out why.

This isn't the time or place to quote more from them, but I highly recommend you go on their site for more information on the topics and studies related to paper, recycling paper, and the sustainability of forests.

Regardless of your concerns about paper or other related reasons why you may or may not be currently printing your newsletter, remember there two Biblical principles:

1. We are called to serve our people
2. We are to be mindful of the "least of these." There may be very few people who want a printed newsletter, or other printed items in the church but they are important to Jesus and should be to us also.

Quote #7 Why print isn't dead and what it means for your church communications

What follows is a series of quotes from an article on the Effective Church Communications website. Though a few years old, they still apply. Commentary on applications in the church follow each quote.

Maybe it really isn't about print or digital first, but leading together, side by side. The mantra of the web has always been more powerful and successful when it is collaborating, not competing. Why compete with each other? Why should any product go first, when both can cross the finish line at the same time if they work together?

The smart answer isn't putting digital or print first, but to put design and usability first, using each product for what they do best and let them do it together.

from: <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2012/10/digital-first-print-first-both-should-work-together291#sthash.vmk0cuur.dpuf>

Practical application: One of the best ways print and digital can work together in the church is when your church bulletin mentions an activity or event for the print notice to link to the church website for background information and explanations. In addition, your social media can remind and link to the website material. Your print (business cards, bulletin, and postcards) should also have the URL for your website and links to your social media.

This can work especially well for seasonal celebrations. For example, at Christmas your church will probably sponsor a variety of events. On your website, you can have explanations of why Jesus really is the reason for the season, what Advent is all about, suggestions for how you can use the season to train children, a Q & A section for people unfamiliar with church. In addition, you can use your social media to remind people of what is available in more depth and encourage them to invite their friends.

Not only does a mix of communication mediums enhance brands, they can effectively work together to create a marketing solution, which adds real value by engaging customers with measurable results. An example of this is using variable data printed pieces that are specifically targeted and personalized to engage a customer, combined with digital solutions for example a corresponding personalized web page that enables further interaction. This kind of communication has proven results to increase response rates and improve customer retention giving a far better return on investment than static printed or passive digital communications alone.

From: David Allsopp, director, asap digital: <http://www.thedrum.com/news/2012/07/24/paper-and-print-print-v-digital>

To use Christmas as an example again, create print material such as postcards and invitation cards for your congregation to give out that once again link to expanded digital explanations. Even more effective, if you have the

communication volunteers who can do this, would be to create blog or web sections for specific groups in your church, for example in the Children's Ministry you could create: "Parent's ideas to teach kids at home about Jesus at Christmas" and with that core content, create flyers to hand out Children's Sunday School classes and send out the same content in emails and social media to parents. Another idea would be a series of tweets going to teenagers directing them to a blog or Facebook entries about "How to invite your friends to church without being embarrassed about it."

Two related quotes follow:

According to marketing experts, there is a new resurgence of print marketing from forward-thinking business people who recognize the revenue potential of direct-mail ads and other print promotions. In a crowded online market in which users are bombarded with banner ads and display ads, people are becoming jaded by internet advertising. Print is becoming a legitimate alternative.

It's sometimes difficult to differentiate your business in a crowded online market. However, it's not so difficult to make a difference with a posters, flyers, or other print promotions. A large proportion of companies have yet to take advantage of new digital technologies. By optimizing your print promotions, you can create print promotions that not only stand apart, but also do a great job of bringing customers from a print ad to your website or sales offer.

Since working for print companies for the past 5 years, I can honestly say that print never went away for a lot of businesses. Especially small business and local chains that completely rely on direct mail offers and local print ads for their walk-in business. I also see larger businesses starting to return to print to take advantage of new technologies that make it possible for customers to interact with them via smart phones. Thanks to the gigantic leaps-forward in smart phone technology, we are now able to bring customers to smart phone optimized web pages, social media pages, landing pages, and even to our checkout pages – directly from a print ad. QR code technology is fast becoming an effective bridge between these two worlds.

http://www.lawtonprinting.com/blog/integrating_print_and_digital,_print_is_key_to_success_in_a_digital_world/75

Nowadays, printed materials such as books, brochures and magazines frequently direct readers to other digital media sources to supplement their experience with sound or moving image. A recent example of this in action is Jodi Picoult's novel 'Sing You Home', in which readers can scan a QR code at the beginning of each chapter to hear a soundtrack intended to 'bring the character of Zoe to life for the reader by giving her a real voice'.

<http://www.fespa.com/news/industry-news/when-two-worlds-collide-how-print-and-digital-can-become-complementary.html>

A key application to the quotes above is how posters, flyers, and other print promotions can drive people to your expanded digital resources. No matter what any SEO "expert" tells you, you need more than the savvy use of

keywords to get your church website found. One way to do it is in the same way that we check out the website from any company when we get an advertisement in the mail or Sunday paper that looks interesting, or from a print notice in the form of postcards, mailers, invitation cards, or posters at the local coffee shop. All these can drive people to your website.

The creation of QR codes added to creative media has many exciting options for the church—imagine an outreach postcard or poster with a QR code taking you to your praise band, podcast or video that was specifically designed for an unchurched audience.

Quote #8—Challenges to interpersonal relationships because of social media

Social media has also changed the way that we interact, mainly the way we have lost some of our social skills. Some people are completely incapable of carrying on a normal conversation or interacting with people in person because of the dependency of social media.

Social networks are becoming one of the dominant ways we communicate. Snapchat or Instagram, anyone?? People are more obsessed with checking their smartphone every 2 minutes than engaging in meaningful conversation with their child or spouse. Social media and technology are double-edged swords. It's awesome to have and can really help us, but it also distracts us to the point of being blind and deaf to everything else going on.

Mandy Edwards, <http://memarketingservices.com/>

The commentary for the above quote is the following article from Effective Church Communications. The article addresses only one small area of interpersonal communications—social media, but it's an important one for us to work on in the church—because all the media tools in the church ultimately are not primarily about the information we share, but about the relationships we are building with each other and our Lord.

Article: The silent, destructive communication war between Boomers and Millennials

There is a silent war going on in churches today. Nobody talks about it and many in the church are not even aware it is going on, but it continues day after day and the injuries, both to individuals and to the Kingdom of God, are immense. This is the war of communication expectations between talking on the phone, email, and texting.

Though this conflict can happen between any members of the church, for purposes of this article, I'm going to oversimplify it by sharing what I've seen happen many times between Boomer and Millennial age groups. Though I'm using these two groups as examples, read into them "Boomer and older" and "Millennial and younger".

Here are some typical skirmishes:

Situation #1:

A Boomer congregation member places a phone call to a Millennial Youth Pastor and leaves a message. No response. Boomer tries email. No response. Sunday comes around and Boomer angrily confronts Millennial, "I was going to contribute two scholarships to Winter Camp, but since you didn't have the courtesy to respond to my offer, the scholarship money has been donated elsewhere."

Millennial responds, “I’m really sorry. I didn't get any of your messages.”

Situation #2:

A Millennial Youth Pastor texts the Boomer age people in the church who have said they want to be part of the prayer team for youth. She is excited with the list she received from the church office and sends a series of Instagram links along with the texts showing the kids they will be praying for at an upcoming strategy session at Starbucks.

When the time comes for the strategy session, only one person out of the 15 she sent multiple text messages to shows up. On Sunday, when she tries to be kind and ask why various Boomer individuals didn’t show up, she gets a combination of blank stares and replies of “You never contacted me” in response.

What is going on

In both groups, the person sending the message felt they were doing all they could to communicate. However, just sending a message is not the same as communicating a message.

In both cases the message was never received by the party it was intended for.

Before I get to specific advice on how to deal with this redemptively in the church, let’s step back and realize that we are at a unique time in the world of communication because, though we have many channels of communication available today, different groups use different tools that do not necessarily communicate with each other. Following are some examples of this:

Millennial communication channels

Many Millennials rarely talk on their phones—they don't answer them or listen to messages. Nor do they read email—they rarely sit down at a computer because they do everything with their phones. Except talk on them.

They text. A lot. They constantly scan and send social media on their phones. These are the communication channels they use.

The result is that if they are called and left a voice message or sent an email, chances are they won’t hear it or see it.

Boomer communication channels

Boomers talk on their phones. They listen to and leave messages. Many have no idea how to text, how to receive one or how to send one. Many of their phones don't have the texting app enabled or it may not be available. If they have it, they may not know how to use it.

For many Boomers, their preferred method of technological communication is email, though many Boomers and older don't even know how to use this. The Boomers who use email, assume everyone has email and responds to it.

The social media of choice for many Boomers is Facebook—but they use Facebook at home on a computer and they primarily look at the updates and ignore (or are not aware of) messages sent through Facebook.

Of course, there are many exceptions to the examples above, but they are worth considering when communication problems arise.

Suggested solutions

Before practical solutions, as is always the case, let's look at the spiritual solutions first.

For all age groups in the church we do well to remember that we serve a Lord, “did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom (Matt. 20:28).”

We are commanded to “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, (Phil. 2:3).”

How then can we act with humility and a heart of service in our intergenerational communications? Here are some suggestions:

1. Be honest in your print and online church communication listings. Many problems arise when a church lists staff email addresses, but the staff members do not answer their emails. Where this is particularly destructive, and happens often, is between youth pastors and parents, where the parents email and the youth pastor doesn't respond.
2. If an email address is given, staff MUST commit to checking and responding to email.
3. If staff won't do this and prefers to text, DON'T list their email. List a number they can be reached and specifically state “Pastor Jeff prefers to communicate via text.”
4. In the church if you are on a committee or volunteer for a ministry or work with volunteers, before anything else, ask “What is your preferred communication method? Text, email, phone call?” Then respond in the way requested, even if that is not your preferred method.
5. If you don't know how to text, consider learning how to do it. If typing with one finger or your thumbs seems impossible, most phones today make it possible to send a text by dictating it into your phone.

6. If you hate to respond to email—get an app on your phone, where you can check your email and do it anyway.

In conclusion

These are not easy communication changes to make, particularly if you have to learn a new way to communicate, but warring communication methods hurt individuals and the church. Pray for patience and grace with yourself and each other and remember it's not about you, but about keeping peace and growing the Kingdom of God that we communicate in the ways and using the methods that we do.

Quote #9 A proper perspective has and always will be a challenge

Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:40-42).

When Marshall McLuhan, early pioneer of electronic media, pronounced in the early sixties, that "the media is the message," he was predicting that the means of communication would be more important than the message it carried. For his time, the primary media was television; more and more in our world it is computers and the resulting forms of digital communication: desktop publishing, the internet, cell phone, and small screen communications.

Though it is easy to get caught up in the complexity and power of digital communications, as Christians we must constantly remind ourselves that these incredible innovations, and any that are to come, are only tools. The power doesn't come from the tool or media-the power comes from the message.

As the Apostle Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). The world "power" used in this verse comes from the Greek word, *dunamis*. It's the same root for our world dynamite and it means a "miraculous, mighty, wonderful power."

Our message, not the media we use to share it, is the source of true power. It was the same for the early disciples writing with pens on parchment, it will be the same for us if we are creating virtual reality holograms to illustrate Bible stories in the years to come.

We live in an age where the pace of change is incredible. Many of you started out in communicating with pencils, progressed to typewriters, and now operate computers on your desk more powerful than the ones they used to put a man on the moon. This pace will not slow down.

We need to always remember that no matter how powerful, overwhelming or impressive the technology, there remains, "only one thing that is needful" --the good news of salvation found in Jesus.

From: *Devotions for Church Communicators* by Yvon Prehn

About Effective Church Communications



Effective Church Communications is a ministry that provides training, templates, resources, and inspiration to help church communicators fully fulfill the Great Commission. The hub of our ministry is our website: www.effectivechurchcom.com.

Our approach to church communications includes more than design and communication construction how-tos, though we have lots of them. It includes foundational, biblical teaching related to communications, communication leadership, and church communication teams. We constantly remind church communicators that we have been entrusted with the words of eternal life and the eternal destinies of people depend on how well we communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ. For every communication piece, you not only get an easy-to-use templates and design tips, but a reminder of where this communication fits into bringing people to Jesus and helping them mature in their faith.

Though we work hard to stay current with technology, we value and attempt to teach timeless communication skills and principles. The majority of our training has application in every communication channel from print to podcasts.

We believe churches of every size, from tiny house churches to mega-churches benefit from clear, effective communication and we strongly emphasize that churches be who they are in their communications to their unique congregation and to the community they are called to reach. We strongly encourage churches to study their people, set goals, evaluate response to communication projects, consistently and clearly communicate based on who they are and where they are, rather than copy the latest mega-church or marketing trend.

We do not allow, encourage, link to, or promote, in any way, irreverent, profane language or snarky, cynical approaches to church communication or in the discussion of it. We serve a holy God and we seek in all we do to walk worthy and communicate a worthy message that reflects our Lord.

We strongly believe church communicators, of any age, from any size

church, who use any software, with any skill level, can create incredible communications and can help and encourage each other.

We have ways (and are working on more) where church communicators can share and interact through our website, including our Great Idea Swap.

Though we encourage church communicators to pour their hearts, minds and souls into the hard work of communicating the words of eternal life, we are constantly aware that our words will only accomplish eternal results because of His blessing of them and His working through them of our eternal God.

Please check out www.effectivechurch.com and join us in the great adventure of sharing the words of eternal life

About Yvon Prehn



Yvon Prehn is the founder and director of Effective Church Communications and of www.effectivechurchcom.com. For over 20 years she taught church communication ministry, skills, and strategy at seminars, conferences, and national conventions all over North America.

She is now at home in Ventura, California where she writes and creates online training materials to equip, inspire, and encourage church communicators.

Through most of her adult working life, Yvon has worked in communication ministry as a writer and teacher. She was a newspaper reporter and religion writer for the Colorado Springs SUN for nine years. When desktop publishing was first invented Yvon was a top-rated, national trainer in desktop publishing for Padgett/Thompson, the nation's largest one-day seminar company. She worked as a communications consultant and trainer for numerous Christian ministries in Colorado Springs and was senior editor at Compassion International and Young Life International.

Yvon is the author of many books, including the first book out on desktop publishing, *The Desktop Publishing Remedy*, published by David C. Cook in 1994. She has written for many Christian magazines and was the communication columnist for *Christian Computing Magazine* (now *Ministry Tech*) for over 20 years. Her recent books (available at amazon.com) include *The Five Steps of Effective Church Communications and Marketing*; *Connection Cards, grow your church, pastor your people, little cards, big results*; and *Devotions for Church Communicators*.

Yvon has a master's degree in Church History and has done additional graduate work in theology and communications. She taught high school English and was an adjunct professor in church history at Regis University.

In addition to her formal experience in these areas, Yvon gets the opportunity to practice church communications in very practical ways. She and her husband Paul worked in many areas of ministry in

the church, including single adult ministry, adult education, and small group ministry. Yvon serves as a Bible teacher, as well as creating many of the church communications and marketing materials, both in print and online, for the various ministries she and her husband work with.

Yvon's seminars, plus her written and web-based materials, have helped thousands of people in Christian ministry and churches maximize their communications and enabled them to use them to help their churches fully fulfill the Great Commission.

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