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 The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection
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Review of *the blogging church*¹

Themes

The blogging church provides a clear vision and specific guidance about how the practice of blogging can have a positive impact in the life of a church. Brian Bailey and Terry Storch provide clear information for a wide range of interested readers - from someone who is curious about what a blog is to someone who is an active blogger and is looking for increased effectiveness.

After addressing the question of “why blog?” Bailey and Storch move to suggestions about how writing a blog could effectively be implemented within a congregation. Suggestions, which are addressed in respective chapters, include to: share news, cast vision, reach out, and connect your staff. “Make the blog the definitive place for people to go if they want to find out what is going on at your church.”² In addition to text, photos add another way to tell the story of the congregation. “If you use a blog for no other reason than to publish photos of the life of your church, you will be successful.”³

In addition to announcements, Bailey and Storch recommend considering the blog as more of an open dialogue - ask and answer questions. “It doesn’t matter if a question comes in an email or a phone call, or while you are shaking hands after a service. Why not answer the questions online, for the benefit of hundreds or even thousands of people, instead of just one?”⁴ “People who read blogs are looking for perspective, personality, and behind-the-scenes details.”⁵

“Blogging is simply a new way to tell stories. . . . The message doesn’t change when the methodology changes. If the methodology fails to change, however, we begin to distance ourselves from the people we are called to reach, and we risk becoming irrelevant.”⁶ Blogs can be an effective way of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

Bailey and Storch suggest that reading as well as writing is integral to entering the world of blogs. The authors recommendation for the blogs that one reads: “One-third should be written by people who share your approach to ministry. . . . One-third should be written by people who

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² Bailey, Brian, *the blogging church*, 30.

³ Bailey, Brian, *the blogging church*, 32.

⁴ Bailey, Brian, *the blogging church*, 36-7.

⁵ Bailey, Brian, *the blogging church*, 113.

⁶ Bailey, Brian, *the blogging church*, 169.

look at what you do from a unique perspective. ... One-third should be written by people who don't believe."⁷

The *blogging church* is an excellent introduction to the practice of blogging and how it can have an impact in local congregations. I recommend this book to those exploring the possibility of beginning a blog, considering new ways of communication for a local congregation or hoping to improve a current blog.

Relevance and application for The United Methodist Church

The blogging church has relevance for The United Methodist Church as the denomination seeks to be more effective in making disciples of Jesus Christ. Blogging can be a tool for general boards and agencies, annual conferences, denominational officials, local congregations and pastors to increase communication on all levels. At times, there is frustration about the quality or amount of communication within the denomination and blogging may be a way to increase effective communication.

One practical way to apply blogging within conferences would be for conferences and districts to create a blog for communication and conversation about events and issues relevant to that community. A blog would allow comments and feedback from a wider community. Creating a blog feed that could be subscribed through RSS or email allows for greater flexibility for the recipient.

Relevance and application for The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection

The blogging church has relevance for The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection. The relevance and application for The United Methodist Church hold true here at Resurrection. There are several staff members who have created and maintain blogs. To the best of my knowledge, there is not an overall strategy at this time to utilize blogs as a part of the communications strategy of the church.

A possibility at Resurrection may be an interior blog for staff that could increase awareness of activity across ministry areas. For those interested in information about the congregation, a blog may be another option for communication and dialogue.

Bibliography

Bailey, Brian and Terry Storch. *the blogging church*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.

⁷ Bailey, Brian, *the blogging church*, 65-6.