Eight Ways Churches are Using Pinterest

Imagine if you had access to the world’s largest bulletin board—a place where you could exchange ideas and images from around the globe. That’s one of the major benefits of the increasingly popular website, Pinterest.

Unlike sites such as Facebook and Twitter, which tend to be driven by words, Pinterest is propelled primarily through visuals. The site is the equivalent of a giant bulletin board allowing users to pin their favorite thoughts, ideas, photos, and images. Once “pinned” (the equivalent of “posted”), any user can re-pin the image, like it, or comment on the pinned item.

Pinterest is estimated to be the third most popular social network, behind only Facebook and Twitter. Though the company is hesitant to release exact numbers, the site attracted about 19 million monthly users in April, according to The New York Times. Not only is the user base growing at an exponential rate, but the length of time users remain on the site is impressive. While the average user spends less than 12 minutes on Twitter and eight minutes on LinkedIn, they spend more than 16 minutes—or 25 percent more time—on Pinterest.

This enormous bulletin board creates an opportunity for churches to up the ante...
of their quality of visuals used in their congregations, as well as exchange ideas for projects such as VBS, sermon series, Sunday school classes, and more. Like many other social media sites, users can use keywords and hash tags in the descriptions and link to other Web pages—including your church’s.

Here are eight ways your ministry can utilize Pinterest starting today:

1. **Reminding your congregation of upcoming events.** In addition to church bulletins, Web sites, and e-newsletters, churches are using Pinterest to provide visual reminders of upcoming sermon series, activities, and events in the local church. Use Pinterest to pin sermon podcasts or a pastor’s latest blog entry.

2. **Championing stories in your community.** Did your church just complete an outreach project or volunteer day? Did the youth group return from its missions trip? Has your church developed a vibrant network of small groups? Champion the stories of what God is doing in your community by sharing photos through Pinterest.

3. **Developing fresh themes for church events.** Churches are using Pinterest to develop new themes and decoration ideas for events and activities from church-wide retreats to fall festivals to VBS. Search under “DIY” and “craft” to create a board for Sunday school activities. One church outside of Denver, Colorado, is using Pinterest to design its volunteer appreciation dinner as a luau-themed barbecue.

4. **Fundraising.** One Pinterest-inspired small group of DIY’ers in Texas created handmade items to sell at the church’s annual mission fundraising event. To date, the group has created more than two dozen items, ranging from monogrammed canvas to tile drink coasters made with paint chips.

5. **Archiving worship songs.** Worship teams are using Pinterest to pin songs and YouTube videos that they want to learn and practice.

6. **Recommend resources to members.** Pinterest can be used by pastors and staff to “pin” recommended resources and activities for church members. Share books, music, and Web sites you want your church to know about, read, and explore. These pages can be used to provide a list of overall staff recommendations. Pastors and staff can set up boards for individual ministries, too, such as “Men’s Ministry,” “Women’s Ministry,” and “Small Groups Ministry.”

7. **Sharing quotables.** Inspire your congregation throughout the week with a “Notable & Quotable” board that offers reflections, quotes, and other visually inspiring images. These can be tied into the church’s mission, vision, or current sermon series.

8. **Staying in touch.** Whether your church supports a handful of organizations or dozens of missionaries, create a board to keep your people updated on what’s going on in their lives. Your organizations and missionaries will appreciate the extra care and you may just find the extra awareness turns into extra prayer.

One of the greatest opportunities of Pinterest is involving men and women who naturally love the site and want to be responsible for updating and pinning on the page. Grab your church’s name on Pinterest today and begin creating a board to interact with your congregation.

Margaret Feinberg is author of *Scouting the Divine, The Sacred Echo*, and the upcoming *Wonderstruck* (January 2013).

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If your church or ministry uses Pinterest, we’d like to hear about it. Send an email to info@adventistcommunicator.org.
Text Messaging for Ministry

TechTalk with Bryant Taylor and Chip Dizard

Once upon a time when you needed to get a message to a group of people you either called them all individually or split the list between several people, creating a phone tree to relay the message. Technology advanced which made it easier, and you would send a group email. Both were effective but not always efficient, because they were dependent on the individual checking their email or being home to receive the call. Well, technology has advanced again, and you can now reach your group in seconds wherever they are with a text message.

What is group text messaging?

Group text messaging is the same message sent to multiple mobile phones or devices at once. Most phones are able to send messages to two to five others. When you need to reach large groups you will have to use a text messaging service. There are a plethora of services to choose from, some free, but most are fee-based. In this issue we will focus on crossMRKT, a mobile text and email service of symbiota.com.

Why use group texting?

There are several reasons to use group texting instead of phone trees or email.
1. Most people always have their mobile device within arms reach.
2. 97% of all text messages are read.
3. 90% of all text messages are read within 4 minutes.

In short, this is a excellent choice to effectively and efficiently deliver your message to your group.

How does crossMRKT work?

Once you sign up for the service:
1. Choose a keyword, one that users will associate with your organization—i.e SAC.
2. Begin to build your list of names or groups by asking people to sign up. Six ways are offered to do this: QR Codes, text-to-join, online sign up forms, Facebook sign up, mobile voting, and text-to-screen.
3. Send your message. Since it is web-based, the message can be sent from a computer, smartphone, or tablet. You are limited to 140 characters per message. This service allows you to schedule when your message will be delivered. You choose the date and time and it’s seamless.

How to use it in ministry

The uses for ministry are many. Pastors can use it to send a weekly message to members, to contact key leaders, or announce an urgent meeting. Youth leaders can send reminders, getting the word out about a flash mob or youth outreach event. Ministries can send updates and reminders of upcoming events, request and receive a vote on an item, and more.

Bottom line

Group text messaging is the fastest, most effective and efficient method to get your message, update, reminder, request, program advertisement, organizational mission and vision (and the list goes on, and on, and on) to the masses.

Damian “Chip” Dizard operates an online video tutorial website, WebVideoChefs.com, where he shows people how to make better videos. Bryant Taylor is the communication director for the Allegheny West Conference and pastor of the Beacon of Hope Church in Columbus, Ohio.
Adventist Logo Folders

Created by the NAD Communication Department

Do you need a professional-looking public relations folder when making media contacts? This glossy folder features the Seventh-day Adventist Church name, logo, and contact information. It also includes an inner slot for your business card. Simply insert your press releases, media announcements, etc. to assemble a professional press kit. This folder is also useful at church-sponsored events and church board meetings and for creating information packets for church visitors.

Available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or (800) 328-0525. Catalog #250100

SDA Organization Finder App

The North American Division has developed an organization locator for all the church-authorized organizations in the NAD. It is called SDA Finder and is downloadable for the iPhone, iPad, and Android mobile devices. Different colored pins denote the different types of organizations. You will also find contact information and URLs for various Web sites. A few conferences have not yet signed up to make their organizational information available. Please feel free to contact app@nad.adventist.org with any questions or concerns.

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