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Fuller Theological Seminary

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# Theology, News and Notes

OCTOBER 2000

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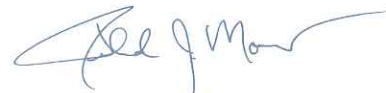
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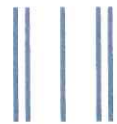
# Theology, News and Notes

OCTOBER 2000

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



## Ministering in the Internet Age



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ABOUT THIS ISSUE

*Ministering in the Internet Age* 2

SCOTT CORMODE

*Expanding the Canvas:  
Preaching, Art, and the Internet* 4

BECKY BANE

*Religious Scholarship on the Internet* 11

WILLIAM F. FORE

*Creating a Successful  
Congregational Web Site* 13

THOMAS H. WALKER

*"So How Can the Internet Make  
Me a Better Leader or  
a More Faithful Servant?"* 19

SCOTT CORMODE

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY GANDEE VASAN—TONY STONE IMAGES,  
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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

# Ministering in the Internet Age

BY SCOTT CORMODE

**C**ongregations have discovered computers. Ministers now have, as a matter of course, personal computers in their offices or in their homes.

Churches now produce their own worship bulletins and newsletters. And E-mail has become as common in some parishes as the fax machine. Some preachers have even brought PowerPoint presentations into the worship service. Computers are now embedded in the congregational landscape.

With these ubiquitous computers has also come access to the Internet. It has, however, been less clear how the sprawling reach of the Internet can be of service to parishes and their leaders. This issue of *Theology, News and Notes* attempts to explore this new territory. Each of the contributors to this issue has been asked to describe how the Internet might be of use to Christian leaders. Each has focused on a different opportunity opened up on the Web. Together, these articles stake out a wealth of new resources that Christian leaders can use to improve their ministries and further the cause of the gospel.

In the first article, Becky Bane opens a creative door for preachers. Many of us have often thought that it would be great to use good art to spark our thinking about sermons. But there have always been two problems: First, most of us do not have access to much good art. The Louvre is in Paris, not in my backyard. And, second, I am not sure that I know how to interpret what I see when I am looking at good art.

Bane's article offers hope on both fronts. First, she shows how the Internet can bring the world's art to the preacher's desktop. So it no longer matters that the *Mona Lisa* resides in Paris. Now it lives in cyberspace, and I can see her smile without leaving my office. And, second, Bane offers insights and models for engaging art. Exegeting an art piece, it turns out, is not unlike exegeting a passage of

Scripture to the extent that each endeavor follows certain rules and moves along particular paths. Bane introduces those paths as well as describing the artist's landscape. The result is a new expository avenue for preachers. We can now imagine using art as a fresh source of reflection and inspiration when preparing texts for congregational preaching.

In the second article, William F. Fore offers insight into a trove of religious scholarship on the Web. Fore was asked to write about a site he operates called [www.religion-online.org](http://www.religion-online.org). The site collects articles and books from important religious scholars and makes them available for free through the Internet. His sources vary from the *Christian Century* to out-of-print books from a diverse cross-section of authors.

In the third article, Thomas H. Walker provides a guidebook to creating a congregational web site. Too often churches that want to open a space on the Web have no choice but to copy models that may not be appropriate for preaching the gospel. They often are left to emulating E-commerce sites designed to sell things to people. There have not, however, been many guides to producing a congregational site that emphasizes that the site is a venue for mission. Walker provides such a guide. He describes the best reasons for creating a parish web site. Then he details the key strategies that go into creating a church web site. And, finally, he explains what a congregation will need to know in order to maintain their web site.

The final article takes yet another angle. It

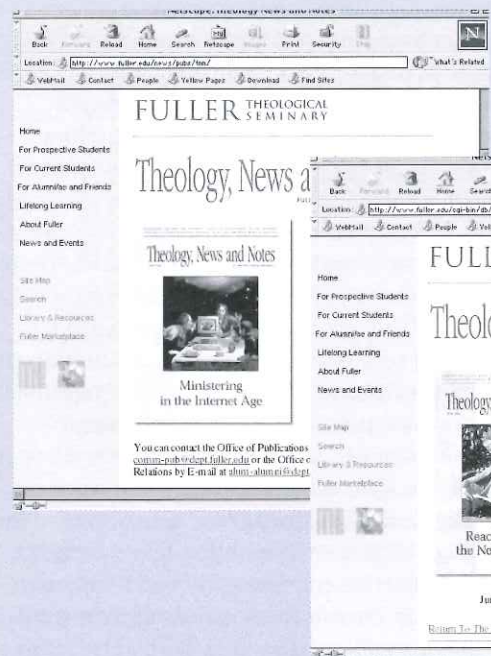
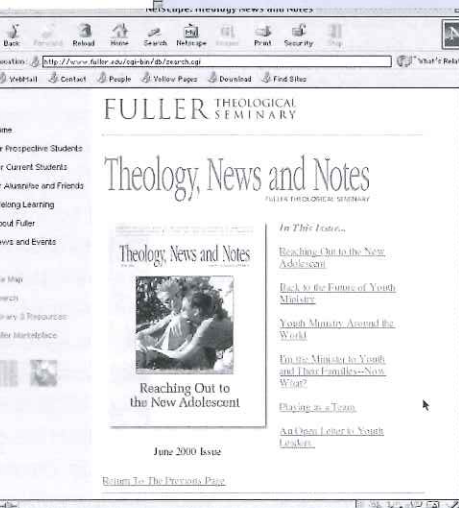
responds to an oft-whispered concern. There are those who worry that the high-tech and impersonal world of the Internet can do nothing to improve the face-to-face work pursued by pastors and other religious leaders. To illustrate how the Web might aid even the most low-tech of ministers, the article describes a fictional lunchtime conversation. The topic of conversation is one pastor's question, "So how can the Internet make me a better leader or a more faithful servant?" His friends surprise him by offering a series of resources, culminating with a description of a web site called [www.christianleaders.org](http://www.christianleaders.org).

The Internet has opened a gateway to the world. It enables a religious leader to visit the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. or a seminary library without leaving her office. It provides a venue for becoming more adept without driving long distances to classes. And it opens communication channels to congregants that had not been previously accessible. There are many powerful ministry tools on the World Wide Web. Come explore them.

**SCOTT CORMODE, Ph.D.**, holds the George Butler Chair in Church Administration and Finance and heads the Leadership Education Project at the Claremont School of Theology in Southern California. He is currently integrating the Christian leaders web site ([www.christianleaders.org](http://www.christianleaders.org)) with a reader and casebook on leadership.



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*With these ubiquitous computers has also come access to the Internet. It has, however, been less clear how the sprawling reach of the Internet can be of service to parishes and their leaders.*

# Expanding the Canvas: Preaching, Art, and the Internet

BY BECKY BANE

*Sitting at my desk, I cradled my coffee mug and watched the sun rise on a chilly Tuesday morning. I glanced down again at the Bible open in front of me and my thoughts turned to the sermon text for the week, Romans 5:12-20, "Christ, the new Adam." Paul's powerful verbal imagery stirred something in me. I tried to imagine what that looked like—Christ, the new Adam. Snippets from the first chapter of Genesis floated into my thoughts like pieces of a collage in search of a canvas.*

Sermons are collages created from the bits and pieces of daily living. Like an accomplished artist, the effective preacher balances skill with creative sensibility. But such creativity takes work. The preacher must develop a discerning eye, while learning to listen for the Holy Spirit.

Artists and preachers alike look for ways to jump-start their own imagination in order to inspire others. One commonly suggested way is to invest time looking at art. Great art not only sparks the imagination, it also teaches and develops valuable skills. But art is not easily accessible. It is often cloistered in museums or hidden in expensive books. Until recently, access to any art—great or otherwise—has been beyond most preachers' arena of accessibility. Fortunately, new avenues for finding inspiration through art are now available through the Internet. Technology now offers preachers innovative methods for aiding the hermeneutic process and stimulating the imagination. Through the Web, a preacher's desktop resources can include the visual arts.

*My imagination struggled in fits and starts. I nursed every thought as carefully as the warmth of my coffee, but each one cooled with the question, "What does that look like?" I heard the words; I just couldn't see their meaning clearly. It was as if only one of my senses was functioning. How could I fully imagine a sermon, especially this particular sermon? I put my mug down and prayed for insight. Then, with a refilled cup, I pulled out my computer keyboard. Once logged on to the Internet, I*

*begin a search through my favorite art sites. I wanted to find something that would help me visualize what I could as yet only hear.*

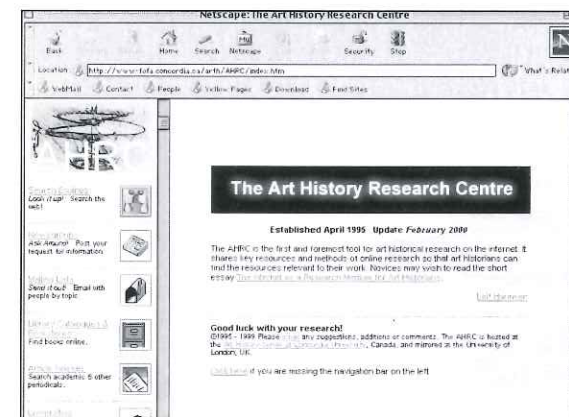
Internet technology is a tremendous tool for creative preaching. Of all the resources available online, visual art is one of the most exciting to be offered on the World Wide Web. Virtual galleries, art resources, and a growing artistic presence on the Web are potential aids for imaginative proclamation of the gospel. This is not simply about seeing visual art in the physical sense. It is about analysis, discernment, and prophetic imagination. Art stimulates the imagination, provoking new understandings of the world in which we live. Merely looking at visual art nurtures perceptual skills and creative problem-solving. Learning how to look helps any viewer (including a preacher) develop his or her own creative skills.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, such opportunities for cultivating the homiletic imagination are expanding as art and technological resources converge.

Art, technology, and art via Internet technology are increasingly important to consider for what they offer preachers seeking to expand their own resource pool and spark their imaginations. Access to art via Internet technology is a means for enlarging a preacher's canvas. The technology provides access, while also offering effective and innovative methods for encountering traditional resources. Many voices are currently challenging the church to consider visual art's significance for faith understanding.<sup>2</sup> They point out that, in matters of faith, an artist is often "sensitive to aspects of a text, doctrine, practice or situation that bypass many of us."<sup>3</sup> They suggest that preachers are like artists in seeking to elicit meaningful connections in people's minds. Margaret Miles, in *Image as Insight*, alludes to this when she notes that one of art's functions is to "give objective form to feeling."<sup>4</sup> It is no surprise that these are skills important for the homiletic process. Obviously, preachers can benefit from increased interaction with the arts and artists.

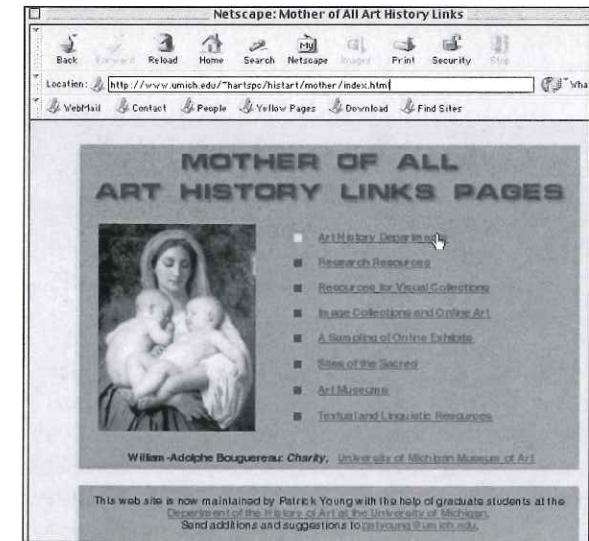
From guides for imaginative preaching to the role of aesthetics in theology, from multisensory educational paradigms to pastoral care models, arts

proponents emphasize visual art's value for faith and the prophetic imagination. They advocate exposure to and consideration of art. What each assumes, however, is access. Unfortunately, the issue of access is not always adequately addressed. Few people, let alone most preachers, have access to visual art on a regular basis. Access is exactly why Internet technology has so much potential. Without access, the benefits of increased exposure cannot occur. Today, a preacher's access to visual art can be as simple as following the instruction "Click here."

*I connected to two web sites: "The Art History Research Centre," and the University of Michigan's "Mother of All Art History Links Pages."<sup>5</sup> On previous visits, I used their links to find images, historical background, and commentary. They served me well before and today was no different. I found several promising links, including one to the Sistine Chapel.<sup>6</sup> Since Paul's words conjured up Genesis imagery, Michelangelo's Creation of Adam seemed like a good place to start. From a list of thumbnail images, I could select from all paintings in the Chapel, including The Creation of Adam and The Last Judgment. Separate compositions sharing one architectural space certainly invited comparisons in my mind! To give myself some more options, however, I decided to broaden my search. It uncovered two more paintings that intrigued me: di Grazia's The Annunciation and*



*van Eyck's The Ghent Altarpiece. The Altarpiece was a powerful visual exposition on the doctrine of redemption, while The Annunciation showed the usual Mary and Gabriel scene. I almost dismissed it, but something in the composition caught my eye—a tiny scene tucked into the painting's upper left-hand corner. It showed Adam and Eve being thrust out of Eden by an angel, while God directed from above. Initially, I didn't know what to make of that, but instinct told me it was worth investigating. I wasn't sure whether any of these pieces would bring clarity to*



*what was only faintly visible in my mind's eye. At the very least, however, I had enlarged the dimensions of my sermonic canvas.*

Visiting museums and galleries or looking at books are the usual ways to encounter great art. The problems are obvious. Museum visits are geographically difficult, if not impossible, for many. One has to live close enough to a museum or gallery, as well as have the time, in order to visit. Furthermore, any museum's collection varies in subject material, quality, and quantity. Printed resources pose their own dilemmas. Libraries with adequate resources are one way to take advantage of art books, but again, access and availability can pose obstacles. Quality color reproductions make art books prohibitively expensive to publish or buy. The geographic and financial hurdles alone have always made exposure to visual art difficult. These are serious hurdles that limit visual art's potential as an aid for creative preaching. How then, can a preacher encounter art at just the moment when she seeks expository inspiration?

With the advent of the Internet, the art world has recognized the opportunities unique to computer technology. Many museums, academic institutions, and individual artists quickly understood the potential for increased accessibility. In response, they created diverse resources, ranging from general arts information to online galleries. These resources are important entry points for the uninitiated. The secular art world has also faced a problem the church knows well—finding a means for familiarizing people with an intimidating topic and helping them to take advantage of the resources in order to enrich their lives. Technological resources now exist not only for expanded access to visual art, but also the means for better understanding the value of art.<sup>7</sup> The art world's technological efforts provide an important model for the church. Furthermore, their goals mesh with

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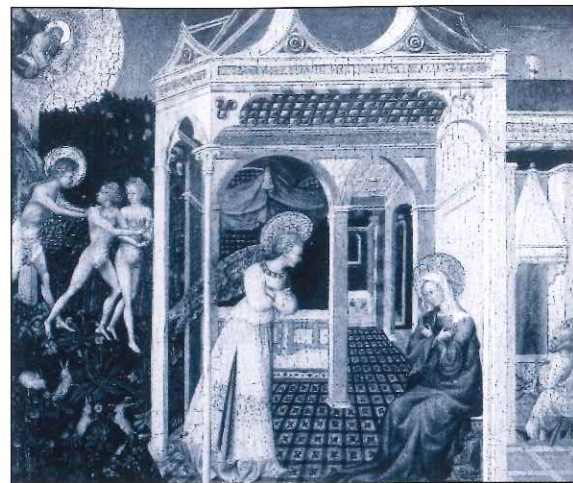
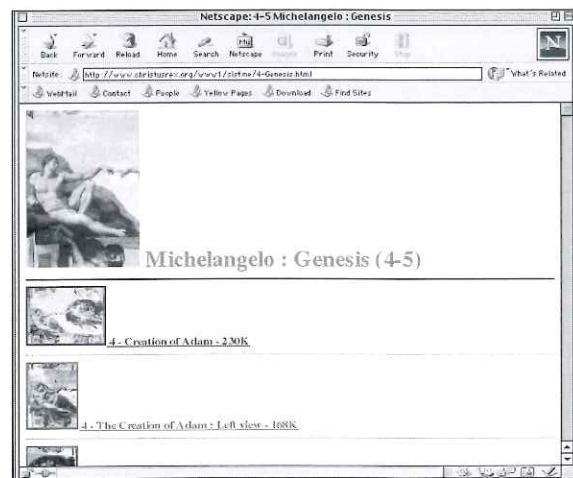
Access to  
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canvas.

Visual art, like preaching, challenges us to look beneath the surface of our own experiences.

what many in the church currently advocate about the arts and theology, particularly in reference to preaching.

The arts, it is observed, "feed the preacher's own creative and integrative abilities."<sup>8</sup> In other words, exposure to art stimulates and sustains the imagination, while modeling symbolic expression and creative problem-solving. These are crucial skills for preaching. Related to this, Marva Dawn, in *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down*, suggests that faith renewal, "habits of discipline, thoughtful appreciation and careful reflection" are nurtured by exposure to the arts.<sup>9</sup> She challenges the church to find ways to incorporate the arts. Art via Internet technology is an important option in providing resources for preachers as they engage in this endeavor for themselves and in modeling it for their congregations.

*My imagination took flight as I considered all my options. Print versions of all the art I found online would more than cover my desktop, I thought to myself. Of course, I could never have accumulated so many possibilities in such a short time, given my budget or the local library holdings. A trip to the seminary library was not possible for me that particular week, nor was there a major museum nearby. Fortunately, my searches uncovered many promising possibilities. Interestingly enough, most of them included Eve and Mary. Though Paul hadn't mentioned either woman, quite a few artists introduced them into their compositions. It raised some challenging questions for me about Paul's casting Christ in the role of the new Adam. Obviously, his metaphor was a springboard for the artistic imagination, inspiring multiple visual interpretations over the centuries. I decided to invest some time exploring in "virtual galleries" and skimming the online commentaries. I gave myself permission to play with the possibilities. It was not squandered time. Much of the art I looked at didn't exactly match my text, yet the*



Giovanni di Paolo di Grazia's *The Annunciation*

*simple act of looking at many different images helped me considerably. Like the practice of prayer, practice in "looking" refined my discernment skills. From past experience, I knew it was an important skill in my preaching toolbox. Prayer, traditional exegesis, exposure to verbal and visual imagery, and evenly paced theological reflection, would work together, enabling me to see deeper meaning behind the text. I carefully selected a few pieces that clearly related to the text, but did so in very different ways—Michelangelo's ceiling painting of Adam juxtaposed with his Last Judgment, Giovanni di Paolo di Grazia's The Annunciation and Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece. I could see the text working in these compositions for two reasons: First, I set aside time to look reflectively. Second, the artists' skill and personal visions enticed me into entering their creative process. For a few wondrous moments, I could see through their eyes. They challenged me to expand my original understanding of Paul's words. In those moments, "Click here for a full screen image," meant a great deal more than increasing the number of pixels on my monitor.<sup>10</sup>*

Preachers don't often consider visual art as a resource.<sup>11</sup> They commonly integrate literary art forms such as hymn texts, poetry, and fiction into their hermeneutic process, but not visual art. The reason for this is no mystery. Visual art intimidates people. The art world's vocabulary and mindset tends to exclude and confuse people. It induces a kind of art phobia. When unfamiliarity and ambivalence toward visual art intersect with the Protestant aversion to images, a monumental effort is needed to integrate the visual dimension into religious life, as well as the hermeneutic process.<sup>12</sup> Acknowledging and employing multisensory means of communicating the gospel is an important responsibility for preachers.<sup>13</sup>

Society looks to artists for a fresh view of the

world. Likewise, congregations look to preachers for new perspectives and deeper understanding. The capacity to reflect and interpret visually and verbally is linked to intuitive ability, as well as to analytical skills. Art develops intuitive ability by directly engaging nonverbal ways of knowing. It represents subjective understanding with concrete forms. Simply put, it makes the invisible visible. While visual artists use line, shape, texture, and color to point beyond what is seen with the eye, preachers employ verbal texture, shape, and color to point beyond human experience. As one scholar describes it, visual art is a "medium of revelation."<sup>14</sup> L.T. Tisdale, in *Preaching as Folk Art*, points out that the best preaching is more than an "act of theological construction," it is crafting "a work of art." A preacher's vocation, like the artist's, is to "express the inexpressible."<sup>15</sup>

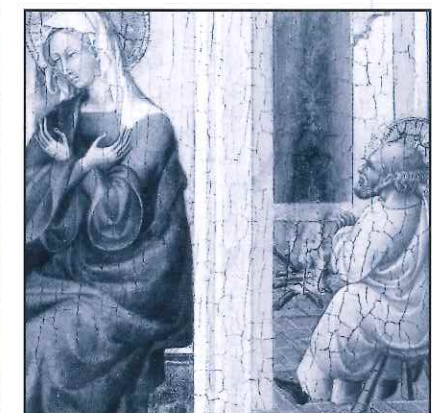
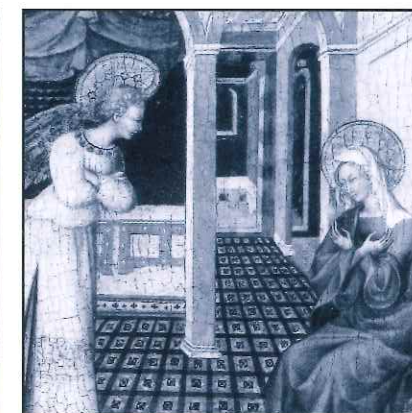
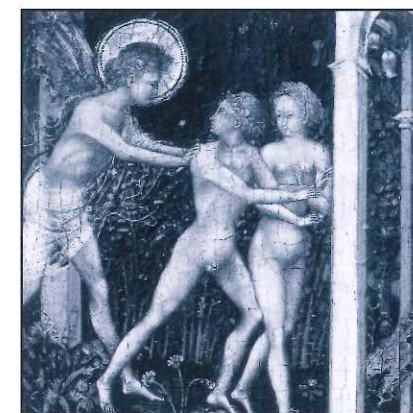
Crafting a sermon involves experimenting with words, themes, their relationship and meanings. Artists also experiment with their materials and compositional elements, before getting down to the business of giving form and structure to their vision. Experimentation and exploration—playing

**What images come to the screen of your mind in connection with the sermon subject?**

- Begin by getting them on the screen.
- Do these images preorient you to the focus of the sermon?
- Do you have an intuition about where this sermon might go?

Robert Allen, *Interpreting the Gospel*

with the possibilities—are necessary first steps for the creative process. "Play provides the spaces" where we can search out meaning, test new constructions and "be in search of a soul."<sup>16</sup> For adults, playful imagining or free association often "assumes the problem-solving functions of overt play."<sup>17</sup> Robert Allen, in *Imagining the Gospel*, also urges that preachers allow the mind and heart to freely associate (play!) with the text before



engaging in the critical reflection necessary to sermon writing. Discernment and analytical skills join with playful exploration and imaginative constructions to create a work of art. Allen further suggests preachers reflect about the images that "come to the screen" of their minds when thinking about a sermon topic. The first step is simply to get them "on the screen."<sup>18</sup>

*What did my eyes see on the screen? I saw three very different answers to my original question about how to visualize the objective relationship between the first and second Adam.*

*As inspiring as Michelangelo's images were for other scriptural contexts, they didn't flesh out what I was trying to imagine this particular morning. I knew it couldn't be the only way to visually express the relationship between Adam and Christ. In The Ghent Altarpiece I saw how one artist created an arrangement of individual portraits to convey his own interpretation of Paul's verbal imagery. Van Eyck's Adam and Christ were a far cry from the idealized Adam and Eve painted by Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. There was no doubt that new Adam looked very different in the mind's eye of these artists.*

*Looking at their work helped me recognize the uniqueness of di Grazia's composition on the theme of salvation and redemption. The artist divided the painting's composition into three scenes. Separate, yet related, they worked together to convey a deeper message. They moved from left to right to show Adam and Eve, then Mary with an angel and, finally, Joseph sitting alone by a fire. An angel dramatically cast the first couple out of the garden, with God looking on from the uppermost left-hand corner. But my eye was drawn most to Mary, in the center of the canvas. She sat in an enclosed garden as an angel approached. Tranquility emanated from the two. To the far right of the canvas was Joseph, alone, warming himself by a fire. There*

While visual artists use line, shape, texture, and color to point beyond what is seen with the eye, preachers employ verbal texture, shape, and color to point beyond human experience.

*was a lot to see in this composition. Christ was not included in the painting. As I considered the meaning of it all, I remembered one art historian's comment about another annunciation painting, 'All is resolved in her womb.'*<sup>19</sup>

*Letting my eye flow over the canvas, my heart and mind began to see with new understanding.*

There is more to visual art than delighting the eye. Great art has the power to challenge us to look beneath the surface of our own experiences—if we open ourselves to the possibilities. We bear an important responsibility when we make use of visual resources, online or otherwise. "Engagement" and "challenge" imply reciprocal action. Mere exposure to visual art through online resources, while helpful, is as inadequate as reading Scripture without study, preparation, and reflection. Taking full advantage of artwork accessed through Internet technology necessitates effort. Finding quality art resources online requires work, not only to find the art, but also to make the most of what is available. It is not enough to simply find a pictorial representation of a text on the Web and decode the symbolism or use it as a decorative illustration. Such superficial treatment is as undesirable as proof-texting and perpetuates the instant gratification so often associated with technology.

Drawing from this rich reservoir requires responsible and thoughtful use. The question, What can the faithful learn from the way a painter creates that would speak to the way we create theology? needs to be addressed.<sup>20</sup> In the words of Marva Dawn, we need to slow down, renew our acquaintance with art as a resource of substance and feast on "the solid food of God's fullness." She expresses an important concern over societal forces that have led to a culture of instant gratification, diminished intellectual formation, creative problem-solving and expressive abilities.<sup>21</sup> To be sure, technology has played a part in creating a culture of "instant gratification." But we need to be cautious about blaming technology to the extent that we fail to make the most of a valuable resource. This means using technology appropriately and responsibly—neither vilifying technology nor substituting it for other methods.<sup>22</sup>

Increasing numbers of scholars, theologians, and worship leaders are emphasizing the value of art for theological reflection. To varying degrees, some seminaries now include the arts in their programs. Yet much more needs to be done, especially in providing access to resources and reinforcing the value art has for preaching as well as for a life of faith.<sup>23</sup> The question was, and continues to be, how to bring about the integration of art, congregational life, and theological

education. For all that has been accomplished, however, many problems persist, including access and true integration. Internet and computer technology, up until recently, was not an option for addressing these dilemmas. They are now.

*My searches turned up art from the early church to medieval times, but di Grazia's painting continued to intrigue me. Early Christian artists literally framed portraits of Christ with the figures of Adam and Eve. In the Middle Ages, artists began to include Mary.<sup>24</sup> Many visually connected Adam and Eve with the redemption given in Christ. The Ghent Altarpiece very clearly showed what the "old Adam" looked like in comparison to the "new Adam" through portraiture, body language, clothing (or lack of!) and figure arrangement. Yet, in all the art I looked at, no one else paired the expulsion with the incarnation in quite the same way as di Grazia. This painting suggested perspectives I hadn't considered. But The Annunciation reflected my initial, subjective reaction to Paul's verbal imagery. At the same time it challenged me to think through the implications in a way that the other pieces did not. As I worked through this process, the technology let me move back and forth between the images, focusing on details, and comparing the various visual interpretations.*

*Like exploring the subtleties of a word study, the visual nuances captured my imagination. The text and composition played off each other. Seeing the action of the expulsion contrasted with the incarnation in The Annunciation, made me realize that I hadn't been looking for portraits of either Christ or Adam. I was trying to understand a process and so a sense of movement was key. The figures' body language caught my eye, as did the progression from one "scene" to the next. Even though I eventually decided to set aside the other paintings and concentrate on the di Grazia, I knew I would not have appreciated it as much as I did without careful consideration of pieces like The Ghent Altarpiece. Once I settled on The Annunciation, I used the National Gallery's selection of thumbnail images, full-screen displays and online commentaries to compare the painting's different sections. At the same time, I flipped through the translations, lexical aids, and textual commentaries that were spread all over my desk. Technology enlarged my desktop to include diverse resource options in such a way that the canvas upon which I was designing my sermon was also expanded.*

Creating a collage involves cutting and pasting

images together around a theme. The artist chooses each, selectively trimming and assembling them onto a surface. Anyone who has crafted a sermon knows how like a collage it can be. But sermons are not solely an individual effort. In a sense, they are collaborative efforts between the preacher, congregation, past expressions of the faith community, and the text—all guided by the Holy Spirit. Its formulation depends on resources a

#### **Making the most of visual art for preaching requires**

- understanding visual art as more than mere illustrations
- being open to diverse forms of communicating the gospel
- patience and practice in looking
- allowing art to engage the heart and mind.

preacher has at her disposal, her craftsmanship, and giftedness. Its prophetic power derives from inspired creativity. Few people wonder about where and how craftsmanship originates. Craftsmanship is sustained work, a consequence of disciplined effort. Creativity and inspiration, however, is often a mystery, sometimes even to artists. Mozart once mused, "When and how [my ideas] come I know not; nor can I force them."<sup>25</sup> To the preacher, inspiration's origin is never in doubt. But in order to benefit from God's gift of inspiration, the preacher, like the craftsman, must use appropriate tools and use them wisely.

Visual art via Internet technology is an innovative, but highly appropriate tool for the art and craft of preaching, as well as an aid for the imagination. The "effects of technization on culture"—efficiency valued over relationships, equation of information with understanding, ignorance of historical faith symbols and traditions—are taking their toll on religious culture.<sup>26</sup> Some suggest that the arts may provide an answer to the dilemma. In an age when faith symbols and biblical narrative have lost their meaning, encountering art can awaken the senses, not only to the value of symbolic meaning, but also transmit the rich meanings of our faith heritage. Art can "incarnate our experience of mystery, wonder, and awe." For that reason, when we ignore art, "we are cut off from most of the means by which we perceive life's ultimate meaning."<sup>27</sup> Computer technology, with its innovative information formats and increased access to art resources, amplifies visual art's value for faith education and proclaiming the gospel. The irony of the situation is worth noting. Technology is feared as dehumanizing, contributing to a culture of instant gratification and contributing to lower intellectual expectations.

Yet it provides unparalleled access to visual art—art that enhances human creativity feeds the imagination and nourishes the soul. By accessing art online, the benefits of technology can counter the dangers of technology. The diverse resources offered by technology open a virtual door to the very real possibilities that visual art has always provided for proclaiming the gospel.

*In my searches, I found artwork that acted as more than textual illustrations. The works I looked at were visual proclamations, engaging me in a dialogue that led to deeper understanding and creative applications. Christ, the new Adam, as depicted by each artist, arose from specific historical eras, but conveyed theological concepts that transcended boundaries of time and place. They helped me to be in dialogue with the text and traditional resources. The conversations I had, stimulated by this art, brought clarity to my mind's eye as I crafted my sermon. I could finally see what Christ, the new Adam, "looked" like. That helped me find a way to communicate with my congregation. With a grateful heart, I realized my sermon would grow out of a mixture of verbal and visual exegesis. The technological and traditional resources together enlarged the canvas upon which I was constructing the collage that would be my sermon. In turn, I hoped to spark the imaginations of my congregation, so that they would continue the dialogue and add elements of their own to this collaborative collage.*

#### **ENDNOTES**

1. Certain observations made by scholars from different fields are important to consider for a discussion on art and preaching. Howard Gardner notes that (1) studies indicate that a tendency "toward aesthetically superior taste emerges from looking at a large number of paintings, even in the absence of information about which is supposedly better" and (2) "problem-solving in the arts is qualitative problem-solving." H. Gardner, *The Arts and Human Development* (Basic, 1994), p. 223 and 274. For more on Howard Gardner's research, go to <http://pzweb.harvard.edu/Default.htm> "To be trained in the discipline of seeing involves the total engagement of the viewer, and the viewer in turn is transformed. This is a central part of the hermeneutic of the discipline of seeing." Doug Adams, *Art as Religious Studies* (Crossroad Publishing, 1987), p. 5. Also William Dryness observes that artists "shape their material into symbolic forms that project a world," and with these forms, artists "cast out lines across the world, especially across its empty spaces, connecting entities that may throw light on each other." *The Earth Is God's* (Orbis Books, 1997), p. 153.

2. Jane Dillengerger, in *Image and Spirit in Sacred and Secular Art* (Crossroad Publishing, 1990), p. ix, explains how people can analyze art so that their intellectual resources can be enriched and "their visual focus sharpened, thereby deepening their emotional sensitivity to works of art. . . . The deeper purpose remains consistent: to draw the reader and viewer into a lively conversation with the works of art." Margaret Miles, in *Image as Insight* (Beacon Press, 1985), p. 150, states that "neglect of images is neglect of contemplation" and that for "the untrained eye, eyesight is not insight, just as, for the unprepared mind, religious concepts make no sense. . . . Training of both eye and mind is fundamental to the quickening of religious sensibility," p. 4. William Dryness, in *The Earth*, p. 136, observes that the "melody of everyday life and the work place call us out of those practices [that reflect (or distort) the presence and activity of

*Encountering art can awaken the senses, not only to the value of symbolic meaning, but also transmit the rich meanings of our faith heritage.*

*The Web provides unparalleled access to visual art. Resources exist not only for expanded access to visual art, but also for learning to interpret art.*

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God], into something bigger and greater. This call is a call to know and celebrate God. Art, then, may be the best place to understand the meaning of our life in the world, or at least it is a good place to start."

3. Robert Allen, *Interpreting the Gospel* (Chalice Press, 1998), p. 141.
4. "But its function is not exhausted when the community recognizes and affirms certain complex configurations of the life of feeling. Religion needs art to orient individuals and communities, not only conceptually but also affectively, to the reality that creates and nourishes, in solitude and in community, human life." Margaret Miles, *Image*, p. 4.
5. Each is a network of arts-related sites, offering multiple resources. Concordia University hosts the "Art History Research Center" site at <http://www-fofa.concordia.ca/arth/AHRC/index.htm> which was created by the Art History Webmasters Association and The Art History Research Centre. The University of Michigan created and maintains the "Mother of All Art History Links Pages," at <http://www.umich.edu/~hartspc/histart/mother/>.
6. <http://www.christusrex.org> provides links to numerous resources, including the Vatican. Access the Sistine Chapel at <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/sistine/0-Tour.html>
7. By creating Internet resources, arts institutions and individuals have tackled an important problem from their discipline's perspective—access and unfamiliarity with art. Educational aids include, but are not limited to, art history experts who answer questions, art history departments offering online courses, and glossaries for art theory and criticism.
8. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Fortress, 1997), p. 123. For further explorations of this important concept, see Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down* (Eerdmans, 1995); Robert Allen, *Interpreting the Gospel* (Chalice Press, 1998); Tom Troeger, *Imagining a Sermon* (Abingdon 1990); and William Dyrness, *The Earth Is God's*.
9. Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out*, p. 284. "[Neil] Postman's educational proposal . . . urges schools to 'make available the products of classical art forms precisely because they are not so available and because they demand a different order of sensibility and response.' Since the Church's goal is to nourish deep sensibilities in worship participants in order to broaden our capabilities to love both God and the neighbor, we might join in Postman's campaign to use the arts for societal reform . . . although we would want to widen Postman's repertoire to be more globally and ethnically inclusive."
10. <http://metalab.unc.edu/wm/paint/auth/eyck/ghent/> for van Eyck's painting, *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb (The Chent Altarpiece)*; <http://nga.gov/pimage?367+0+2+gg3> for *The Annunciation*.
11. Allen, *Interpreting*, p. 140.
12. "But the visual arts, such as painting, graphics and sculpture seem to suffer from the Protestant legacy of theological uneasiness with the visual image—a legacy rooted, in part, in certain Protestant interpretations of the second commandment regarding graven images. The issue does not manifest itself as a condemnation of the visual arts as much as an uneasiness in legitimating them beyond a general affirmation of their importance as a testimony to the power of human creation, a source of earthly pleasure and an occasional role as a prophetic voice in the face of human injustice." Wilson Yates, *The Arts in Theological Education* (Scholars Press, 1987), p. 154. Also, Miles, *Image*, pp. 150 – 154.
13. "There are witnesses in the clouds who speak to us through this diversity of media." Tom Troeger, *Preaching While the Church is Under Reconstruction* (Abingdon, 1999), p. 21. Troeger stresses the value of visual art, as well as hymns, poetry, and drama for visionary preaching.
14. "To speak of the revelatory and sacramental power of art is to speak of its power to reveal reality," Yates, *The Arts*, p. 119f.
15. Tisdale, *Preaching*, p. 122.
16. "[Play] provides spaces in which the modern human is in search of meaning or, to adopt a Jungian phrase, 'in search of a soul.' Religion, theater, therapy, or other hybrid spaces are perhaps the few remaining forums within an increasingly technological and pragmatic society in which meaning can be created, reinvented, rearranged." Bjorn Krondorfer, *Body and*

- Bible: Interpreting and Experiencing Biblical Narratives* (Trinity Press International, 1992), p. 2. From another discipline, H. Gardner, notes that "for adults, fantasy often assumes the problem-solving functions of overt play" and when such freedom of exploration or "possibilities and schemes" is combined with the "ability to discriminate," one is "well equipped for artistic production." *The Arts*, p. 276.
17. Two interesting examples showing the value of art and play for creativity are at the New York Museum of Modern Art website. (Go to [http://artsafari.moma.org/look\\_at\\_ptg\\_and\\_sclp.html](http://artsafari.moma.org/look_at_ptg_and_sclp.html)) See also [http://artsafari.moma.org/activity\\_fantastic.html](http://artsafari.moma.org/activity_fantastic.html)) These web pages have interactive art-making processes. While the page is designed with children in mind, the ability to "play" there is not restricted to children and provides a model for creative "playfulness" online. The program helps "children develop observational skills by asking them to describe what they see. None of the questions assume knowledge about the history of art. They simply draw upon children's natural curiosity and often evoke surprising and insightful responses."
  18. Allen, *Interpreting*, p. 122. "What images come to the screen of your mind in connection with the sermon subject? Do these images pre-orient you to the focus of the sermon? . . . Do you have an intuition about where this sermon might go? Eventually you need to reflect critically on such hunches, but begin by getting them on the screen."
  19. John Drury, *Painting the Word: Christian Pictures and Their Meanings* (Yale University Press, 1999), p.42.
  20. Yates, *The Arts*, p. 155.
  21. Dawn, *Reaching Out*, p. 281–284. She asks the church to consider what resources it provides for the development, nurture, and renewal of faith, in light of media assaults and instant sensory gratification. [Neil] Postman's educational proposal . . . urges schools to "make available the products of classical art forms precisely because they are not so available and because they demand a different order of sensibility and response." Since the church's goal is to nourish deep sensibilities in worship participants in order to broaden our capabilities to love both God and the neighbor, we might join in Postman's campaign to use the arts for societal reform . . . although we would want to widen Postman's repertoire to be more globally and ethnically inclusive.
  22. "The best uses of technology enable us to teach in ways that would be otherwise impossible." Scott Cormode, "Using Computers in Theological Education: Rules of Thumb," (*Theological Education*, 36: 1 Autumn 1999), pp. 101–115.
  23. Wilson Yates' excellent study, *The Arts in Theological Education*, documents the background and status of the arts in theological education, as well as implications for future recognition of arts value for the church.
  24. "Consider Hugo van der Groes's *Adam and Eve* (before 1475). The pair stand before us, self-consciously naked. . . . The small painting is part of a small home or travel altarpiece, for the other panel of the diptych shows the *Deposition of Christ*. Thus, the scene of the Fall is paralleled with one of the Redemption like Jan van Eyck's *Altarpiece* where the role of Eve is balanced by that of the Virgin Mary." Jane Dillenger, "Eve, the Mother of All Living," *Image and Spirit*, p. 22.
  25. Quoted by H. Gardner, *The Arts and Human Development*, p. 286.
  26. Dawn, *Reaching Out*, p. 283.
  27. John Westerhoff III and John D. Eusden, *The Spiritual Life: Learning East and West* (Seabury 1982), p. 272.

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# Religious Scholarship on the Internet

BY WILLIAM F. FORE

There are hundreds of "religious" sites on the Internet, but very few provide the full text of scholarly writings. One site, however, has been doing this for more than three years: Religion Online (<http://www.religion-online.org>). And it has had amazing success.

Religion Online is a library of hundreds of chapters, monographs, speeches, and articles, presenting many different points of view, but all written from the perspective of sound scholarship and available to anyone with access to the Internet. The response thus far has exceeded all expectations. At present there are 1,600 entries, with more than 50,000 "hits" coming in monthly. Documents are being downloaded at the rate of more than one each minute, 24 hours a day. And the site continues to grow by about 20 percent a month.

Viewers may read the material online, or print it without restriction, though quotations should be cited. The site provides the writings of more than 200 authors from many countries, including South Korea, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Australia, India, Thailand, China, and Indonesia. Each document contains a short summary of the text and a brief biography of the author. A list of books written by the author and links to other sites are included for those who wish further exploration.

Subject areas include: Old and New Testament, Theology, Ethics, History of Religion, Comparative Religions, Sociology of Religion, Religion and Communication, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Homiletics, Liturgy and Worship, Missiology, and Religious Education.

There are three ways a researcher can find the right material. First, each subject area lists the items available by title with a brief description. Second, there is a listing by authors. And third, there is a search program which allows the inquirer to find files which contain any word or string of words. For example, if a person puts into the search the words "Kenneth Scott Latourette," the program instantly lists all available articles and books by Dr. Latourette, as well as all articles which mention his name.

One of the major sources of material is *The Christian Century* magazine, which has granted permission for Religion Online to use any of its

articles printed over the last 50 years. More than 500 *Century* articles are already online. In addition, there are some 80 books and hundreds of articles by authors, including Karl Barth, C.H. Dodd, Martin Marty, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Georgia Harkness, Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, William Placher, Russell Spittler, and John Howard Yoder. Only material is put online for which copyright permission has been obtained or where the material is out of print. With so many quality books going out of print each year, this still offers a huge selection from which to choose.

Here are two examples of how you could use Religion Online: First, let's say you are preparing a sermon for Sunday. You are using the Lectionary for the fifth week after Easter, where one of the recommended scriptures is 1 John 4:7-21 ("Brothers, love one another").

On Religion Online's home page, you click "Search Religion Online" and the program presents an empty box. In the box, type "1 John," click on "Search," and the program quickly finds ten articles, all containing the words "1 John." There is a short summary of each article to help you choose the ones you want.

You click on the article "Is There Such a Thing as New Testament Ethics?" by William Spohn, and the full text immediately comes on your screen. But *where* in the article is 1 John? To find it you use your "Find" option. Click on "Edit," then "Find in Page," then type "1 John"—and there is the reference! As you read, you see Dr. Spohn mentions that 1 John is a favorite text of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Good idea. You go back to the home page and click on "Index by Authors," then click on Bonhoeffer, and there is a beautiful poem Bonhoeffer wrote called "Who Am I?" which you could use in your sermon. You can print this page, or any number of pages, for future reference.

The search found nine other references. Click on another: "Touch and See" by F. Dean Lueking, and there is a helpful meditation on acceptance, encouragement, trust, and love. Click on "Now What?" by Stanley Harakas, and there is a commentary on the entire set of scriptures recommended for the fifth Sunday after Easter—including 1 John.

And that's not all. Go back to Religion Online's opening page and click on "Recommended Sites." There you will find a linked site called "Text This

Religion Online is a library of hundreds of chapters, monographs, speeches, and articles . . . all written from the perspective of sound scholarship, and available to anyone with access to the Internet.



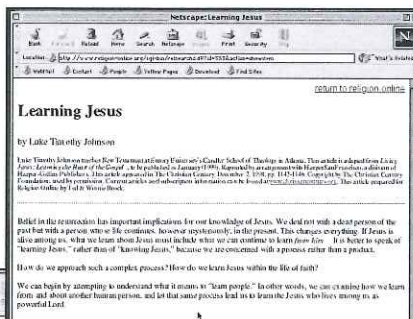
Week." When you click on the name, the Internet takes you to the actual site, where you discover a list of many other resources related to your text—including a reference to Chapter 22 of Paul Tillich's *The New Being*, titled "Love Is Stronger than Death." When you click on it, you are instantly returned to Religion Online, which contains the entire chapter for you to read or print! (Religion Online and Text This Week are cross-linked).

Now here is a second example. A visitor comes to you with a question about the authority of the Bible: How should we accept it—as literally true, as just a bunch of stories, or what? You will have books in your own library that will help. But you also have many resources at Religion Online.



the Universities of Bonn, Frankfurt, Kiel, Mainz and Marburg in Germany, Waseda in Tokyo, and Oxford in England.

The feedback from users is very interesting. A student in Beijing E-mailed that he was writing a doctoral dissertation on Paul Tillich and expressed his appreciation to Religion Online for providing him with material he could not find anywhere in China, even at the Imperial Library. A professor at the University of Birmingham in England



recently wrote that he was linking Religion Online to his student guide to New Testament studies. A student at Shahid Beheshi University in Tehran, Iran, recently contacted Religion Online for references to assist in his study of "the concept of religion."

The site has achieved remarkable success with the help of only seven volunteer

editors. All but one are retired ministers, several of them working with their wives. They scan and then digitize the material, taking care to leave the copy as close as possible to the original. Then the material is converted into HTML (hypertext) language and placed into a master computer in Palo Alto, California. From there it can be accessed from any Internet site in the world.

The great promise of the Internet is being realized in a modest way through Religion Online. The costs are minimal—there are no charges, no advertising, and all who work on the project donate their time. Their only compensation is the knowledge that throughout the world people are able to have access to material that otherwise would be completely unobtainable, and that through this service many thousands are deepening their understanding of religion.

#### ADDENDUM

Religion Online can be found on the Internet at <http://www.religion-online.org>. Persons interested in volunteering their time to edit, or in submitting documents for inclusion, should contact William F. Fore by E-mail at [fore@home.com](mailto:fore@home.com), by fax at 760-839-3985, or by mail to 557 La Calma, Escondido CA 92029, USA.

**WILLIAM F. FORE, Ph.D.**, former president of the World Association for Christian Communication, currently lives in Southern California. In 1997, when Fore taught at the United Theological Seminary in Bangalore, India, he discovered that books were almost impossible for students and professors to obtain. A single copy printed in the United States cost about one-sixth of a professor's monthly salary. So he helped the seminary purchase a computer and taught the professors and students how to get on the Internet. When he returned to the U.S., he began Religion Online.



OCTOBER 2000

# Creating a Successful Congregational Web Site

BY THOMAS H. WALKER

Congregational web sites have become a new kind of litmus test in ecclesial circles these days. The pressure from fellow clergy, members of the congregation, and the popular press has ministers scrambling to try and get up a "WWW" something. There is some justification for this. The advent of the Internet and web technology represents the most significant advance in communication technology since Gutenberg's press. The church must rise to the formidable potential of this new medium, but the reasons need to serve the true mission of the church.

This is why a congregation and its leaders should create a web site that gives it shape and focus. Often congregations put up web sites because of the social pressure to establish a presence on the Internet. These web sites frequently provide only the same kind of information found in the Sunday bulletin or monthly newsletter—that is, information about what is happening in the church building and congregational events. Little, if anything, is done to directly engage the online visitor. However, if the reason for the web site is to enable the congregation to communicate its understanding of God's Word in an interactive way to people of all cultures and creeds amid the fastest growing marketplace in human history, then a very different kind of web site will emerge. It will be a web site that supports the congregation's expression of the gospel.

#### Why Churches Create Web Sites

So why should a congregation go to the effort of creating a web site? How can it become a venue for mission? There are at least three really good reasons for a congregation to put time and energy into making sure their web site does more than alleviate the social pressure to "get something up" on the Web. These reasons are:

- A web site can become an important vehicle for strengthening parish communication.
- A web site can become a tool for improving ties with the greater church.
- Wise use of a web site and Internet technology can provide an opportunity for the local congregation to engage in worldwide evangelism.

#### A. Strengthening Parish Communication

The health of a congregation is often a reflection of its internal system of communication. The larger and more complex a congregation becomes, the more energy and care needs to go into ensuring clear communication. The World Wide Web is one of the most promising communication tools available today.

Most congregational web sites make use of information from bulletin announcements and newsletters, often posted online in their entirety. However, congregations are beginning to make tremendous progress in parish communications by focusing on the Web as their first form of communication. Its immediacy and fluidity become the best place to get important news and information documented quickly. Once posted to the Web, then announcements and newsletters can be easily drawn from the web site and put out in printed form. The Web can also complete the life cycle for parish communications in a way that leaves them continuously available to the congregation. All public communications, such as newsletters, sermons, bulletins, annual reports, etc., can be archived in the web site and be accessible through menu-driven systems or a full text search.

Congregations live their lives as a series of events that shape the communal identity. Just keeping track of the schedule is a difficult task in most churches. An online calendar is another good example of how the Web can truly enhance parish communication. On the Web the schedule of congregational events becomes an effective way for leaders to keep the latest information posted so that members can quickly verify dates and scan for events that interest them. Links from the calendar allow viewers to quickly access further information about events. Important communication tools, such as instructions and directions, can be woven through web links into the fabric of the web calendar. Forms required to support events can be formatted for printing or can process the desired information interactively through the Web. Pictures and write-ups from past events can be linked into the calendar following the event to create a kind of multimedia history of the life of the congregation, which can share valuable insights for newcomers and long-time members alike.

Advanced web facilities can enable a consid-

A web site must support the congregation's expression of the gospel.

Religion Online can become your second library—and one with powerful search capabilities that can help you find what you want, when you want it.

erable amount of actual church business to take place through the web site. Sub-webs can be used to support the work of committees, organizations, and departments. Web discussion engines can allow groups to work through issues with fewer meetings and better documentation. Links can be created that enable congregational members to send prayer requests to the pastor or a prayer team. A daily devotional can be posted to encourage members in the development of daily meditation. Members might be encouraged to set their web browsers at home and work to load the congregation's daily devotional page first. In many important ways a well-managed congregational web site will gently integrate congregational communication into the everyday lives of members.

#### **B. Improving Ties with the Greater Church**

In the future, as congregations develop web sites to facilitate their work, it will become increasingly possible to search the Web for exciting initiatives being reported in other churches' web sites. The Web will become a primary way that church leaders share ideas with each other and begin to communicate about more effective ways to develop congregational mission. The same tools that enhance parish communication will be used to enable congregations to collaborate where they share interest and common need. Web sites will be used to link multicongregational undertakings, giving them both a communication tool and a symbol of unity in collaborative ventures.

Organizations of affiliated churches and denominational structures will find the Web a valuable way to share information and support common work. Many church headquarters have been working hard to develop high-quality web facilities that serve the mission of the church and provide links between the various expressions of the denomination. With the Web, however, collaboration can rapidly progress beyond traditional denominational lines. Partnership can be expressed easily on an international, ecumenical basis as congregations from around the world with common goals use the Internet to find each other and establish shared mission.

It is possible to imagine that, as congregations, judicatories, denominations, and worldwide church organizations manage information through the Web, the church will be able to globally express itself in a powerful new way. But, as expansive as this vision may be, it must begin through the creation of web sites by local congregations, enhanced by their members' ability to adapt to this new method of communication.

#### **C. Engaging in Worldwide Evangelism from a Local Congregation**

As more and more churches realize that the Internet offers them an opportunity to directly answer the Great Commission, web sites and other Internet technologies will enable local congregations to "make disciples from all nations." The Internet is a splendid mode for a local congregation to reach out with the good news. People encounter a wide variety of strongly stated messages on the Internet. There is no stigma associated with speaking one's mind on the Web. Communicating faith is quite acceptable on the Internet. People who visit a web site feel safe, can leave when they want, and are more likely to pay attention while they are there.

The church web site is the cornerstone of a good strategy for witness through the Internet. However, the web site must bear witness to faith and directly share community. Faith stories shared by real people through text, audio, and/or video show the congregation's commitment to its belief. These stories with pictures of people sharing community together help the visitor to hear the witness, while the gentleness of the Web's passivity enables them to explore the beginning of their faith at their own pace. A site must be rich with good-quality material attractively arranged and clearly organized. Religious language must be minimized or very carefully defined. Every effort must be made to engage the visitor through an exploration of faith in daily life, not just pious meandering.

However, to be effective in witness through the Internet, a congregation must be willing to go beyond the Web. Web sites can stimulate visitors to think, but there needs to be a way that they can begin to interact with the community of faith. Inviting visitors to share questions or comments through an E-mail link becomes the perfect opening for a conversation. With care and permission, other members of the congregation can be brought into the conversation and a kind of community can be formed. Internet chat allows "real time" conversations that help to develop lasting relationships and more spontaneous interactions. Online learning techniques can be brought to bear so that people can acquire a sense of a learning community as their faith develops.

It is important to remember that online community is different from the physical community of a congregation. Face-to-face community is often held together by charismatic, articulate leadership that has roots in the physical presence of individuals. Online community actually favors those who write well, are thoughtful, and are kind. On the Internet, shyness is less of a barrier and can actually enable empathetic caring and witness. Age, gender, race, physical impairment, etc., are not nearly the barriers to online community that they are in the

average local congregation. A faithful venture in witness through the Internet may be able to draw on a congregation's untapped resources and release new power for mission.

For the sake of faith's development, the physical Christian community, beyond the virtual community enabled through the Internet, must engage believers. Even so, Internet technology can play an important role as evangelism teams search the Web for compatible congregations in regions where new friends live. E-mail becomes a good way to introduce seekers to new communities and to support them in their transition into the church. As these activities proceed, a natural network of relationships builds up as members of different congregations collaborate via the Internet to support hospitality to newcomers. Can we imagine a new era in which congregations join in shared mission to their communities and the world through the intelligent use of Internet technologies?

#### **Summary**

Why a congregation's web site is created has a lot to do with its long-term impact. Many church leaders are beginning to think that the Web may become a crucial tool for enhancing communication within the parish. Some are realizing the Web's potential for linking all parts of the church together in new and exciting ways. There is new thinking abroad that there may be a new way to reach out directly with a witness to the faith of the church through the Internet. Each of these reasons, or a combination of them, gives ample justification for a congregational web site that will endure and serve the mission of the community it expresses.

#### **Key Strategies for Creating a Church Web Site**

Once a congregation sees how a web site serves its true mission, it is much easier to create something that will have value. Much has been written about the technical details of creating a web site. What follows here are some strategic considerations that will help in bringing such tools and techniques together in developing or redesigning a congregational web site. In this section we will address these key issues:

- A. Developing Information Structure
- B. Issues for "Look" and "Feel"
- C. Providing Clear Navigation

#### **A. Developing Information Structure**

It is the underlying information structure that gives web sites their shape and usefulness. This is the most frequently overlooked aspect of web design. Because the Web is such a flexible medium,

people tend to underestimate the importance of organizing the information carefully. Designers should think of a web site's flexibility like a parachute. Creating an information structure is like folding and packing a parachute. Quality information structure has a great deal of influence over how it will unfold and deploy for the user. Like a parachute, a web site needs to work right the first time it is used. Second chances are rare.

The most important task in developing information structure is to envision the web site from the perspective of the visitor. Often church leaders create the site's information structure based on how the congregation's ministry is organized. In other words, a section focused on worship, a section on youth ministry, a section on adult education, etc. This is not a bad way to organize information. However, it may not be readily apparent to the visitor how to get answers to fundamental questions such as, How do I telephone the pastor? What is it like to be a member of this congregation? How do I answer my children's questions about God? The best kind of web structure will anticipate the questions and information needs of the visitor.

Of course developing a visitor-oriented structure would be much easier if everyone came to the web site from the same perspective. Because they don't, it is vital to think of potential web site users as general constituency groups. Although these vary from congregation to congregation, they will probably include constituencies such as the church staff, members of the congregation, potential members, other church professionals, seekers, and casual visitors. No information structure will meet all the needs of these groups. However, by focusing on the constituencies they most want to serve, designers will greatly enhance the overall effectiveness of the web site.

#### **B. Issues for "Look" and "Feel"**

Today's leaders are very aware that Sunday visitors are beginning to form an opinion about the congregation even before they enter the church building. The impression left by a person's first visit to a congregation is crucial. Is parking easy to find? Is the church facility attractive? Are the grounds well kept? Are people friendly? Is the sanctuary inviting? Do signs help the newcomers find what they seek? Increasingly, the first impression of a web site may be just as critical as the one formed at the door of the church. Does the "look" and "feel" of the web site really portray the image the congregation wants to project?

To understand the strategic significance of *look* and *feel*, one must know that the Web is designed to adapt information as best as it can to the software and hardware of each user. Because users have so many different kinds of software and

The best  
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Wise leaders will draw on the help of experienced web designers to set up the basic parameters and standard practices for their web site.

hardware, it is almost impossible to determine exactly what every visitor will see. Well-designed web sites bear this in mind and use a number of different strategies in designing *look* and *feel* to make sure that what each visitor sees is pleasing and functional. Three key issues need to be accommodated. First has to do with the browser the visitor is using. Second is the screen resolution produced by the monitor the visitor is viewing. Third is the information transfer speed available to the user.

The browser software determines what advanced capabilities employed on the web site will actually be usable by the visitor. For instance, a wonderful little animation may cause an error in some users' browsers. As a rule, visitors will assume that something is wrong with the web site and will not realize that their out-of-date browser is causing the problem. It is important to make sure the web site doesn't demand the latest and greatest browser and that it is compatible to older versions of the software. Also, a web site should describe what version of browser is required for optimal viewing and provide users with links to the places from which updated browsers can be downloaded. At this point, designing for a so-called 4.0 browser is about right.

Screen resolution is a continuous problem for web design. Many workstations used for creating web sites have large high-resolution monitors. What looks great on the designer's monitor can be almost unusable on the tiny, low-resolution screens of some visitors. It is vital to take steps to plan for low resolution, especially with the increasing development of web-enabled appliances such as WebTV and Palmtop devices. This means paying attention to how graphics are used. The display width of the screen must be controlled. A technique called "frames" can also cause problems because the frames take up so much screen space that they frustrate users with low-resolution monitors. And finally, a carefully developed color palette can help to ensure that the user's monitor is displaying the intended color. Designing for 800 x 600 pixel resolution on a 15" monitor is today's de facto standard.

The third issue that greatly affects the *look* and *feel* from the users' perspective is the speed of their connection to the Internet. Most web sites today assume that the lowest rate of speed is a 28k modem. This is a fairly safe assumption throughout most of the urban and industrialized world. But in many parts of the world, and even in some parts of rural America, speeds can be lower than this for a variety of reasons. This is important because certain types of information, such as graphics, audio, video, etc., require a very long download if the connection speed is slow. Users tend to become annoyed with long waits

and will quickly move on to other sites. The most common problems arise from the use of overly large graphic images that automatically load when the browser calls for the page. Careful use of graphics can be the single best way to enhance the *look* and *feel* of a web site. Congregations that are serious about reaching all around the world should even consider keeping up a separate parallel "text only" site that leaves out the graphics. The additional effort may pay off in the delight and return visits from users in parts of the world that cannot access heavy multimedia-laden sites.

Because of the technical nature of these issues, it is beyond the scope of this article to describe in detail how to create a pleasing *look* and *feel* that accommodates the variations in browsers, screen resolution, and connection speeds. These techniques are well documented in the large body of "how to" literature for web development that has lately come to market. Also, wise leaders will draw on the help of experienced web designers to set up the basic parameters and standard practices for their web site.

### C. Providing Clear Navigation

Once there is a well-thought-out plan for the information structure in a web site in place and the basic parameters for quality *look* and *feel* are set, it is time to carefully consider how navigation will work. Navigation refers to the method or system that enables users to find desired information by moving about the web site. Common elements in a navigation system include such things as navigation bars, drop-down link lists, site indexes, and search engines. There are many things that can be done to provide a way to move around a web site. Suggested below are three keys to a successful navigation system worth keeping in mind when developing a church web site:

The first key to a successful navigation scheme is *simplicity*. Overly large graphics or clever animations slow users by forcing them to wait for these large elements to load. If they are part of the overall navigation scheme, they will slow down the site's performance page after page. Large control frames often frustrate users by obstructing their view, requiring them to constantly scroll in order to see the whole page. Icons employed to help users navigate to various portions of a site must be very clear or should include text so that users don't have to guess what the designer has in mind. When the Web was first created, most navigation was simple words linked to various areas of the Web. It has been amazing to watch the fashion preferences of the Web return again and again to a simple text-based navigation system. Many designers believe that with the artistic use of "tables," text-based navigation will always be the best because of its

simplicity, clarity, and speed.

The second key to a successful navigation scheme is *consistency*. Users should be able to anticipate precisely where basic site navigation will appear on any given page and how it will work to get them around the site. For instance, the navigation bar should be one of the first things to take shape as the browser forms the page. This allows users to browse the site quickly and efficiently. Users find it irritating to wait while a whole page loads before the navigation system comes up. Or worse, visitors have to hunt around a page to find the navigation, which is appearing in different places on different pages throughout the site. It can also be quite effective to have the navigation bar change slightly to reinforce the identity of the page that is presently being displayed. For instance, a navigation bar using a button motif appears to have the "home" button remain pressed down when at the home page. However, it is important to do this carefully so that the consistent appearance of the navigational scheme is not subverted.

The third key to a successful navigation scheme that we will mention here is to pay attention to a fundamental rule called the "seven-plus-or-minus-three" rule. This rule arises from the frustration users experience when they encounter page after page filled with links and options. Good navigational design includes making sure that the number of options at any given point is clear, consistent, and reasonably limited. Over time it has been discovered that four to ten options on any given page is about the right range. Fewer options seem too confining and more options become confusing. Some special pages (such as site indexes and directories) are obvious exceptions to this, but the *seven-plus-or-minus-three rule* will greatly enhance the overall quality of navigation in the web site.

### Summary

In order to develop web sites that truly serve the needs of congregations, it is vital for leaders not to be mired in the techniques and options that commonly assault those endeavoring to create a web site. Instead, we would urge decision-makers to focus their thinking in three areas. First is the development of a good information structure that is designed with the needs of the site visitor in mind. The second area deals with securing the talent and support to make sure the site's *look* and *feel* will be useful to the broadest range of visitors, regardless of the disturbing variation in software, hardware, and connectivity speeds that they may have. And finally, congregational web site developers need to provide clear, consistent, and carefully tuned navigation that supports easy repeated use of the web site by all constituencies.

### Maintaining a Web Site That Serves

The single most common failing of congregational web sites is that they are not adequately maintained. It would be better for the congregation to not have a web site than to have one that has fallen months behind on maintenance and updating. The decision about how a site will be updated and maintained should be made at the same time the site is created. It is vital for the sake of its mission that a congregation put into place the resources to adequately maintain a web site. We urge that congregational leaders carefully consider the following issues as they enter the process of creating a church web site:

- A. Setting Up a Maintainable Web Site
- B. Providing Human Resources
- C. Developing Visitor Confidence

#### A. Setting Up a Maintainable Web Site

Most church staff or volunteers will not have the expertise they need to develop a web site that will be easily maintainable over the long haul. A congregation that wants to develop a high quality, long-term facility should consider employing a consulting web designer to assist in developing the web site. This does not mean that a congregation should turn its web site over to a web development company. Far from it. The purpose of hiring a consultant is to design a web site that the congregation itself can maintain and manage.

Another important step in providing for the future of the web site is to go to the effort of deciding on and securing an Internet domain name for the congregation. This is so that users can find the site at something such as "www.yourchurchname.org" and not at something like "www.joesbar&isp.com/~yourchurchname." Having a domain name will not only make the site easier to find, it will ensure that the web site address will not need to be changed with each new web service provider.

#### B. Providing Human Resources

Congregations choosing to develop web sites should make at least the same level of human resource commitment to it that they do to the Sunday bulletin or monthly newsletter. Somebody must be put in charge of the web site and be expected to work at it on a regular basis. Most congregations should expect this task to be carried out by a member of the church staff.

Congregations that expect to make the Web a strong aspect of their mission will need to make sure that congregational leaders are continuously increasing their understanding of and commitment to web-based processes. This means that staff and leadership will need to make regular use of

The decision about how a site will be updated and maintained should be made at the same time the site is created.

For a web site to have the desired impact on mission, it must be enduring and reliable.

the Web for carrying out church functions and expect to spend time furthering their understanding of the impact of Internet technologies on our culture. Some of the best ways to accomplish this is through regular training of church staff in the technical abilities they will need to make the Web a natural part of their work. This way the Web becomes integrated into the normal leadership processes of the congregation.

### C. Developing Visitor Confidence

The most important reason for careful maintenance is that it helps to develop a high level of confidence among the site's visitors. The key to this is to make the web site the first place interested folk can find information. Announcements and calendar notations should appear on the Web as soon as possible. Changes should be clearly marked so that visitors develop the impression that the information is fresh and interactive. Key aspects of the home page should change at least weekly and should provide valuable information that will help visitors want to return for future installments. Meditations, daily devotions, prayer concerns, etc., in the form of regular installments, may furnish this kind of immediacy and interactivity on a congregational web site.

However, it is not just what is added to the web site that keeps it fresh, but also what is taken away. The judicious pruning of old material is a crucial aspect of effective web maintenance. Web sites tend to grow in amazing ways. Once information is no longer useful, it should be quickly removed. Some information is useful in a historic sense or will be used on a periodic basis. This kind of information should be moved to an archive or storage area where it can be found later when needed. Often these archives themselves, when combined with a search engine, become one of the most useful and interactive parts of a web site.

### Summary

The long-term serviceability of a web site has a great deal to do with how it is maintained. It first must be set up in a way that is maintainable. This often requires the help of a consultant or web expert. Then it is crucial that the web site is resourced by staff and volunteers who will regularly keep its information up-to-date. Finally, it is vital to develop confidence in visitors that

they will find fresh, reliable information for ongoing congregational processes on the Web.

### Conclusion

In spite of the constant pressure in our day and age to signal a congregation's presence to the world through a church web site, such endeavors should not be entered into lightly. A congregation should examine its motives for creating a church web site. There will not be a good outcome if the only reason is a vague idea about establishing a web presence to keep up with the "trends." This motivation will likely result in an inadequately resourced web site and portray a poor image for the parish. However, if the congregation can envision carrying out its mission through better parish communications, closer linking with the greater church, and through efforts to witness to faith through the Internet, then the Web may become a vital and powerful aspect of the parish's work.

The actual development of the congregational web site requires some careful planning in at least three arenas. First, careful attention must be paid to how the site's information structure is organized. This underlying structure is crucial to making the site understandable for visitors and maintainable for the congregation. Second, the way it appears to users rests to a large degree on some rather technical issues relating to the nature of the Web itself. To be effective, congregations will have to develop or employ the talent to make the *look* and *feel* of their web site usable by the great variety of software, hardware, and connectivity rates that will access it. Finally, navigation must be made simple, consistent, and carefully tuned to the needs of actual users.

In conclusion, it must be reiterated that for a web site to have the desired impact on mission, it must be enduring and reliable. Successful congregations will allocate resources to have their web sites designed so that they are easily maintainable. They will put staff and volunteers in place to ensure that the information is fresh. And, finally, they will use the web site as the primary place to locate the latest and freshest information about the life and work of the congregation.

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# "So How Can the Internet Make Me a Better Leader or a More Faithful Servant?"

BY SCOTT CORMODE

Three old friends from seminary were reminiscing over lunch at the China Garden restaurant in Burbank. "You know me, I am a techno-geek," Kate Sanders said with a laugh. The pastor of the Ridge View Presbyterian Church enjoyed poking fun at herself and bantering with friends. Always ready to tell a story, she cemented her techno-geek status by saying, "When I started seminary in 1981, I bought an electric typewriter, a Royal Aristocrat. I was so proud of that thing. Of course, in six months, it was obsolete. I typed about four papers on it before my friend Barry got one of the first generation Apple computers." Then she shook her head and pointed to her oversized purse and said, "I've probably written more words into my Palm Pilot by now than I ever typed on that clunky, old Royal."

"I had just the opposite experience," Morris Wilcox said to Kate. Indeed, they even looked like opposites: she, a large white woman with a disheveled manner, and he, a dapper black man with an earnest intensity. "I started ministry without needing to know anything about computers. But, hey, I'm a Pentecostal," he said with a lighthearted wink. "We don't script our sermons. After seminary, I was working in the heart of the city. And nobody in my neighborhood had their own computer back then. Then I started working with city officials on the economic redevelopment project. And everything had to be typed up on a computer and faxed. Then, after

awhile, all the day-to-day communication shifted to E-mail. At some point, I got a cell phone. Then we started planting the new church. In the beginning, we had 12 members—but we already had voice mail, a fax machine, a cell phone, and an E-mail address. If we were doing it today, we'd probably even have a web page. Now I can't imagine ministering in the city without being wired."

"You two amaze me," said Lucas Stewart, staring at his former classmates. "I still don't know how to use E-mail. My secretary has an account that the congregation can use if necessary. And if I really need something mailed from home, I suppose my daughter can do it." The Baptist pastor paused for a moment, groping for an idea.

"But it's not E-mail that worries me," Lucas continued. "I'll learn that some day. I am more interested in the Internet. I see all that my kids can do. There's a lot of information out there. And I keep hearing about how business is being transformed. Here's the deal. I'm really of two minds. Over here, I worry about the church being left behind by all this Internet stuff. But then, over there, I look at the hype and wonder if it *is* all just hype. I mean the substance of my ministry is telling people that God loves them. It has to be face to face. I still have to sit with people in the hospital and attend countless meetings. I can't do that online. For me, being a pastor is about reminding people that God will remain faithful to them." He brightened up, like a man who had



"After seminary, I was working in the heart of the city. And nobody in my neighborhood had their own computer back then."

## Using Stories to Learn

The accompanying article is what might be called "real-life fiction" to the extent that it tries to capture real-to-life situations in fictional settings. What are the strengths and weaknesses of using a narrative format?

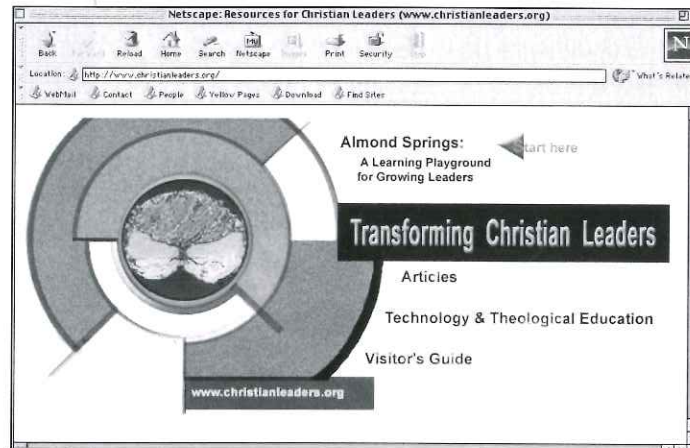
At its best, a fictional format is multilayered, in that it captures not only the author's main point, but also folds in various feelings and counter-arguments along the way. At its worst, it can sound like an infomercial where wide-eyed dupes marvel at the wonders of some modern snake oil.

There are, however, some good scholarly reasons for employing a narrative methodology. For example, Roger Schank has shown that professionals (like doctors, lawyers, and ministers) retain lessons and learn them more quickly when the lessons arrive as stories. Likewise, John Seely Brown maintains that transformative learning, especially in the workplace, comes through storytelling.

Perhaps the best reason to use the form, however, is that the medium matches the message. This an article about the power of stories to form leaders written in the form of a story about leaders. Exegeting life, in this instance, comes down to exegeting stories.

finally found his car keys. "Yeah, this is it. This is what I mean. My ministry is about service, and it's about leadership. What I want to know from you two is simply this: How can the Internet help my ministry—my people-first, face-to-face, practice-what-you-preach ministry? That's what I want to know. Can the Internet make me a better leader or a more faithful servant? Or is it all just window dressing?"

"I see where you're going," Morris said with an intrigued smile. "People do have to come first. But



there is a particular skill that we need if we're really going to help these people who come first. It's not enough to sit through those countless meetings. I know you. You're always looking for some way to remind people in the midst of those meetings that God's faithfulness changes the way that they do their business. How many times have I heard you say that this is not a bank, it's a church? You derive a particular energy out of those different times when crises are raining down on you."

"Yes, there are moments when my ministry seems most alive," Lucas said, leaning forward. "And they usually happen at the times when I'm not completely sure how to proceed. I'm thinking, for example, of the first time that someone confessed to me that he had to tell his wife that he had been unfaithful. It was a terrible moment. I was devastated. But I was also energized at the same time. I knew that this was exactly why I was called into ministry—to be with people at just such a time as that."

Kate jumped back into the fray. "What you're talking about is vocation. It's a calling. It's that feeling of responsibility and joy—of uncertainty and confidence."

"Exactly," Lucas continued, "but you still haven't answered my question. I would like to think that I can improve the way that I handle those moments—that I can become more adept at figuring out what to do the next time one of those crises leaps up at me. And you two keep telling me how wonderful the Internet is. So I want to know if

the piles of information on the Web can help me. Can it prepare me for those moments when my calling is most alive?"

"I have two answers for you," Morris said in his cool, proficient manner. "First, what you crave is wisdom, not information. And it's not just you. It's laypeople as well as church leaders. None of us want smug solutions or easy answers to complicated questions. Ministry is not like being a technician, where you can just follow the instructions, and everything turns out all right. It's a craft—a craft that has to be cultivated through patience and practice. That's where wisdom comes in. Lucas, in that moment you just described (when your calling is most alive), you don't want information, you want wisdom."

"So you're saying that the Internet can't help me become more reflective," Lucas said with a shrug, "because it can't teach wisdom. It can only dole out information."

"Not so fast, there. Let me finish," Morris said. Lucas raised his hands in the universal sign of surrender. "You're right, you're right. You said you had two points to make. Go on," Morris continued.

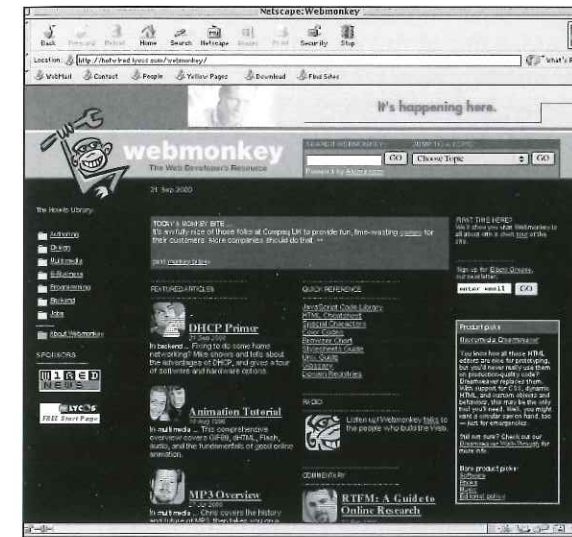
"So the real question becomes, Can the Web teach wisdom to church leaders? I think it can. And I even have a web site that you might want to visit. But first, let me tell you a story about my 12-year-old daughter Naomi."

"That's right," Kate interrupted, "your girls are named Ruth and Naomi. I love that." Morris laughed, "Yeah, my wife said we couldn't have a third because we'd have to name her 'Orpah'—and that sounds too much like a talk show host." Kate chuckled, "You know, of course, how Oprah got her name?" "Yeah," Morris started to say. But then Lucas cleared his throat and with mock indignation declared, "Meanwhile, back at the conversation, I'm waiting on why Naomi's story is going to make me appreciate the Internet."

"Okay, okay," Morris said. "Last spring, Naomi had to do a report for her science class on botany. So she decided to write about 'Why Peonies Won't Grow in My Backyard.' My first question was, 'What are peonies?' I got the 'Oh, Dad!' look, and then Naomi pointed to a poster of enormous white flowers that hangs in her room. Anyway, she got on

#### Useful Web Sites

- Webmonkey ([www.webmonkey.com](http://www.webmonkey.com))
- Jakob Nielsen ([www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com))  
Ten Good Deeds in Web Design  
How People Read on the Web  
How to Write for the Web
- Christian Leaders ([www.christianleaders.org](http://www.christianleaders.org))
- Religion Online ([www.religion-online.org](http://www.religion-online.org))



the Web and learned about 'hardiness zones' at [garden.com](http://garden.com) and then she found an article in *Fine Gardening*. Apparently, there are whole web pages devoted to peonies. She even E-mailed an arboretum back east and got an answer on something about soil acidity from a helpful gardener. But here's my point. Naomi did not just get encyclopedia knowledge on the Web. She found wisdom from green-thumb gardeners. And it's just that kind of wisdom that I think you are looking for, Lucas—wisdom about ministry."

"Oh, but wisdom alone is not enough," Kate responded. "Knowledge and wisdom have to go together. In fact, I usually have to gain a certain amount of knowledge before I am ready to hear the wisdom. It's like when I wanted to learn how to create web pages. I went to visit my friends, the Webmonkeys."

"Wait a second," Lucas exclaimed. "The Webmonkeys?" "Yeah, the site is at [www.webmonkey.com](http://www.webmonkey.com) and they are not really my friends. But I think of them that way. It's the best place I know on the Web to learn how to create a web site or how to improve your web skills. Anyway, I went to Webmonkey and took their free tutorials to learn the basic knowledge I needed to create a web page. Then I took their DreamWeaver tutorial. [DreamWeaver is a web-authoring tool, kind of like a word processor that spits out web pages.] And once I learned DreamWeaver, I could experiment with making a web page for my church. Then, after a while, I was ready to learn more. But only then was I ready for wisdom (as opposed to knowledge). I found a site called [www.useit.com](http://www.useit.com) where a guy named Jakob Nielsen writes wise columns on how to make your web site more usable. I learned a lot from him. But I needed the knowledge about web design before the wisdom about making web pages more usable would make sense to me."

"Okay, I'm convinced that the Web can give me

wisdom as well as knowledge," Lucas said as he took the last of the Kung Pao Chicken. "But what about ministry wisdom? You said, Morris, that you had a web site that I could try out. What did you have in mind?"

"Well, it's a relatively new site called [www.christianleaders.org](http://www.christianleaders.org)," Morris said. "What happens there is this: You go to the site and you begin reading a series of stories, like episodes of a TV show. The episodes all take place within a single congregation called the First Church of Almond Springs, California. And you kinda walk around in the shoes of the pastor, named Charlotte Robinson. [I'm told that when Richard Mouw first saw the web page, he dubbed it 'Charlotte's Web Site.'] Anyway, the stories deal with typical ministry situations—the kind of moments that Lucas described—when a pastor has to decide what to do next."

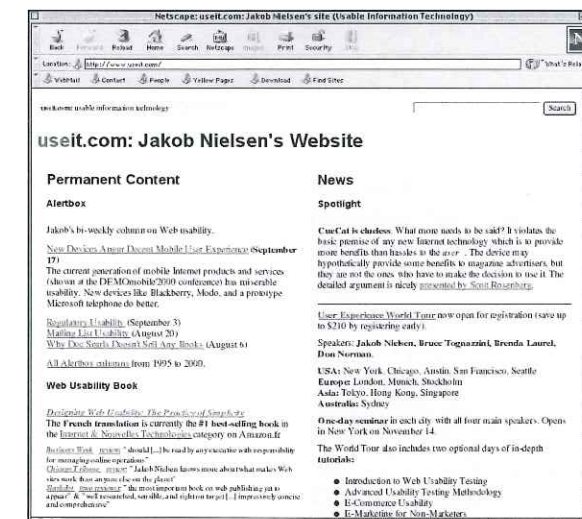
Lucas looked unconvinced. "So stories are interesting. But how will that help me grow as a leader?"

"Because of the resources that are attached to the episodes," Morris replied. "Each episode has material that is supposed to help you interpret what is going on in the scene. And by helping you figure out the situation, it helps you think about your own experiences."

"Oh, I see where this is going," Kate said.

"There are lots of articles out there that say that people learn best when they need it most. So if the site puts me in a position where I am at someone's deathbed, then I am primed to learn about death, dying, and grief counseling."

"So tell me about the resources that this [christianleaders.org](http://christianleaders.org) is supposed to have," Lucas prompted.



"Well, if I remember right, there are three or four different kinds of interpretative resources," Morris recalled. "There are obvious ones, like articles. Every episode brings up some set of issues—issues like conflict resolution or planning a

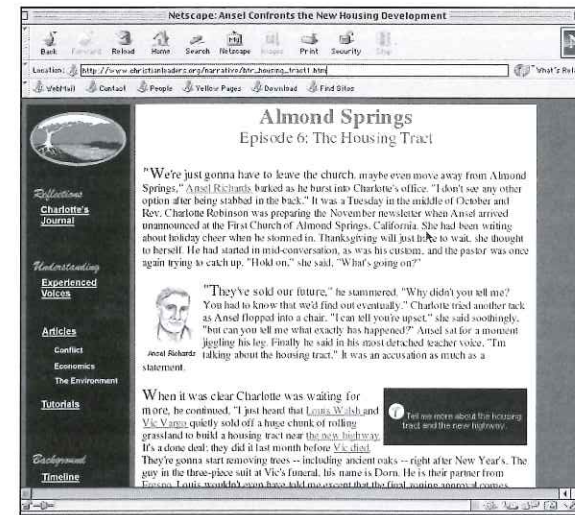


*"Knowledge and wisdom have to go together. In fact, I usually have to gain a certain amount of knowledge before I am ready to hear the wisdom."*

worship service. And in the sidebar next to the scene there is a list of articles about conflict or whatever the issues are. So just when you can picture a conflict scenario, there are conflict articles there to interpret it."

"That makes sense," Lucas said, hesitating. "Articles interpreting stories. There is a certain usefulness there. But there is not much there in the way of wisdom."

"Well, you know how my daughter Naomi



*"The episodes all take place within a single congregation called the First Church of Almond Springs, California. And you kinda walk around in the shoes of the pastor, named Charlotte Robinson."*

wrote to that arboretum back East and then read tips from gardeners in *Fine Gardening*? Well, someone at this Christian leaders web site has interviewed pastors about these episodes and then attached their comments to the scene under a heading called something like 'Experienced Voices.' So you have a pastor describing a mistake he made (like the trouble he got into praying at a political prayer breakfast), or someone describing how she came up with a way to deal with a difficult choir director. The leaders don't always agree with each other. But there is a lot of wisdom in their experienced voices."

"You know what this is like?" Kate asked Lucas. "Remember when we took that Continuing Education class on Adult Learning and they told us how adults learn more from stories than from lectures? Well, I'd much rather read a couple of experienced voices than slog through a bunch of articles. But my question for you, Morris, is this: Are there any models? I'd like to be able to see how someone else works through tough problems. Do we see solutions at this web site or just problems?"

"Well, there is a good model for theological reflection. The pastor, Charlotte, writes a journal entry about each scenario. That's where she frames

the problem and you kinda see where she's going in addressing it. But she's not perfect; sometimes she makes mistakes. And I don't always agree with how she handles problems. In fact, if you read through the episodes in order, you can see how she sometimes has to pay for her mistakes down the line. But one thing that the journal does have is a good model for theological reflection."

"What do you mean?" Kate interjected.

"Well, the pastor, Charlotte, separates every journal entry into reflections on three layers of the episode: the personal or pastoral layer (where she worries about the needs of individual people), the communal or organizational layer (where she worries about the needs of the congregation), and the spiritual or theological layer (where she discusses theological questions). The reason the layers work is that they show that sometimes she has to decide which layer to address first. So sometimes dealing with the pastoral needs of individuals in a conflict situation can actually make the organizational problem for the congregation worse—and vice versa, I've got to say. It's not always clear which strategy Charlotte chose—we don't always get the closure I'd like. But when it comes to framing the problem—when it comes to what Lucas keeps calling the moment when ministers have to decide what to do next—there are some really interesting examples."

Lucas looked thoughtfully at his friend across the table. "So when do you use the site?" Morris shrugged. "Mostly I've just played around with it so far. But, okay, there was a time last month when I went there for a specific purpose. It was the afternoon before a board meeting for a neighborhood development group I work with. And someone called to alert me that a conflict was brewing at the meeting. An issue I thought was dead was going to come up again. What I wanted was a crash course in conflict resolution. So I went to the Christian leaders site and looked up a couple of episodes about conflict. I skimmed through some of the articles, and I read the experienced voices. So I felt ready for the meeting."

"Did it help?" "I don't know," Morris replied. "The chief instigator of the problem came down with food poisoning so we tabled the whole issue until next week. But I felt prepared. Later on, I'll let you know how it actually turns out."

Just then Morris' cell phone rang. After a quick conversation of clipped phrases, he looked at his watch and said he had to go. The three planned another lunch date, paid the bill, and headed for the door. On the way out, Lucas asked Morris for her E-mail address.

## Upcoming Events

### NOVEMBER

- 2-3 **Alpha Conference**, Portland, Oregon\*
- 4 **"Fuller Visits"** Grand Rapids, Michigan\*\*
- 8 **Installation of Wilbert Shenk, Ph.D.**, as the Paul E. Pierson Professor of Mission History and Contemporary Culture, First Congregational Church, Pasadena, California\*\*\*
- 8-9 **Annual Missiology Lectures**, School of World Mission, "Making Christian History," featuring Jehu Hanciles, Ph.D.; Cecil M. Robeck, Ph.D.; and David Daniels, Ph.D.; Fuller campus\*\*\*
- 9-11 **American Society for Church Growth Annual Gathering**, Pasadena, California\*
- 11 **Alumni/ae Luncheon**, Santa Barbara, California\*\*
- 15 **Installation of Winston E. Gooden, Ph.D.**, as Dean of the School of Psychology, First United Methodist Church, Pasadena, California\*\*\*\*

### JANUARY

- 4-5 **Alpha Conference**, Honolulu, Hawaii\*
- 20 **Natural Church Development Workshop I**, San Francisco, California\*
- 17-19 **School of Psychology Integration Symposium**, featuring Stephen Post, Ph.D., from Case Western Reserve University, on "Aging, Dementia, and the Family," Travis Auditorium, Fuller campus\*\*\*\*

### FEBRUARY

- 3 **"Fuller Visits"** Washington, D.C.\*\*
- 5-9 **World Christian Pastors' Conference**, Pasadena, California\*
- 15-16 **Alpha Conference**, Phoenix, Arizona\*
- 17 **Natural Church Development Workshop I**, Chicago, Illinois\*

### MARCH

- 4 **Fuller Happening and Dinner**, Phoenix, Arizona\*\*
- 15-16 **Alpha Conference**, Santa Barbara, California\*
- 19-20 **Alpha Conference**, San Francisco, California\*
- 22 **Alumni/ae Luncheon**, "Honolulu 2001," Honolulu, Hawaii\*\*
- 30-31 **Natural Church Development Workshop II**, San Francisco, California\*

\* For more information, call the Office of Continuing Education at 1-800-999-8578.

\*\* For more information, call the Office of Alumni/ae Relations at 1-626-584-5498.

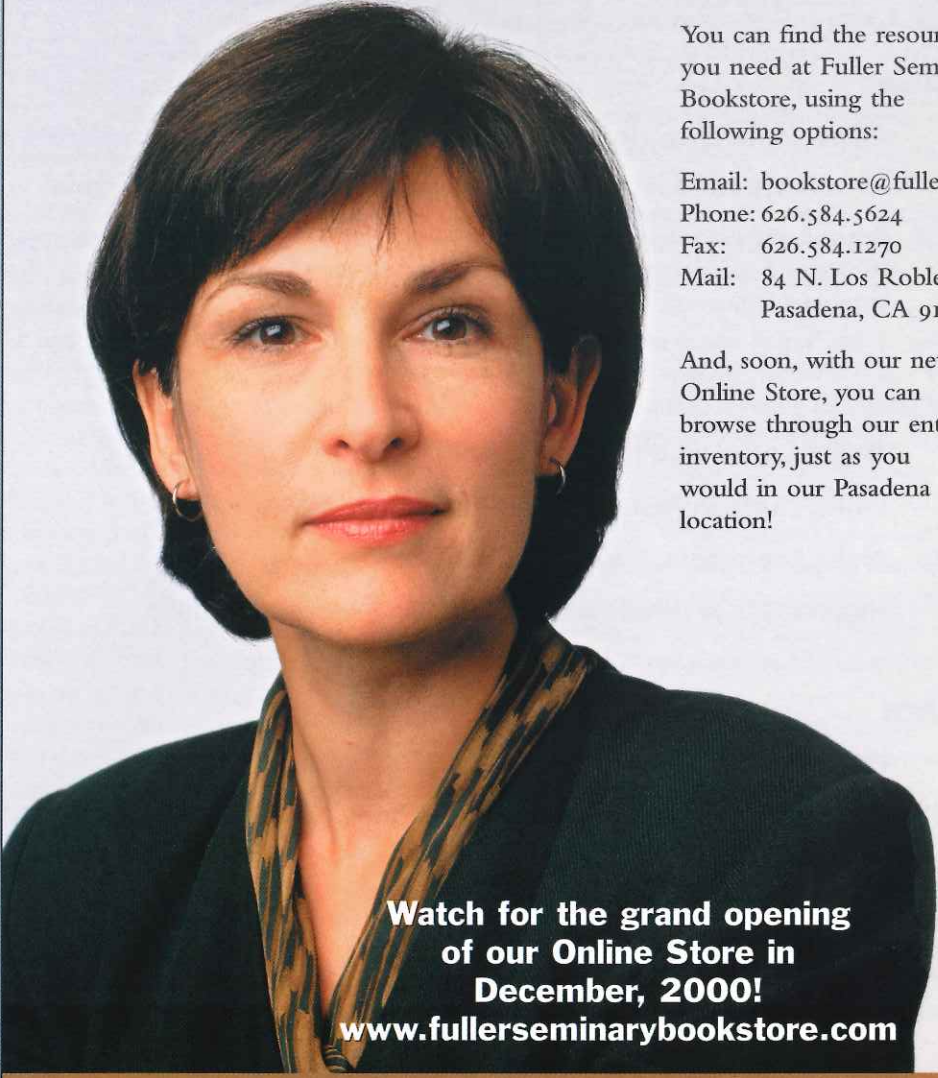
\*\*\* For more information, call the School of World Mission at 1-626-584-5260.

\*\*\*\* For more information, call the School of Psychology at 1-626-584-5502.

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