AN

SMB O'JOHNSON

PRESENTATION

AT THE 🏈

MAIDEN EDITION

OF

THE INTERNET OUTREACH SEMINAR

ORGANISED BY

THE INTERNET OUTREACH COALIATION FOR AFRICA

ON NOVEMBER 16, 2007

Grace's Global Multipurpose Hall 9 MKO Abiola way, Beside Vista Bakery Via D'Rovans Hotel, Ring Road, Ibadan, Nigeria.





Blogs

How to create it, and using it effectively and excellently for Christian Ministries.

Email communication

(Email marketing, e-ads, Email prayer, email evangelism, and e-newsletter)

Chat room

Strategies, the dos and don'ts

BLOGS



Weblogs, or "blogs" for short, are the latest low-cost medium for creating buzz. A blog is a type of website, but differ from the usual site style, by having these characteristics:

- An informal, personal, ongoing diary-type commentary by an individual: either about his/her life, or opinion/news about a specific topic.
- Most blog entries are plain-text mini-articles, though pictures, audio, and even video clips can be incorporated too.
- Latest blog entry appears near the top of the front page, with previous entries below it in date order.
- Blog entries are usually short; longer posts are sometimes split so the balance of the item is on a new page.
- Readers often have the opportunity to add their own comments about a blog entry, or even respond to other people's feedback.

- Readers can opt to receive an alert by RSS every time a new entry is posted on the blog.
- Most blogs are created and updated through a web-based interface system such as Blogger. No technical knowledge is needed to start a blog, though technically minded people can install software on their servers to create more sophisticated and customizable blogs.

A good percentage of people and companies in the media community have built their own blog pages and are utilizing them for feedback on their articles. Many corporations are using blogs for messaging and to promote their products. Whether it is home to a technical user group, created for a club of aficionados, or used to post general information.

A blog is just another marketing opportunity to build brand awareness for your company and products.

Blogs give you another Internet communication strategy.

The author of a blog is called a 'blogger'. So-called 'blogging' has vastly grown in popularity over the last few years – the whole world of blogging is sometimes called the 'blogosphere'. It matches (and shapes) the modern desire to receive (and be able to comment on) information in short personalized conversational blocks.

To achieve its purpose, a blog must continue to have new postings added at regular intervals. This requires continued commitment and discipline Because a blog is informal and personal, it can create a feeling of personal relationship between users and the writer – this is called a sense of community. The journalism principle remains true: "People are interested in people."

Blogs, you and Ministries/outreaches

Blogs can be used by Christians to build a community around a school of thoughts. For example a Pastor may be teaching a series on Holiness. He or she may build a blog around this topic and ask his/her members or congregation to visit the blog to add their comments on the topic. This will

provide an enabling environment for them to express their views about the subject matter, which they may not do when asked in the church. Others that are not privilege to be in the teaching will have access to the teachings and also to comments from every individual that have commented on the subject matter.

Pastors can use blogs to achieve so many aims like if the Pastor wants to know the knowledge base of his members or audience about a topic before embarking on the teaching of same topic, the pastor can build a blog for this and ask members to comment on the topic.

It could also be used as feedback. It can be used for collaboration on a certain team project of the ministries.

Apart from creating your own blogs, Christians can be contributors to blogs, making positive contributions thereby spreading the gospel of our Lord, Jesus.

Blogs can also be created on general topics that will attract large numbers of readers and in the process Jesus will be preached.

Christian professionals and pastors who are experts or professional before answering the call of GOD upon their lives can build blogs around their expertise or skills to express their views or offer advices to people for free. Through these free support and contributions to life, they will be able to win more souls to Christ.

Old men and women can be involved too, they are old, experienced both the ups ad downs and life. These old men/women can build blogs built around topical issues of life and through these they will be able to tell readers how Jesus had helped them to survive and excel in this life.

The use is endless. Christians and Pastors can be creative and maximize the use of this great Internet tool. For your information, you create blogs for free.

To create a blog, please visit: <u>www.blogger.com/start</u>, <u>www.lifewithchrist.org</u>, <u>www.blog.com</u>, <u>www.wordpress.com</u>

Examples of blogs are <u>www.apostle-smb.blogspot.com</u>, <u>www.smb.lifewithchrist.org</u> -built around the contents of this seminar <u>www.yomifavour.blogspot.com</u> - built around the topic 'favour'





EMAIL COMMUNICATION



EMAIL PRAYER

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

(Ephesians 6:18) NIV



Email prayer is simply receiving prayer requests through emails and responding by praying by writing via the email. It may sound funny or uncultured, but I had personally seen it working. For example, a person in the US had once emailed me asking me to pray for him concerning an aspect of his life, which I did by praying for him and sending the prayer through an email, the results was tremendous. I am an Email Prayer Mentor/Volunteer to some online evangelistic group and this has given me the boldness to advice Christians and pastors to embrace email prayer. Brethren, the medium of prayer does not matter, God works through the email prayer.

Every day we all receive emails from people who are struggling with issues and pain in their lives. It is often difficult to know what to say. There are times when all we can do is pray. Including the text of a prayer in the email response has proven to be a very effective way of ministering to hurting people. I have discovered that a personal prayer can be tremendously encouraging - even for those who are going through a hard time. You may want to consider praying for your friends in this way to let them know that you are thinking of them.

Some Christians and pastors have been doing this email prayer without knowing, but there's need to utilize and maximize its use. Encourage your church members, family members and friends to make prayer request through their email. Assure them of confidentiality and when you act not only by praying for them during your prayer time but by also emailing the prayer to their email addresses, I assure you, the result is going to be spectacular and outstanding.

Praying in an email is a very effective way of presenting needs to the Lord while encouraging the person who has given the prayer request. Initially, this method of praying can seem a little awkward; however, with practice, you will soon find it to be effective and comfortable.

The following tips can help you get started well in email prayer:

1. You Must Be Specific.

When you type out the prayer, please address/pray specifically for the request that has been given in the email sent to you. Please pray for God's will in the related circumstance because you may not know the issues that are surrounding this request.

2. Make Sure You Pray Scripture.

In between your email prayer or at the end of it, please, make reference to the scripture. You may discovered that the need you are praying for is such that you don't have any answers. In that case, you could pray a scripture reference.

The email prayer may go like this: "Lord, you know the pain that (name) is struggling with as she is going through her divorce. I pray that your peace would guard her heart and mind during this difficult time (Philippians 4:7) In Jesus Name, Amen"

3. Don't feel you need to give them an answer.

When you are praying for individuals, please don't feel you need to offer them counsel or give them an answer. If they decide to write back you can refer them to further help. Your main responsibility is to pray for them and share the next step in their relationship with God.

4. Customize and personalize the email.

Use a personal salutation (Dear name)

Indicate why you are responding (ie. "I received your request for prayer). I would like to pray for you.

Begin to type the prayer. "Dear Lord, praise be to you for ____."

5. Please, encourage them to respond back to you

You can encourage them to respond back to you by suggesting: "I would love to share with you more about my personal spiritual testimonies – feel free to write back."

Sending in an email prayer request may be a new experience for the person who has sent the request. The senders may not know that they are free to write to you and discuss spiritual issues unless you tell them. Always give them the option of corresponding further with you.

Many of the people writing in may not know Jesus Christ or they may be living defeated spiritual lives. Don't miss the opportunity to share Christ with them.

6. Don't be discouraged if they don't email back.

People using the Internet are often looking for quick answers. You may never know the impact of the email you sent. Continue to pray for that person – and if the Lord lays it on your heart – try writing again at a later date. (ie. "You came to my mind today and I prayed for you. I pray that God is giving you strength in the situation you were going through"). Often an email such as that will trigger a response – but even if it doesn't, you may still have been a blessing.

7. Share the hope of Christ by including links to some websites that offers spiritual solutions in that specific need.

Give the individual the "next step" for their spiritual life. Let them know that they can know Christ or have a deeper relationship with Him. Sample: "I have discovered that Christ gives me incredible strength and guidance to deal with difficult situations in my life. If you would like to know more about having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, please

check out Journey of Joy. If you already have a relationship with Christ, but feel that you are living a defeated life, please check out Spirit Filled Life

Sample prayer request and the sample response

Email: (email address)

Name: Esther

Prayer Request: I am a young lady, but my fiancé jilted me a week to our wedding. Despite, the fact, we have started making serious preparation and sent out invitation cards. He left me without any genuine reason; all efforts to make him change his decision prove abortive. Someone that I have always seen as my love and friend has betrayed me. I have so much bitterness and hate in my heart that I can't seem to release. I fear loosing my soul.

Please pray for me to be able to forgive, live it and to help me handle whatever fate might have for me. I am running out of money to fight or stand up for my self. Please pray for me

Sample Response:

Dear sister Esther,

Thank you so much for sending your prayer request to us. Your email has been forwarded to me. I would like to pray for you.

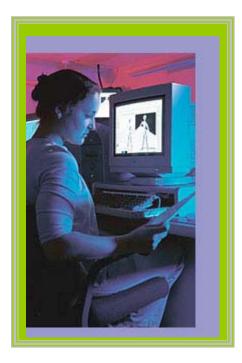
"Dear Lord, I thank you for Esther and her willingness to ask You to help her forgive in this situation. Lord, You have promised in Your Word that You will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7) and I pray that right now you would do just that for Esther. I pray that You would help her to forgive and not let any root of bitterness to take hold of her life in this very difficult situation (Hebrews 12:15). Today may she forgive as she herself has been forgiven by Your amazing love. Strengthen her this day, and as she walks with You, may You continue to give her strength and Your peace. Thank You that You have promised that Your grace is always sufficient for every situation that we find ourselves in (2 Corinthians 12:9) I pray these things in the precious name of Jesus, amen."

Esther, I don't know what I would do in the difficult times of my life if I didn't know that God has promised me His grace and that His Holy Spirit would give me strength and be my comforter in these times. Today, allow Him to fill your life, empower and control, and help you to forgive. If you

Would like to know more about how to do this, I would love to e-mail further with you.

One way to increase intercessory prayer for the saints in your congregation is to use your email accounts/addresses to conduct email prayer. Using the Internet/email prayer, you can have a virtual Prayer Room open 24 hours a day. At any time, people can send in their prayer requests at their convenience by sending directly to your email address. It is like having an online hotline for prayer.

Embrace it! Use it! You will surely see its tremendous results.



e-NEWSLETTER



An e-newsletter (newsletter) is an informative letter mail to subscribers. A brief publication containing news and current events, usually geared toward a particular organization or group with common interests.

It may be in form of a publication that an organization used to keep its members informed of news and meeting information.

e-Newsletters differ from a discussion list in that most of their content is developed by the list owner or manager. They are usually delivered on a regular basis, ranging from once a day to bi-monthly (as opposed to the more sporadic nature of discussion lists) and delivered to email accounts/addresses of those that have opted in their email addresses to receive the e-newsletter.

A newsletter is a regularly distributed publication generally about one main topic that is of interest to its subscribers. Newspapers and leaflets are types of newsletters.

Many interest groups use a digitally produced newsletter (e-newsletter) to help promote their interest.

Christian ministries have embraced the use of newsletter to communicate to their members and audience. Newsletter can be used in many ways.

A newsletter can be used to deliver sermons or transcripts of messages to email addresses of subscribers. The message preached on Sundays can be delivered to email addresses of members or subscribers first thing

Mondays' morning. This gives the members that listened to the pastor preached the message to have an opportunity to review the message again and again. Subscribers that are not in church will also have a feel of what happened on Sunday. With this the message is on forever as long as it is their email addresses.

Newsletter can also be used to inform members and subscribers of recent happenings in the church/ministry and upcoming events of the church/ministries.

A Christian ministry can use e-newsletter to collaborate with its partners. With the newsletter, partners will be kept informed of all activities/programs of the church/ministry. The newsletter can be used to inform or tell the partners the future plans of the ministry, what partners can do to support or collaborate with the ministry, how this can be done and when & where to do this. The e-newsletter can also have links to the ministry's websites and useful websites.

Some Christian ministries in Nigeria are already making use of this great ecommunication strategy. But I had discovered that its use is still very low. It's not very difficult to create a newsletter. There are some Christian organizations (like Kings & Priests Inc.) are helping ministries and training ministries how to do this. Pastors/ministries must learn about email deliverability and usability. Also there are some rules and regulations governing the use of newsletter and email communications on the Internet.

Newsletter/email communication strategy is very simple and low cost compared with regular mailing system and other communication methods.

There are professional ways of delivering newsletter via email. Doing it in the professional will save you a lot of time and your hard earned money thereby helping you save and maximize the use of your spiritual and material resources. With just a single click on send you can send a newsletter to millions of people at a time. In short within few minutes you could deliver a newsletter to hundred of millions of people. It also permits what I call **personalization** and **targeting**.

Personalization and **targeting** allows you to address each subscriber uniquely. This makes them special and they have strong attraction to your ministry or church.

e-newsletter helps us reach lots of people where they are located on this globe. For some time now I have been receiving e-newsletters of some great ministries all over the globe. Some of the ministers I have not met face to face or even seen on the TV or heard on the radio but the fact remains that these ministries have affected me positively without any physical connection between us. So until you started using the e-newsletter to preach the gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, you will never know the great numbers of people your ministries can change for better. Do it, you will succeed.





CHAT ROOM

CHAT ROOM EVANGELISM



What is a chat room?

Allow me to start by defining chat room. A 'chat room' is simply a web page, which can display typed messages in real time. When several people are logged on to the same chat page via the Internet, each can type short messages of a few words (often with accepted abbreviations) onto an area in the web page. Messages, and replies from the others in the chat room, are immediately visible to all the participants as sequential lines (with identification of the writer).

Most chat rooms are un-moderated - that is, there is no one in control. Some chat rooms, particularly for children and young people, have a moderator who can guide the flow of discussion, rebuke rudeness or profanity, and remove someone from using the chat room if such guidelines are broken.

It is important that people wishing to use chat rooms take time to learn the protocol, and what is an appropriate strategy for online witness.

Chat room evangelism

Chat rooms are also a valuable method of sharing faith in cross-cultural situations - because there are chat rooms for almost every country, ethnic community and language in the world. If you wish to do chat room evangelism, it is important to understand the culture and religion of the group of people you are targeting.

Several millions of people around the globe visit chat rooms every day. They are ready to communicate – so this gives Christians many opportunities to share their faith.

However, we must tell others the Good News in the right way or we may actually turn people away from Jesus. 1 Pet. 3:15 stresses the use of sensitivity when we share the Gospel with others: "As Christians we must always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have. But we must do this with gentleness and respect..." (NIV) An insensitive or argumentative attitude will completely compromise the message we are trying to communicate. Christian ministries and churches should begin to teach the youth and children how to use the chat room to spread the gospel of Jesus, who is the hope of tomorrow. We all know these youth and children are good and regular users of the chat rooms. In Nigeria, chatting is one of the first things a young girl or boy will first learn about the Internet. Often, they use it for negative things like searching for Internet boyfriends/girlfriends. To be frank you will find out that many Christian youths are involved in these sinful acts. Do you know where the problem is? These Christian youths are not taught or educated on ways they can use this powerful tool of online communication to preach JESUS.

Pastors and Christian youth leaders must begin to acquire knowledge about Internet evangelism and also start teaching the youths and in fact all Christians both old and young.

If you are thinking of going into chat room evangelism, it is wise to ask your Christian leaders for their opinion as to whether you are suitable for this sort of ministry. Even if they say you are, it is in any case good to do this sort of witness with the encouragement and prayers of your church's leaders. They may also be able to help you with classes on personal witnessing.

We must also understand the potential personal dangers, especially for younger people.

When I was first starting out sometime in 1999, I first learn by visiting different types of rooms without saying anything. Watch how people write and the abbreviations they use. Some chat rooms are just for teens or students. Others are for different age groups, special interests or those of a national or ethnic background.

Before starting a chat session

- You should pray for wisdom, the right words to say, and that God will lead you to people who are ready to discuss and that are hungry for HIS Word.
- You could arrange in advance with a friend to visit the same chat room at the same time – this may help to get a discussion going. Or you could ask a friend to pray for you at the time you plan to be online.

Important things to do while you are in a chat session

- Pray while you are online for those you speak to, and how to reply effectively.
- Respect and understand other people's views, cultures, and religions. Even if you disagree with something they say, try to identify with part of it.
- Be ready to share how you became a Christian, and how God helps you in your life right now. Remember, you are offering other people a relationship with the living loving God. You are not trying to sell them a religion or even a set of morals or beliefs. Non-Christians do not understand this – they think that trying to obey certain rules or going to church is what makes people 'Christian'.
- Many chat rooms offer the facility to jump from the main room to a 'PM' (private meeting) in a 'one-to-one' room. This can be useful when a chat room is crowded. It may well be wise to limit 'PM' sessions to those of the same gender as yourself.
- If someone wishes to talk again about issues later, exchange email addresses so that you can maintain contact.

What you must avoid

 Do not choose an inappropriate username/ID. It can be funny, but not sexy or completely bizarre. Don't choose an obviously Christian nickname, like 'Prayerpeople' or 'jesuslovesyou' etc. This makes you sound preachy before you start, and some people will not even speak to you. Permit me to use a personal experience. When I was starting out in chat room evangelism, I was using one of my email addresses 'apostlesmb@yahoo.fr', I discovered that each time I logged into any chat room and try to open a conversation with anyone, most time I will be ignored. It was later I found out that my yahoo ID sound 'preachy' even before saying Jesus. We should try to choose a neutral username.

- Don't pretend to be somebody else. If a chat room requires a personal profile, write it honestly. As Christians we must always say the truth because Jesus who we preach is the Truth and life.
- Don't pester people who don't want to talk. If anyone is not ready to enter into a conversation with us, please, leave him/her alone. Most of the time I had entered into some chat rooms like 'Algeria', 'Iran'; I always encountered this anytime I mentioned the name Jesus.

It is counter-productive to be pushy or try to force people into a decision they are not ready to make. Remember you cannot force them to accept Jesus. Allow the Holy Spirit to touch them. You do your part and leave the rest to GOD.

Don't argue about anything, especially when you are doing online/chat room evangelism. It's not the nature of Christianity to argue. Remember you cannot win them to Christ by arguments. Arguments will only make them see reasons why they should not accept Jesus. They will like to prove that they are very right.

You must avoid using too much of Christian terms. They may not really understand them. They might even hate them. Instead of using Biblical words try using general words that still have same meaning. For example if you just building a conversation with a chronic Muslim, instead of saying Jesus, the Lord, use Jesus Christ. The two words are the same but the first one can stop a Muslim fanatic from chatting with you. We should choose our words rightly that does not means we should compromise or dilute the Words of GOD. We are only dangling a carrot before them to catch them.

 Avoid getting sidelined into arguments on non-essential or controversial things such as the age of the earth, evolution, politics, alcohol, abortion, or denominational practices and doctrines. You may have firmly-held views on these things which flow out of your Christian faith, but they are not essential to the Gospel. Remember you are there to preach Jesus, simple. Be humble and realize that even godly, experienced Christians take different views on some of these things. Also no one is likely to change his or her mind on for example, abortion, until after becoming a Christian. Some chat room users may deliberately try to steer you into these sidelines and provoke you into argument on these issues.

- Do not get angry, even if you are personally abused or people criticize the Bible and God. They may only be trying to see how far they can push you anyway! "A gentle answer turns anger away. But mean words stir up anger." (Proverbs 15:1) If you find that you always argue in chat rooms, this sort of witnessing is probably not suited for you!
- Never criticize other people's views or beliefs.
- Don't pretend to 'know it all'. Admit when you don't know an answer to something. You may have heard the saying, "A Christian is just one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread."

Cautions

- Not everyone in a chat room is what they seem. There are pedophiles and other predatory people who visit teen (and other) chat rooms pretending to be nice. Young people in particular should follow these guidelines. Older Christians too have sometimes been sucked into wrong relationships online.
- Never give your last name, address or phone number to anyone else in a chat room. Make sure those things do not appear in any profile you make available to chat room members or on your email signature (or email provider/ISP personal profile if you have one).
- Never ever arrange a face-to-face meeting alone with a chat contact.
 If you do wish to meet someone, don't do it till you have written to them by email for a long time, and discuss it with your parents and a youth leader first. Even then, don't do it alone: take a friend and meet in a safe public environment, for instance a cafe or church youth meeting.
- Don't treat chat rooms as dating agencies!
 If someone in a chat room starts trying to find out too-personal information about you or wants to talk about sex, leave and find a new chat room.

Real dangers and bad things have happened to young people who were too trusting of so-called online 'friends'.

Learn from others

We can learn from others who are experienced in chat room evangelism. Maybe there is someone in your church or neighborhood who would give a seminar about it. It is a good activity for a youth group to be involved in.



RESOURCES

To learn more about Internet Evangelism, please, visit:

- <u>www.webevangelism.com</u>
- <u>www.visionsynergy.net</u>
- <u>www.iec.gospelcom.net/otoe/index.php</u>
- www.lausanneworld.com/worldreports/60
- <u>www.evangelism.com</u>