

“Becoming a Welcoming Church”

By Thom S. Rainer

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:12

“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

Hebrews 2:4

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Isaiah 7:14

Although church signage may not seem like much, we have biblical evidence that even God used signs to speak to his people. When Israel needed directions in the wilderness God gave them a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God provided signs so that people would know when to expect the Messiah. God has also given us signs so that we can be aware of his return.

Myths about Church Signage and Website

1. Everyone knows where our church is. This is an arrogant statement at best. Just like many of us may not know where the local doctor’s office, lawyers office, court house, grocery store, etc, we shouldn’t assume that a visitor knows where our church is.

2. Our church is small so we don’t need signs for people to get around. Just because we may feel that the church is small doesn’t mean that we should be small minded. Even if the church is small basic church signage shows a consideration for our guests.

3. Church websites are really not that important. God gives us resources for us to use them for his glory. Everyone may not connect with the local fellowship but a church website allows us the opportunity to minister to those far and wide. A few years ago preachers called Facebook the devil, now almost every church has a Facebook page.

4. It's easy to get around our church: Yes, it may be easy for you to get around the church because you've been here for years, but it may not be that simple for a visitor. If I were to come to your home you know where the restroom is but I don't. Just like I would need assistance and directions in your home so would a visitor in our church.

5. Signs and websites are human-centered methodologies. They are not central to the gospel. Heating and A/C are not essential to the gospel, but we have those. These may not be the top priority, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't use them. If God has blessed us with it, He desires us to use it.

A Primer on Church Signage

1. Signage is not for members. Many of us are well informed to know where the church is located and where everything is located in the church. Signage is not for us but its to be hospitable to our guest.

2. Quality signage is important. Church signage should be legible, readable, and possess good quality. The Church signage is a reflection of how the members feel about their church and the God they serve.

3. The two must signs are for handicap and guest. Those who have disabilities should know where they can park and guest should also know where a good place is that they can park and be served/helped.

4. Church leaders should conduct a signage audit once every year. The church often times goes through changes. When those changes are made the church signage should be updated along with the change. If the finance room has been relocated the sign should be relocated with it as well.

The Front Door We Often Forget

The front door of a house says a lot. It provides details on what type of home it is, their values, core beliefs, economic income level, where they are in life, and even how they feel about their home. Based off of the front door we can learn a lot about that particular individual and family. Well for the church the website and Facebook page can be viewed as the front door of the church.

In this day and age everyone has a cellphone and mostly every cellphone has Google. If you hear about a certain restaurant, school, city, etc., that sounds interesting most likely you are going to do your own personal research on it before you go. Well, if people research restaurants, schools, cities, etc., whose to say they aren't researching our church before they come? Therefore, the church website and Facebook page are essential elements to ministry.

1. Address and service times should be easy to locate. When a person visits our media page they are looking for something. They should easily be able to locate information regarding our address and service times.

2. Lack of clarity about beliefs or doctrine. It should be understood and stated on the website what we believe as a church because different people are looking for different things. Some people are looking for a church that will compromise the Gospel, and if that's what we present then eventually that's what we'll attract.

3. Hardly visible contact information. There needs to be info on the church page/website as to how a person can better connect with us, how they can receive more information, availability on planning a visit, an opportunity to receive prayer, or to schedule a meeting with a key leader.

4. *No photos of Pastor, staff, and other leadership.* Years ago churches would hang a picture of their current and former Pastors in the foyer or choir stand. Although now days that may not be a common practice, those who view the church page should know what the leaders of the church look like or if the church has any leadership. The church page should also show some diversity, pictures of various members, and church families should be added to the page periodically.

5. *Dull and boring church media outlets.* The church's media outlets should look fun, exciting, active, vibrant and should make a visitor want to be apart of the things the church has going on. If you are not excited about your church no one else will be.