

The God-pod

How Churches Are Changing With the Times

by Jessica Podhola

Podcasts, webcasts, You-Tube, Internet radio, blogs, photo blogs... what? Gone are the days when all we had to spread our messages was word of mouth. The 21st century Unitic has moved beyond notes and cassette tapes onto podcasts, CDs, webcasts and more. The costs are negligible, the know-how basic (I bet you can find a volunteer in your congregation), the results can be priceless.

In my family-sized church, Unity of Independence (www.unityindependence.com), we have moved beyond selling cassettes, we have set up a myspace page, flickr account, and a blog. We now sell CDs after the service. Our minister Carla McClellan is so dynamic; broadcasting her message any way we can is our goal. We want to be practical Christians—we want to be relevant to the times.

Recording

Most churches are already utilizing PowerPoint or other worship software, so going to digital recording is the next logical step. GoldWave is software that is available for download at www.goldwave.com; this software is easy to use. It comes with pre-set settings and the ability to record up to five hours. The audio sequence is \$50 and the audio/video version is available for \$60. You should have a computer with a fast processor and lots of memory for audio and video together, but smaller churches can still utilize this tool with the average home computer. You can burn discs for

your congregation for about 50 cents. Google it—there are lots of alternatives.

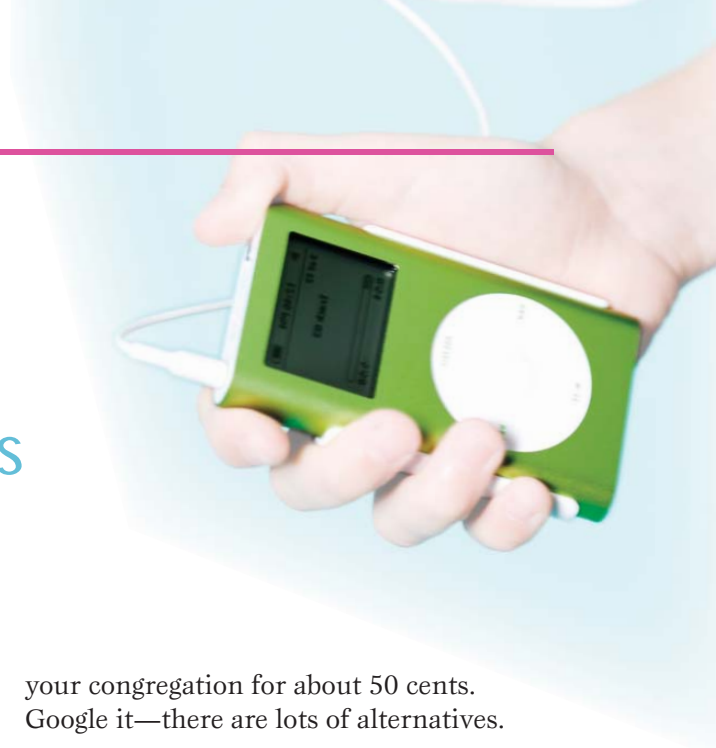
The most infamous webcasting site is You-Tube, but my personal favorite is God Tube at www.godtube.com. There are lots of videos and some of them don't resonate with my Unity principles, but that's why I can hit back on my browser. You can upload your videos for free, your members can sign up for free, and if they have to miss a Sunday, that's okay—they can catch you online. If you have a website, you can also host videos and podcasts from your site. This is fairly common, so it is becoming less expensive to find hosting services.

No Fear, Atmosphere

Now, most of this article is assuming that your church already has microphones, an amplifier, a sound board, and a computer. No? Don't fear. You can still get your message out. If you are starting a new church, I would suggest a blog. You can always post your talks on the web and www.blogger.com is a great free site. Members and strangers can read your message and interact with you.

“Music and technology are vital parts of a modern ministry and keep our services vibrant and fresh. In the AWE (Authentic Worship Experience) service that I offer, I use video clips, recorded ‘trance’ music, a live band, PowerPoint slides, lighting

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effects, drumming, a cappella singing and Native American flute music. The possibilities are endless. These elements combine to produce an atmosphere conducive to an experience of the Divine, deliver a basic message without the need for an extended talk, and encourage active participation and involvement in the service,” says Dale Worley from Sacred Place Ministries. (Check him out online at www.asacredplace.net.)

Unity itself is on the forefront of this new technology, all you have to do is Google it!

Jessica Podhola is a prayer chaplain and a member of the staff of Unity of Independence, Missouri. She lives in Independence with her husband, two children, and three cats.