

EDITORIAL: FaithVillage- Young Christians' home

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"Can churches retain theological integrity and still find common ground among those with differing beliefs?"

That's the question presented by the cover story in this issue of the paper. And it mirrors a key question the board of directors and staff of Baptist Standard Publishing—our parent organization—have been asking for several years: Can a 123-year-old Baptist news organization create a website that will strengthen and expand the larger Christian community, particularly teens and young adults?

Editor Marv Knox

We believe the answer is a resounding Yes! So, we have spent more than three years praying, researching, thinking, cooperating and dreaming. Now, we are building FaithVillage, a website that will gather a vast online community of evangelical Christians, ages 13 to 44. FaithVillage will expand their personal faith, provide them with a broad range of excellent Christian resources, and enable them to contact and collaborate with each other in ways never imagined before.

Our research revealed the vast majority of young Christians access the Internet and spend much of their lives online. They told us they would like to use the web to strengthen their faith, but that's daunting. For starters, they must visit dozens of sites to find the range of resources they need—from inspiration, to Bible study, to missions and ministry, to growing in their faith, to strengthening relationships, to worship, and on and on. Beyond that, they don't have a clue what's trustworthy. And these lonely, disjointed treks into the Internet leave them feeling isolated and frustrated,

rather than welcomed into the larger family of faith and encouraged.

As we listened to young Christians, we prayed. We asked God to give us a clear vision for how to build on our decades of strength as a Christian publisher so we can inform, inspire and empower them to grow in their faith and expand Jesus' kingdom. What we saw was FaithVillage.

Visitors to FaithVillage will stroll down four virtual "streets" in our community. Each building they see will house a unique channel of information about a particular aspect of faith or ministry. Each channel will be marked with a sign, much like you would see on a store or business facing a commercial street in your town. For example, Momentum will house church leadership resources, Scriptura will offer Bible study materials, Engage will involve participants in missions and ministry causes, Epic House will minister to college students, while Revolution will serve middle schoolers and high schoolers, and the Grove Theater will present videos. FaithVillage will be home to these and many other channels—providing participants with access to resources otherwise available only by visiting scores of different websites.

FaithVillage is built on a social networking infrastructure, so each member of the Village will receive a profile page. It will enable members to post photos and comments, create and participate in all kinds of groups, and easily share materials from throughout the Village. We're making FaithVillage available free to individuals and churches. So, congregations can use the groups function as the backbone of their communication with members individually, as well as teams, committees, Sunday school classes, small groups and staff. Imagine the value of operating your own free in-church communication network within a village of excellent, trusted resources.

If you'd like to visit FaithVillage, go to our blog website, www.faithvillage.com. Be sure to click the arrow in the FV TV box, and you

can watch a six-minute video that will give you an excellent overview.

Meanwhile, we would be grateful if you would help us build FaithVillage. Please consider taking these faith steps:

- *Most importantly, pray for FaithVillage and our team.*
- *Tell everyone you know who is 13 to 44 about FaithVillage, and show them the online video.*
- *Sign up as a charter member on our homepage or apply to become a free church partner (click the partnerships tab).*
- *If God leads, contribute to this vital venture.*

You can contact me at mknox@faithvillage.com.

Marv Knox is editor of the Baptist Standard. Visit his blog at baptiststandard.com.