Tips and Tweets: Sharing Your Blessed Tomorrow Commitment on Social Media

Social media can be a powerful means to engage your community. It's a great way to inspire others, celebrate successes, promote upcoming events, and share your Blessed Tomorrow message and activities.

If your organization already has a presence on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, then you're already well down the path to enjoying it as a way to connect daily with your members. If your organization doesn't have a presence, sign up with Facebook, and perhaps Twitter. Getting started is easy!

With a little planning and preparation, you can build a strong online relationship that generates the types of conversations and engagement needed to inspire and empower your congregation in its mission to care for creation.

To be effective in integrating Blessed Tomorrow into social media, follow these five steps:

1. **After setting up your social media pages, "like" Blessed Tomorrow** on Facebook (http://www. facebook.com/blessedtomorrow) and "follow" Blessed Tomorrow on Twitter (@BlessedTomorrow). Blessed Tomorrow will "like" and "follow" you back!

2. **Post a few updates** to get your creation care conversation going. Here are a few ideas to help get you started:

    For Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ or other sites with no character limits, try:

    Our congregation is the newest member of @BlessedTomorrow! We will be doing what we can to care for God's creation and to ensure a Blessed Tomorrow for our children and the most vulnerable. We invite your ideas and participation.

    Join us in caring for God's creation by taking one new step today to walk more gently on the earth. We are committing to saving energy by turning off lights in empty rooms. What steps are you taking to care for creation? #CreationCare

    For Twitter (144 character limit):

    We are called to lead in caring for God's creation. Our faith guides us to solutions for our children and the most vulnerable. #BlessedTomorrow

3. **Check in with Blessed Tomorrow daily, to "like" and "share" or "favorite" and "retweet"** our updates. This will post our updates on your social media pages and vice versa, offering you easy content and a great way to talk about creation care with your community.

4. Once you have created your Blessed Tomorrow mission and story and thought about the steps your congregation will take to care for creation, post your own social media content. Planning for monthly themes, weekly messages, and daily topics (such as "Words of Wisdom Wednesday" or "Creation Care Thursday") will streamline your social media efforts and create a reliable flow of updates to build a stronger online following. In addition to communicating on your services and events, you can fold in your creation care messages and updates.

5. Approach social media as yet another way to give back to your congregation. Use it to offer them guidance, information, and inspiration and as a means to interact with them, such as posing questions to get their thoughts or ideas. Offer hopeful, positive, and motivating creation care images, ideas, tips, and videos (from other leaders is ok, too!). Ask for them from your members, too! What you will find is that people like to share and you will build a stronger community for encouraging them to do so.

With Blessed Tomorrow, you can take advantage of the many ways in which social media can help you spread your creation care message throughout your community.

Here are additional tips on making the most of your social media, culled from a breadth and depth of best practices available:

- **Start small:** There are many social media platforms on the rise with varied success, depending on where your audience spends their time. Don't get bogged down by trying to manage too many sites at once if you don't have enough time.

- **Follow and like others:** By following and liking other leaders and organizations, you will get inspiration from what others are posting and build your network. Retweeting (using the letters RT) and reposting their content creates connections, and you may even receive a retweet or share in return.

- **Use Images:** Posting eye-catching and inspirational photos, infographics, and images to accompany your posts will help draw a reader's eye to your posts.

- **Tag others:** The @ symbol is a great tool for getting visibility on other social media pages. By using the @ symbol (for example, @BlessedTomorrow), you can tag others in your social media posts and your posts will appear on their pages for new audiences to see. It's also a great way to share another organization's outstanding work and help you build your network.

- **Use #hashtags:** The # symbol is another tool to help you get noticed as the internet creates linkable topics across the web like #climatechange. Use the # symbol before any word or group of words (no spaces or punctuation) as a way to create a conversation on one topic, such as your next #creationcareconference.

- **Post links:** You can insert links to articles or web pages that you find relevant to your message and preface them with a short explanation of why it would be of interest to others. Be sure to use a link shortener service like bit.ly or TinyURL before posting to save your readers from having to see long links. This is especially important for Twitter because of its limited character count.

- **Timing and frequency:** You'll want to find a balance between posting too frequently and not posting enough so try a few different intervals and see how your audience responds. Work up to posting once a day. You may wish to alter the time of day you post and gauge when your receive the highest response.

- **Think before you post:** As always, think carefully about what you post and ask yourself a few questions first. Could my post be misinterpreted in any way? Is my post appropriate for all cultures, political beliefs, and age groups?

- **Encourage a conversation:** Think of social media as a two-way street. Don't just make statements, ask your audience questions to get them talking to you and one another.