

Sharing Jesus Online:

Guidelines for getting the best out of your witness on Social Media



The Biblical Foundation for Social Media use:

"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" [Romans 10:15]



For the Apostle Paul, his feet were the only social media tools available, walking from town to town, village to village. By the time of the Reformation we add the printed word as a new tool for sharing the Gospel. Without the printing press it is doubtful if the themes from Luther's 95 thesis would have spread across Europe. This is equally why Ellen White talked about spreading books and tracts like the leaves of autumn.¹

Since then even more varieties of 'beautiful feet' have become available with the advent of radio in the 1920s, TV in the 1950s, then more recently the internet and now social media. All of these are additional means for sharing our faith.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have." [1 Peter 3:15]

This is sound advice in face to face conversations. It is even more important online. Being prepared to give an answer means that you are ready, but you have to wait until the person you are communicating with is ready. In every answer you give you are pointing them towards 'the hope you have within you'. Thus, in your responses you will always ask, 'What is the redemptive, positive thing to say here?'



"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity,



God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."

[Romans 12:1-2 The Message]

The Message paraphrase makes this Bible verse jump out. Social media is very much about my 'everyday, ordinary life', and as I dedicate it to God I can use my 'ordinary' to be a gentle witness to my non-Christian contacts.

¹ Ellen G White, Manuscript Releases vol 4, page 107.

"Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." [Colossians 4:6 NIV]

Important in everyday life, even more important on the internet where there is no body language to modify or express your emotions. Grace is largely lacking on the internet. Social media is often seen as a place to argue, bully, harass or embarrass. As Christians we can have fun and live life to the full, but we will always add grace to a conversation. We will always be 'salt and light'.



My Christian rules for Social Media:

- I do share my life online – but only share what will not come back to haunt me!
- 80% of my postings are my 'everyday, ordinary life'.
- 20% of my postings share my faith but in a non-threatening way.
- I'm open for discussion but not for argument.
- I will never be negative about those I theologically disagree with.²
- I may suggest moving deep discussion from a public page to a private posting.
- Internet supplements, does not replace, face-to-face.

Some BUC sources for Social Media content:

Social media content is easily shared from the following websites:

<http://adventist.org.uk> Every page has a social media button at the bottom.

<http://hopetv.org.uk> Every on demand video can be shared on social media.

www.youtube.com/ukhopetv A selection of Adventist content worth sharing with friends including the Mark Finley 'Hard questions about God' series from London.

www.secmedia.org A large range of content from various life and studio events.

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² Decided proclamations are to be made. But in regard to this line of work, I am instructed to say to our people: Be guarded. In bearing the message, make no personal thrusts at other churches, not even the Roman Catholic Church. Angels of God see in the different denominations many who can be reached only by the greatest caution. Therefore let us be careful of our words. Let not our ministers follow their own impulses in denouncing and exposing the "mysteries of iniquity." Upon these themes silence is eloquence. Many are deceived. Speak the truth in tones and words of love. Let Christ Jesus be exalted. Keep to the affirmative of truth. Never leave the straight path God has marked out, for the purpose of giving someone a thrust. That thrust may do much harm and no good. It may quench conviction in many minds. Let the Word of God, which is the truth, tell the story of the inconsistency of those in error.

People cannot be expected to see at once the advantage of the truth over the error they have cherished. The best way to expose the fallacy of error is to present the evidences of truth. This is the greatest rebuke that can be given to error. Dispel the cloud of darkness resting on minds by reflecting the bright light of the Sun of Righteousness. [Ellen G White. Manuscript 6, 1902 / Evangelism pg 576]