



Social Media Guideline of the New Apostolic Church

New Apostolic Church
International



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Chief Apostle Jean-Luc Schneider

Appreciatively und responsibly

Why guidelines for dealing with social media? Many Facebook users might ask this question. It is very simple. Not everyone feels confident or has learned how to deal with the new media. And especially because the boundaries have become blurred between its use in the private, professional, and Church spheres, questions arise which were unthinkable a few years ago.

Ministers and workers in the Church, and also members, acknowledge themselves and their faith quite naturally online. They ought to know where the New Apostolic Church stands on activities in social media.

What is important is that everyone is aware of the consequences of his statements and behaves in an appreciative and respectful fashion, in accordance with the gospel.

Social media frequently has its own rules. The present *Social Media Guideline* of the New Apostolic Church is not intended to replace these rules. Rather, it will supplement them by explaining the standpoint of the Church and giving instructions on benefits and risks.

Let us use social media responsibly and carefully weigh up the use of our time and our words.

Cordial greetings, your

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line that curves to the right and then loops back down and to the left.

Jean-Luc Schneider





Fundamental principles of communication



Fundamental principles

As members of our local congregation and of the Church worldwide, as ministers or voluntary workers, we give our Church a public face. This holds true for what we do in our real life and also for the manifold activities in the virtual world of the Internet.

As individuals but also as Church members and co-workers we can be caught between freedom of expression and loyalty to our Church or employer. When we are active online as Church members or ministers, the realms of private life, profession, and Church become blurred. When are we speaking for ourselves and when for our Church? People outside have to be able to recognise whether our statements are made as a private person or in our capacity as a functionary in the New Apostolic Church.

The New Apostolic Church is facing the challenges and expectations of this new age of communication and making use of the opportunities of social media. With its recommendations and information the *Social Media Guideline of the New Apostolic Church* should make dealing with social media easier and give confidence to voluntary as well as full-time workers and ministers.

A new age of communication

Communication meant formerly that organisations and businesses would inform people by means of printed publications, radio, and TV. Reactions on the part of readers, listeners, and viewers were rare or technically impossible.

Nowadays, the communication comes mostly from the people themselves: they ask questions, demand answers, and make their opinion known—sometimes positively, sometimes negatively. Communication is no longer a monologue, but a dialogue, with an infinite number of readers anywhere and anytime.

This behaviour is made possible by social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram as well as a multitude of mobile devices which for most people have

become a permanent feature of life. Networked communication has also benefited from the much easier access to information. The way people communicate with each other has changed fundamentally in recent years due to various developments.

Social media is a public space in which special rules apply. Even if thousands are not looking over our shoulder as we write, nevertheless the message can be seen by thousands a few minutes after publication.

Every online activity provides an image of one's personality. This image should reflect the true thoughts and beliefs of one's personality.

Communication is faster and more public. The number of contacts and dialogues is increasing. Information and news are visible and available on the web of social media, unrestricted by place or time.



Church on nacworld.net

nacworld.net is the social network of the New Apostolic Church International and offers the opportunity worldwide to make contacts with other Christians and to foster friendships. nacworld.net is aimed at members of the New Apostolic Church. Members of other Churches or religious communities are likewise welcome. nacworld.net has been developed for the Church; it has no connection with any external businesses or advertisers.

<https://nacworld.net>



Church on Facebook

The New Apostolic Church is represented on Facebook with Fan Pages and Pages. Thousands of members share news from around the New Apostolic world on a daily basis in their personal news feeds. The content is moderated by the Communication Services group. Reports featured on nak.org and nac.today are shared on a daily basis. The New Apostolic Church has an official Facebook Page in the four core languages of English, German, French, and Spanish:

New Apostolic Church International

English: <https://www.facebook.com/newapostolicchurchinternational/>

German: <https://www.facebook.com/neuapostolischekirche/>

Spanish: <https://www.facebook.com/iglesianuevaapostolica/>

French: <https://www.facebook.com/eglisenéoapostoliqueinternationale/>

nac.today: <https://www.facebook.com/newapostolic.nactoday/>

nacworld.net: <https://www.facebook.com/nacworld/>

Chief Apostle: <https://www.facebook.com/jeanluc.schneider59/>

District Churches

NAC Hesse: <https://www.facebook.com/nakhrs/>

NAC North Rhine-Westphalia: <https://www.facebook.com/naknrw/>

NAC Northern and Eastern Germany: <https://www.facebook.com/nak.nordost/>

NAC Southern Germany: <https://www.facebook.com/naksued/>

NAC USA: <https://www.facebook.com/NewApostolicChurchUSA/>

NAC Canada: <https://www.facebook.com/NACCanada/>



Church on Instagram and YouTube

Instagram

The New Apostolic Church posts content on Instagram in English and in German. Reports from nak.org and nac.today are shared on both services. The focus is on network-related images or collages. Existing reports are combined with individual images, given a teaser, and are then shared. The network is used to like and share pictures as well as short texts and captions.

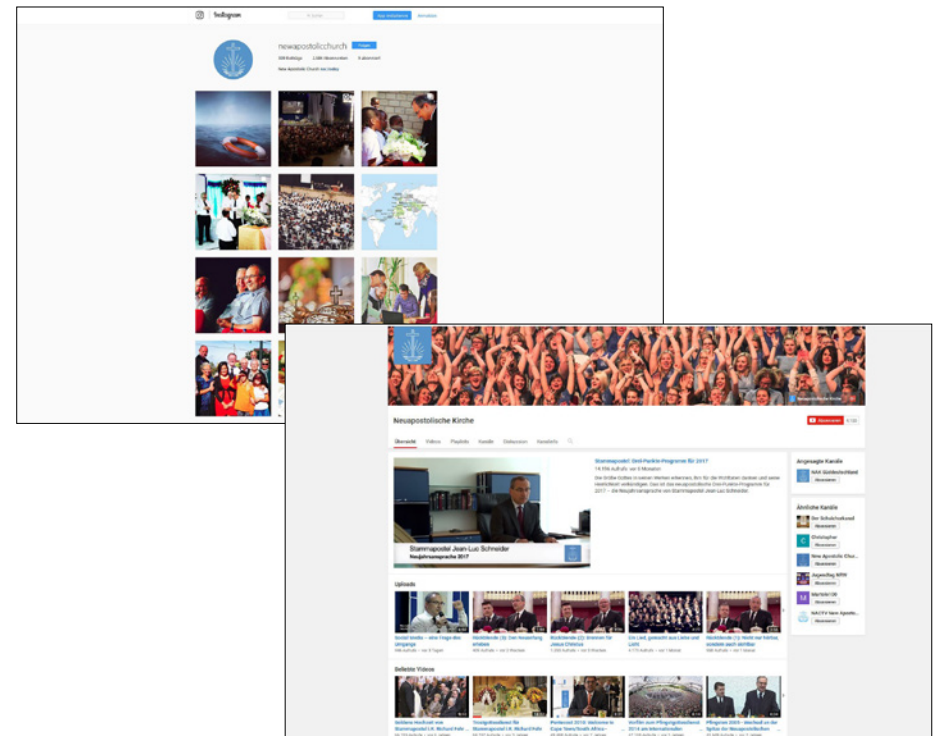
English: <https://www.instagram.com/newapostolicchurch/>

German: <https://www.instagram.com/neuapostolischekirche/>

YouTube

The New Apostolic Church broadcasts short video clips of divine services, meetings, and talks on a dedicated YouTube channel with audio and text in English and German.

<http://youtube.de/neuapostolisch>



Church on Twitter and Pinterest

Twitter

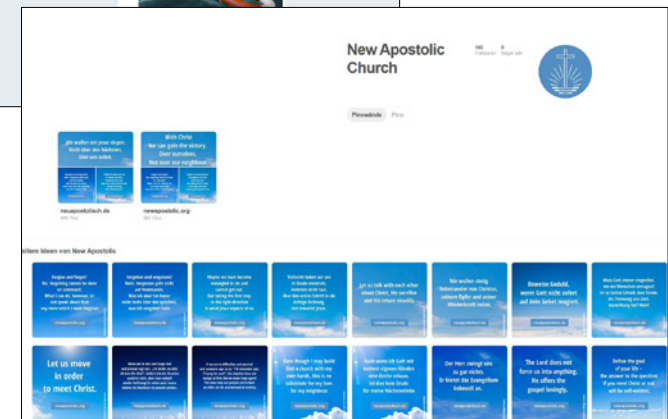
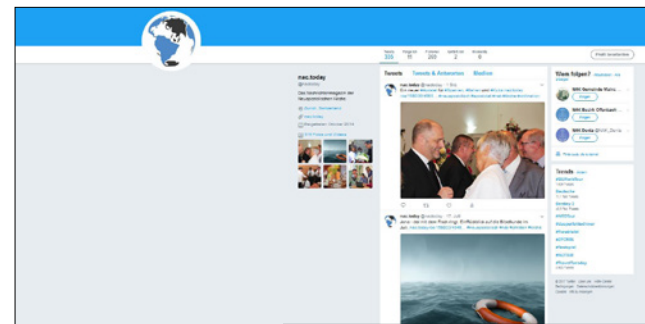
The New Apostolic Church uses a German-language Twitter account to publish content from nac.today.

<https://twitter.com/nactoday>

Pinterest

The New Apostolic Church uses Pinterest with an English- and a German-language account to feature quotes by Apostles published on neupostolisch.de/newapostolic.org.

<https://www.pinterest.de/neupostolisch/>



Potential

As Christians we are called upon to have a dialogue with other people. Social media supports us in this task but does not replace personal contacts. That is why we as a Church on principle support activities in social media. We recognise the manifold uses of social media for the Church and for other people.

1. We want to fulfil the Mission Statement. To reach out to all people in order to teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ and to baptise them with water and the Holy Spirit. Providing soul care and cultivating a warm fellowship in which everyone shall experience the love of God and the joy of serving Him and others.

2. We want to profess our faith. With posts, Likes and Shares of articles, New Apostolic Christians are actively testifying to their friends and acquaintances and thereby playing their part in modern vineyard work as well as public relations work for the Church.

3. We want to strengthen the community. Through social networks New Apostolic Christians feel part of a larger fellowship beyond country and state boundaries, and beyond their often small congregations.

4. We want to be visible. Social media is a part of everyday life for more and more people. Those who are not on social media do not exist for a large number of people. A modern representation strengthens the image, especially for young people. The Church has to be where the people are.

5. We want the members to feel connected to their Church. Articles in social media highlight the positive developments and aspects of the Church. This strengthens the self-confidence of the members and helps them identify with the Church.

6. We want to ensure the sovereignty of information. Church information and news can be spread effectively and efficiently on social media. Other people also do research on social networks. We offer access to reliable information and position the Church and its doctrine in the digital sphere.

7. We want to provide an opportunity to foster dialogue about Church and faith. Social media strengthens dialogue. We can discuss Christian and Church topics as well as core New Apostolic themes on networks which are also used by other Churches.

8. We want to offer help and answers. Social media enables a fast and direct dialogue with people who have questions and concerns.

9. We want to bring people within the Church together. Social media encourages the networking of people who employ their knowledge and abilities within our Church.

10. We want to spread positive news. In an age in which negative headlines receive the most views, we want to report good things.



Points to consider

1. Plan resources. The Church has only limited financial and personnel resources. They must therefore be employed efficiently. A social media concept with clear operational procedures and structures ensures that the Church does not spread itself too thinly, or that it suddenly has greater expenditure than expected. The social media concept will be reviewed once a year and gauged according to current developments (new trends, new networks).

2. Retain control. Anyone who is involved in social networks opens himself up to direct communication with the user. This brings certain risks and dangers. However, if the Church were not involved in social networks at all, third parties would do so in the name of the Church (fake profiles), thus increasing possible risks. There is no real control anyway on the Internet. However, by means of a clear social media concept—in tandem with an editorial concept—the Church can steer communication on the social networks and/or influence it in a positive way.

3. Communicating authoritatively. Comments and questions from users, and the answers to them, are public. In individual cases comments can be blocked or users banned. The aim of social networks, however, is dialogue and a feedback culture. Besides, user enquiries also reach the Church via messaging function. To begin with, these discussions are private, but like any email, they can also be made public later. A clear ruling is therefore required as to who speaks for the page/Church and reacts to enquiries. The administrators are thereby aware of their responsibility not to speak for themselves or their own District Church, but for the Church as a whole. Emails reach NACI on its Internet page, nak.org. Enquiries are also answered on social media by the Church spokesman or his communication team. Individual queries can be forwarded to the person in the District Churches responsible for communication. This procedure remains unchanged.

4. Preserving the sovereignty of information. The official Church websites are the primary source of information for important Church news. Only those topics which have little or no relevance for the Church and its policies are found exclusively on social media. The sovereignty of information remains with the Chief Apostle or District Apostles. Social media assists Church communication.



Limitations

1. Concentration. Throughout the world there are hundreds of social networks. On account of its limited resources the Church has to concentrate on the ones which are of the greatest benefit.

2. Automation. Teasers are used to stimulate interest and can be completely or partly automated. If these are produced by an editorial group using an editorial tool, the various social media channels can also be a very efficient means of communication.

3. Not the primary channel. Social media is not the primary channel for our news. This is not due to the complexity of individual topics but to the fact that first of all we only have control over the information when it is on our own website. This means that if we were to publish an article exclusively on Facebook, the Facebook algorithm could limit or block access to the information at any time and secondly it can also exclude certain people, namely those who are not registered with Facebook and do not want to use it in a public and unregistered way. Similar rules apply for other networks.

4. Pastoral care. Here and there the Church also receives pastoral care enquiries via social networks. Pastoral care must, however, remain personal and in such cases a conversation or contact with local pastoral care givers is therefore offered.

5. Groups. The many hundreds of chat groups which exist on social networks, especially on Facebook, cannot be controlled or steered. They can be set up by anyone. Many are secret and can therefore not be tracked. Often groups are not freely accessible, that is, they are not public. In individual cases Church ministers and workers also belong to the administrative teams of certain groups.





Directions for dealing with internal communication



Directions for dealing with internal communication

A social media team under the umbrella group NACI Communication Services, led by the Church spokesman, moderates Church activities on the social networks and edits publications. It also gives answers to enquiries and, where necessary, forwards them to the appropriate authorities in the District Churches.

1. Official Church profiles. The New Apostolic Church International and the District Churches maintain Facebook profiles. The style of the publications is factual and news-oriented. Teasers of reports are posted on the various website. Reports in greater detail are posted about important Church events. Analogous to the websites, for the New Apostolic Church International the focus is on national and international topics, for the District Churches it is on regional topics. Selective networking takes place between them. Basically, important Church news appears first on the Church websites; the social networks function predominantly to forward and share this news. By concentrating reports on these pages, we can also reach and inform users who do not regularly visit a large number of websites directly. Approval for Facebook Pages in the districts and congregations is the responsibility of the District Churches. The requirements for their operation are the same as for websites. That means observing existing Internet and editorial guidelines, a copyright, a clear concept, and fixed responsibilities.

2. Profiles of Church ministers. A person of public interest who wants to appear on Facebook must, according to its requirements, use a Facebook Page. Profiles are only for private use. If this rule is infringed Facebook reserves the right to delete the account. However, it is possible to move the private profile to another page and keep all the contents. It is then administered by the business manager or a private profile. A private profile must clearly regulate the privacy settings.

3. Official Pages for Church ministers. As a public figure, District Apostles, as well as Apostles and Bishops where necessary, are advised to create an official Facebook Page. This requires an editorial concept. Several administrators should be involved in the running of it in order to achieve speedy reactions to events. The administrators must be suitably authorised (that is, have their own authorisation process outside of Facebook). Every Page must have a copyright, or refer to one. People's pages can be made more personal. Comments and opinions are also possible, such as thanking those who have helped after a big event, an invitation to a transmission service, and so on.

4. Groups. For discussions the New Apostolic Church maintains its own social network site, nacworld.net. That is why there are no official NAC groups on Facebook or other social networks.





Instructions for pastoral care givers

New Apostolic Church
International



Instructions for pastoral care givers

Many ministers and their delegates frequently use the social networks. Some draw attention to the voluntary work they do while others simply use these networks for private purposes.

1. Self-image. Church ministers must not forget that also on the social networks they are perceived as examples, pastoral care givers, or teachers. Their posts or comments are evaluated accordingly. That is why it is recommended that they check their privacy settings, and where necessary limit them, so that private content cannot be seen by everyone. A minister's official role, especially, must be exercised in accordance with the existing *Guide for Ministers*.

2. Dealing with pastoral care topics. Where pastoral care is exercised by means of technical communication the minister carrying out pastoral care must ensure that confidentiality is preserved to the highest degree. Moreover, when he receives a pastoral care enquiry via social networks he should switch to a different, direct form of communication as quickly as possible; for example, personal conversation, telephone call, or email. When dealing with any kind of pastoral care data, one must ensure that Church and state provisions for the protection of pastoral care confidentiality and the requirements of the Church data protection law are heeded.



Recommendations for Church members

New Apostolic Church
International



Recommendations for Church members

Members of the New Apostolic Church are requested to express their opinions as a private person and not in the name of the Church. An exception is when they are assigned to certain tasks, such as public relations work. In such cases the existing recommendations of the Church should, in any event, be borne in mind.

Media contacts

Social media offers many opportunities, but also gives rise to questions. Above all it is a powerful instrument of communication which is in a constant state of flux. The New Apostolic Church would like to make use of it!

The Church invites members and ministers to share ideas and experiences on a continual basis. Beyond that, those responsible for communication in the District Churches welcome questions and suggestions. Names and contact information can be requested from the relevant Church administration.



Privacy settings



Privacy settings

Settings change so often in the course of a year that they cannot be updated often enough. It is therefore necessary to continually review one's privacy settings and adjust them if necessary. How this is done is described in detail on the various networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Pinterest, nacworld.net).

denk ihr / die ihr doch arg seyd / Kind 24
dennoch ewren Kindern gute Gabe ge-
ben / Wie viel mehr wird ewer Vater im
Himmel gutes geben / denen die ihn bit. 25
Alles nu / dz ihr wollet / das euch
die Leute thun sollen / das thut ihr ihnen /
Das ist das Gesetz vnd die Prophe. 26
ten. 27

Luc. 6. v. 31.

12

Guideline
Codex



Social Media Guideline

1. We respect our neighbour. We maintain a respectful tone and are aware that we are communicating with other people. We have consideration for their emotions and feelings. That is why we refrain from any expression which could be construed as racist, violent, extremist, fanatic, sexist, discriminatory, or otherwise offensive. We publish only what we would say to the recipient in a personal conversation.

2. We are friendly. A clear, understandable language—free of irony, sarcasm, or provocation—is the basis for a constructive exchange of views. Rage, anger, and frustration do not lead anywhere. Criticism is possible, as long as it is not hurtful or personal. Problems with individual people are not discussed publicly. We remain calm, even when others are not.

3. We are honest and authentic. We use our real name and do not deceive. If we are not serving the Church in an official capacity on social media, we can decide for ourselves whether we admit in our profile whether we are working full-time or voluntarily for the New Apostolic Church.

4. We respect the intellectual property of others. Content, whether text or images, may in general only be published with the permission of the original author (copyright). When third parties are quoted, the quotes must be clearly identified and the source of the quote given. Quotes are only ever used as a supplement to one's own thoughts (right to quotes). If pictures or videos are published, the people depicted must be in agreement (right to one's own image).

5. We act responsibly. Each person is responsible for the content which he publishes on social media. We do not speculate. Communication on the Internet is often simple and in places banal. Whenever it concerns topics to do with Church we try to keep the conversation above the ordinary.

6. We spread good news. We are witnesses of our faith and the public face of our Church. In our activities on social media we demonstrate Christian values.

7. We protect the private sphere. We are aware that what we communicate on the Internet is, on principle, public. Even if we try to limit the visibility of our social media activities to certain people, content can at any time be redirected, either inadvertently or on purpose, and thus be made public. Private information must remain private. This includes, among other things, personal data and confidential information.

8. We keep politics and business separate from Church involvement. As far as social media activities for the Church are concerned, we refrain from any party political remarks. Likewise, we keep a strict separation between voluntary or Church involvement and business or professional interests.

9. Count us in. A responsible use of social media during work time may be possible. We clarify with our superiors to what extent we may, during work time, use social media to establish contacts, increase our knowledge, or build networks.

10. We do not have to know everything. If we are unsure we ask the person in charge. We do not spread rumours. When we make a mistake we admit it, apologise, and learn from it.



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