

The Great Commission wasn't a suggestion. It was a commandment. We are to share the Orthodox Faith with the entire world. But how are we supposed to reach people? Stand on a soapbox on a street corner? Go door-to-door? Visit the sick, the needy, the elderly? Those are all good things that are worth doing. But did you ever think about using your Facebook account to spread Orthodoxy?

Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites are all the rage. People use them to find lost friends, connect with others with similar interests, and as an easy way to keep everyone updated with the latest news. Facebook users have an average of 281 friends in their personal networks. That means one Facebook user is capable of getting a personal message out to literally hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people. Now compare that online world to the real one. How many people do you really interact with on a daily basis? In my case, a few dozen at the most. I go to work, see some folks around the office, and head home. My primary activities outside work are focused on my parish. Since most of the people I meet at the parish are already Orthodox, the fact is that I don't have a lot of face-to-face evangelism opportunities in my daily routine.

Which is why Facebook and other social networking sites open up so many opportunities. I would be classified as someone who is heavily involved in Orthodoxy. I run Orthodox Websites, I blog on Orthodox topics, and I even serve on my parish council. But even so, only 1/4 of my Facebook friends are actually Orthodox. Looking at the whole list, fully 3/4 of the people I am friends with on Facebook are not Orthodox Christians.

How is that possible? They are friends from high school and college mostly. But some are friends I've met in business and professional settings. Others are friends from the Republican Party, and still others friended me because they liked something I wrote about the Middle East. This is a mission field, and I take it very seriously as one. You should too.

I don't get pushy with it. I don't publish long posts about Orthodoxy or about the Church fathers. I don't need to, because top-notch material is already being produced by media ministries like the Orthodox Christian Network. All I have to do is share it with my Facebook friends. I use one of the social bookmarking links on the OCN site (or Orthodox Biz, or any of the Orthodox Blogs I read), and include a short commentary on why I like the particular piece.



The most recent piece I put out was the Beyond the Veil episode talking about the [Rapture](#) as a purely made-up fantasy. Most of my non-Orthodox friends are Evangelicals, and most of them believe fervently in the Rapture. By putting out that article on my Facebook and on Digg, I brought this scholarly Orthodox podcast to their attention. Many of them listened to it, and then stuck around the myocn.net site to learn more about other topics. I got into a lively debate with

some of them on Facebook, which then attracted even more of my friends to pay attention to Orthodox teaching on the end-times. I am not an expert on the way the Early Church viewed the Book of Revelations. I am not an expert in Patristic Theology, the nature of Creation, the struggles of the early Christian communities in a hostile Roman world, or the meaning behind all of what we do in the Divine Liturgy.

But I don't have to be an expert on all those topics. That is the beauty of Facebook evangelism. I just have to point my friends to the real experts in these fields, and then be there to answer questions the best I can. If I get into trouble, then I can do a reach-out to my priest, or even to the OCN contributor whose work I am recommending to my friends. I don't have to be a Theologian, or even a good writer. All I have to do is honestly pass along things which I think are spiritually beneficial for my friends and acquaintances. Of all the things we are called do for the Kingdom of God, Facebook evangelism is likely to be among the most effortlessly effective. So start sharing, and may the electronic mission field be ripe for the harvesting!

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