

SSP

The Church of Jesus Christ



Does My Facebook Need A Facelift?

Your online image matters more than you think

The moon. The moon is a reflection of the sun. **Facebook.** Facebook is a reflection of you. It's your "avatar!" The use of the term *avatar* for the on-screen representation of a user was coined in 1985 on a LucasFilm project. An **avatar** is the graphical representation of the user or the user's alter ego or character. It may take either a three-dimensional form, as in games or virtual worlds, or a two-dimensional form, as an icon in Internet forums and other online communities. Most of us surf Facebook updates many times a day to see what's up with our friends, send a "like," send a "poke" or just see who is going to the game this

By the GMBA Officers

Friday night. Facebook is a *fantastic* communication tool. In fact, the GMBA has recently joined the Facebook world with our own page.

Follow the GMBA on Facebook by liking The Church of Jesus Christ (GMBA).

So, the questions at hand are **Am I accountable for my Facebook "reflection?" Does it really matter?** Before we get into some specifics, let's answer those general questions right off the bat: **YES** and **YES!**

Two Sides of Technology

In recent years, technology has greatly impacted the church. The Internet has allowed us to reach out to foreign works with just the click of the mouse. Missionaries are able to text family members while traveling to a distant field, a la "we r well, luv u." When it comes to technology, like anything, there are many positives and many negatives. Respected sports and political figures have ruined their reputations, careers and sometimes their lives with a cell phone or social media blunder. As we stated earlier, Facebook is a wonderful tool when used correctly, but **every rose has its thorns.** We are not immune to the problems that are associated with social media, and we must vigilantly ensure we don't slide into problems.

Put It to the Test

When it comes to comments, language, pictures or movies, we need to be careful about what we post on our Facebook pages. For example, if you have 423 friends on Facebook, then when you post a picture of yourself doing something, you're saying, "I am OK with 423 people seeing this picture. This picture is a representation of me." Remember, you represent you, your family and your Church! Let's look to the pleasing word of God:

ALMA 5:14, And now behold, I ask you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received HIS image in YOUR countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?

OK, let's break that scripture down in our own language today. When we apply this scripture to *this* subject, it is saying, "Do the pictures and comments on my Facebook page **reflect** that I am a servant of Christ? Or do they **reflect** something else?" (Remember the moon and sun thing we started out with?)

Have you ever taken the time to scroll through your Facebook profile to just get the general "feel" of what your page is **reflecting** about you? Maybe you'll be pleased with what you find, or maybe you'll find some pictures you forgot were on there. Ouch. Does your Facebook bring reproach on your family or the Church?

A Sincere Warning

OK, we're sure you're getting it by now. The truth is this: we're trending toward electronic communications more and more. Many of us would rather text a friend than talk to them live. We're expressing so many of our daily **reflections electronically**. Since this

has become the norm, many people feel immune to potential problems that could result from a single Facebook (or other) post or picture.

Have any of you heard of electronic anonymity? It doesn't really exist! We want you to know that we hear about this issue from your ministry, your parents, other members and even your peers! Good or bad, we see and hear about your Facebook **reflection**. People are watching you! Many form opinions, *whether correct or incorrect*. Like it or not, people look at a single picture or comment and draw a conclusion about you *and about our Church!*

That's unfair and judgmental, you say. Sure, it's not always fair, but that's the way it is. Please consider this point carefully and understand that your page is a reflection of you as a member of the Church and a child of Christ. Do not feel there is a line of separation or that we have "immunity," like on the various reality shows we all watch today.

We must understand that we are indeed accountable for our personal electronic representation. Our avatar should be in sync with the calling that rested upon us the day of our baptism. What is your avatar doing? What is it saying?

Inner Change

We don't want you to finish reading this article and *only* say, "OK, I am going to change my page so that my avatar doesn't reveal anything bad." *Rather*, this article should cause us to think and say, *If* my avatar is not a reflection of Christ, then I need to look inward:

1. I'm going to ask for God's help and strength to change. I want to seek a closer relationship with Him.
2. I'm going to delete anything that might bring reproach on me, my family and my Church.
3. I'm going to make my avatar reflect a person that has dedicated his or her life to Christ 100 percent!

Your Best Face Forward

Please take 33 seconds and watch this YouTube video **NOW**:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09jUmUrycuU>.

OK, what does that commercial mean to you? Our "better" should be better than the better of the world around us! *We are called to be "better!"* We are called to be different, special and not conformed to the image of this world, but to the image of the One who died for us, Jesus Christ! We are to **reflect Him!** Make no mistake: *you matter*. Your image matters in person *and* electronically! When Alma's son Corianton had issues going on, his father said something like, "*The people won't believe my preaching because of your actions.*" Our actions impact us, they impact our families, and they impact our Church. In 1985, Brother Dominic Thomas said, "**The church cannot be better than you and me.**"

We love you and want to care for you and our Church. If this doesn't apply to you, praise God! If you think it applies to older people too, we know, and we're encouraging them to do the same. If it *might* apply to you (i.e. you aren't sure), please don't read this article and then delete it without serious contemplation and prayer. Please do not be offended or upset by its content. Rather, allow it to stir up the Spirit of God that *is* within you to make any necessary changes to you and your avatar. Remember, the only way to truly change our avatar is to change *ourselves, with the help of Christ!*

May God Bless you
and your avatar,

The GMBA Officers