

Meta announces 'more speech' on Facebook, Instagram: How Mississippi churches can respond

By Tanner Cade

Communication Services Director

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg on Tuesday announced significant changes to Facebook, Instagram, and Threads, including the end of the platforms' third-party fact-checking program in favor of a new community notes system.

"It's time to get back to our roots around free expression on Facebook and Instagram," Zuckerberg said in a video release.

The announcement outlined plans to simplify content policies and enforcement, increase civic content, and protect free expression worldwide. Zuckerberg acknowledged the platforms had strayed from their original intent in recent years due to content restrictions.

"It means we're going to catch less bad stuff," Zuckerberg said. "But we'll reduce the number of innocent people's posts and accounts that we accidentally take down."

He concluded the video by stating, "We're getting back to our roots of giving people voice."

At first glance, the announcement may not grab the attention of evangelical leaders, but many church leaders responsible for communicating their mission on digital platforms see potential positives in the news.

"With Meta dialing back third-party fact-checking and easing up on algorithm restrictions, churches on Facebook and

Instagram now have a better shot at sharing the Gospel without running into frustrating digital roadblocks,” said Lorie Hanson, director of communication at First Madison.

In recent years, increased restrictions and shifting algorithms have hindered churches’ efforts in the digital space. A small fraction of church followers may see posts from their church, while those in the broader community often miss the positive messages entirely.

“Faith-based posts have often been accidentally flagged or pushed down in feeds, making it harder for churches to reach their communities,” Hanson said. “This update opens the door for more meaningful conversations about faith to shine through without fear of being silenced or hidden.”

Not all churches have directly noticed suppression of content, but some perceive challenges tied to Meta’s policies.

“Though I know people who have at least perceived they have had issues that seemed somehow related to their content being blocked or filtered in some way, I think any increased freedom is better,” said Eric Busby, director of media and technical ministries at Morrison Heights Church.

The consequences of Meta’s restrictions have made it difficult for the “innocent” voices of churches to break through digital filters. However, today’s announcement may provide new hope for increased visibility.

“I’m excited to track engagement analytics in the future and compare them to trends from the past few years,” Hanson said.

If you need help improving the reach of your social media platform for your church, please feel free to reach out to Tanner Cade, communication services director for Mississippi Baptists, to schedule a meeting. tcade@mbcb.org