



## **Ancient Faith Ministries (AFM) – Content Contributors Policy**

Thank you for your interest in contributing to the content of Ancient Faith Ministries through your book, podcast, videos, or blog. In beginning new relationships like this, we feel it is helpful both to you and to us to share a general understanding of who we are as a ministry and the type of content we are committed to. You could publish your content anywhere—in most cases now, for free—so publishing with AFM means entering into a relationship together.

At the center of everything we do is the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world, the Conqueror of death, and the King of kings. We want our listeners and readers to see Him first in all we present. Sometimes other issues, such as politics, church governance, ethnocentrism, quarrels, and divisions within the Orthodox Church, can block the view to Christ, and we don't want that to happen.

Even if the Church sometimes needs to enter into these issues, AFM does not seek to be the be-all, end-all of everything the Church does or should do. Rather, we want to be a positive, uplifting, and encouraging resource where people can find hope, peace, and love as exhibited by Christ Himself, to their salvation and the salvation of the world. We like to point to the 3 Es—Evangelism, Edification, and Education—as the on-ramps to the experience of and relationship with Christ.

At AFM, we present our content with the understanding that viewpoints vary on how to apply Orthodox tradition to today's world. We also understand that people may eventually hear or read something on our platform with which they disagree. While we strive to present only material that is in line with the teachings of the Orthodox Church, we do not necessarily endorse all the content available on our website. So there certainly are some liberties our content partners can enjoy.

Five specific issues are especially important for your attention as a contributor:

- 1. Accountability:** All lay content contributors must provide to AFM the written blessing of their parish priest, who should be made fully aware of the nature and content of the work they would like to contribute. The same applies to clergy, but the written blessing must come from their canonical bishop. An email from the priest or bishop to our Chief Content Officer ([fr.andrew@ancientfaith.com](mailto:fr.andrew@ancientfaith.com)) will suffice.
- 2. Your Public Witness:** In agreeing to become a content provider for AFM, you are committing to staying within the boundaries of Orthodox Christian teaching as expressed in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, as well as in the public declarations of the Assembly of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in the United States. The latter have helped to interpret and apply Orthodox theology on such contemporary issues as gender, marriage, the sanctity of life, etc. **This commitment applies not only to the content you provide for AFM platforms but to anything you post on your personal platforms, whether websites or social media, as well as all your public statements.** Your reputation as a faithful Orthodox Christian matters both on and off our platforms.
- 3. Politics:** We want AFM's platforms to include engagement with modern social and cultural problems, but it is not appropriate to use our platforms to advocate for or to denounce specific political parties, candidates, government officials, activists or organizations in their political capacities (in some cases, doing this may legally threaten our non-profit tax exemption in the United States). For instance, it's okay to say "Your faith should shape your vote," "Christianity should inform our politics" or "This practice or political philosophy is not in keeping with the Church's teachings for the following reasons" but not "Vote for or against this candidate or party" or "Support or oppose this candidate, party, or political organization." In general, getting

caught up in the 24-hour news cycle, political controversies of the moment is not what AFM is about – especially where Orthodox Christians of goodwill may disagree. Spiritually commenting on cultural issues related to politics should be focused more on the theoretical and the historical rather than on parties, factions, and movements—it’s about ideas and behavior, not about naming names. If you’re not sure if your proposed content that’s related to politics crosses the line into “getting political,” please contact us to ask. We understand that political opinions may be strongly held and may well be informed by one’s faith, but AFM’s platforms are not the place for staking out positions on political officials, organizations and activists and what they’re up to at the moment. We have this policy because we believe getting political on our platforms hinders our ability to preach Christ. **This policy applies to AFM platforms only.** Posting your political opinions on your own platforms is your own business. AFM takes no responsibility for the political opinions of its staff or content contributors.

**4. Interview Guests:** To avoid unnecessary controversy or embarrassment, you should thoroughly research any guests you want to interview for an AFM platform. That does not mean that you have to hold them to all the standards above, but if they do indeed violate them, carefully consider the framing for your interview with them: Are they saying things that are not consistent with the Orthodox faith? Do they have a reputation for saying or writing things against the Orthodox faith? Are they known for being inflammatory? What does having this interviewee on AFM’s platform do to fulfill the “3 Es”? Be explicit about that. Some people will see your interview as an endorsement of all their views and behavior. While guilt-by-association is a fallacious way of reasoning, it is part of our modern world and becoming more acceptable to many. As Orthodox Christians speaking in public, we have to keep our eyes open and do all we can to make sure we’re understood, especially when we publicly interact with people we disagree with. That doesn’t mean we have to satisfy mobs uninterested in the truth, but we should leave little room for ambiguity for those who are ready to listen and think carefully.

**5. Commenting on other AFM contributors’ work:** We want our contributors to interact with each other’s work. But we also want to make sure that this is done respectfully and responsibly. If you want to post a negative review of an AFM product (especially books), you’ll need to do that somewhere off of AFM’s platforms – we have no obligation to publish negative reviews of our products. It’s bad for business and for our relationship to our authors. If you wish to post something whose primary purpose is to critique another AFM contributor’s work, an advance, pre-publication copy must be provided to the contributor whose work is being critiqued. Any disputes will be arbitrated by the Chief Content Officer in consultation with AFM leadership.

We are pledging to each other that we will remain faithful to the teachings of the Orthodox Church as partners in ministry. We realize there are fringe elements in Orthodoxy, but we cannot be identified with any of them. We wish to remain mainstream in our media content, avoiding unnecessary controversies or extremes.

If you have any questions please contact:

CEO John Maddex – [jmaddex@ancientfaith.com](mailto:jmaddex@ancientfaith.com)

CCO Archpriest Andrew Stephen Damick – [fr.andrew@ancientfaith.com](mailto:fr.andrew@ancientfaith.com)

By contributing to AFM media, you are indicating that you understand and agree to follow the above guidelines.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_