

THE CHRISTIAN ACTIVIST

Our hope is that we all truly become *disciples* of Jesus:

- Bearers of the good news of Jesus
- Ministers of Jesus' kindness and compassion
- Advocates for the needy
- Soft-hearted, but hard-headed in defense of the defenseless

Matt 5:14-15

"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill (that) cannot be hidden."

Amos 5:24

But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

God loves the world (John 3:16)
God loves His church (Eph. 5:25)
God loves the lost.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

We are Jesus' hands and feet to the hurting people of the world:

- The lost
- The sick and disabled
- The poor
- Children
- The unborn
- The aged
- The disenfranchised and marginalized
- Our culture

Christian activism is the practice of aggressive advocacy to achieve specific goals

We can be **individual** Christian activists as we fight for justice and protection of the needy and powerless day to day as we meet them at work, at school, in our community

We can be **corporate** Christian activists as we become advocates for justice and protection of the needy and exploited as a church:
In cooperation with other churches and para-church organizations
Or in cooperation with government or non-government organizations NGO's

The emphasis **of the Christian activist** is on making important gains for the kingdom of God **now**, not just waiting for the kingdom promised at the end of the age

Christian activism first starts with our attitudes and the manner in which we treat those around us—

Particularly those with less authority than us

“How I treat a brother from day to day, how I react to the sin-scarred wino on the street, how I respond to interruptions from people I dislike, how I deal with normal people in their normal unbelief on a normal day – all this reveals my reverence or irreverence for the Abba of Jesus more tellingly than the anti-abortion sticker on the bumper of my car.”

Brennan Manning

The Church’s primary mission is to the lost

We are the **only ones** involved in this mission

Not McDonalds / not the Postal Service / not the Rotary club / not animal rights advocates

“The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

Peter Lord

Above all, a Christian activist is an evangelist

1. The world needs a friend in Jesus – my testimony
2. We all need forgiveness for our sins
3. We all need adoption into the family of God
4. We all need the covenant blessings given to the children of faith
5. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to live a Christ-like life and impart that life to those around us

As Christian evangelist activists we have the opportunity to be involved in:

Relationship evangelism

Power evangelism

Prophetic evangelism

Needs-meeting (compassion) evangelism

Evangelism is done by word and by deed

“Preach the Gospel always, and if necessary, use words.”

Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

The world needs a **compassionate Church**

Not just an argumentative, judgmental church

Not just a social club engaged in philosophical arguments

But a church that loves her community and attempts to help it

A church that is **conservative** in moral values, integrity, and hold to the truth of the Bible, as traditionally interpreted

But a church that is **liberal** in extending Jesus’ hand to the less fortunate, the unsuccessful, the despised, the exploited

We must remind ourselves that the Jesus of the gospels was not a companion of the rich and powerful

But of the poor, the rejected, the excluded, the under-educated

Ps 82:3-4

Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless;

Maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.

Rescue the weak and needy;

Deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

Who are the needy that Christian activist is called to help?

1. The lost in the U.S.

Only 30% of Americans describe themselves as “born again”
 9% of US adults classify as evangelicals
 Atheists and agnostics comprise 10% of adults nationwide
 10% of the US population identify with a faith other than Christianity
 The Barna Group

The number of un-reached, lost people in the world is staggering
 865 million Muslims or Islamic followers
 550 million Hindus
 275 million Buddhists
 140 million in 2550 unreached tribal groups (which are mainly animistic)
 17 million Jews scattered across 134 countries

Two-thirds of the world's population -- more than 3.2 billion people -- live in the 10-40 window *****Slide showing it*****

95% of the people living in the 10/40 Window are un-evangelized.
 Many have never heard the Gospel message *even once*.

2. The sick – in the U.S.

*****3 PHNP slides******

Other developed nations / Canada experiences

The sick in the world

About 34,000 children under the age of 5 die every day.
 (About 12.5 million per year)
 25,000 children die each day from measles, diarrhea, malaria, pneumonia,
 and malnutrition -- preventable or treatable diseases

The Big Three Infectious Diseases

HIV

- 40 million with the disease
- 3 million deaths/year from HIV
- 5 million new cases of HIV yearly

Malaria

- 275 million infected
- 1.2 million deaths per year
- A child dies every 30 seconds from malaria

Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis

- 8 million with the disease
- 2 million deaths per year

*****slide of AIDS patient******

3. The poor – in the U.S. (2005)

37 million people live in poverty.

25% are African Americans

22% are Hispanics

8% are non-Hispanic Whites

In rural areas of Latin America

48% live below the absolute poverty level.

45% do not have access to safe water

There are an estimated 15 million street children in Latin America

In Sub Saharan Africa

56% do not have access to adequate sanitation

41% of the children are malnourished

47% do not have access to health care

*****slides of Guatemala projects***

Prov 19:17

He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.

Permit me to quote a speaker at the U.S. National Prayer Breakfast earlier this year.

But the one thing we can all agree, all faiths and ideologies, is that God is with the vulnerable and poor.

God is in the slums, in the cardboard boxes where the poor play house... God is in the silence of a mother who has infected her child with a virus that will end both their lives... God is in the cries heard under the rubble of war... God is in the debris of wasted opportunity and lives, and God is with us if we are with them.

Isaiah writes, “If you remove the yolk from your midst, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness, and ***if you give yourself to the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted***, then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday and the Lord will continually guide you and satisfy your desire in scorched places”

Who am I quoting?

Bono of the rock group, U2.

The Bill Hybels pastor comment on a meeting he attended at which Bono spoke

4. Children:

Orphans:

Africa

34 million children in sub-Saharan Africa were orphans, one-third of them due to AIDS in 2001

Asia has the largest number of orphans.

In 2001, there were **65 million orphans**, with approximately 2 million of them orphaned due to AIDS.

Exploited children:

The International Labor Organization (ILO) has estimated that 250 million children between the ages of five and fourteen work in developing countries—at least 120 million on a full time basis.

Commercial sexual exploitation

At least 97 countries have reported cases of the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The last recorded estimates indicate that as many as 2 million children, mainly girls but also a significant number of boys, are sexually exploited in the multi-billion dollar commercial sex trade each year. (UNICEF Report)

5. The unborn in the U.S.

Number of abortions per year: 1.37 million (1996)

Number of abortions per day: 3,700

In the World:

Number of abortions per year: Approximately 46 Million

Number of abortions per day: Approximately 126,000

The Alan Guttmacher Institute. (www.aqi-usa.org)

Prov 24:11-12

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.

If you say, "But we knew nothing about this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?

6. The disenfranchised:

Women

Ethnic groups

Refugees

Political prisoners

These countries have generated the greatest number of refugees and asylum seekers.

*****country slides****
*****refugee camp slide***

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”
Edmond Burke

7. The excluded: Immigrants

Their plight
 Their motive
 Their sacrifice

Immigrants are an opportunity for the evangelical church

The 2006 Hispanic vote 70% Democratic candidates / 30% Republican candidates

The 2004 vote? 60% Democratic / 40% Republican

Deut 10:18-19

(The Lord) defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt.

Ex 22:21

"Do not mistreat an alien or oppress him, for you were aliens in Egypt.

Mark 12:31

"Love your neighbor as yourself."

8. Our culture:

Long-held tradition – based in Judeo-Christian ethics and truth – are being eroded daily

Marriage is under attack

Family is being redefined

STD's and HIV are rampant

Pornography omnipresent

Gambling growing

The moral fabric of our society is unraveling

Placing our friends, communities, children and grandchild at great moral and physical peril

Rom 1:32

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

What can we do?

1. We must not contribute to the problem

We must not be involved in domestic violence, prejudice, work-place corruption, marital infidelity, crime, rebellion

Not support organizations, media, corporations that promote exploitation, oppression, sinful activities and lifestyles

Be careful what we watch on TV, movies, Internet

Not support the pornography or the gambling industry

Be priests (intercessors, helpers) and kings (leaders, decision-makers) in your homes and with your friends

Not criticize others trapped in sin too harshly or judgmentally

Offer them freedom, warn them firmly but gently

Eph 5:11-12

Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

2. Do the work of an evangelist

Tell others the really good, really new News of Jesus' love

Start discipling those around you—at work, home, friends—even before they become a Christian or come to church

Talk about Jesus out loud as much as you talk to Him in your mind

2 Tim 4:4-5

But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

3. Work with groups that are advocates for the hurting:

According to your passion, your interest, what the Holy Spirit is inspiring in you

New Life Projects:

20% general giving for missions

Foreign projects -- short-term mission opportunities

Guatemala Hospital work

Adopt a Village

TEAR orphanage projects

Thailand work

Romania trips

Serbia / Balkans trips

Ed and Maritza Khouri's *Equipping Hearts* ministry

Brothers in Christ internet ministry to the poor

Domestic opportunities

Christian Crisis Center

Caring Hearts Pregnancy Center

Treasure Chest After School Program

Hospice, Home Health, Nursing Home volunteering

5% increase toward the poor

Helping Hands Ministry

National organizations

Focus on the Family (Citizen Magazine)

American Family Association

Operation Rescue

Don't be afraid to work with non-Christian organizations:

Federal, state government agencies / school system

Non-government organizations (NGO's) – private, non-faith-based groups

Do not be discouraged by the enormity of the problems

“How do you feed a billion hungry children? One child at a time.”

World Vision

The successes:**1. The lost**

1. About 180,000 people in the world become a Christian each day!
2. In *Korea* in 1900--there were virtually no Christians
--Today, 40% of the population is evangelical
3. In *China* in 1950--the number of Christians was in the 100,000's
-- Today the number is estimated at over 100 million
4. In 1989 there were only four known Christians living in Mongolia. That country now has an estimated 10,000 indigenous believers.
5. Christians in Cambodia grew from 200 to 400,000 between 1990 and 2004
6. More Muslims have turned to Christ in the last 10 year than in the previous 1,000

2. The sick:

The first hospitals? **Monasteries**

Florence Nightingale: "God spoke to me."

Small Pox eradication 1970's

Life expectancy data

Medieval England: 33 years

U.S. 1900: 49 years

U.S. 2000: 77 years / World average 2000: 66 years

Health Insurance initiatives

Massachusetts

Walmart

House Resolution 676

3. The poor

European Union joining with the old Iron Curtain states

Humanitarian work worldwide

Gates Foundation 6.6 billion in grants

Warren Buffet pledge over 30 billion pledged

Celebrities: Brad Pitt / Bono

Tsunami relief

4. Our Culture:

Citizen-Link e-mails to Congress

2001 – 12,186

2004 – 1, 029,370

Christian legal organizations

Victories in allowing prayer, Christian clubs in schools

Prosecution of child predators and pornographers

Boycotts of corporation supporting anti-Christian causes

5. The disenfranchised and excluded:**Slavery:**

May 22, 1787 meeting of 12 Englishmen—mostly Quaker

William Wilberforce 1759-1833 / First anti-slavery speech to British House of

Common 1789

Slavery abolished in England 1833 three days before his death

Civil Rights Movement *****slide of global improvements***

“If Christians had given the traditional 10 percent tithe of their income to their churches in 2004, instead of the 2.56 percent that they actually gave, there would have been an additional \$164 billion available,

The State of Church Giving through 2004.

******slides of Philippine girls******