

Christian Activism in a Post-Christian World

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"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."
Matthew 10:16

In many ways, the world Jesus confronted 2,000 years ago was little different from our own. We remain sheep in a wolfish world, a situation demanding we be discerning, careful, articulate, gentle, and innocent, yet forthright, honest, clear and outspoken. Jesus walked in a pre-Christian world filled with sin. We walk with Him in a post-Christian world, filled with sin. Our first priority is evangelism, of course. But how do we most effectively engage political activism in the context of our Christian walk in a post-Christian world?

It has been said a problem well stated is half solved. What are our biggest problems considering activism?

Communication is a big problem. Reaching the lost has rarely been more difficult. Secular citizens are thoroughly indoctrinated with the language and precepts of the world. Most every tenet of faith has been reversed or challenged in the secular mind. When Christians speak, we are perceived as foreigners. Secularists simply do not understand us, especially when we steep our approach in Christianese.

We have not learned well enough an effective approach to the wolf pack. When sheep talk, wolves attack, kill and eat. When we bleat, they see meat. It appears Jesus is and was teaching us that if sheep are to communicate effectively, we must learn to speak a little bit of wolf lingo, shrewdly proceeding, in love.

Does this mean compromise? Not at all. Effective jail ministry requires learning to speak in ways inmates can understand. Paul demonstrated this many times by finding some common ground with his audience and working from there to present the Gospel. Unless we find common ground with secularists we will never effectively share the Gospel, or the good politics that can flow from it. A great opportunity in this regard is reaching out to millennials who oppose abortion. We share common ground. Can we at least start there?

Another major problem: the spirit of defeatism. Christian leaders are largely AWOL. The shepherds too often appear content seeing the sheep scattered, allowing worldliness to cause confusion. Leaders muzzle themselves when the wolves show up. They become lap dogs when we need sheep dogs. What will it take for leaders to step up? It will take the spirit of John the Baptist. It will take bold, brave men willing to do battle in the spiritual realm. The recently declared 'war on toxic masculinity' is a great opportunity to demonstrate God-given, live-giving masculinity, found only in Christ Jesus!

Another problem (of our own making) is our tendency to play into the hands of our adversaries by confirming stereotypes. Preaching in the Spirit with power is one thing. Bible thumping is quite another. It easily becomes cartoonish. When was Bible thumping last effective? We will never harangue people into heaven, nor will we rebuke them into republicanism. God invites us to reason with Him. Shouldn't we issue a similar invitation? We should be the most reasonable people on earth!

Another problem: the spirit of condemnation. In our appeals, we frequently condemn the sinner, seeming to ignore the sin. We have it backward. Speaking out against great evil is our tradition, and doing so along with promoting all that is good adds power to the message, rendering it most persuasive. Why do we tend to be negative when our message is so positive? Are we sending mixed signals?

In another area it appears we need improvement: confronting the spirit of confusion. The world is spinning out of control. Fear, terror and suicide mark Western culture. The satanic spirit of confusion has been unleashed.

We offer the Rock. Yet, the spirit of confusion reigns, even inside the church. What must we do to be more effective spiritual warriors? One paramount remedy: rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Is our prayer life vibrant, or are we neglecting this crucial element in our walk with Christ? This too is a problem, isn't it!?

Another challenge we face is articulating a relevant message. For example, the homosexual doesn't need to hear more people hammer him/her with sermons about sin and hell. Homosexuals are familiar with aggression, condemnation and confrontation. They don't have ears to hear when approached in these ways. What we all need is conviction by the Holy Spirit. Genuine love is the only Christ-like approach proven effective with any group of people separated from the love of God. We must keep in mind that in every group of lost people, many desperately want the love of God in their lives, but they've been deceived into accepting counterfeits. Our job is helping them realize the genuine love of God and encouraging them to experience that genuine love, one that delivers healing, and joy. To break the chain of deception, we are called to speak the truth, in love. Working with Christ in the Spirit we can be used to set the captives free, just as we were set free from our own sin.

Spiritual warfare: are we focused on warring in the spiritual realm? Have we put on the full armor of God, or are we warring against the flesh?

Perhaps our biggest problem is we lack power in our messages because we have not repented of our own sin sufficiently. We cannot call upon the power of God if we harbor sin in our lives. We cannot be genuine ambassadors for Christ in any arena if we allow the devil to hinder a truly spiritual walk. Therefore, before we address any of the other problems we face, we must be sure we are innocent doves, not hypocrites appearing half lamb and half wolf.