

CBF Advocacy: Encouraging, Equipping & Modeling a Positive Public Witness

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How do we love our neighbor as ourselves? CBF Advocacy begins with missions. A passion for missions can extend to advocating for justice in systems that create so many marginalized, poor and oppressed in our communities. As professor Cornell West reminds us, “justice is what love looks like in public.”

Congregations should consider advocacy a natural extension of their tangible, charitable mission work. CBF Advocacy serves as a resource for congregations making this journey. No matter what issue their mission commitment might lead them to engage, we can help increase the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts.

In addition to encouraging and equipping congregations to

When it comes to advocacy for refugees and immigrants among us, CBF churches and field personnel in North Carolina have been a model. In April of 2017 when CBF Advocacy established an Action Team for Immigrants and Refugees, we knew Marc and Kim Wyatt should be a part. An excellent example of Christian advocacy comes from Hope Valley Baptist Church in Durham and pastor Bill Bigger. After receiving support from CBFNC and a grant from the CBF Ministries Council to renovate a nearby house to host refugee families, the church was featured in a video produced and promoted by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Pastor Bigger was then invited to join

World Relief to lobby Congress in Washington DC on World Refugee day. With over one-third of all CBF field personnel serving migrant populations across the globe, CBF Advocacy will continue encouraging and educating our supporters to advocate on behalf of and alongside our immigrant and refugee neighbors.

CBF Advocacy has not and will not encourage congregations to get involved in partisan campaigns by supporting or opposing candidates for office. Not only would this violate the IRS code for nonprofits, in the long run it will mute the prophetic voice of the church and open the door to blatant abuse by politicians. CBF Advocacy is working with the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty to make sure this rule, often referred to as the

“Johnson Amendment,” is not repealed. While CBF Advocacy will invite and encourage advocacy, we will not attempt to force any issue upon a congregation. Finally, CBF will not begin passing resolutions at General Assembly declaring the “right” side of any issue. We will instead seek consensus and hold up churches and pastors of models of advocacy in a given issue area.

Effective Christian advocacy takes long-term commitment, humility, and a recognition that we don’t have all the answers. While our political moment is rife with conflict, the command to love our neighbor remains. If we’re loving our neighbors just as we love ourselves, our voices and actions as citizens will show it. We’re often reminded that we serve as the hands and feet of Christ in this age, but how might we serve also as his voice?

Thoughts on Advocacy I’ve Heard and Pondered Recently

by Rick Jordan | CBFNC Church Resources Coordinator

“You might say, ‘doing that would make me uncomfortable.’
—Do it afraid. Begin the struggle. It gets easier.”

—On opening a conversation with someone very different from yourself

“I want to help the people in that line,
but I want that line to get shorter.”

—A minister’s observation of a long soup kitchen line

“Privilege is a fact, not an insult!
You can’t help it if you have it, and you don’t
have to feel guilty about it. Like it
or not, your status in the world will help you
get something you may not deserve.

It will make your path easier, and in
some cases, your privilege may blind you
into thinking the benefits that you gain
from it are ones you deserve because
you’re somehow better, smarter,
or more deserving than other people.”

—From the youth beach retreat led by CBF
missionary, Angel Pittman

“When we realize that there is still
discrimination and how we as white people
have so much advantage, it is like we wake
up. But you don’t just wake up once. We have
to commit to waking up again and again. Our
society has a lullaby for white people: go back
to sleep, go back to sleep.”

—From the Racial Equity Institute follow-up meeting

“I face racial or gender discrimination every day,
at least three times a day.”

—An African-American female minister



engage in advocacy, CBF Advocacy seeks to provide a model of positive and effective Christian advocacy. In the last five years, CBF Advocacy has invited pastors and church members to participate in advocacy in two main issue areas.

Predatory lending in the form of payday and auto title loans is a usurious practice preying on the financially vulnerable in their time of desperation. The typical interest rate of over 400% APR most often leads to a debt trap, ultimately making the financial hardship worse. CBF Advocacy is a national leader in the call for reform. North Carolina actually has some of the strongest laws in the country protecting borrowers. Families are better off without predatory lending and we will continue to work to restore moral and responsible lending laws.