

Christian Action Ministry Newsletter

Involving the Christian in Community Action

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Thoughts from our new CAM President

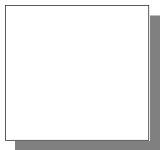
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Evangelism Online

Christians can use social media to preach the Gospel, Here is an actual example from a CAM member that was published online in 2021.

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If you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call 802-370-9560, email, or contact our website (see back page)



In the Works

Legislative bills

Are you interested in becoming involved? CAM is looking for interested and active people to act as liaisons to their church, helping to keep the Christian community informed. Contact CAM at 802-370-9560.

Where's the Front?

By
Lauston Stephens

Hollywood loves a true story but seldom tells it truly. Even if it is overdramatized, there is a scene in the 1977 film MacArthur that illustrates a point. The general listens carefully as the Australian military leaders outline their plan for the defense of their country in the face of the spreading wave of Japanese imperialism. They will use the vast Outback, perhaps as the vastness of Russia had weakened Napoleon. MacArthur commends them for their work and their love of their country. He then announces that the battle line for the defense of Australia will be in New Guinea, roughly a thousand miles north of the continent.

Douglas MacArthur did not travel to Australia to help them defend but to marshal forces to push back and defeat imperialism. He had a different objective and was seeing battle lines that the Australians had not been considering.

Spiritual, social, political, and military conflicts all have some of the same issues. There is the question of where and when to engage. Previous articles looked at individualism and

conformity.

We tend to think of conservatives as favoring individualism and liberals as favoring a communalism or collectivism. It is not that simple. In this country, “pro-choice” advocates are normally regarded as liberal but use individualism to favor abortion on demand and other sexual behavior that does not contribute to the growth of the community. It is a disingenuous use of individualism in the case of abortion because it ignores unborn individuals, but it prevails in public opinion in this most individualistic country.

Normally regarded as conservative, “pro-life” advocates do not counter with a claim that we need every available womb to produce ten or fifteen children. We do not. There *are* countries where the birth rate has dropped below sustainability but, with nearly eight billion people on the planet, some will declare, “Mission accomplished,” to the injunction to “be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth”. Most Americans do not feel that the needs of the community outweigh the need or the preference of the individual in the matter of abortion.

Therefore, individualism is an effective approach for abortionists in this culture.

On the other hand, China’s One Child Policy justified abortion by asserting that the needs of the many did outweigh the desires or needs of the individual family. Both individualism and collectivism have been used to justify abortion. That is not the ultimate battle line on this issue.

In 1973, many were awakened to a conflict by the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court ruling, and have focused on a political conflict. Storehouses of time and treasure have been spent for decades now on legislative, executive, and judicial battle lines. Some may think that a victory is in sight with a six to three “conservative” majority now on the Supreme Court. There are several reasons why this is not the ultimate battle line.

If *Roe* is overturned, the nation will revert to a patchwork of state laws as there was in 1973. There will still be abortions as there were before the ruling. One political battlefield may be quieted but fifty-plus others are already growing more intense.

Roe was only part of the changes that were happening at that time. There were innovations in contraception. Many Christians have embraced some of these innovations and the clock cannot be turned back on that, but they helped facilitate the male-led, hedonistic, “anywhere, anytime, anyone” sexual revolution. For women to embrace this “revolution”, there almost had to be abortion on demand. Focusing only on the political battle line may be like closing the front door because the valley is flooding and you want to keep your floor dry. There is a bigger picture.

There is also the matter of holding political gains, There is taking ground and there is holding ground, Each effort has its challenges. Legislative and executive gains are subject to regular elections. As the nation becomes increasingly secular, the pool of viable candidates grows secular. Even when judges are appointed for life, that is also still temporary. Political battles may be won, but there is never an end to political conflict. Politics is not the ultimate battle line.

In ancient times, lives were aborted more after birth than before it. Read again Exodus 1:15-21. Even when public policy requires abortion, life can still prevail. What does it matter what laws are on the books if life has won the heart and mind of the mother? Winning hearts and minds is integral to The Great Commission set before the Church Universal; all of life is addressed, not just “hot button” issues; clergy are trained to lead congregations in positive, winsome

ways.

Stewardship of civil democracy has been unknown to Christians for much of history and in unknown even today in much of the world. We must be faithful stewards of what has been given to us, but the Church did not prevail in the Roman Empire at the voting booth. We prevailed in the arena where we were slain for our faith and in the city dump where we rescued thrown away lives. Those prospects are always with us.

This is the traditional idea of Christian action and ministry: “I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.” Jesus washed the feet of Judas. Works of compassion are done because they are the right thing to do, whether or not they contribute to the recipient’s embrace of Christianity. Yet this is also serving on the battle line for hearts and minds.

I was not one of the founders of CAM, but my thinking was similar at that time; that the Church had been negligent in our stewardship of democracy and we needed to repent of that negligence. There is an aspiration in the CAM mission statement: “With the cooperation and support of a multitude of Christians working in unity, Christian principles and ideals can again become the guide and basis for decisions and directions in our community.” None of us at that time had a true assessment of what “multitude of Christians” there may or may not have been in Vermont. We did not dwell on how realistic were our aspirations.

It appears that the percentage of Christians that rally to political fronts is consistent with percentages in the general pub-

lic. Some may report to the political front full-time but others only on voting day. If you profess to be Christian, you may be AWOL, but you are in a conflict. We do not all get the same marching orders from the Captain of our salvation. We must recognize when those serving on other fronts are serving the same Lord.

CAM is a lay ministry “dedicated to informing and involving Christians in issues that affect the spiritual and moral well-being of our communities.” This is now my third article with an eye on the division and polarization of society that is affecting the whole world and even Christians. Now comes the involvement part; we are to be peacemakers. This is not easy. The Church actively acknowledging that we are to be a multicultural institution stresses and stretches us as individuals. Sunday morning is not a time to get comfortable. (See the Jan./Feb. 2020 issue.) We must not allow sinful expressions of an ethic of community to excuse an unhealthy clinging to individualism if that is a factor in many of our social ills. (See the Sept./Oct. 2020 issue.)

Here are three reasons why one might think to ignore these articles. First, Vermont is the least religious state in the nation. Wouldn’t it be easier for the Church to affect the larger culture if there were more of us? No, God reduced Gideon’s numbers so His people would not “vaunt themselves against” Him; this could be exactly the right place for something to start.

Second, Vermont is one of the least urban and least ethnically diverse portions of America. Wouldn’t it be easier to do this if there were more people to work with? Actually, in more populated areas, it is easier to have monocultural congregations.

Third, this is often viewed as a “conservative” newsletter. We’ve looked at our need for embracing more of the cultures and people that God embraces and now we’re remembering the “righteous acts of the saints” which often seem to be an emphasis of “liberals”. Labels we put on others often say more about us than the other. The need is to embrace that which is Christian.

Dick Trudell was a co-founder of CAM in 1992, has served as president since 2005, and has led us through several special speaker events. He has chosen to take a step back and I have been chosen as president. I’m not new to you; I’ve written over twenty articles for the newsletter since 2005. However, I need a fresh assessment of everything. Over the next few months, I will be attempting to connect with someone from each of the congregations that we serve. We may call it a “listening tour” even though much may be done by phone or Zoom, etc. How is your congregation doing? Your congregation may be facing issues of which our small pool of writers is not aware. You may be seeing ways we can improve this ministry. You may know of new congregations that could become part of this network.

The discussion here of different battle lines does not mean an abandonment of issues but an expansion. MacArthur inspires me to see CAM as more than a retreating “rear guard” unit reporting where moral ground is being lost. There are lives to be rescued in prisons, in drug addictions, on food lines, etc. There is room to mobilize the entire Church. This follows the centuries-old and global path of Christianity and so should we.

Lauston Stephens is President of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Roadside Assembly of God in Rutland, VT

Evangelism Online

by
Kay Trudell

Some Christians are active on social media. Others avoid it or limit themselves to Christian websites. To participate or not is between the conscience of the saved Christian and Jesus.

I am active on social media, and follow many people, platforms, and websites. Most are either Christian, pro-life, political, or pro Israel. There are others as well. I acknowledge that I am not perfect online, and that I am a sinner, but I often use chat rooms and blogs as an opportunity for online evangelism, and have been doing so for awhile. I mentioned several times in past CAM Board meetings that I do this, and have told my fellow Board members that some day I will write about it in our newsletter.

The following is my response to an article and responses on one secular site that dealt with racism, eugenics in Vermont, abortion, Planned Parenthood and Margaret Sanger. The online site where I posted the following response is a Vermont site which is secular and self-identified as liberal. I can't print the original article because of copyright issues, but bear in mind mine was not the first response. Other people had responded before I did. This was written bearing in mind that most of the people who write on the site are not saved and are secular.

I tried to share the Gospel in a way that would reach this audience. This was written in response to both the original article and previous responses from other readers.

My response as published on their site:

"I totally agree with you that we should judge people by the content of their character, regardless of skin color, as Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. stated. Agree!! I am a Gentile Christian who attends a church with a mixed-race congregation that preaches we are all one in Christ Jesus.

"People want to be allowed to judge others as they meet them in their daily lives without having themselves metaphorically put up against the wall and told they must confess the sins that others tell them they have --- and tell them and tell them and tell them. And tell them they are racists if they do not comply. This is not Mao's Chinese Communist Cultural Revolution where the cultural influencers forced people to recant on their knees in front of their entire villages etc.

"If people do not believe that they are racist, or that there is systemic racism where they live and work, while still acknowledging the evils of slavery, Jim Crow laws, etc. in the past, THAT must be respected. If you keep beating people up who were not part of these past wrongs, you are just making the divide wider.

"Take people as they are today. If you keep beating people up, you will get either forced confessions while the heart is still resentful, as happened in Mao's Cultural Revolution, which will not help racial healing, or a hardening of the heart where reconciliation is not possible. To insist that another person must acknowledge something against their will is tyranny. People need to be free to do so on their own as an act of their own free will. To do otherwise is collectivism and thought and speech control.

"One way Christians have found reconciliation with their brothers and sisters of all ethnicities is because of the Bible verse that says we are all one in Christ Jesus. That we are all equal in Him. But here's the caveat: it is not possible without Jesus. You can call that observation whatever you want to, but once people of various skin colors, income levels, cultures, etc. unite in Jesus Christ, He helps heal our hearts. It is only possible because He is the Higher Power all Christians who are Bible-Believers follow.

"Look at society today. Many segments of it reject Jesus. Many people say we must not drag religion into it because of "separation of Church and State" (words which are not in the Constitution). Okay, but look at what is happening in our culture without Him. The

inner heart must assent freely in order for true reconciliation to take place. Without that, it will not be possible.

"Humans of one skin color cannot force humans of another skin color to do it without a change of heart. It cannot be forced. Hundreds of millions of people of various skin colors and ethnicities have found the ability to unite and view each other with compassion as equals because of Jesus. Without Him, it is just a case of one skin color telling the other what a bunch of racists they are, and reconciliation cannot happen in a way that is open, honest, truthful, or sincere.

"The problem is bigger than the human heart. It is a problem of the spiritual heart. Some call it a sinful heart. You cannot force a heart. A heart must be won and assent freely."

When I first sent this response (Feb. 2021) to the site (The Vermont Political Observer), they did not post it but replied that it was awaiting moderation. But within 48 hours it was posted and allowed to remain. So far, no one else on the site has responded to my comment.

Kay Trudell is a Director of the Christian Action Ministry and attends Ignite Church in Williston, VT

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 3:28



What can I do?



*Faith without
works is dead*
James 2:17

e-mail : camnetvt@gmail.com

website : <https://christianactionministry.org/>

Seven pro-life Christian men who shared similar values and attended local churches in Chittenden County began meeting together in 1992 to discuss moral issues that were prominent in our culture. Some held offices in their respective churches and wanted to see those issues brought to the forefront of the Christian Community. They felt a newsletter coupled with well-known speakers knowledgeable in certain areas would give impetus to others to become involved. The Christian Action Ministry was duly incorporated in 1992.

Those men contributed their time, work efforts, and finances, Now in our 30th year, three of the original seven are still with us and actively contributing, working side by side with the rest of our members. We have received a 501(c)3 status, allowing donations to our ministry to be tax free for the donor.

We now provide 1500 copies of our bi-monthly newsletter through a network of distributors, and have a website and email address where we can be contacted for information. If you are interested in joining us in this ministry or would like to contribute articles you have written for inclusion, refer to the contact information on this page.

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📞 (802) 370-9560
Call to confirm date

Next Meeting

*March 15, 7:00 pm
Parkinson home
Hinesburg, Vt.*

**Making A Difference
In Vermont!**

To reach our website enter <https://christianactionministry.org> and select the first listing below that reads **Christian Action Ministry Network VT** and open it. Then bookmark our website calling it CAM or else Christian Action Ministry. Then when you want to go to our website in the future, click on the bookmark name you entered in your list of bookmarks.