



SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

The message of Jesus concerning our love for others and the way we act on that love is much at the heart of the gospel. He told us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves and that whatever we do to the least of our brothers we do unto him.

From early christianity many of the followers of Jesus have taken this mandate seriously, by taking care of the sick, imprisoned, widows, orphans, the poor and others in need. Compassion for others is considered to be one of the underlying factors that eventually led the Roman empire to turn to christianity. People had for example witnessed christians being the once that served the sick during plagues, risking their own lives. Their testimony of self-sacrifice for the sake of others had a deep impact in a very self-indulgent society, a bit like the one we live in today.

As members of the western society that is increasingly individualistic, we must not forget the call of Jesus to serve and love others, including the least of our brethren, those who are different from us and are of different opinions to us. We are also called to love our neighbor, the person who lives next door and not self-isolate in the comfort of our own homes and churches.

Christians are to impact they´r society and culture in the way of Jesus who:

“being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage, rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant”
Philippians 2:6-7

One of the strongest ways to follow Jesus’ footsteps is to humbly serve and love others and meet the needs of the people in our societies.

In different parts of the world, including the nordic countries we have many stories of pentecostals that have greatly served their societies with love and humility. This has often had a positive impact on countries social, humanitarian and economic development while also opening the door for the gospel. The way christians love and serve others gives the outside world a testimony of the fruit of our faith.

THE NORDIC

In the Nordic countries specifically we have seen this in the past with things like:

- rehabilitation centers for alcoholic- and drug addicts,
- service to foreigners and immigrants,
- food distribution,
- shelters for the homeless and so on.

Thousands of lives have been affected to the better and this has opened many hearts to the gospel also.

What usually starts off as an individual charitable effort is often eventually institutionalized and run in a professional way with hired employees. This is usually not a bad thing since this brings stability to the work.

However, the tendency is for us to trust in institutions, church departments and the government to take care of those in need. This can lead to us christians to lose the longing and urge to be the hands and feet of Jesus since it is taken care of by something or someone else. For many christians donating a small portion of their income to a christian charitable institution can become our portion of the “Jesus love” we show to others. The box we check for the “love your neighbor” compartment in our faithlife.

This is an unfortunate development. While donating to charitable causes is a good thing, we can not outsource the love for our neighbor to organizations whether they be Christian or not. The nordic welfare state is arguably the best in the world. With over 1000 years of christianity being the ruling faith in our countries the system has been influenced by Jesus’ way of taking care of the needy, although Jesus has now been taken out of that picture for the most part.

We can easily come to the conclusion that there isn’t much that we as followers of Jesus can add to what the system can offer in meeting people’s lives.

However the human needs runs much deeper than just food and shelter. The need for pentecostals and others who claim to follow Jesus to reach out to our society is great. And the needs are many. For example:

- Today we see an epidemic of loneliness and anxiety, there is a massive identity crisis amongst young people and a lack of purpose.
- Our countries are full of immigrants that are trying to find footing in our countries with a need and a longing for direction and recognition, a personal touch that a system can not offer.
- Thousands of children who cannot live at home need good homes where they are welcomed with care and nurturing love.

We need to see a renewal in the way pentecostal individuals think about their own lives in connection to their fellow man. Everyone’s call is to love they’re neighbor and those in need, in an actual and tangible way.

This can for many mean that we take the “risk” of offering help, visiting neighbors, inviting people into our home and whatever else we might find uncomfortable but important. This also means that many need to look at their schedule and simplify it in order to leave a margin for people and for the unexpected relationships that are formed when we are not too busy. When we are too busy, we easily see people as a disturbance rather than an opportunity to express love and compassion. Of course no one can be there for everybody but we should at least do something what we would like to do for all.

We encourage churches to take initiatives, to be brave in fighting for important social matters and recruit their members to make a real positive impact on the wellbeing of their communities and its members.

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