

Being Ambassadors for Christ in the Public Square

**A Workshop for Congregations and Pastors
on Advocacy, Faith, and Action**

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ISAIAH 1:17

Learn to do good;

“LEARN”
EDUCATE (OURSELVES AND OTHERS)

Seek justice,

“SEEK”
ENGAGE THOSE IN POWER

Rescue the oppressed,

“RESCUE”
DIRECT EMERGENCY ACTION

Defend the orphan,

“DEFEND”
PROTECT THOSE MOST VULNERABLE

Plead for the widow.

“PLEAD”
*ADVOCATE FOR AND WITH
THOSE IN NEED*

The image features a central purple speech bubble with a white outline and a pointed bottom. Inside the bubble, the words "SCRIPTURE AND THEOLOGY" are written in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered and stacked in two lines. The background is a light gray gradient with several thin, curved lines, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of depth and movement.

**SCRIPTURE AND
THEOLOGY**

2 Corinthians 5:20

So we are **ambassadors** for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be **reconciled** to God.

Πρεσβεύω – *presbeuō*: to be an ambassador, act as an ambassador

Καταλλάσσω – *katallassō*:

* to reconcile (those who are at variance)

* return to favor with, be reconciled to one

* to receive one into favor

John 14:16; 26

14 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to abide with you forever. . .

26 The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

Παράκλητος
paraklētos

Intercessor

Consoler

Advocate

Comforter

What are Issues that Require Advocacy?

- A community issue of broad concern for which choices have to be made by diverse groups of people.
- There are no clear right or wrong answers as the issue involves value conflicts and underlying paradoxes that are difficult to resolve.
- “Solutions” are rarely found, and the conversation will always continue, yet deliberators are encouraged to make judgments regarding positive actions.

EXAMPLES?

John 14:16; 26

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Isaiah 6:8-11

**⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
'Whom shall I **send**, and who will **go** for us?'**

Isaiah 6:8-11

**⁹And he said, ‘Go and say to this people:
“Keep listening, but do not comprehend;
keep looking, but do not understand.”**

**¹⁰ Make the mind of this people dull,
and stop their ears,
and shut their eyes,
so that they may not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and comprehend with their minds,
and turn and be healed.’**

¹¹ Then I said, ‘How long, O Lord?’

**Matthew
13:14-15**

Jesus' commentary on his parable about the seeds:

¹⁴With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

**“You will indeed listen, but never understand,
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.**

**¹⁵ For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,**

and they have shut their eyes;

so that they might not look with their eyes,

and listen with their ears,

and understand with their heart and turn—

and I would heal them.”

It's about
healing.

Steven Charleston explains:

"That last word from Isaiah ['I would heal them'] is the most important to Jesus and to you and me.

The whole point and purpose of our environmental ministry is healing. We are not just in the business of advocacy or political action: we are very much engaged in a **healing ministry."**

(Sermon: "The Isaiah Factor: Prophetic Words that People Can Hear" in *Earth and Word*, ed. David Rhoads, [Bloomsbury Academic, 2007])

**Tactics for
teaching and
preaching about
advocacy**

- 1) Create modern parables that communicate deep truths.**
- 2) Craft stories of everyday life with images easily accessible to everyday people.**
- 3) Illustrate an invitation to change with a call to repentance that sounds more like a promise than a stern warning.**
- 4) Allow space for hearers to decide what this call means to them.**

Underlying principles of advocacy

- 1) Have the victims of injustice present at every instance of dialogue.**
- 2) Don't just listen to the voice of those on the margin but actually become a guest in their world (at their invitation).**
- 3) Spend time learning from them, and only then, offer to speak as their advocate.**
- 4) Speak with and alongside – better yet, pave the way for *them* to speak, and then listen and support.**