Being A Modern Activist

An Honors Project

By

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In response to the perceived problem of public apathy and disinterest in politics and current events, I endeavored to teach a class called "Being a Modern Activist" on activism and community involvement. The class's objective was to benefit the students through improved awareness on these topics and benefit the community through a higher level of citizen involvement. Some topics addressed include Gandhi's non-violent activism strategies, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights movement, religious tolerance, lobbying, and various modern activists. In this project, I included the lesson plans from my eight classes, personal reflections, and the supplemental materials I used in teaching the course.
Acknowledgements

- I would like to thank Dr. George Wolfe for advising me, and making time every week to meet with me about this project. Also, I would like to thank him for the thought-provoking guest lecture he gave to my class.

- I would also like to thank Sister Ann Kendrick for taking time out of her busy schedule to speak with my class. She is an excellent of a modern faith-based activist.

- Finally, I would like to thank the program coordinator Charlotte Overmeyer at High Street United Methodist Church for giving me this wonderful opportunity. Thanks also to the students in my class who were a joy to teach.
Project Introduction

So many people today are apathetic, not caring about what is going on in this country, much less the rest of the world. Those who do care feel overwhelmed and helpless, without knowledge about what they can do to make a difference. For these reasons, I decided that I wanted to teach a class addressing social issues. The opportunity arose in an adult continuing education program at High Street United Methodist Church.

I understand the focus on teaching the “next generation” of high school and college students so they can make a difference in the future, but strictly adhering to this rationale causes us to leave out a large segment of society with great, untapped potential. Retired adults have an abundance of time and many are simply looking for something to do that makes them feel like they are still contributing to society in some way. So, when presented with an opportunity to teach an older adult class about activism and current events, I was ecstatic.

Through this project, I hope to inspire my students to become more actively involved in politics and society. Not only do I want to teach them about important issues, but I want to teach them how they are affected and what they can do about it. Producing more highly educated, involved citizens will greatly benefit our society, no matter what age bracket they fall into.

In the course, we will cover past activism and movements like Mohandas “Mahatma” Gandhi’s fight for India’s independence from Great Britain, and Martin Luther King Jr.’s quest for civil rights and how their strategies are still useful today. We will also look at present-day activism, and introduce the idea of the “faith activist” that Mark Massé explores in his book, Inspired to Serve. Through the stories and work of several modern-day faith-based activists and their efforts to deal with problems related to racism, homelessness, domestic violence, and the plight of migrant workers, some of society’s injustices will become glaringly apparent. I strongly believe that education is the first step to tackling these issues.
Class 1- Introduction
September 12, 2005

I will introduce the idea behind this course and outline the topics we will cover. We will discuss the idea of an “activist” and explore any possible misconceptions the class may have about them. We will also touch on the difference between being a pacifist and being a nonviolent activist. We will discuss one of Dr. Wolfe’s handouts: “Continuum of Aggression,” and determine where we fall along the continuum. Then I will introduce Mark Massé’s book Inspired to Serve and explain how it was a major motivator in my desire to do the class. We will look at the new kind of activist portrayed in Massé’s book who is inspired by faith to make a difference by helping the less fortunate or by fighting injustice.

Lesson Plan

A. Introduction of class, teacher, and students
   1. Why were you interested in this class?
   2. What do you hope to learn from it?

B. Continuum of Aggression
This shows the different levels of force beginning with non-responsive pacifism and ending with the use of weapons of mass destruction.
   1. Looking at this chart, which ones of these do you think are ok?
   2. Where do you fall on this continuum?
   3. Is it the same for every issue?

C. Activism Today
Webster’s dictionary defines “activism” as action to affect change in the government.
   1. Is activism even relevant today?
   2. If it is, what does a modern activist look like?
D. Being passive vs. being a non-violent activist

Introduction of Mark Massé’s book, *Inspired to Serve*. He interviewed 13 regular people who are considered activists today. All of them feel that their faith is calling them to make a difference in the lives of others.

**Reflections**

Today was my first class. The program coordinator, Pastor Charlotte Overmeyer showed me to my room and asked me if I had ever taught older adults before. I had never taught a class to any age bracket so I was a little nervous, but she assured me that they are wonderful. My class calmed my fears almost immediately when they arrived. As they trickled in, several exclaimed that I was so adorable and young, and one lady even gave me a hug.

The class is composed of nine ladies between the ages of 55 and 70. The purpose of today’s class was a basic outline of the course material. I also wanted to get a general feel for their beliefs and attitudes so I could gauge how to proceed with controversial material. First I went over the outline of the class, and then we discussed some of the basic concepts of peace studies. After that our discussion drifted into current events that pertained to the subject matter. They seem very open to new ideas and ready to debate old ones. I was surprised at how interested and informed these ladies are. Most of them explained that they were motivated to take my course to further their knowledge, become more culturally sensitive, and be more aware of what is going on in our country and abroad. I am very excited to teach the class and I expect it to be a real success.

**Sources**

## Continuum of Aggression (use of force)

**Dr. George Wolfe, Director**  
**Center for Peace and Conflict Studies**  
**Ball State University**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-responsive pacifism</th>
<th>Legal non-violent activism, e.g., boycotts, demonstrations, voting, publishing</th>
<th>Civil Disobedience (breaking the law) non-cooperation</th>
<th>Use of physical force but w/out killing</th>
<th>Violence but only against military targets and killing only military personnel</th>
<th>Will tolerate civilian casualties</th>
<th>intentional killing of civilians; use of WMD</th>
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Class 2- Mohandas Gandhi

September 19, 2005

I will give a brief history of Mohandas Gandhi life and his non-violent strategies in India’s fight for independence from Great Britain. We will watch a few video clips from the movie Gandhi based on his life story. We will also discuss the basic principles of non-violence that Gandhi built his movement on and how we can apply them in today’s society.

Lesson Plan

A. Biography of Gandhi’s life

1. Video Clip- The British government introduced the Salt Acts informing the people that all salt must be bought from the government at an inflated price. Gandhi led a massive act of civil disobedience when he marched with several thousand followers 320 km to the ocean to make their own salt from sea water.

B. Main teachings/strategies

1. Satyagraha- this term means “sacrifice” and it refers to the incredible inner strength or “soul force” that is necessary to endure suffering and hardship to call public attention to injustice. Gandhi was inspired by Jesus’ “turn the other cheek” philosophy and this strategy was utilized during many future non-violent movements.

2. Can you think of any person or movement that has utilized this technique?
   a. Women’s suffrage movement with hunger strikes
   b. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement
   c. Nelson Mandela in South Africa

3. Tapasya- this means restraint of anger. Gandhi thought the ability to forgive someone for a wrong they had committed against you was a crucial virtue. Instead of lashing out in anger, Gandhi taught his followers to channel the anger to feed their inner strength.
a. Pass out Gandhi quote sheet
b. Can you think of times in your life where it was beneficial to restrain your anger?
c. How can this concept be applied to some current issues?
   i. Spanking
   ii. Capital Punishment

Reflection

Today we began our analysis of the most influential peaceful activists in the past. We started with Mahatma Gandhi and his struggle for India’s independence from Great Britain. Luckily, many of the students had some background knowledge on Gandhi, and all seemed to realize his importance. We discussed his value system and his non-violent strategies.

I was a little wary of trying to teach my class the difficult principles Gandhi based his life on, but they caught on surprisingly fast. The ladies asked a lot of questions and soon came up with numerous real-life examples to explain both Satyagraha and Tapasya. They loved the list of Gandhi quotes, and after we read over them, several even expressed a desire to display them in their houses! We watched a video clip of one of Gandhi’s more famous marches and discussed what it takes to make an average person achieve extraordinary things. Later, we had a good debate on capital punishment and spanking which led to a discussion on bad parenting and how much it is affecting our society.

Sources


Gandhi Quotes

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world.”

“Hate the sin, love the sinner.”

“The weak cannot forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.”

“They cannot take away our self respect if we do not give it to them.”

“Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.”

“Though we may know Him by a thousand names, He is one and the same to all of us.”

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

“Love is the strongest force the world possesses, yet it is the humblest imaginable.”

“Even if you are a minority of one, the truth is the truth.”

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

“My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents and I lay them both at His feet.”

“Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit.”

“My life is my message.”

From www.quotationspage.com
Class 3- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
September 26, 2005

Today we will review the history of the civil rights movement and the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King. We will discuss his values and strategies and the influence of Jesus and Gandhi on his activism. I will utilize excerpts from his famous “I have a Dream Speech” here. We will discuss current events such as the occurrence of prejudice and racism today, as well as the anti-Muslim sentiments that arose after September 11.

Lesson Plan

A. Overview of the Civil Rights Movement
   2. Rosa Parks, bus boycott (1955)
   3. Forced integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas

B. Biography of Martin Luther King Jr. Life
   1. Read excerpt from *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*
   2. What were some of your personal experiences during this time?
   3. Did you or anyone you know participate?
   4. How were these people treated?
   5. What were the attitudes of your parents? Your friends?

C. Strategies and Philosophy
   1. Recording: “I have a Dream” speech
      a. Non-violent reactions
      b. Sit-ins
      c. Boycotts
      d. Marches
      e. Jail time
D. How does MLK compare to Gandhi in philosophy and strategies?
   1. Visit to India
   2. Satyagraha- suffer for cause; “soul-force”
   3. Power of Non-violence

E. Today
   1. Do you think African-Americans face discrimination today?
   2. What personal stereotypes do we have?
   3. How can this be changed?
   4. What other groups have faced discrimination in the U.S.?
      a. Japanese-Americans and internment camps during WWII
      b. “Communists” during Cold War
      c. Muslims after 9/11

Reflection

This is one of those subjects that you learn about over and over again early in your education. Teaching the Civil Rights Movement to this class was completely different because I got to see the issues from their perspectives. All these ladies lived through this time period, and had many personal experiences to contribute. One lady received several threatening phone calls from members of her rural community when her husband attended the March on Washington.

The class was more involved than I expected and many said they supported the movement at the time. When we listened to the “I Have a Dream” speech, most ladies commented that they remembered it. After last week’s lesson, the class was quick to see Gandhi’s influence on Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement. I was also interested to hear what they thought about racism today. All were quick to admit that it definitely still existed, citing friends and relatives. The most interesting point to me is when we explored the problems with passing racism from generation to generation, and the effect parents can have on their child’s value system.

We discussed the anti-Muslim sentiment that became prevalent after 9/11. I had several news articles to share with the class about violence directed at Muslims and
homosexuals. The class was shocked but brought up other examples of when particular groups of people have been singled out for discrimination. I felt like my students really opened up with their personal experiences during this lesson and I am becoming much more comfortable teaching.

Sources


King Jr., Martin Luther. I Have A Dream. PhotoDisc, Inc. 2000


Letter from a Birmingham Jail [King, Jr.]

LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL*
April 16, 1963 MY DEAR FELLOW CLERGYMEN:

While confined here in the Birmingham city jail, I came across your recent statement calling my present activities "unwise and untimely." Seldom do I pause to answer criticism of my work and ideas. If I sought to answer all the criticisms that cross my desk, my secretaries would have little time for anything other than such correspondence in the course of the day, and I would have no time for constructive work. But since I feel that you are men of genuine good will and that your criticisms are sincerely set forth, I want to try to answer your statements in what I hope will be patient and reasonable terms.

--------- *AUTHOR'S NOTE: This response to a published statement by eight fellow clergymen from Alabama (Bishop C. C. J. Carpenter, Bishop Joseph A. Durick, Rabbi Hilton L. Grafman, Bishop Paul Hardin, Bishop Holan B. Harmon, the Reverend George M. Murray, the Reverend Edward V. Ramage and the Reverend Earl Stallings) was composed under somewhat constricting circumstance. Begun on the margins of the newspaper in which the statement appeared while I was in jail, the letter was continued on scraps of writing paper supplied by a friendly Negro trusty, and concluded on a pad my attorneys were eventually permitted to leave me. Although the text remains in substance unaltered, I have indulged in the author's prerogative of polishing it for publication. -------

I think I should indicate why I am here in Birmingham, since you have been influenced by the view which argues against "outsiders coming in." I have the honor of serving as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization operating in every southern state, with headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. We have some eighty-five affiliated organizations across the South, and one of them is the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights. Frequently we share staff, educational and financial resources with our affiliates. Several months ago the affiliate here in Birmingham asked us to be on call to engage in a nonviolent direct-action program if such were deemed necessary. We readily consented, and when the hour came we lived up to our promise. So I, along with several members of my staff, am here because I was invited here I am here because I have organizational ties here.

But more basically, I am in Birmingham because injustice is here. Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C. left their villages and carried their "thus saith the Lord" far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus and carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so am I. compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my own home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.
Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. Never again can we afford to live with the narrow, provincial "outside agitator" idea. Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.

You deplore the demonstrations taking place in Birmingham. But your statement, I am sorry to say, fails to express a similar concern for the conditions that brought about the demonstrations. I am sure that none of you would want to rest content with the superficial kind of social analysis that deals merely with effects and does not grapple with underlying causes. It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city's white power structure left the Negro community with no alternative.

In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action. We have gone through these steps in Birmingham. There can be no gainsaying the fact that racial injustice engulfs this community. Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States. Its ugly record of brutality is widely known. Negroes have experienced grossly unjust treatment in the courts. There have been more unsolved bombings of Negro homes and churches in Birmingham than in any other city in the nation. These are the hard, brutal facts of the case. On the basis of these conditions, Negro leaders sought to negotiate with the city fathers. But the latter consistently refused to engage in good-faith negotiation.

Then, last September, came the opportunity to talk with leaders of Birmingham's economic community. In the course of the negotiations, certain promises were made by the merchants --- for example, to remove the stores humiliating racial signs. On the basis of these promises, the Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth and the leaders of the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights agreed to a moratorium on all demonstrations. As the weeks and months went by, we realized that we were the victims of a broken promise. A few signs, briefly removed, returned; the others remained.

As in so many past experiences, our hopes had been blasted, and the shadow of deep disappointment settled upon us. We had no alternative except to prepare for direct action, whereby we would present our very bodies as a means of laying our case before the conscience of the local and the national community. Mindful of the difficulties involved, we decided to undertake a process of self-purification. We began a series of workshops on nonviolence, and we repeatedly asked ourselves: "Are you able to accept blows without retaliating?" "Are you able to endure the ordeal of jail?" We decided to schedule our direct-action program for the Easter season, realizing that except for Christmas, this is the main shopping period of the year. Knowing that a strong economic with-drawl program would be the by-product of direct action, we felt that this would be the best time to bring pressure to bear on the merchants for the needed change.
Then it occurred to us that Birmingham's mayoralty election was coming up in March, and we speedily decided to postpone action until after election day. When we discovered that the Commissioner of Public Safety, Eugene "Bull" Connor, had piled up enough votes to be in the run-off we decided again to postpone action until the day after the run-off so that the demonstrations could not be used to cloud the issues. Like many others, we waited to see Mr. Connor defeated, and to this end we endured postponement after postponement. Having aided in this community need, we felt that our direct-action program could be delayed no longer.

You may well ask: "Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches and so forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?" You are quite right in calling, for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent-resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word "tension." I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, we must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood.

The purpose of our direct-action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you in your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved South land been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.

One of the basic points in your statement is that the action that I and my associates have taken in Birmingham is untimely. Some have asked: "Why didn't you give the new city administration time to act?" The only answer that I can give to this query is that the new Birmingham administration must be prodded about as much as the outgoing one, before it will act. We are sadly mistaken if we feel that the election of Albert Boutwell as mayor will bring the millennium to Birmingham. While Mr. Boutwell is a much more gentle person than Mr. Connor, they are both segregationists, dedicated to maintenance of the status quo. I have hope that Mr. Boutwell will be reasonable enough to see the futility of massive resistance to desegregation. But he will not see this without pressure from devotees of civil rights. My friends, I must say to you that we have not made a single gain civil rights without determined legal and nonviolent pressure. Lamentably, it is an historical fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily. Individuals may see the moral light and voluntarily give up their unjust posture; but, as Reinhold Niebuhr has reminded us, groups tend to be more immoral than individuals.

We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed. Frankly, I have yet to engage in a
direct-action campaign that was "well timed" in the view of those who have not suffered unduly from the disease of segregation. For years now I have heard the word "Wait!" It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This "Wait" has almost always meant 'Never." We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that "justice too long delayed is justice denied."

We have waited .for more than 340 years for our constitutional and God- given rights. The nations of Asia and Africa are moving with jetlike speed toward gaining political independence, but we stiff creep at horse-and-buggy pace toward gaining a cup of coffee at a lunch counter. Perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging dark of segregation to say, "Wait." But when you have seen vicious mobs lynch your mothers and fathers at will and drown your sisters and brothers at whim; when you have seen hate-filled policemen curse, kick and even kill your black brothers and sisters; when you see the vast majority of your twenty million Negro brothers smothering in an airtight cage of poverty in the midst of an affluent society; when you suddenly find your tongue twisted and your speech stammering as you seek to explain to your six- year-old daughter why she can't go to the public amusement park that has just been advertised on television, and see tears welling up in her eyes when she is told that Funtown is closed to colored children, and see ominous clouds of inferiority beginning to form in her little mental sky, and see her beginning to distort her personality by developing an unconscious bitterness toward white people; when you have to concoct an answer for a five-year-old son who is asking: "Daddy, why do white people treat colored people so mean?"; when you take a cross-county drive and find it necessary to sleep night after night in the uncomfortable corners of your automobile because no motel will accept you; when you are humiliated day in and day out by nagging signs reading "white" and "colored"; when your first name becomes "nigger," your middle name becomes "boy" (however old you are) and your last name becomes "John," and your wife and mother are never given the respected title "Mrs."; when you are harried by day and haunted by night by the fact that you are a Negro, living constantly at tiptoe stance, never quite knowing what to expect next, and are plagued with inner fears and outer resentments; when you no forever fighting a degenerating sense of "nobodiness" then you will understand why we find it difficult to wait. There comes a time when the cup of endurance runs over, and men are no longer willing to be plunged into the abyss of despair. I hope, sirs, you can understand our legitimate and unavoidable impatience.

You express a great deal of anxiety over our willingness to break laws. This is certainly a legitimate concern. Since we so diligently urge people to obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools, at first glance it may seem rather paradoxical for us consciously to break laws. One may won ask: "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that there fire two types of laws: just and unjust. I would be the Brat to advocate obeying just laws. One has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws. I would agree with St. Augustine that "an unjust law is no law at all"
Now, what is the difference between the two? How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law. To put it in the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas: An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority. Segregation, to use the terminology of the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber, substitutes an "I-it" relationship for an "I-thou" relationship and ends up relegating persons to the status of things. Hence segregation is not only politically, economically and sociologically unsound, it is morally wrong and awful. Paul Tillich said that sin is separation. Is not segregation an existential expression of man's tragic separation, his awful estrangement, his terrible sinfulness? Thus it is that I can urge men to obey the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court, for it is morally right; and I can urge them to disobey segregation ordinances, for they are morally wrong.

Let us consider a more concrete example of just and unjust laws. An unjust law is a code that a numerical or power majority group compels a minority group to obey but does not make binding on itself. This is difference made legal. By the same token, a just law is a code that a majority compels a minority to follow and that it is willing to follow itself. This is sameness made legal.

Let me give another explanation. A law is unjust if it is inflicted on a minority that, as a result of being denied the right to vote, had no part in enacting or devising the law. Who can say that the legislature of Alabama which set up that state's segregation laws was democratically elected? Throughout Alabama all sorts of devious methods are used to prevent Negroes from becoming registered voters, and there are some counties in which, even though Negroes constitute a majority of the population, not a single Negro is registered. Can any law enacted under such circumstances be considered democratically structured?

Sometimes a law is just on its face and unjust in its application. For instance, I have been arrested on a charge of parading without a permit. Now, there is nothing wrong in having an ordinance which requires a permit for a parade. But such an ordinance becomes unjust when it is used to maintain segregation and to deny citizens the First Amendment privilege of peaceful assembly and protest.

I hope you are able to ace the distinction I am trying to point out. In no sense do I advocate evading or defying the law, as would the rabid segregationist. That would lead to anarchy. One who breaks an unjust law must do so openly, lovingly, and with a willingness to accept the penalty. I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for law.
Of course, there is nothing new about this kind of civil disobedience. It was evidenced sublimely in the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to obey the laws of Nebuchadnezzar, on the ground that a higher moral law was at stake. It was practiced superbly by the early Christians, who were willing to face hungry lions and the excruciating pain of chopping blocks rather than submit to certain unjust laws of the Roman Empire. To a degree, academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. In our own nation, the Boston Tea Party represented a massive act of civil disobedience.

We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was "legal" and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was "illegal." It was "illegal" to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers. If today I lived in a Communist country where certain principles dear to the Christian faith are suppressed, I would openly advocate disobeying that country's anti religious laws.

I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.

I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and that when they fan in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress. I had hoped that the white moderate would understand that the present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. Actually, we who engage in nonviolent direct action are not the creators of tension. We merely bring to the surface the hidden tension that is already alive. We bring it out in the open, where it can be seen and dealt with. Like a boil that can never be cured so long as it is covered up but must be opened with an its ugliness to the natural medicines of air and light, injustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

In your statement you assert that our actions, even though peaceful, must be condemned because they precipitate violence. But is this a logical assertion? Isn't this like
condemning a robbed man because his possession of money precipitated the evil act of robbery? Isn't this like condemning Socrates because his unswerving commitment to truth and his philosophical inquiries precipitated the act by the misguided populace in which they made him drink hemlock? Isn't this like condemning Jesus because his unique God-consciousness and never-ceasing devotion to God's will precipitated the evil act of crucifixion? We must come to see that, as the federal courts have consistently affirmed, it is wrong to urge an individual to cease his efforts to gain his basic constitutional rights because the quest may precipitate violence. Society must protect the robbed and punish the robber.

I had also hoped that the white moderate would reject the myth concerning time in relation to the struggle for freedom. I have just received a letter from a white brother in Texas. He writes: "An Christians know that the colored people will receive equal rights eventually, but it is possible that you are in too great a religious hurry. It has taken Christianity almost two thousand years to accomplish what it has. The teachings of Christ take time to come to earth." Such an attitude stems from a tragic misconception of time, from the strangely rational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually, time itself is neutral; it can be used either destructively or constructively. More and more I feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than have the people of good will. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people. Human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability; it comes through the tireless efforts of men willing to be co-workers with God, and without this 'hard work, time itself becomes an ally of the forces of social stagnation. We must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right. Now is the time to make real the promise of democracy and transform our pending national elegy into a creative psalm of brotherhood. Now is the time to lift our national policy from the quicksand of racial injustice to the solid rock of human dignity.

You speak of our activity in Birmingham as extreme. At first I was rather disappointed that fellow clergymen would see my nonviolent efforts as those of an extremist. I began thinking about the fact that stand in the middle of two opposing forces in the Negro community. One is a force of complacency, made up in part of Negroes who, as a result of long years of oppression, are so drained of self-respect and a sense of "somebodiness" that they have adjusted to segregation; and in part of a few middle class Negroes who, because of a degree of academic and economic security and because in some ways they profit by segregation, have become insensitive to the problems of the masses. The other force is one of bitterness and hatred, and it comes perilously close to advocating violence. It is expressed in the various black nationalist groups that are springing up across the nation, the largest and best-known being Elijah Muhammad's Muslim movement. Nourished by the Negro's frustration over the continued existence of racial discrimination, this movement is made up of people who have lost faith in America, who have absolutely repudiated Christianity, and who have concluded that the white man is an incorrigible "devil."
I have tried to stand between these two forces, saying that we need emulate neither the "do-nothingism" of the complacent nor the hatred and despair of the black nationalist. For there is the more excellent way of love and nonviolent protest. I am grateful to God that, through the influence of the Negro church, the way of nonviolence became an integral part of our struggle.

If this philosophy had not emerged, by now many streets of the South would, I am convinced, be flowing with blood. And I am further convinced that if our white brothers dismiss as "rabble-rousers" and "outside agitators" those of us who employ nonviolent direct action, and if they refuse to support our nonviolent efforts, millions of Negroes will, out of frustration and despair, seek solace and security in black-nationalist ideologies a development that would inevitably lead to a frightening racial nightmare.

Oppressed people cannot remain oppressed forever. The yearning for freedom eventually manifests itself, and that is what has happened to the American Negro. Something within has reminded him of his birthright of freedom, and something without has reminded him that it can be gained. Consciously or. unconsciously, he has been caught up by the Zeitgeist, and with his black brothers of Africa and his brown and yellow brothers of Asia, South America and the Caribbean, the United States Negro is moving with a sense of great urgency toward the promised land of racial justice. If one recognizes this vital urge that has engulfed the Negro community, one should readily understand why public demonstrations are taking place. The Negro has many pent-up resentments and latent frustrations, and he must release them. So let him march; let him make prayer pilgrimages to the city hall; let him go on freedom rides-and try to understand why he must do so. If his repressed emotions are not released in nonviolent ways, they will seek expression through violence; this is not a threat but a fact of history. So I have not said to my people: "Get rid of your discontent." Rather, I have tried to say that this normal and healthy discontent can be channeled into the creative outlet of nonviolent direct action. And now this approach is being termed extremist.

But though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail to the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ..." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we viii be. We be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremist for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their
environment. The other, Jeans Christ, was an extremist for love, truth and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

I had hoped that the white moderate would see this need. Perhaps I was too optimistic; perhaps I expected too much. I suppose I should have realized that few members of the oppressor race can understand the deep groans and passionate yearnings of the oppressed race, and still fewer have the vision to see that injustice must be rooted out by strong, persistent and determined action. I am thankful, however, that some of our white brothers in the South have grasped the meaning of this social revolution and committed themselves to it. They are still too few in quantity, but they are big in quality. Some-such as Ralph McGill, Lillian Smith, Harry Golden, James McBride Dabbs, Ann Braden and Sarah Patton Boyle---have written about our struggle in eloquent and prophetic terms. Others have marched with us down nameless streets of the South. They have languished in filthy, roach-infested jails, suffering the abuse and brutality of policemen who view them as "dirty nigger lovers." Unlike so many of their moderate brothers and sisters, they have recognized the urgency of the moment and sensed the need for powerful "action" antidotes to combat the disease of segregation.

Let me take note of my other major disappointment. I have been so greatly disappointed with the white church and its leadership. Of course, there are some notable exceptions. I am not unmindful of the fact that each of you has taken some significant stands on this issue. I commend you, Reverend Stallings, for your Christian stand on this past Sunday, in welcoming Negroes to your worship service on a non segregated basis. I commend the Catholic leaders of this state for integrating Spring Hill College several years ago.

But despite these notable exceptions, I must honestly reiterate that I have been disappointed with the church. I do not say this as one of those negative . critics who can always find something wrong with the church. I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who 'has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of Rio shall lengthen.

When I was suddenly catapulted into the leadership of the bus protest in Montgomery, Alabama, a few years ago, I felt we would be supported by the white church felt that the white ministers, priests and rabbis of the South would be among our strongest allies. Instead, some have been outright opponents, refusing to understand the freedom movement and misrepresenting its leader era; and too many others have been more cautious than courageous and have remained silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained-glass windows.

In spite of my shattered dreams, I came to Birmingham with the hope that the white religious leadership of this community would see the justice of our cause and, with deep moral concern, would serve as the channel through which our just grievances could reach the power structure. I had hoped that each of you would understand. But again I have been disappointed.
I have heard numerous southern religious leaders admonish their worshipers to comply with a desegregation decision because it is the law, but I have longed to hear white ministers declare: "Follow this decree because integration is morally right and because the Negro is your brother." In the midst of blatant injustices inflicted upon the Negro, I have watched white churchmen stand on the sideline and mouth pious, irrelevancies and sanctimonious trivialities. In the midst of a mighty struggle to rid our nation of racial and economic injustice, I have heard many ministers say: "Those are social issues, with which the gospel has no real concern." And I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely other worldly religion which makes a strange, on Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular.

I have traveled the length and breadth of Alabama, Mississippi and all the other southern states. On sweltering summer days and crisp autumn mornings I have looked at the South's beautiful churches with their lofty spires pointing heavenward. I have beheld the impressive outlines of her massive religious-education buildings. Over and over I have found myself asking: "What kind of people worship here? Who is their God? Where were their voices when the lips of Governor Barnett dripped with words of interposition and nullification? Where were they when Governor Walleye gave a clarion call for defiance and hatred? Where were their voices of support when bruised and weary Negro men and women decided to rise from the dark dungeons of complacency to the bright hills of creative protest?"

Yes, these questions are still in my mind. In deep disappointment I have wept over the laxity of the church. But be assured that my tears have been tears of love. There can be no deep disappointment where there is not deep love. Yes, I love the church. How could I do otherwise? I am in the rather unique position of being the son, the grandson and the great-grandson of preachers. Yes, I see the church as the body of Christ. But, oh! How we have blemished and scarred that body through social neglect and through fear of being nonconformists.

There was a time when the church was very powerful in the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of society. Whenever the early Christians entered a town, the people in power became disturbed and immediately sought to convict the Christians for being "disturbers of the peace" and "outside agitators." But the Christians pressed on, in the conviction that they were "a colony of heaven," called to obey God rather than man. Small in number, they were big in commitment. They were too God intoxicated to be "astronomically intimidated." By their effort and example they brought an end to such ancient evils as infanticide and gladiatorial contests.

Things are different now. So often the contemporary church is a weak, ineffectual voice with an uncertain sound. So often it is an archdefender of the status quo. Par from being disturbed by the presence of the church, the power structure of the average community is consoled by the church's silent and often even vocal sanction of things as they are.
But the judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today's church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century. Every day I meet young people whose disappointment with the church has turned into outright disgust.

Perhaps I have once again been too optimistic. Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world? Perhaps I must turn my faith to the inner spiritual church, the church within the church, as the true ekklesia and the hope of the world. But again I am thankful to God that some noble souls from the ranks of organized religion have broken loose from the paralyzing chains of conformity and joined us as active partners in the struggle for freedom. They have left their secure congregations and walked the streets of Albany, Georgia, with us. They have gone down the highways of the South on tortuous rides for freedom. Yes, they have gone to jail with us. Some have been dismissed from their churches, have lost the support of their bishops and fellow ministers. But they have acted in the faith that right defeated is stronger than evil triumphant. Their witness has been the spiritual salt that has preserved the true meaning of the gospel in these troubled times. They have carved a tunnel of hope through the dark mountain of disappointment.

I hope the church as a whole will meet the challenge of this decisive hour. But even if the church does not come to the aid of justice, I have no despair about the future. I have no fear about the outcome of our struggle in Birmingham, even if our motives are at present misunderstood. We will reach the goal of freedom in Birmingham, ham and all over the nation, because the goal of America is freedom. Abused and scorned though we may be, our destiny is tied up with America's destiny. Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, we were here. Before the pen of Jefferson etched the majestic words of the Declaration of Independence across the pages of history, we were here. For more than two centuries our forebears labored in this country without wages; they made cotton king; they built the homes of their masters while suffering gross injustice and shameful humiliation-and yet out of a bottomless vitality they continued to thrive and develop. If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail. We will win our freedom because the sacred heritage of our nation and the eternal will of God are embodied in our echoing demands.

Before closing I feel impelled to mention one other point in your statement that has troubled me profoundly. You warmly commended the Birmingham police force for keeping "order" and "preventing violence." I doubt that you would have so warmly commended the police force if you had seen its dogs sinking their teeth into unarmed, nonviolent Negroes. I doubt that you would so quickly commend the policemen if you were to observe their ugly and inhumane treatment of Negroes here in the city jail; if you were to watch them push and curse old Negro women and young Negro girls; if you were to see them slap and kick old Negro men and young boys; if you were to observe them, as they did on two occasions, refuse to give us food because we wanted to sing our grace together. I cannot join you in your praise of the Birmingham police department.
It is true that the police have exercised a degree of discipline in handing the demonstrators. In this sense they have conducted themselves rather "nonviolently" in public. But for what purpose? To preserve the evil system of segregation. Over the past few years I have consistently preached that nonviolence demands that the means we use must be as pure as the ends we seek. I have tried to make clear that it is wrong to use immoral means to attain moral ends. But now I must affirm that it is just as wrong, or perhaps even more so, to use moral means to preserve immoral ends. Perhaps Mr. Connor and his policemen have been rather nonviolent in public, as was Chief Pritchett in Albany, Georgia but they have used the moral means of nonviolence to maintain the immoral end of racial injustice. As T. S. Eliot has said: "The last temptation is the greatest treason: To do the right deed for the wrong reason."

I wish you had commended the Negro sit-inners and demonstrators of Birmingham for their sublime courage, their willingness to suffer and their amazing discipline in the midst of great provocation. One day the South will recognize its real heroes. They will be the James Merediths, with the noble sense of purpose that enables them to face jeering, and hostile mobs, and with the agonizing loneliness that characterizes the life of the pioneer. They will be old, oppressed, battered Negro women, symbolized in a seventy-two-year-old woman in Montgomery, Alabama, who rose up with a sense of dignity and with her people decided not to ride segregated buses, and who responded with ungrammatical profundity to one who inquired about her weariness: "My feet is tired, but my soul is at rest." They will be the young high school and college students, the young ministers of the gospel and a host of their elders, courageously and nonviolently sitting in at lunch counters and willingly going to jail for conscience' sake. One day the South will know that when these disinherited children of God sat down at lunch counters, they were in reality standing up for what is best in the American dream and for the most sacred values in our Judaeo-Christian heritage, thereby bringing our nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in their formulation of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Never before have I written so long a letter. I'm afraid it is much too long to take your precious time. I can assure you that it would have been much shorter if I had been writing from a comfortable desk, but what else can one do when he is alone in a narrow jail cell, other than write long letters, think long thoughts and pray long prayers?

If I have said anything in this letter that overstates the truth and indicates an unreasonable impatience, I beg you to forgive me. If I have said anything that understates the truth and indicates my having a patience that allows me to settle for anything less than brotherhood, I beg God to forgive me.

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith. I also hope that circumstances will soon make it possible for me to meet each of you, not as an integrationist or a civil rights leader but as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother. Let us all hope that the dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon pass away and the deep fog of misunderstanding will be lifted from our fear-drenched communities, and in some not too distant tomorrow the
radiant stars of love and brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty.

Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood,
Martin Luther King, Jr.
This class will feature Sister Ann Kendrick, one of the faith activists profiled in Mr. Massé’s book. She will speak about her current work in Florida to aid the poor and obtain basic rights and services for migrant workers. Sister Ann has played a crucial role in the formation of groups such as the Office for Farmworker Ministry (OFM) and Farmworker’s Association of Florida (FAF) which empower the workers to address numerous social issues.

Lesson Plan

A. Introduction of speaker: Dr. George Wolfe

B. Sister Ann Kendrick:
   1. Background
   2. Work
   3. Pass out information brochures

Reflection

I thought today’s class was amazing. It was great for my students to meet a modern activist, especially one who was profiled in the book we are reading. It was so fortunate Ms. Kendrick took the time to speak to my class when she had so many other engagements. She is really a wonderful, dedicated individual. She explained her life’s work in Florida with such vigor and enthusiasm that it was impossible not to be inspired.

My class and I both enjoyed her presentation. It was interesting to learn how Sister Ann changed from a self described “upper-middle class white girl on the go to college and get married track” to a nun devoted to serving the less fortunate. One semester experiencing the poverty in Guatemala changed her world view. Hearing her life story really confirmed my teaching about how ordinary people can do something extraordinary with their lives.
I cannot stress the value of her presentation enough. I can get up in front of class and lecture for hours about activism but it will never match the impact of getting to meet someone who is living what we talk about. If I ever teach in the future, this is definitely a technique I will employ frequently. Besides, students need a little variety in class. I know I get tired of hearing my professors lecture every day.

Sources

The Office for Farmworker Ministry Needs Your Help

Come walk with us and help a dream come true for a new Pastoral and Immigrant Center

Currently, the OFFM is operating out of a small rented storefront office in Apopka. Programs and requests for services continue to grow. A new building is needed to provide adequate room for administrative offices, counseling sessions, parent training programs, tutoring, mentoring, and meetings. Plans are in the works for a new Pastoral Center. The center will represent the dreams, efforts and dedication of a community for over thirty years.

Please join Sisters Cathy, Ann, Gail and the community they have served and loved for over thirty years in accomplishing this goal. You can help by:

- Contributing financially
- Volunteering your time and talent
- Spreading the word
- Attending sponsored events
- Advocating for appropriate legislative changes

Walking together and working together we can change the world - one person at a time...

Areas of ministry begun and administered by the OFFM during the past thirty two years include advocacy, parish ministry, youth ministry, ministry to women, pastoral counseling, networking diverse cultures, counseling, mentoring and tutoring of adults and youth. Also established were legal services, low-income rentals and homeownership, economic development projects, community health centers, The Community Federal Trust Credit Union, Notre Dame Americorps, Pennies for Power and the Farmworker Association of Florida.
Class 5- Father Roy Bourgeois
October 10, 2005

We will discuss Father Roy Bourgeois and his fight to close the “School Of the Americas.” I will show the video created by his organization and use my personal experience from the Ft. Benning protest. Some celebrities such as Susan Sarandon and Martin Sheen regularly attend the SOA protest in Georgia. This brings up the issue of the new trend of celebrity activism. I will be interested to hear what the class thinks about this subject. This is also a good opportunity to raise some interest in this issue and the upcoming protest in November. We will discuss the pros and cons of extreme activism, justifications for civil disobedience and some current events that pertain to these subjects.

Lesson Plan

A. School of the Americas background
   1. Watch SOA video
   2. Article: “School of the Americas”
   3. Which side do you agree with?
   4. If these things are true, how can this occur in our country?
   5. Do you think the government keeps other things from its citizens?
      a. Abu Ghraib prison scandal

B. Father Roy Bourgeois
   1. Biography
   2. Creation of SOA watch
   3. Article: “Backyard Terrorism”
   4. What message does this send to other countries?

C. Civil Disobedience
   1. Crossing the line
   2. Is this type of civil disobedience justified? Why?
3. Is this extreme activism?
4. Do you think extreme activism is useful or necessary?
5. What are some of the negatives attached to the extreme activist?

D. Personal Experience: Ft. Benning

1. Photos
2. Article: “On the trail on the celebrity activist”
3. What other celebrities can you think of that are involved with a cause?
   a. Martin Sheen and Susan Sarandon with SOA Watch
   b. Angelina Jolie and George Clooney are U.N. goodwill ambassadors

Reflection

I was a little wary approaching this issue because it is very controversial. The SOAW faces strong opposition ranging from arguments that Ft. Benning does not train soldiers in torture anymore, to the idea that these practices are justified. Also, I was afraid the class would be shocked at the graphic nature of the SOAW produced video. I did not want to give the class the impression that to be an activist you had to take “radical” action like the ones portrayed in the video. Even when I personally attended the protest with my campus organization, Peaceworkers, I felt that some factions were much more radical than we aspired to be. Selfishly, I didn’t want my class to put me in that category.

I soon learned that I had worried needlessly. My class viewed both the video and the evidence objectively, like I had hoped they would. We had a good discussion and the general consensus was that my class was disturbed, but not really surprised that we could have such a facility on American soil. It was interesting to me how we discussed the idea of “the new civil disobedience” whereas Father Roy Bourgeois and his team were equally justified in crossing the line or scaling the fence as Martin Luther King Jr. had been when he orchestrated lunch counter sit-ins.

We also talked about celebrity activists and how their fame could greatly benefit a cause. My students were surprised to learn how many celebrities had actually taken up a cause. While this class covered the most controversial issues, I also think it prompted some of the most thoughtful discussion.
Sources


School of the Americas

Cold War training camp remains focus of controversy

By Bruce Kennedy
CNN Interactive

(CNN) -- The intruder waited in his hiding place for just the right moment -- soon after his targets had gone to bed. He then put his plan into operation.

Earlier that day in 1983, Vietnam veteran and priest Roy Bourgeois had walked unchallenged into Fort Benning, Georgia, wearing surplus military fatigues. He had climbed up a tree near a barracks used by Salvadoran soldiers training with the U.S. Army, waited until "lights out," then unleashed his guerrilla protest.

Bourgeois turned on his electronic "boom box" that blared into the night air a recording of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero calling on his nation's soldiers to stop killing their countrymen. Romero was later killed while conducting Mass in San Salvador. Of the three men accused in Romero's assassination, two were graduates of the U.S. Army's School of the Americas (SOA).

Bourgeois served 18 months in a federal prison for his actions. But his protest paved the way for larger demonstrations against what some people call the "School of Assassins" -- but what SOA supporters say is an important tool in helping spread democratic values to Washington's allies in Central America and South America.

The end of World War II and the start of the Cold War ignited new concerns in the United States that Communists would attempt to infiltrate and subvert the country's southern neighbors. The U.S. Army started its School of the Americas in Panama in 1946. In 1984, under the terms of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty, the school was moved to Fort Benning.

More than 63,000 Central and South American soldiers from 22 nations have trained at SOA since its inception. According to the school's Web site, instruction at SOA for its first several decades "focused on nation-building skills, then [was] altered in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy to provide instruction necessary to the nations in Latin America to thwart armed communist insurgencies."

Opponents of the school, who maintain their own "School of the Americas Watch" Web site, claim SOA graduates "have been responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America."

Some of the more notorious individuals who have trained at SOA include:
Former Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega, now serving an extended sentence in a U.S. prison on drug charges.

El Salvador's Roberto D'Aubuisson, who formed the death squads that killed Romero and thousands of others during the Salvadoran civil war.

Former Argentine President Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, accused of making thousands of people "disappear" during Argentina's "dirty war" of the 1970s.

SOA officials said that out of thousands of soldiers the school has trained, only about 300 have been accused of human rights violations.

Joe Leuer, a training specialist for course management who has worked at SOA since the early 1990s, said the connections that critics make between the school and the crimes allegedly committed by its graduates are tenuous at best.

D'Aubuisson, for example, "took a radio operator's course in the early 1970s. People want to connect the dots and allege the school which taught him how to operate radios efficiently also taught him how to create death squads," Leuer said.

The school insisted it was not responsible for the actions of individuals who ignored its training, which has always included instruction on the basic rules of warfare as set out in the Geneva Convention.

The SOA controversy intensified when a 1992 report declassified by the Pentagon in 1996 revealed the details of a manual used at SOA in the 1980s that advocated tactics such as beatings, false imprisonment, execution and bounty payments for enemy dead.

Following the report, the SOA curriculum was expanded to include instruction on international humanitarian law, human rights and ethical use of force.

"The school has never taught torture and never will," SOA commandant Col. Glenn R. Weidner told a November 1998 news conference. "We still do military training, but this is not the torture training that Father Bourgeois would have you believe."

According to SOA's Web site, the curriculum in the late 1990s focused "on supporting the primary foreign policy goals of the United States in the region -- consolidation of the effective democratic governance, respect for the rule of law, and economic development along free market principles."

Opponents were not appeased. They wanted the school shut down. Some protests were loud, such as the ones staged every November 16 for the past 10 years outside the gates of the school. They commemorate the killings in El
Salvador on that date in 1989 of six Jesuit priests, deaths to which some of the graduates of the school have been linked. Notable among the protesters in recent years has been actor Martin Sheen, star of the TV drama, "The West Wing."

Other opposition took the form of efforts in Congress to cut the budget of the school. Finally, in October 2000, Congress voted to close the school in December and reopen it in January 2001 under a new name, the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation.

Army officials hope that changing the school's name and making sure its curriculum stresses civilian control of the military and respect for human rights will blunt some of the criticism.

The new school will offer courses in such topics as anti-drug operations, disaster relief and peace support -- not just to military personnel but also to law enforcement officials and civilians.

Although the new law directs the school to comply with the "democratic principles" of the Organization of American States, opponents of the school have said the changes will only be cosmetic. They vow to continue protests.

"We see this as cosmetic," Bourgeois, a co-founder of School of the Americas Watch, said in November 2000. "It's like taking a bottle of poison and writing 'penicillin' on it."

A recent statement on the Web site of School of the Americas Watch calls on Americans to let Congress and new administration "know that we are not fooled by this attempt to dissociate the SOA from its brutal history and from the violence that graduates continue to perpetrate on our sisters and brothers in Latin America."

But the school's defenders such as training specialist Joe Leuer say the training it provided was important in post-Cold War Central and South America.

"By looking at where our graduates are working now," Leuer said, "on peacekeeping missions, de-mining missions, creating transparent [military] budgets, putting their military under civilian rule for the first time ... that's democratization. If you're trying to market a product that nobody wants, no one is going to buy it."
Backyard terrorism

The US has been training terrorists at a camp in Georgia for years - and it's still at it

George Monbiot
Tuesday October 30, 2001
The Guardian

"If any government sponsors the outlaws and killers of innocents," George Bush announced on the day he began bombing Afghanistan, "they have become outlaws and murderers themselves. And they will take that lonely path at their own peril." I'm glad he said "any government", as there's one which, though it has yet to be identified as a sponsor of terrorism, requires his urgent attention.

For the past 55 years it has been running a terrorist training camp, whose victims massively outnumber the people killed by the attack on New York, the embassy bombings and the other atrocities laid, rightly or wrongly, at al-Qaida's door. The camp is called the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, or Whisc. It is based in Fort Benning, Georgia, and it is funded by Mr. Bush's government.

Until January this year, Whisc was called the "School of the Americas", or SOA. Since 1946, SOA has trained more than 60,000 Latin American soldiers and policemen. Among its graduates are many of the continent's most notorious torturers, mass murderers, dictators and state terrorists. As hundreds of pages of documentation compiled by the pressure group SOA Watch show, Latin America has been ripped apart by its alumni.

In June this year, Colonel Byron Lima Estrada, once a student at the school, was convicted in Guatemala City of murdering Bishop Juan Gerardi in 1998. Gerardi was killed because he had helped to write a report on the atrocities committed by Guatemala's D-2, the military intelligence agency run by Lima Estrada with the help of two other SOA graduates. D-2 coordinated the "anti-insurgency" campaign which obliterated 448 Mayan Indian villages, and murdered tens of thousands of their people. Forty per cent of the cabinet ministers who served the genocidal regimes of Lucas Garcia, Rios Montt and Mejia Victores studied at the School of the Americas.

In 1993, the United Nations truth commission on El Salvador named the army officers who had committed the worst atrocities of the civil war. Two-thirds of them had been trained at the School of the Americas. Among them were Roberto D'Aubuisson, the leader of El Salvador's death squads; the men who killed Archbishop Oscar Romero; and 19 of the 26 soldiers who murdered the Jesuit priests in 1989. In Chile, the school's graduates ran both Augusto Pinochet's secret police and his three principal concentration camps. One of them helped to murder Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffit in Washington DC in 1976.

Argentina's dictators Roberto Viola and Leopoldo Galtieri, Panama's Manuel Noriega and Omar Torrijos, Peru's Juan Velasco Alvarado and Ecuador's Guillermo Rodriguez all benefited from the school's instruction. So did the leader of the Grupo Colina death squad in Fujimori's Peru; four of the five officers who ran the infamous Battalion 3-16 in Honduras (which controlled the death squads there in the 1980s) and the commander responsible for the 1994 Ocosingo massacre in Mexico.

All this, the school's defenders insist, is ancient history. But SOA graduates are also involved in the dirty war now being waged, with US support, in Colombia. In 1999 the US State Department's report on human rights named two SOA graduates as the murderers of the peace commissioner,
Alex Lopera. Last year, Human Rights Watch revealed that seven former pupils are running paramilitary groups there and have commissioned kidnappings, disappearances, murders and massacres. In February this year an SOA graduate in Colombia was convicted of complicity in the torture and killing of 30 peasants by paramilitaries. The school is now drawing more of its students from Colombia than from any other country.

The FBI defines terrorism as "violent acts... intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a government, or affect the conduct of a government", which is a precise description of the activities of SOA's graduates. But how can we be sure that their alma mater has had any part in this? Well, in 1996, the US government was forced to release seven of the school's training manuals. Among other top tips for terrorists, they recommended blackmail, torture, execution and the arrest of witnesses' relatives.

Last year, partly as a result of the campaign run by SOA Watch, several US congressmen tried to shut the school down. They were defeated by 10 votes. Instead, the House of Representatives voted to close it and then immediately reopen it under a different name. So, just as Windscale turned into Sellafield in the hope of parrying public memory, the School of the Americas washed its hands of the past by renaming itself Whisc. As the school's Colonel Mark Morgan informed the Department of Defense just before the vote in Congress: "Some of your bosses have told us that they can't support anything with the name 'School of the Americas' on it. Our proposal addresses this concern. It changes the name." Paul Coverdell, the Georgia senator who had fought to save the school, told the papers that the changes were "basically cosmetic".

But visit Whisc's website and you'll see that the School of the Americas has been all but excised from the record. Even the page marked "History" fails to mention it. Whisc's courses, it tells us, "cover a broad spectrum of relevant areas, such as operational planning for peace operations; disaster relief; civil-military operations; tactical planning and execution of counter drug operations".

Several pages describe its human rights initiatives. But, though they account for almost the entire training programme, combat and commando techniques, counter-insurgency and interrogation aren't mentioned. Nor is the fact that Whisc's "peace" and "human rights" options were also offered by SOA in the hope of appeasing Congress and preserving its budget: but hardly any of the students chose to take them.

We can't expect this terrorist training camp to reform itself: after all, it refuses even to acknowledge that it has a past, let alone to learn from it. So, given that the evidence linking the school to continuing atrocities in Latin America is rather stronger than the evidence linking the al-Qaeda training camps to the attack on New York, what should we do about the "evil-doers" in Fort Benning, Georgia?

Well, we could urge our governments to apply full diplomatic pressure, and to seek the extradition of the school's commanders for trial on charges of complicity in crimes against humanity. Alternatively, we could demand that our governments attack the United States, bombing its military installations, cities and airports in the hope of overthrowing its unelected government and replacing it with a new administration overseen by the UN. In case this proposal proves unpopular with the American people, we could win their hearts and minds by dropping naan bread and dried curry in plastic bags stamped with the Afghan flag.

You object that this prescription is ridiculous, and I agree. But try as I might, I cannot see the moral difference between this course of action and the war now being waged in Afghanistan.
On the trail of the celebrity activist

By CNN's Richard Quest

Thursday, September 1, 2005 Posted: 1251 GMT (2051 HKT)

(CNN) -- This month Richard's quest takes him on a journey to uncover the celebrity activist.

Beyonce, Bono, Angelina Jolie. For the past few months we have been besieged by the most famous names in the world telling us to get involved and "make poverty history" or "help the refugees".

It reached fever pitch during the Live 8 Concerts and G8 summit -- so much so that the team behind CNN's 'Quest' programme decided to try to find out whether this involvement actually did any good.

Crucially, we also wanted to find out whether these celebrities actually knew anything about what they were supporting, or if it was just a plaintiff plea that "something must be done!"

When it comes to getting involved, celebrities come in different shapes and sizes. At the top of the pyramid are the Geldofs and Bonos -- these days more players of aid politics than of musical instruments.

Bono admitted: "It is going to take the rest of my life to achieve some of these goals. I am not going anywhere. This is my life now."

For most celebrities there is a great deal underneath the seemingly obvious platitude that "something must be done."

Take Beyonce and Destiny's Child who are savvy enough to know their celebrity status gives them a platform and are prepared to use it.

Beyonce told me: "I know the young generation look up to us, so one of the reasons we are here is to take advantage of our celebrity. We've been to Africa and we've seen the children and we've been to the townships and we've seen them with our own eyes."

The clear message -- I am not just a pretty face. I know what I am on about here.

The biggest names are recruited by all major charities to put forward their cause. Some, like the singer Natalie Imbruglia, have chosen to champion the least picturesque causes. In her case, fistula in women in Africa.

As she admits, faeces, incontinence and nasty smells are not popular causes. Others like Angelina Jolie are regularly pictured hugging children in refugee children in camps around the world, or in her case even adopting an orphan with AIDS in Ethiopia.

But don't be fooled. Angelina knows what she is doing.

Whether it is the gossip about her and Brad, or making films to fund her charity work, she admits: "I am clear enough to know that if you do a film every once in a while, you can maintain a certain level of celebrity to be able to get on shows and talk about things. So there is a balance."

Suddenly it all seems rather calculated for full effect.

Organizations like the ONE campaign take a great deal of time and trouble to make sure the celebrity is the right fit. Get it wrong and terrible PR damage can flow.
One who spent time making sure he got it right was actor George Clooney who has just signed up to the ONE campaign in the US. It took weeks of discussions. Neither side wanted to make a mistake.

As Clooney puts it: "It takes me a while to get in, you also want to make sure the things you get in to are the right ones."

Clooney is now preparing to make his first trip "into the field" to see for himself. Pretty much as I did last month.

UNICEF had arranged for me to travel to Ethiopia for a week as a Goodwill representative.

In the show, you see me exchange my journalist's hat for my UNICEF T-shirt. I had to receive special permission from CNN to shift sides, so to speak.

Nothing I saw would shock the average OXFAM or Save The Children field worker. But it gave me and my production team nightmares.

There were acutely malnourished children and when my time came to feed them enriched milk formula, UNICEF's Ethiopia Director Bjorn Ljungqvist wasn't joking when he said I was literally feeding them life.

There was one empty cot where another child had died the previous night. 1,200 such children die in Ethiopia every day.

Then onto the slums of Awassa where we met the AIDS orphans.

Two sisters living in a concrete shack less than 3 meters square, the oldest only 13, looking after her 9-year-old-sister. There were hundreds of such cases.

By the time we had finished filming, we were all grateful there wasn't a cash machine in Awassa as we would have emptied our bank accounts to help them out. Instead we all went back to our hotel where, unashamedly, we admitted we privately burst into tears.

UNICEF's Alfred Ironside is quite blunt about why they use the famous faces: "Celebrities are absolutely critical to everything UNICEF does. They can open doors and people listen to what they are able to say'.

It is a sad commentary on today's society, but he is right. If I hadn't been making this programme, would the Prime Minister of Ethiopia have given me time?

The PM may not be happy with our final portrayal of his country, but it also gives him the chance to say "I'm a bit tired of those who think that that is the only picture in Ethiopia."

"There is a threat of famine," he says, "but people are not hapless, helpless beggars, they are fighting poverty and they are making in-roads and those need to be recognized as well."

It is too easy to criticize the celebrities for getting involved as air-headed singers making trite comments.

But as they would say, at least they are doing something. And let's not forget, it is we as consumers who give them that license, following their every bit of gossip and tittle-tattle.

If they are to be criticized for caring in the first place, we too must share part of the blame for caring about what they do.

My producer described our show as the most important programme he has made in 10 years at CNN. I think he is probably right.
Does celebrity activism work? Well, we've made a programme featuring the issues behind it. I've spoken to government ministers about UNICEF's work. You've just read an article about it.

So from the charities' point of view, I guess it does.

Richard Quest presents CNN's 'Quest'. The hour long special on 'celebrity activism' airs on CNN Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 August. For show times click here.
Class 6- Interfaith Understanding
October 17, 2005

This class will discuss Dr. M. Basheer Ahmed and his work to help under-served Muslims in his community and promote interfaith understanding. He has been so vital in efforts to provide health services to poor Muslims, and promote understanding of Islam and Muslim culture. I think it is important to include a non-Christian activist in order to get a broader perspective. Dr. Wolfe will discuss Muncie’s own interfaith fellowship and some common themes in all world religions. We will also explore the importance of religious tolerance in today’s society.

Lesson Plan

A. Brief history of Dr. Basheer Ahmed and his work
   1. Muslim Community Center for Human Services
   2. Interfaith work
   3. Religiously motivated violence
   4. Show video clip: “Kingdom of Heaven”
      a. How does this demonstrate a lack of understanding of other religions?
      b. Why is this a problem?

B. Dr. Wolfe:
   1. Interfaith Fellowship in Muncie
   2. Common themes in world religions
      a. Golden Rule
      b. Creation
   3. Do churches promote religious tolerance and understanding?
   4. Why or why not?
   5. How would this benefit the community?
   6. What are some examples of religiously motivated violence today?
      a. “Jihad”
b. Anti-Muslim sentiments

7. Article: "Hate Crime Reports Up in Wake of Terrorist Attack"

Reflection

Interfaith understanding and commonalities in all major religions is one of my favorite subjects so I was very excited to have the opportunity to teach it. I was surprised to learn that although every student was educated for many years in the Christian church, they had little knowledge of other religions or similarities. Luckily the class was very interested and really enjoyed Dr. Wolfe’s lecture. They were surprised to learn how similar the major world religions really are. Many ladies even seemed interested in joining Muncie’s Interfaith Fellowship to learn more.

Our discussion on religiously motivated violence, and the clip from Kingdom of Heaven was really useful in examining the violent history of the Christian religion. We often attack religiously motivated violence in other religions while overlooking the fact that Christians once engaged in this themselves. I chose the clip to combat this type of hypocrisy while teaching about religiously motivated violence in many different faiths.

We also touched on current events, especially anti-Muslim sentiments and hate crimes that began after 9/11. The article I shared in class, “Hate Crimes up in Wake of Terrorist Attacks” shocked the students because it detailed atrocities that were committed based solely on religious misunderstandings. All agreed that churches should do more to promote interfaith understanding so members would be more equipped to confront these modern issues.

Sources


Hate crime reports up in wake of terrorist attacks

September 17, 2001 Posted: 7:15 AM EDT (1115 GMT)

ATLANTA, Georgia (CNN) -- Reports of hate crimes against Muslims and southeast Asians have risen exponentially across the U.S. in the wake of Tuesday's terror attacks. The backlash has prompted Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to ask President Bush Sunday to ensure the safety of Sikhs living in the United States.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations says it received more than 300 reports of harassment and abuse from Tuesday through Thursday night, nearly half the number it received all last year. Khalid Iqbal, director of the Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group, says cases range from families being spat and yelled at, "Go back to your country," to assaults on people and businesses.

In Mesa, Arizona, a man was charged with first-degree murder Sunday in connection with a series of shootings that police said could be a racially-motivated response to last week's terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

Mesa police said Francisco Roque, 42, was being held on a $1 million bond in the killing of Balbir Singh Sodhi, 49, a Chevron gas station owner. Sodhi, from Punjab, India, was shot to death while doing landscaping outside his business Saturday afternoon.

Many Sikhs believe he is the first to have been killed in retaliation for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

Family members, friends, and members of the Indian Sikh community say they are being targeted because their men wear turbans and long beards as part of their religious dress, a tradition that's lasted for 500 years.

"Our appearance looks like Osama bin Laden and those of Afghanistan," said friend Suminder Sodhi, alluding to the man the U.S. has branded the "prime suspect" in the attacks. "But we are different people from Muslim people. We have different beliefs, a different religion."

A leader of the Phoenix Sikh community says the media didn't help to dispel bias when they broadcast the arrest of a Sikh aboard an Amtrak train on Wednesday. He was charged with carrying a knife, but was later cleared of any connection to the terrorist attacks.

"And the media just showed that over and over and over," said Guru Roop Kaur Khalsa, a minister of the Guru Nawak Dwara Sikh temple in Phoenix. "It sets us up."
"We strongly condemn the attacks on the U.S.," she said. "The American Sikh community and Sikhs worldwide feel we not only share Americans' grief, but we have some killed in the World Trade Center, too."

Suminder Sodhi, who is not related to the victim, said just the day before the shootings, the two friends were working on setting up a news conference to discuss the Sikh community's reaction to the terrorism attacks -- and to allay public fears that Sikhs have no connection to bin Laden. They were trying to get in touch with Arizona Sen. John McCain.

Sodhi's brother Rama Sodhi says they had been warned by well-meaning customers that they should be careful.

Sodhi is survived by three sons and daughters. The 49-year-old former taxi driver was known for giving candies out to children at the gas station.

Attacks on Sikhs have also been reported elsewhere in the United States.

They include a Queens, New York man who was shot in the forehead by a BB gun as he left a temple. He had gone there to pray soon after the attacks. And a Fairfax, Virginia man was nearly driven off the road by two vans on his way to donate blood.

A Hindu temple was also firebombed in Matawan, New Jersey last week.

Sikh Dharma's official website -- Sikhnet.com -- reports 133 incidences of hate crimes and harassment since Tuesday.

Attacks on Muslim-Americans have also been reported.

In Texas, mosques in Irving and Denton were attacked last week in the wake of the terror attacks.

Iqbal said while he thinks the media are more responsible in their coverage of last week's terrorism attacks, he believes they still carry subtle biases against Muslim-Americans.

"When I see reports of Osama Bin Laden or Afghanistan, what images do I see? The call for prayers and Muslim men and women praying with their Muslim attire. It not only hurts me, but my children," he said.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations said there are an estimated 7 million Muslims living in the United States; about 1.2 billion worldwide.

The group recorded over 138 media reports fingering Islamic extremists as the culprit during the week of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, he said. And it was repeated again after the crash of TWA Flight 800 the year after.
Attacks on Muslims and mosques are often triggered by news reports, the group said, from the latest violence in the Middle East, the destruction of the Taliban statues in Afghanistan, to terrorist attacks such as the ones on Tuesday.

"I urge you to try and understand -- for everybody to understand what each other's religion is so we can live in harmony with each other," Iqbal said.

Iqbal did point to something good coming out of last week's tragedy.

Some Muslims in Seattle had been afraid to go to mosque all week, and when they went, they found non-Muslims standing there with flowers.

One woman had even approached Iqbal asking, "What can we do?"

"And when I told her, women are looked at and targeted mostly because of their recognizable headscarves and veils, she said she'll dedicate Monday to wearing a headscarf in solidarity. It touches my heart."

On Sunday, the Islamic Society of Denton in Texas, which suffered only minor damage by the Molotov cocktail attack last week, held a prayer vigil. Joining the Muslim prayer were the city mayor and 15 other church groups. "It is a gathering of peace, prayer and friendship. Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian..." Irfan Ali, a member of the mosque, said, trailing off.

The day before, the mosque received a gift from the student body of the University of North Texas: 50 posters with greetings, flowers, condolences and prayers. The student body president had delivered it in person, Ali said.
Class 7- Faith Activism in Action
October 24, 2005

Previously, we have seen how activists were inspired by their faith. Today we are going to see how faith can be a solution. We will watch and discuss a film that shows a mediator who utilizes the strong faith of the community to formulate a solution. This is an interesting modern example of activism and I think the class will be interested in the power of faith-based solutions.

For next week’s lesson “Lobbying and Getting Involved,” I would like to prepare a packet containing information about opportunities on how to get involved in Muncie community, or national organizations. Today I hope to get an idea what kind of activities students would be interested in participating in.

Lesson Plan

A. Background

1. The problem: Watermen vs. Environmentalists in Chesapeake Bay
3. Movie Clip “Between Heaven and Earth”
4. What do you think about this strategy?
5. Could this actually work?
6. Could this technique solve some problems in Muncie?
7. How could this change the role of churches?
8. What if it is a problem between people of two different faiths?
   a. Interfaith understanding
   b. How has this changed the way we look at faith as a motivator?
   c. Last week’s religiously motivated violence vs. inspiration to solve disputes

B. Causes and Organizations

1. What are you already involved in?
2. What causes or organizations would you like more information about?

3. Afghan Women and Kid’s Education and Necessities
   a. Founder Bibi Bahrami
   b. Muncie based that makes huge difference in Afghanistan
   c. Building of school, health clinic, women’s vocational center

**Reflection**

I really liked using the film *Between Heaven and Earth* because it was a really powerful example of the use of a faith-based solution. The class seemed to enjoy it too, and we discussed why this technique was not more widespread. The class argued that it was questionable if appealing to faith would work on a much larger level like in Muncie, but that it was definitely something that should be looked into. I personally had a realization of the immense power that the church holds, and what a resource it could be in promoting change or resolution.

When I asked the class about their involvement, I was not surprised to learn that all were involved in something through their churches like a food or clothing bank. They also gave me some good ideas of what else they would be interested in, and I got to share with them about one of my favorite organizations in Muncie, AWAKEN. Afghan Women and Kids’ Education and Necessities is an amazing organization that makes such a huge impact on an international level.

**Sources**


Class 8- Lobbying and Getting Involved
October 31, 2005

Wrap up. I will teach the class steps they can take to become active for a cause. We will discuss lobbying techniques and I will encourage them to contact their representatives. My experience in the FCNL lobby conference will be useful here. We will also discuss current events and share contact information.

Lesson Plan

A. Getting started
   1. Educate yourself on the issue
   2. Know your representative
   3. Make it personal
   4. Ask for a specific action
   5. Follow up

B. Ways to contact your representative
   1. Letter writing/emails
   2. Phone calls
   3. Letters to the editor
   4. Petitions
   5. Lobby visits
   6. Have you ever tried to contact an elected official before?
   7. Why or why not?

C. Personal experience lobbying in Washington DC

D. Helpful sites
   1. www.fcnl.org
      a. Information about officials, their staff, voting records, current bills
Reflection

Teaching the class how to go out and make a difference really made me feel kind of proud. This seems strange because all my students are around three times my age, but it didn’t matter to me. Before we have just learned about other people, but today’s lesson was focused on action that anyone can take. The class was very interested in how to contact their elected officials and asked lots of questions. I hope I conveyed how simple it is to get your voice heard, and how it really does make a difference. We also discussed some current events and they conveyed how much they had enjoyed my class. I cannot stress enough how sweet these ladies were to me in my first time teaching. We exchanged contact information and I promised to let them know what I was doing from time to time. It sad leaving the classroom today, and it made me wonder if regular teachers feel this way too.

Sources


Representative Mike Pence (R-IN 6th)
3rd-term Republican from Indiana.

Cosponsorship Status
Click here to see Rep. Pence's cosponsorship status on important legislation

Contact Information
Web Site: mikepence.house.gov
E-mail: Contact Via 'Web Form.'

Washington Office:
426 CHOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-1406
Phone: (202) 225-3021
Fax: (202) 225-3382

Main District Office:
1134 Meridian Plaza
Anderson, IN 46016
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Fax: (765) 640-2922

Background Information
Party: Republican
Residence: Columbus
Prev. Occupation: Radio Talk Show Host
Prev. Political Exp.: no prior elected office
Education: BA Hanover College, 1981; JD Indiana University, 1986
Birthdate: 06/07/1959
Birthplace: Columbus, IN
Religion: Christian

Other Information
Term: 3rd
First Elected: 2000
Percentage in Last Election: 67%
Major Opponent: Melina Fox
Committees:
• Agriculture
• International Relations
• Judiciary

PAC Contributions
2005-2006 Election Cycle
2003-2004 Election Cycle

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Senator Richard G. Lugar (R-IN)
5th-term Republican from Indiana.

Cosponsorship Status
Click here to see Sen. Lugar's cosponsorship status on important legislation

Contact Information
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1180 Market Tower, 10 West Market St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204
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Background Information
Party: Republican
Residence: Indianapolis
Prev. Occupation: Businessman
Prev. Political Exp.: Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners, 1964-67; Mayor of Indianapolis, 1968-75
Education: BA Denison University, 1954; MA Oxford University, 1956
Military: USN, 1957-60
Birthdate: 04/04/1932
Birthplace: Indianapolis, IN
Religion: Methodist

Other Information
Term: 5th
First Elected: 1976
Percentage in Last Election: 67%
Major Opponent: David Johnson
Committees:
- Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
- Foreign Relations, Chair

PAC Contributions
2005-2006 Election Cycle
2003-2004 Election Cycle

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Senator Evan Bayh (D-IN)
2nd-term Democrat from Indiana.

Cosponsorship Status
Click here to see Sen. Bayh’s cosponsorship status on important legislation

Contact Information
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Indianapolis, IN 46204
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Background Information
Party: Democrat
Residence: Indianapolis
Prev. Occupation: Attorney
Education: BS Indiana University, 1978; JD University of Virginia, 1982
Birthdate: 12/26/1955
Birthplace: Shirkieville, IN
Religion: Episcopal

Other Information
Term: 2nd
First Elected: 1998
Percentage in Last Election: 62%
Major Opponent: Marvin Scott
Committees:
• Special Committee on Aging
• Armed Services
• Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs
• Select Committee on Intelligence
• Small Business and Entrepreneurship

PAC Contributions
2005-2006 Election Cycle
2003-2004 Election Cycle
Final Reflection

I absolutely loved teaching this course. It was such a learning experience for me. Now, I really have a different view of how difficult and time consuming being a teacher is. It is a lot of work, but it is so worth it in the end. I guess I got lucky because my students were so wonderful.

Their reactions really surprised me. Coming into a class of older adults, I did not expect them to be so well-informed, open, and excited to learn new things. They sure showed me! All were up on current events and genuinely interested in my class material, no matter how controversial or challenging. I also got a different view of the Christian faith than I was expecting. I stereotypically lumped all people who grew up in the church as being staunch conservatives. These ladies showed me that it is more complicated than that. Many even disagree openly with teachings in their church because they feel the church members are too close-minded.

I could definitely see myself coming back to teaching after working in my field for a few years. I cannot think of anything that would be more rewarding. I am so glad that I agreed to teach the class and mold it into my honors project. I doubt I would have benefited as much from writing a paper.