

Michael Brown: You Are Just Too Woke for Me

It's difficult to take a stand for anything today without being accused of virtue signaling or the like. And if you're woke in one area, you'll soon find out that you are blissfully unwoke in another area. (Hey, if "woke" is a word, why not "unwoke"?)

Well, allow me to set the record straight. Everyone has blind spots. Everyone is woefully ignorant (or neglectful or indifferent) in some major area of genuine concern.

So, let's not be so self-righteous and smug. And let's not be so condemning of others who genuinely care but who don't quite express their concern in the right way. We are doing the best we know how.

For all those who decry racism, do you also decry anti-Semitism? Have you been speaking out about the dangerous rise in anti-Semitic words and deeds in America in recent years? And last year and the year before, did you take to the streets to shout, "These synagogue shootings must stop!"

Or maybe you've been alert to the very real dangers of anti-Semitism. But have you been on the front lines of the pro-life movement? Have you been speaking up for the unborn? Are you there on the sidewalk to help offer mothers a better choice?

Perhaps you are grieved about gun violence in America. A report from January of this year stated that, "At least 15,292 people were fatally shot in The United States in 2019, excluding suicides, according to data gathered by Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit that tracks shootings. That's a roughly 3% increase over 2018."

That is not good news. But it absolutely pales in comparison

to the number of babies killed in the womb each year—as many as 800,000 to 1 million.

Woke in one area, asleep in the next.

Or maybe you are thoroughly pro-life. That's great to hear.

But are you concerned about the persecution of Christians worldwide? About our brothers and sisters being raped and kidnapped and tortured and beheaded? About them losing their properties and their homes? About their church buildings being burned to the ground? Does your home congregation even talk about this publicly, let alone pray for these persecuted saints?

As noted by the Catholic News Agency, “In a report issued on 15 May, the International Society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law (Intersociety) said that 620 Nigerian Christians have been killed since the beginning of the year and mapped a campaign of destruction and arson carried out against churches in the African nation.

“The society, a nonprofit founded in 2008 in Nigeria, works to promote civil liberties, the rule of law, criminal justice reform and good governance. Its report said that ‘Nigeria’s main Islamic Jihadists: Militant Fulani Herdsmen and Boko Haram/ISWAP have intensified their anti-Christian violence in the old Middle Belt and Northeast regions.’”

And that is just Nigeria. What about Christians in China and India? Or in the Middle East? How woke are we really?

Or maybe this *is* your area of focus. Maybe you pray daily for the suffering church and write letters to advocate for them. But do you care about human trafficking?

According to an April 2019 report in *Fortune*, “Slavery is alive and well in the land of the free. With human trafficking now a multi-billion-dollar industry worldwide and cases

increasing in the United States, activists are trying to squash the myth that most women who work as prostitutes do so because they want to."

And what about the *children* sold into sexual slavery? Does that keep you up at night? Were you even aware?

According to the Erase Child Trafficking website, "Statistics show that 46 children in America are taken and sold into slavery per day."

How can this be happening, and on our watch, at that?

Or maybe *this* is your area of focus, and you are fighting tirelessly to liberate victims and stop others from being victimized. Wonderful.

But what about world hunger? We are told that more than one-tenth of the world's population is undernourished (so, more than 8 billion people) while World Hunger reports that, "Approximately 3.1 million children die from undernutrition each year." That is almost 8,500 kids dying per day because of malnourishment. Who can put words to this?

And what about all the other, urgent causes that I have not addressed? What about your particular area of interest that I failed to mention?

The point of all this is not to lay a guilt trip on you or to make you feel that you should not focus on one particular issue. And I certainly don't want to make you feel paralyzed by the massive needs worldwide, including many that we *can* do something about.

I simply want to remove any sense of smug self-righteousness. Or of being more woke than someone else. Or of criticizing those who are late to your particular party. Or of accusing others of virtue signaling when they are simply trying to do what is right.

From God's perspective, all of us are miserably unwoke and fall pitifully short of loving our neighbors as ourselves.

So rather than strutting around in our self-righteous cubicle, applauding our compassion and awareness, let's walk humbly, honoring others as they fight their fights and welcoming those who want to join ours.

Let the awakening begin. We are not as woke as we thought.