



Community Impact

A TEAM PLAYBOOK & RESOURCE MANUAL

INFORM

VISION TO LAUNCH

HOW TO ESTABLISH A MINISTRY AT YOUR CHURCH

INFORM | IGNITE | IMPACT

COMMUNITYIMPACT.FRC.ORG

THE CULTURAL COMMISSION

From the beginning, God delegated the shaping and development of culture and society to humankind. By launching a Community Impact ministry in your church and commissioning a team, the church provides greater, more effective influence in the world, especially in the public arena.

CASTING THE VISION

With such diversity in the body of Christ, churches that have the greatest impact for the kingdom of God typically share a common conviction: **there is no substitute for obeying the Great Commission and the Cultural Commission.**

The body of Christ must provide persuasive moral influence in the public arena as the “salt” and must engage in personal evangelism as the “light.” There is no plan B.

More often than not, churches reaching people for Christ have an intentional plan for evangelism. Moreover, churches making a positive impact on the moral health of their community have a ministry team devoted to this purpose as an official part of their ministry structure.

These ministry teams are known by a variety of names, but their function is the same: to provide in-house leadership for congregational response to the moral and social issues that impact the community, state, and nation. We’ve chosen to call these groups Community Impact Teams (CIT). Regardless of what you call yours, we want to help you establish an effective team in your church.

**With all the threats to Faith, Family, and Freedom,
Community Impact Teams help answer what
many Christians are asking: “What can I do?”**

About Family Research Council

Vision Statement:

Family Research Council’s vision is a prevailing culture in which all human life is valued, families flourish, and religious liberty thrives.

Mission of Organization:

Family Research Council’s mission is to serve in the kingdom of God by championing faith, family, and freedom in public policy and the culture from a biblical worldview.

WHAT DOES A COMMUNITY IMPACT TEAM DO?

We suggest four fundamental tasks on which to concentrate. Basically, it is the CIT’s responsibility to:

1. **Inform** the church leadership and congregation about the moral issues being debated and acted on in the public arena;
2. **Equip** the membership as to how they can engage these issues;
3. **Alert** them when prayer and action is needed;
4. **Mobilize** them for various forms of action with a goal of making a positive impact for the greater good.

Let’s look at each one more in depth.

1. INFORMING

And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ.
Philippians 1:9-10

My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Hosea 4:6

The initial role of the CIT is educator. Clarifying Christian duties toward the community and providing your church with accurate and pertinent information on moral issues should be first on your agenda. “Why should Christians be concerned about social issues?” “What exactly should we be concerned about?” Answering these questions is your top priority.

Busyness is pandemic in our culture; most people just cannot find the time to stay informed. Ministers are notoriously overworked and far too busy to keep up on every social issue. The CIT is first and foremost a friend to the pastor. By supplying your leadership with the information to direct the congregation in matters of public policy, you will provide a desperately needed service. If your information is consistently balanced, thorough, and reliable you will win both gratitude and confidence. This confidence from your pastor is perhaps the single most necessary ingredient for the success of the CIT. Consider the church leadership your primary constituency. You will serve the church best by serving the leadership well.

Lack of time is also a big reason why church members may be uninvolved in the public square. This factor, along with a lack of reliable information, prevents the confidence they need to get involved. Under the guidance of the pastor, your second priority should be to educate the congregation both on current moral concerns and on the basic matters of Christian citizenship.

Your church probably has a committee devoted to evangelism or missions whose job it is partly to remind folks that every believer has a role in fulfilling the Great Commission. Likewise, while orchestrating church involvement in social issues, the CIT also reminds the congregation that every Christian has a responsibility here as well. Many Christians today are woefully misinformed about the ramifications of their faith in the public arena. Your presence helps the pastor to teach the congregation about these things. By informing and modeling the role of the Christian in society, you help to disciple the body of Christ!

The resources found in this manual and the CIT website will assist you to accomplish your two primary responsibilities as educator: to give your church reliable information on the moral issues of the day, and to disciple them into a fuller expression of their faith in action as the salt and light.

2. EQUIPPING

All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service. Ephesians 4:11-12

Education is the first step in the discipleship of the Christian. But once informed, the question then becomes “What should we do?” “How do we respond?” The second role of the CIT is to equip, to provide the resources necessary for action. Merely knowing that I should do something is not enough to get me out of the pew and into action; you must also provide tools and show me how to get involved. It is not uncommon for the novice to experience an overwhelming sense of frustration when confronting the magnitude of today’s problems. In order to prevent the typical swing from apathy to futility, folks need to have a useful response for information you share.

“Whom should I call?” “Where should we go?” “Are there any experts who can help us?” “Are there any organizations that specialize in this ‘arena’?” “Has anyone dealt with this before?” The CIT must expect these types of questions and offer opportunities for involvement whenever a concern is shared. The good news is that there is no need to re-invent the wheel. Most social issues that your church will face have already been dealt with effectively by folks no braver than you! Therefore, your job is not to be a resident expert on everything from A to Z, but a resource center for the church—the Team with the connections.

Again, the pastor is your foremost responsibility here. When it comes to taking action as a congregation, the pastoral leadership will be the ones to make the final decision; but you should educate and equip them. Pray regularly and specifically for wisdom and power as a Team. Schedule time to pray with the pastor. And when the opportunity comes to step out as a congregation, be an advisor. Recommending a course of action is yet another way to help the church leadership do their jobs. Knowing that you have already identified helpful resources and time-tested ways to be involved will further encourage your pastor’s confidence in you, not to mention your own self-assurance.

3. ALERTING

Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman... Ezekiel 33:7

For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 1 Corinthians 14:8

Sometimes informing and equipping must then lead to a call to action. Far too many opportunities for Christian influence in the public square have been lost due to someone being asleep at the wheel. The third role of the CIT requires perhaps the most diligence and discernment. This is the role of watchman: to sound the alarm when the time comes for the church to take action. As the passage in 1st Corinthians puts it, the alert must be clear. The need to be both timely and accurate is obvious. It is no less important to have a well thought out plan of action. Above these three things there must be adequate prayer.

Submission to church leadership is critical at this point (Heb. 13:17). Your role as watchman is to bring both the alert and your recommendation to the attention of the leadership. But the decision to act lies with the one in authority. The actual call to arms is where most church leaders grow wary. If you have been reliable and responsible up to this point, it will likely translate into permission to move forward. However, if the leadership is not comfortable with moving forward, continue to build the relationship. Don't get discouraged. Continue providing intelligence reports and pray that the pastor will take the next step of allowing for an alert to the church.

CAUTION: The call to action can be the most overused function of the CIT. Sounding too many alarms, like the story of the boy who cried "Wolf!," is perhaps even worse than no alarm at all. Ill-timed or imprudent battle cries are to be avoided at all costs. Deciding when and what to alert the congregation about is a crucial matter for prayer in the CIT and with the pastor. It is quite common for those who get immersed in social issues to develop a sense of urgency not shared by others less familiar with the subject. This deep sense of urgency can be a liability, intimidating to those who are "outside" the situation. The CIT must exercise restraint in its capacity as watchman, showing prayerful wisdom over when, how often, and in what fashion they will sound the alarm.

When done correctly, however, the importance of this role is difficult to overestimate.

4. MOBILIZING

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly.
Romans 12:6

... make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Philippians 2:2

Once the church leadership has agreed to a course of action, the pastor may return the ball to your court. The task at hand is then mobilization: to coordinate church involvement through the duration of a project.

In some cases this role remains in the hands of the pastor, but they will often delegate to the CIT the responsibility of guiding the congregation through the particular involvement. Publicizing the action or event, coordinating volunteers, arranging for materials— these are types of activities that will require some administrative skill.

Knowing that this responsibility may be yours could help to moderate the frequency and ambition of your “alarms,” but this is also a very rewarding function of the CIT. Seeing the church in action and watching the joy people experience as a result of actually being salt and light in the community is very satisfying indeed. And, of course, the more timely and appropriate the involvement (i.e. the better you fulfill your role), the more likely your church will be to participate the next time! Inform, Equip, Alert, and Mobilize: these are the basic ways in which the CIT can serve the body of Christ.

COMMUNITY IMPACT TEAMS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Why a team and not just an individual? While a passionate individual can have success, a team can best accomplish the goal of mobilizing the entire membership to engage in informed activism. There are several spiritual and practical reasons for this approach, such as biblical accountability, maximum effectiveness, and utter survival. Consider Solomon's wisdom: "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Christians working together in the local church tend to be more influential in the long run than those trying to go it alone.

THE COMMUNITY IMPACT TEAM IN THE COMMUNITY

There are friends both inside and outside the church ready and willing to help. Another significant role of the CIT is to enlist those friends to join the effort to advance faith, family, and freedom. This is the role of liaison; acting as the link to other churches and organizations.

To further assist you in this task, FRC provides resources for churches through the Center for Biblical Worldview, The Washington Stand, Washington Watch with Tony Perkins, and Stand on the Word. . FRC focuses primarily on what is going on in Washington, D.C., and it is important that you or members of the CIT sign up for free updates on national matters (FRC.org). FRC's sister organization, FRC Action, provides voter guides, party platform comparisons, and other channels of action concerning elections and pending legislation (FRCAction.org). It is also important to keep up to speed on moral issues in your state, so locate your state Family Policy Council and subscribe to their communications as well. For information about legal issues impacting culture and religious liberty, there are a number of excellent groups. Among the ones we partner with most are First Liberty Institute, Alliance Defending Freedom, and Liberty Counsel, but there are others.

By acting in liaison with FRC and other organizations in the state, the CIT can tap into a nationwide network. As we mentioned before, there is no need to re-invent the wheel; most issues that your church will face have already been dealt with effectively. A liaison does not need to be an expert on everything but serve as a resource for the church. As you develop your CIT, different members of the Team could be responsible for monitoring certain sources of information and relaying that to the proper person on the Team whose function is dissemination of the information. The goal is to encourage synergy, where the total effect of cooperative action is greater than the sum of individual efforts.

STEPS FOR GETTING A MINISTRY STARTED AND YOUR TEAM ENGAGED

Form the Team

- Identify three or four individuals who could make up the core of a Community Impact Team (CIT).
- Meet with church leadership to obtain approval before going forward.
- Train the team by using the CIT Resource Manual and website.
- The CIT leader will communicate with church leadership, submit to its authority, and seek its approval regarding team activities.

Communicate with the Congregation

- Set up a Community Impact Center to provide resources and information.
- Monitor news, legislation, and events pertaining to the issues affecting faith, family, and freedom.
- Communicate quickly and effectively, using email, text, and social media.
- Offer the congregation clear action steps for appropriate response.

Participate in the Electoral Process

- Create a culture of Christian citizenship and conduct voter registration.
- Provide approved non-partisan voter education material.
- Host election forums and candidate debates.
- Encourage church members to vote values in early voting and on Election Day!

Influence Your Community, State, and the Nation

- Reach out to other community church leaders and share the vision.
- Meet with community leaders and elected officials to discuss issues impacting families, ask how the church can help, and offer to pray with and for them.
- Contribute to the public debate through letters to the editor, blogs, social media posts, and tweets.

GETTING STARTED

Form the Team

The most basic prerequisite for any sort of Community Impact Team is getting the consent and blessing of the pastor and church leadership. This is not to say that a pastor must run the Team or even attend every meeting, but submitting to pastoral authority is a biblical necessity (Heb. 13:17). Of course, it also stands to reason that the church which most exemplifies a respect for moral authority has the best chance of promoting it in the community. Therefore, the pastor must give assent to the establishment of the Team and be consulted on major undertakings for maximum effectiveness.

Pastor Generated: There are a variety of ways to start a Community Impact Team in your church. The pastor may be the catalyst that gets it started. Given the great demands placed upon most pastors, we recommend that a qualified church member be identified to chair the Team. As mentioned above, however, a system of pastoral accountability must guide the Team in fulfilling its responsibilities. Churches with a team of pastors will want to designate one of the pastoral leadership team members to be the point person relating to the CIT.

Team leadership requirements may be different from what characterizes the stereotypical “activist.” While the Lord has blessed some people with a tremendous amount of energy and tenacity, the most important qualifications of a CIT leader should include depth of spiritual maturity, a servant heart, a gift for consensus building, and no overt tendencies toward rebellion or fruitless confrontation (1 Tim. 3:2-12; Titus 1:6-9).

Political “flamethrowers” will be more destructive than helpful.

People Generated: If you are a member who is feeling the call to increase the community engagement of your church, you might first want to identify other church members who share your concern. Support may be as close as your church’s pro-life group, home-school network, or Bible study. The next step is to approach your pastor. You may also wish to present FRC’s worldview material, [“Biblical Principles for Political Engagement.”](#)

Regardless of whether you are pastor or church member, leader or follower, novice or veteran, prayer is the order of the day, both in identifying folks who share the vision and in approaching those who may have less affinity for the social dimensions of living out our faith. Unless all these undertakings begin and continue through the power of the Holy Spirit, they will be of little eternal value and may actually do more harm than good!

Develop a Statement of Mission/Purpose

Before outlining specific functions of the members of the CIT, we suggest that you prayerfully craft a mission/ purpose statement. It might be helpful to look over some sample statements:

“engage! is a non-partisan ministry to encourage the body of Christ to get involved in the civic arena with the compassion and wisdom of Christ.”

Hill Country Bible Church, Austin, Texas, engage!

“The Culture Impact Ministry will inform and equip FBC Indian Trail and our community to be involved in the culture by alerting them to the cultural issues of the day and mobilizing them to stand for our Judeo-Christian values as we engage the Culture for Christ.”

First Baptist Church, Indian Trail, N.C., Community Impact Ministry

“The Watchmen Ministry is a non-partisan information center providing resources that promote good government according to Biblical principles without any political party affiliation.”

Calvary Chapel Chino Hills, Calif., Watchmen Ministry

“Informed Christians being salt and light by working to bring Godly values back to our culture.”

Church for All Nations, Colorado Springs, Colo., Community Impact Team

“Our mission is to educate and empower Christians to take concerted actions locally and nationally to promote and protect biblical values in our culture.”

Community Impact Ministry of Pittsburgh, Pa.

Obviously, the mission/purpose statement for your CIT should be adapted to your particular congregation.

Check out the Next Step in creating a Community Impact Team. IGNITE: Build to Sustain.



Community Impact



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