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Guidelines for Christian Allies (Appendix)

Adapted from Living in the Shadow of the Cross

By Paul Kivel

> It is not upon you to complete the task. Neither are you free to desist from it.
>
> Rabbi Tarfon

If you are Christian or were raised Christian there are many concrete things you can do to counter Christian hegemony:

* Learn the history of Christianity, its impact on other peoples and the history of the denomination you belong to and/or grew up in.

* Notice the operation of Christian dominance in your everyday life. Consider how Christian concepts affect the way you think.

* Examine how you may have internalized judgments about yourself based on Christian teachings. Have you cut yourself off from your body, from natural expressions of your sexuality or spirituality or from connections to the natural world?

* Examine how you may have internalized feelings of superiority or negative judgment

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of others, especially those from marginalized or non-Christian groups.

* Understand and acknowledge the benefits you gain from being Christian in the United States.

* Use your privilege to support the struggles of non-Christian peoples throughout the world for land, autonomy, reparations and justice.

* Notice how organizational and institutional policies perpetuate Christian hegemony. Get together with others to change them.

* Respect other peoples' sacred places, rituals, sacred objects and culture; don't assume you can appropriate them.

* Work for religious pluralism, and support the separation of church and state.

* Analyze public policy through the lens of Christian hegemony.

* Avoid assuming other people you meet are Christian - or should be, and challenge missionary programs.

* Understand and respect non-Christian religions and cultures on their own terms. Avoid universalizing about religion, or assuming all religions are essentially the same,

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worship the same god under different names or are comparable to Christianity.

* Avoid excusing hurtful behavior or policies because of the good intent of their perpetrators. Work with others to respectfully hold people accountable for their behavior.

* Embrace diversity and complexity and avoid reducing things to an artificial either/or dynamic.

* Begin to practice discussing these topics with other Christians in private conversations, when there are public exhibitions of Christianity and in organizational settings.

Paul Kivel is an educator, activist and writer with decades of experience working on issues of violence prevention and social justice. His books and curricula include Uprooting Racism, Men's Work, You Call This a Democracy?, Helping Teens Stop Violence, Build Community and Stand for Justice and Living in the Shadow of the Cross. Information about his work, books, and other resources is available at www.paulkivel.com and www.christianhegemony.org.

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