

IDENTIFICATION WITH A CAUSE

There is a deep seated desire in the hearts of human beings to identify with a cause, country or ideology. In most instances we see this linked to some sort of symbol or a flag. Historically we acknowledge that those who support Christianity are those who wear a cross as a form of jewelry to indicate their relationship to Jesus Christ.

Many of us can also recall how a new generation of Christians embraced the symbol of a fish to express the fact that they were in a relationship with Christ. Unfortunately both the cross and the fish have become symbols bereft of any meaning in the lives of many people.

As I look at the welfare sector I am faced with a similar sense of identification which is expressed in the wearing of a coloured ribbon.

The Red Ribbon

This is possibly the one colour that is most popular and known by most people in our society today. It is linked to our fight against HIV/AIDS. It has become a symbol of support for both those affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.

All campaigns and efforts dealing with this pandemic that is destroying the lives of thousands every day display the red ribbon.

The Pink Ribbon

A colour that is not so well known is of as much importance as the red ribbon. This ribbon relates specifically to breast cancer. Today much of our scientific research is geared to finding a cure for HIV/AIDS. Breast cancer is as deadly a killer as AIDS.

More and more women are becoming victims of this type of cancer. In spite of reports of possible cures and identifying the gene that causes this illness it does not change the fact that as many as those who die from cancer may equal those who die of AIDS. There are some rare instances where women who have had mastectomies have lived over 13 years after first being diagnosed. Every October is Breast Cancer month.

The Green Ribbon

Today we in South Africa are confronted with the horrible details of children being molested and murdered. Children are being kidnapped and then sold as sex slaves. The last week of May of each year has been set aside as child protection week.

Marches and campaigns by community organizations in partnership with the S.A. Police Service are a common feature at this time. All those that support the protection of our children are asked to wear a green ribbon.

The White Ribbon

Every year the last six days of November together with the first 10 days of December are called the 16 days of activism against women and child abuse. We are seeing a continued disregard for women. Women are constantly the victims of domestic violence and even if they report it to the local police station in most instances police officials incorrectly fail to investigate such charges.

Each one of the causes that I have mentioned deserves our attention and support if we claim to be Christians.

One of the key characteristics of Jesus was his compassion. I think this is one of the greatest facets of God's character.

Here on earth and in our society we are faced with unwarranted violence and suffering caused by people. People hurting each other regardless of what the consequences might be.

You might not wear a ribbon, but as a Christian you and I must see the pain and hurting, and we need to make a difference in the lives of our fellowmen. Too often we talk about the problems in life and sadly we do very little to bring about change.

Where others seek not to be involved, that is the place where God might be calling you to reach out as his hand extended.