

## Reasons given against church involvement in advocacy work and possible responses

REASON GIVEN	POSSIBLE RESPONSE
Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:4 say that we are to obey the state, not challenge it.	These verses do say that we should obey the state, but only when it does not go against God's law. The state should uphold right, punish those who do wrong and promote human wellbeing. The church needs to hold the state accountable for fulfilling its God-given role.
Jesus says to love our enemies, turn the other cheek and that 'it is mine to avenge' (Matthew 5).	We are called to love our enemies. The focus of this teaching is not to seek revenge, but to leave that to God.
Jesus says that the 'poor will always be with you' (Mark 14:7).	He continues by saying: 'and you can help them any time you want.' These words are a command rather than an option. The focus of the passage is the anointing with perfume just days before his death and resurrection, showing that the woman had recognised the meaning of what was about to happen.
What really matters is that people are saved, so we need to concentrate on that. Advocacy work does not bring salvation.	Christians are called to seek justice (Micah 6:8), plead the cause of the poor (Proverbs 31:8-9), and stand in the gap for those who are suffering (Ezekiel 22:30).
Jesus did not engage in political activity.	Jesus did not join a political party but he challenged the authorities, e.g. cleansing of the temple (John 2:12-16) and he spoke out against injustice and oppression (Luke 11:42). We need to seek a Godly response to issues, which might involve advocacy work.
Politics is a dirty game. You should not mix religion and politics.	It is true that power can corrupt, but by choosing not to be involved in politics, Christians leave it to others to make decisions that affect everyone's lives. We therefore fail to take our responsibility for stewardship seriously.
Christians have become involved in advocacy work in the past and disgraced the church.	The church has been discredited in the past by its involvement with power, but it has been discredited because of the way it was done, not because it was involved in the first place. We need to learn from the past.
There are two kingdoms – the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world – we live in one and not the other.	There are two kingdoms. Christians are citizens of heaven but we live in the world. We are called to be salt and light and to influence the world. We should not run away from our responsibility.

Source: *ROOTS 1: Understanding advocacy*, Tearfund 2002, page 73