

WANTED

RADICAL
CHRISTIANS

CHUCK HUCKABY

Wanted: Radical Christians

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MissionLawrence.org

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Introduction: When *Radical* Isn't

Recently Rev. David Platt's book [Radical](#) hit the *New York Times* best seller list. The book's editorial introduction says this: *"It's easy for American Christians to forget how Jesus said his followers would actually live, what their new lifestyle would actually look like. They would, he said, leave behind security, money, convenience, even family for him. They would abandon everything for the gospel. They would take up their crosses daily..."*

Remember the lawyer who came to Jesus and wanted to know "who is my neighbor" in order to "dumb down" the definition so that it became "easy" instead of challenging (Luke 10:25-37)? We modern evangelicals are not so different. We evangelicals have a way of watering down the demands of Jesus even when we think we're being *Radical*.

But when the book gets down to illustrating exactly what it means to be so [Radical](#), at least one reviewer made it clear that Rev. Platt's ideas *just weren't that radical!* Dr. Anthony Bradley writing for [WORLD MAGAZINE online](#) wrote a review called **"If Platt's Radical Was Radical"** making clear that *Radical* simply reinforced time worn stereotypes, repeated evangelical clichés, and presented a truncated view of the Good News of Jesus Christ as I've mentioned [elsewhere](#). The purpose of this e-book is NOT to tell people that the teachings of [Radical](#) are "all bad" but to say "they don't go far enough" and **why that is true**. Along the way some other skeletons in the evangelical closet will be exposed for good measure! But the most important reason for this work is to offer a **SELECT FEW** who have been challenged by the message of [Radical](#) an opportunity to do something even MORE RADICAL than was suggested by Rev. Platt.

Ready? Let's get going!

Rev. Chuck Huckaby

MissionLawrence.org

Chapter I: “White Superiority Complex”

Dr. Anthony Bradley happens to be black. For that reason he is especially sensitive to issues of paternalism. Here’s what he had to say after reading *Radical*:

Inadvertently, Platt encourages the “White Messiah” neo-paternalism common among justice-oriented younger evangelicals. Nearly all of Platt’s illustrations of living radically to help the poor are of white evangelicals going to the “inner-city,” or some developing country of non-Caucasians, to find the helpless brown, yellow, needy, and ignorant natives who need white Christians to solve their problems. A truly radical approach would also send Christians to wherever the devil is destroying God’s good creation (1 John 3:8)—in trailer parks, Western Europe, Australia, rural America, and the suburbs. Christians follow Christ wherever the curse is found. For example, according to the latest census data, 44 percent of America’s poor population is white while 25 percent is black, but you wouldn’t know that from reading Platt.

I can’t help but agree with Bradley that this paternalism is completely inadvertent, but it exists nevertheless. We can watch *The Blind Side* and lament the pathetic environment of a young black man living in Memphis’ “projects” but the truth is, folks, that living in the “projects” doesn’t get any better if you’re poor and *white*. Being in an otherwise idyllic “country” or “Small All American Town” setting doesn’t offset the problem. The “way out” here seems just as remote and the path is just as hard – if not harder.

But the average Christian reading *Radical* who would step on the gas when having to drive by the “projects” in a big city and inwardly shiver at the thought of the real needs there wouldn’t give a second thought to the poor living in “projects” in a rural town or in housing that is often worse – in run down trailer parks that dot small town America.

With Bradley, I’ll contend that something truly “radical” would be coming to one of these “hard places”.

If you think climbing out of poverty in the “Big City” is rough, try doing it out in rural America! The city at least has these advantages for those who want to “try”. Usually urban areas have businesses that still have a need for low skilled

“manual” labor. While the nation now bemoans its national 10% unemployment rate, our county has suffered 10-15% unemployment spikes for years... sometimes higher as the factories that once allowed people to “leave the farm” are moving away permanently.

In the city, they have lots of 12 Step programs, transitional housing for ex felons, homeless people, and drug addicts. They have “missions” and other forms of “shelter” that, while it may not be the best, it is, as they say “better than nothing”

And for people with DUI’s or no car who live in the city – there’s usually some kind of public transportation system to access. Very little “public transportation” exists here.

Somehow the infrastructure of charity does not exist in “forgotten places” like this. So there are not even the rudimentary tools necessary for some to escape their poverty. A Pharisaical sense of spiritual superiority often plagues the churches in these “forgotten places” so that those who would turn to Christ as part of turning their lives around find little Gospel welcome along the way.

But at least most of the people in rural America are “white” – as if that were some stellar advantage! It’s not an advantage at all. Instead, it is an illusion. As Dr. Bradley notes, when we consider it “radical” to fly to the assistance of “brown” and “yellow” people when perhaps a greater percentage of the people are in need elsewhere, it betrays our “White Superiority Complex”.

That means genuine needs in America’s smaller towns go unmet simply because the majority of the people are often white – not because they are without needs only truly *radical* Christians might be able to meet! Is God calling you to a small town? Our small town?

Moved at the thought there are people Jesus may want you to serve whom you are “blind to”? Perhaps we should talk: MissionLawrence.org

Chapter II: Are You A “Missionary Tourist”?

This is the “age of Short Term Missions”! Many a reader of *Radical* may read the book and take that as a call to depart on the next “Mission Trip” and think themselves “radical for Jesus”.

Just ask any foreign missionary about the Short Term Missions they like best and you’ll likely receive an ODD FROWN! Why is that? Often the missionary called upon to host the “Missions Trip” only sees a crowd of interlopers, “missionary tourists” who descend like a crowd of starving long lost relatives at Christmas time expecting a free meal and perpetual entertainment. One missionary lamented how one participant in a “mission trip” never got out of the vehicle to do anything except snap a photo with the camera that hung around her neck! Another missionary said that if he never saw another “*Short Term Missions Trip*”, it wouldn’t bother him a bit!

All too often people who go on “Short Term Mission Trips” are totally useless drains on the missionaries’ time and resources. The people contribute nothing to the actual mission at all. Or, if they do actually help out, it’s usually in an effort that feeds their “White Superiority Complex” (see the previous chapter!) and which may actually engender further dependency on man instead of Jesus Christ. Some missions have a policy – “Please don’t send anyone who doesn’t have a skill such as being a doctor or mechanic who can actually DO SOMETHING.”

Another mission in Africa went so far as to suggest that if people were going to spend \$3000 or more coming to help on a “Short Term Missions Trip” without any of the aforementioned skills, that they

1. Stay home
2. Send the mission a check for what they would have “wasted” on the “short term mission trip”.

The mission knew that \$3,000 would buy tons of food or hundreds of Bibles. These items have known *positive* value. Unfortunately the “Missionary Tourist” usually only has a known *negative* value.

If you want to be “radical”, it’s going to take more than one of these vacations masked as a “missions trip”. That’s harsh, but for many such trips this critique is ***all too true!***

For Jesus, “radical” meant “incarnation”. It meant leaving His glorious existence in heaven and “humbling Himself” (Phil. 2:5-11). Our Radical Lord calls us to our own “Incarnation”. While a “Short Term Mission Trip” may be the equivalent of “scouting out the territory” (if we’re being generous), it falls far short of ***incarnation***.

Incarnation is hard.

Incarnation is difficult.

Incarnation is costly.

Incarnation leaves scars – physical and emotional at times.

Incarnation demands perseverance in the face of vast discouragement.

But incarnation is what Jesus did.

If you want to be “Radical”, it will take incarnation. There’s no place like one of the “Forgotten Places” right under your nose here in the United States. We would love to discuss the possibility that Jesus Christ is calling you here!

Contact us at MissionLawrence.org

(And if you’ve just decided to give up being a “Missionary Tourist” you can use the link above to find out where to mail us your \$3,000 check! 😊 **But we really want people who want to join our team to “incarnate” themselves here!**)

Chapter III: Uncool People Need Jesus Too

On March 3rd, 2010 Bill Steger made a lot of the most “serious” evangelicals in America very *uncomfortable*. I say “serious” because these people are not your ordinary pew sitter. They were “church planters”. He made them so nervous he got his knuckles rapped by his “higher ups” and he had to add a “disclaimer” to his post claiming he “hadn’t thought things through”. Personally I don’t believe that for a second!

He wrote a devastating blog post called [“Uncool People Need Jesus Too”](#).

It “rocked” some people because Bill is a pastor for one of the “hippest” church planting networks in the United States. If what he said was true, we really DO have a BLIND SPOT and are leaving people unreached!

Here’s what he said:

Through my work with the Acts 29 Network, I get the privilege of assessing a number of potential church planters each year. I also get to hear about dozens more from fellow pastors as well...

*And as I’ve looked at some amazing plans from church planters, I’ve started to notice a trend. **They all sound the same.***

*It seems as the unique vision that God’s given so many church planters is almost identical. Phrases like “gospel-centered”, “missional”, and “cultural renewal” are littered throughout their proposals. It seems that the phrase **“In the City. For the City.”** or some variation of such has become church planting boilerplate.*

*Not only is the language the same, but so is the target group. It’s amazing how many young pastors feel that they are distinctly called to reach the upwardly-mobile, young, culture-shaping professionals and artists. **Can we just be honest?** Young, upper-middle-class urban professionals have become the new “Saddleback Sam”.*

Seriously, this is literally the only group I see proposals for. I have yet to assess a church planter who wants to move to a declining, smaller city and

*reach out to blue collar factory workers, mechanics, or construction crews. **Not one** with an evangelistic strategy to go after the 50-something administrative assistant who's been working at the same low-paying insurance firm for three decades now.*

He got his knuckles rapped because this is VERY CONVICTING. He's saying the most "radical", supposedly "Jesus following" people in the United States may have a "Blind Spot". He's saying that in the name of "Following Jesus" it's possible we're only out to *please ourselves and go places that suit our prejudices and tickle our fancies!*

Let me ask you: ***Does Jesus love 'Uncool People' too?***

Unlike these church planters who have no plan to work in a smaller declining rural area, a "Forgotten Place", **we do!**

We can't claim it's a *brilliant plan*.

We can't claim it's *unique*.

We CAN however claim to have a plan and a vision for such a place and for the **"Uncool people who live here"**.

Our plan began by establishing Godly worship. Next we are reaching out to those whose lives are locked in disastrous patterns through pain and addiction. We pray and teach that these people will be united to Christ and join our church or another local Christ centered church that does not have the resources or will to reach them. From the basis of the people we help in this outreach, we aim to do Christ centered economic development through focusing on training men and organizing them to serve Christ their families, and this community for Jesus Christ.

Now, honestly, that plan is not too "glamorous". But from what Bill Steger wrote, it's a pretty unique plan! And we are praying God will call the people we need to help fulfill that plan.

Could "that person" be you? If so, contact us at MissionLawrence.org

Chapter IV: Do You Have What It Takes?

Do you have what it takes to make a difference here or in some other “Forgotten Place”?

Perhaps God has been preparing you for just such an invitation. You may have skills and resources you never considered valuable in “mission”. You may have had life experiences that once left you feeling only ashamed and you’ve spent the last 10 years in church and a 12 Step Program. You know Jesus Christ has turned your life around, you’re ready to retire someplace with a reasonable cost of living and you think “I’m tired of wasting my life. But what can I do at my age?” Perhaps this is God’s answer for you.

Please at least find out what we need... God *may* be calling you here.

The reason for this ebook is that OUR PLAN REQUIRES GOD TO WORK!

Specifically, we are “asking, seeking, and knocking” (Matthew 7:7) for laborers in God’s harvest.

We need help.

Not only people who have the desire....

We also need people with specific skills and resources...

An updated list of the kind of person we’re seeking is kept here:

[Mission Lawrence – Wanted: Radical Christians](#)

But we’re here to glorify Jesus Christ through worship, and by bringing the transforming power of Jesus Christ to this community in a variety of ways!

Here’s a partial list of the people we pray the Lord will send:

- Do you want to help form a *serious Christian Community* centered on Jesus Christ and a worshiping community built on historic Biblical worship?
- Do you want to serve with and build a *ministry team*?
- Do you love God’s Word and the historic faith of the Reformation – and have a burning desire to *live out that faith in mission*?

- Do you share Rev. Bradley’s commitment to the *Biblical Message* that God is not only redeeming individuals but restoring communities and cultures by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and NOT just creating “lone ranger Christians”?
- Do you have *ministry experience*?
- Do you have experience in a “12 Step Group”?
- Do you know how to lead a *Christianity Explored* group or an *Alpha* group – or simply participated in one before?
- Do you have some time to work in our Donation Center? It helps keep the rest of our ministry operating.
- Do you have a desire to see Christian Men doing what God has called them to do through our [Rebuild](#) ministry or by starting a local [“New Commandment”](#) men’s ministry?
- Do you have entrepreneurial skills?
- Can you relocate here with a *telecommuting income* or otherwise support yourself as a *tentmaker*?
- Could you relocate a *business* that could employ people here?
- Are you a licensed Nurse (LPN or RN) who is about to retire, would like to relocate someplace without 10 feet of snow in the winter, but would like to donate your nursing skills part time in Christian Ministry as a [Parish Nurse](#)?

Did something on that list leave you shouting “Yes! That’s me!” If so, please contact us at [MissionLawrence.org](#) !

Chapter V: Is God At *McCafe* or Just “St. Arbucks”?

In the darkest days of World War II, Winston Churchill repeatedly uttered these words to those he pleaded to “join the cause”.

He said: **"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."**

Likewise, though I am a pastor and church planter here in one of America's “Forgotten Places”, I can't really offer you anything different. **"I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."**

I *can though* offer you the opportunity to lay down your life for Jesus Christ the Lord and join in an *experiment* to embody the *Truth on mission for Him*.

But I need to reiterate that if you're used to worshipping at St. Arbucks (i.e. you're addicted to getting your coffee at “Starbucks”), we're a “Mc Café” kind of place. The “Designer Coffee” either comes from the Golden Arches or, at present, one of a number of small local places with a “coffee bar” (one is a Bar-B-Q place/convenience store!)

If you're a slave to your iPhone (I know I love mine), there's no 3G network for at least 45 minutes North or South of here. They tell me Verizon has 3G, but who cares if you like your iPhone. iPad? Perhaps there's one somewhere here, but I've never seen one in person.

So to you that might mean we're “backward”.

That's exactly why we need you here!

We need people with gifts from God to help make a difference here!

We need people with a vision of laying their lives down for Christ.

If leaving St. Arbucks behind is too hard, you are, unfortunately not the person we're needing to come here. There's no Starbucks for an hour in any direction!

But if you're someone who's skills match our needs and you're at that stage of life that makes a move here seem sensible, we'd love to meet you!

You see, we believe God is just as much at our *McCafe* as He is at "St. Arbucks"!

If you're up for an adventure for Jesus Christ, contact us at MissionLawrence.org !

Epilogue: So What Are You Going To Do?

I began by saying that our common ideas of being “Radical” for Christ are mistaken.

Our vision for what is radical is TOO SMALL.

We are blind to the needs “right under our nose” because we are distracted by “glamorous” opportunities (we think) that feed our “White Superiority Complex”.

We are blind to America’s “Forgotten Places” because they require something truly radical – “Incarnation” and work.

No “Missionary Tourists” are needed in America’s “Forgotten Places”. But don’t just send a check. Send yourself to invest your life in “Uncool” people who need Jesus too.

You see, while there’s plenty of “religion” here... vital relationships with Jesus are still woefully lacking.

Can you help?

Is God calling you to some unglamorous “Forgotten Place”? Perhaps THIS “Forgotten Place”? If so, please contact us at MissionLawrence.org !