



The Road to Activism

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I confess that throughout my life as an evolving queer organizer, I haven't always been deeply aware of the intersectional components of systemic oppression. It's easier to walk behind the footprint of another than to make new ones. Perhaps, that is why taking our shoes off in holy spaces means so much more—the footprint can be deeper; more visible for those who come next...

I do believe taking up the road of activism is a part of humanity's collective charge to tend to one another, and I do know first-hand that it is no easy road.

There are those who wish to violently and oppressively strike the very soul force of your being into non-existence. And yet, those who strike are also those of whom God calls us to love. What a hard both/and balance; what a life-long call to do justice, walk humbly, and love with mercy.

It's the first full week of June—the honorary designated month when LGBTQIA+ people receive more celebration for being human than they do throughout the rest of the calendar year. Capitalism paints company signs with rainbow colors, Target (kind of) supports Trans artists with their Pride collection, and for just a few weeks, the world seems possibly a little more “out loud” for queer people. But is it?

When the sidewalk paint fades from cities that allocate a minimal part of their fiscal budget to go BIG for Pride, do the footprints of activism remain? Do we stay living our lives “out loud” for queer folks? For trans folks? For Black and brown folks? For I could spend all day naming human bodies who need our love to be louder than hate. But what good would that do if you are not willing to take your shoes off and walk this activism road with me?

My favorite Bible story since childhood has been that of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25–37 (NRSV). Jesus, an activist, is asked how humanity inherits eternal life. Jesus moves right past eternal life as his focus and places us in front of one another by responding with “loving neighbor as you love yourself.”

The parable of the Good Samaritan follows, giving us a first-row seat to the road of activism. The Empire attempts to control the bodies and minds of its constituents to keep walking. Priests contort their spiritual call to care for the sake of capitalism. And finally, a neighbor stops to tend. Taking the injured to an inn, paying for their stay, and continuing to walk the road of activism. This Good Samaritan doesn't ever get to see if justice is fulfilled. This neighbor decides that in the moment what is just and useful is to try, care, give, and continue onward.

What is just and useful in this moment is to name how I saw the road come to life this week:

Monday, June 5th, thousands gathered outside of Atlanta's City Hall to give public comment on what is being called “[Cop City](#),” a proposed \$90 million+ police training compound backed by the Atlanta Police Foundation and several corporate partners. This facility will take over 300 acres of land stolen from the Muscogee Creek Nation and used for decades of racialized violence against Black and brown folks. Tuesday, June 6th, after 15 hours of public comment, the Atlanta City Council funded “Cop City.”

Among comments was the youngest public commenter yet, a young girl who read a rendition of Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax*. She ended her comments with “Stop Cop City” and handed out 18 pinecones from the very forest “Cop City” would remove to City Council members.

Despite Atlanta City Council's vote to fund the project, thousands of Good Samaritans defended the forest and will continue to. And now we can help by spreading the word on the new referendum proposed by Atlanta activists to let the people of Atlanta decide on “Cop City.” [Here's a helpful link to share](#). This is the road to activism. And, if you haven't seen the overlap yet, the wall behind the text, the road is very queer. Queer as in subversive of violence and hate. And that's what Pride, for me, is all about. Rebuke of suffering. Embrace of resilience and joy. Reading *The Lorax*, sharing pinecones and believing in one another.

Take off your shoes. Leave footprints. Do what is just and believe in the ripple of justice that becomes a wave. And, above all else, love out loud, always.

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