

# **Assemblies - The Church Is Relevant – myfishbites.com**

## **The Church Is Relevant - Here's why...**

It's not true that the Bible and Christians are irrelevant or out of date! The opposite is true, despite what some people want you to believe (usually to fit their own agenda!).

This is an assembly to show how alive Christians are. The church is not a building – it is people. This shows how the Christian message is being expressed in the UK and beyond.

It is estimated that overall impact of Christian services and voluntary work is worth over £20 billion to the UK economy each year. The church is the largest provider of some services (like youth work, debt counsellors and parent and toddler groups) in the UK.

The agenda of Christians is that God cares about people and society and so do Christians.

## **Here's what the Bible says... (in the Bible book of Isaiah, chapter 58)**

'I'll tell you what it really means to worship God. Remove the chains of prisoners who are chained unjustly. Free those who are abused! Share your food with everyone who is hungry; share your home with the poor and homeless. Give clothes to those in need; don't turn away your relatives...

Don't mistreat others or falsely accuse them or say something cruel. Give your food to the hungry and care for the homeless. Then your light will shine in the dark; your darkest hour will be like the noonday sun.

## **Christians Against Poverty (CAP)**

If you have ever been short of money or in debt, you may know how stressful this is. But there are people on hand who will help you turn things around, without judgement or without bashing you with a Bible! The work of CAP has no government funding but is funded by Christians who want to see people set free and helped.

CAP are helping over 38,000 people a year through free debt help, job clubs, release groups and CAP Money Courses. The video below is just one of thousands of stories...

**Direct Video Link** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDPhjQ5s08M>  
(link checked Feb 2019)



## **Salvation Army**

You may know of the Salvation Army as they often play Christmas carols around the country. But they do loads of other things too – often being one of the first groups to respond when there are disasters or bad things happen.

In 2013–2014, the Salvation Army provided 2848 beds in their 59 centres around the UK for people who are homeless. They provided beds in residential family centres, centres for young people and beds for victims of domestic abuse. The service also provides support for people who are homeless, those in prison and who have left prison, those with drug addictions and those with learning disabilities and special needs. They have 15 residential homes for older people. They have 162 chaplains to help all people regardless of any background in prisons, hospitals, airports and many other places.

They also have 18 vehicles which responded to 182 incidents. They run youth clubs and a number of churches around the country serving local communities. They also run a number of job clubs and projects to support people back into work. The Salvation Army also help people trace missing family and when people have lost contact with family, with 1891 enquiries completed. Finally, they are also involved in fighting human trafficking, with around 1000 people assisted and numbers increasing. And no, I don't work for the Salvation Army !!

## **Street Pastors**

Street pastors are trained volunteers from local churches who care about their community. They patrol in teams of men and women, usually from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. on a Friday and Saturday night, to care for, listen to and help people who are out on the streets. They provide an incredibly valuable service to the emergency services and to people out on the streets at night.

**Direct Video Link** - [https://youtu.be/B5lvRCXTe\\_w](https://youtu.be/B5lvRCXTe_w) (video is 2:51mins not 3:38)  
(link checked Feb 2019)

## Food Banks

There are over 400 food banks around the UK, set up and provided by Christians (under the Trussell Trust) but with generous donations given by members of the public as well.

913,138 people received three days' emergency food from Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2013–14 (with over 300,000 of these children) compared to 346,992 in 2012–13. The main reasons are delays in benefits, low incomes, benefit changes and other factors such as debt or other factors. Foodbank figures have caused the biggest ever faith leader intervention on UK food poverty in modern times.

The food bank in my local city donated 35,114 kgs of food, with 3981 people receiving food (of which 755 were children). These are people who need food, with some parents even going without meals to feed their children.

**Direct Link Video** - [https://youtu.be/3scrALoxT\\_8](https://youtu.be/3scrALoxT_8)  
(link checked Feb 2019)

## The YMCA

The vision of the YMCA is of an inclusive Christian movement transforming communities so that all young people can belong, contribute and thrive. If you have a YMCA place in your town or city, there is likely someone living there from your high school. In my city there are people living at the YMCA from all the main high schools. The YMCA is the largest provider of safe, supported accommodation for young people in England, supplying nearly 10,000 beds every night, ranging from emergency beds and student accommodation to longer-term supported living and move-on housing. The YMCA also support families with Nurseries, Play Schemes, Childcare, Family counselling, Young parent advice & support, School support, Relationship services, Youth Clubs, Holiday clubs and After School activities.

The YMCA is the largest voluntary sector provider of services promoting health and wellbeing in England with fitness clubs, health training and sports teams across the country.

Individual YMCAs offer a range of education, skills-based training, placement and apprenticeship scheme, offering support to over 43,000 young people each year.

**Direct Video Link** - <https://youtu.be/tsaEtBHskl0>  
(link checked Feb 2019)

## **The church in just one city in the UK**

Here are just some of the projects that Christians have set up or help run... This is in addition to the many activities run in and by churches for the people in the church and their communities

- Project working with prisoners and offenders
- Aid project to Eastern Europe helping orphans and families
- Project delivering guitars to people around the world in needy countries
- A project helping prisoners with life skills, education, courses and reading and writing skills
- A project where people with disabilities or mental health issues are taken sailing
- Accommodation for adults with disabilities
- Christians Against Poverty
- Street Pastors
- A project to feed and help clothe people who are homeless, addicts or vulnerable
- Many projects for parents and children
- Food banks
- A 5-a-side football league and a local running club
- Youth work events, projects and education work, youth clubs, school clubs, social events
- Healing On The Streets – where people are prayed for and people are regularly healed of problems.
- The YMCA
- A project to fight against sex trafficking
- Projects to support refugees
- Working with international students to be friends, support and care for them
- The local homeless centre was set up by Christians, along with other similar projects
- A project working to support abandoned babies in China
- Another project was there to support marriage and relationships

## **Christianity and the Church irrelevant?**

No way – the message and the needs are more relevant than ever before!