

Why the Church in America Needs Jack Bauer!

By John Chevalier

A few years ago, there was a new show on Television. Every Monday night at 9:00pm I was riveted to the tube. It's not often that there's a show on TV that I enjoy, however not many shows carry with it the intensity and interest of the FOX Series "24". I have to admit, I am hooked.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the series, the premise of the show is that each episode is one hour of the day. One season of 24 episodes covers a 24-hour period, which is quite an interesting concept considering that, for four plus years, there have been some pretty intense days. The show revolves around the life of Special Agent Jack Bauer (Played by Kiefer Sutherland) who works for CTU (Counter Terrorist Unit) which is located in Los Angeles, California. CTU, which operates under the direction of Homeland Security, is an elite group of men and women who are directly involved in keeping our country safe from various terrorist masterminds who seek to attack our people and assault our country leadership. Jack has access to all of the latest military technology from weapons to live satellite images that display on his PDA. (Too cool!) These terrorist threats are actually taking place and are being snuffed out right under the nose of the American public, but without public knowledge. It definitely makes you think not only about our country, but also about the dark side of our world as Agent Bauer works to eliminate each week's ongoing terrorist threat.



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Here's the deal. I really like this guy. He's confident, he's focused, he knows why he is on this planet and best of all, like any of the great superheroes, he's here to defend the world against evil. Has anyone noticed the evil in the world? We see it on the news, we see it in our cities, we see it in the workplace and yet somehow in the United States of America it doesn't really seem to concern us. What's even more alarming to me than that is that it doesn't seem to concern those of us in the church. Now I am not talking about us addressing modern day issues such as immorality, abortion, political and social injustices. These things are going to happen in a world without a moral compass, in a world without God. I am talking about the fact that we seem to have lost our concern for the people in this world. The church has come to a place where it exists for itself and within itself, but rarely has any influence on the culture in which it lives. This is a problem!

At a Harvard Business School address in 2002, Lou Gerstner of IBM stated: "The transformation of an

enterprise begins with a sense of crisis or urgency. No institution will go through fundamental changes unless it believes it is in deep trouble and needs to do something different to survive."

The church in the west acts as it does because it does not see, clearly or seriously, the darkness of evil in our world. I am not talking about the present day in which we live or any other moment in human history for that matter. What I am talking about is the need to point out human kind's perpetual companion. Human beings tend towards a darkness of ancient proportions. Even with the restraint of law or the release of grace, human beings show a propensity towards great evil.

Fully knowing this, the church seems to feel neither urgency nor compulsion to change because it doesn't appear to care that the world is in deep trouble and needs to do something different to survive. It has pulled inside itself, to nurture those in its care (And quite frankly doesn't do a real good job of that either) while ignoring those on the outside by choosing rather to cower in fear of evil than to get out and make a difference in the world that we live in. Enter Jack Bauer.

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Jack does not allow his circumstances or his past to determine who he is or what he does. He not only has to battle and outwit the terrorists that he engages every week, but he is also in constant need to have the latest technical support to engage in this battle affectively. When was the last time that the church was able to relate to and reach the culture that it lives in? I know I'm being general here, but, by-and-large, the church that is in existence today rarely touches its world. Jack Bauer does not carry out his duties with a compass, a boy scout knife, a paper clip and a pair of socks (ala: MacGyver). He lives in the real world. No one needs to tell him to upgrade his tools or how to engage his surroundings. He lives in a world that is constantly changing around him and he adapts to that change as the situation presents itself. Folks, we need to embrace change and have the same passion for reaching a lost world that Jack Bauer has in protecting his country.

The church has been called a fortress, a shelter from the storm. Now, I know that an old hymn teaches us that God is our fortress; however, the picture of the church being the fortress and shelter from the storm is a rather inaccurate picture. The church, in my opinion, should be the storm itself, traveling through our world, upsetting everything in its path with the gospel of Jesus and changing people's lives and their destiny forever.



In 1998 hurricane Mitch hit Central America with catastrophic force. In Honduras so much water and mud came flowing down the Choluteca River that it actually changed the surrounding landscape. The Choluteca River Bridge (seen to your left) stood strong and firm on the foundation that had been set for it. The problem now is that the bridge still exists but has no purpose in its world. The river moved, but the bridge is still standing in the same place it did before the hurricane, before its world changed around it, rendering it useless. The parallel is obvious. The world that we live in has been changing for years and the church stays the same stating that Jesus

Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. Well, although this is true, I would imagine that if Jesus came back today, he would speak to us in terms that we could relate to, not in 16th century King James English. He wouldn't show up in church (as a matter of fact he spoke out against the "religious" in his day), but he would meet us on the street, in a pub, or at our workplace.

OK. Please understand that I am not on a bandwagon of church bashing. Jesus is the founder of the church. The church is God's means to get his message out to a world that desperately needs a relationship with Him. What I am saying is that we need more Jack Bauer's in our churches. The church will not rise with an appropriate primal scream unless she sees the earth's children all trapped in the dragon's lair of evil, unable to breath until the gospel comes, and unless she experiences a gut-wrenching deliverance from this power herself.

Agent Bauer is not one to go along with the crowd. He knows he's a man under authority and he does everything in his power to submit to the ultimate authority over his life. In his case he has given his life to eradicate the evil in our land, in our case it to give our life over to the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jack rarely follows orders that don't make sense in his quest to save the world. Why is it that we are happy to get together on Sunday mornings, sing nice songs, have a wholesome time, but we are for the most part unwilling to step out and make a difference in the world? This is our world. These are our surroundings, our cities, our culture, our friends. Why do we take the easy way out? Is it really in our best interest to be comfortable and be a closet Christian than to tell the world about Jesus? What is it that makes us accept the status quo and follow church leaders who are, for the most part, more interested in keeping people safe and building their own kingdoms rather than furthering the cause of Christ?



Let's not accept the path that has been laid for us by people who do not live in the real world. Let's step out of the subculture of the church life that we have created and into the church life as God intended it to be. Let's live for something greater than ourselves. Let's change the world! Paul wrote that we can do everything with the help of Christ who gives us the strength we need. (Phil. 4:13) He is the source of our strength. So, knowing that I ask myself, "Although I don't have a government issued firearm and a cool PDA, what can I do to affect the cause of Christ in this world?" Hmmm, maybe it's not that hard. Maybe He already told us. Maybe we're just not listening.

If I remember my orders right, Jesus gave them to us right before He left the earth. He told his disciples (Matthew 28:18-20), "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.

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And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

If He has all authority, and He is always with me, I think I can break free from the pressure to conform to the institution of church life and embrace the essence of what Jesus originally intended Christianity to be. As for me, I will continue to watch reruns of Special Agent Jack Bauer defend his country, and I will, with Gods help, do my best to imitate the passion that he has for his work as it applies to my calling as a husband, a father, and most importantly on my quest to impact my world for God's glory. No matter who

you are or what you've been through in your life, God wants to use you to change the world. Will you accept this mission? Knowing our mission and having His strength and authority to carry it out beats having that cool PDA any day of the week.