

Occupied in Atlanta

By [David Lewicki](#)

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Two supporters of [Occupy Atlanta](#) showed up at my church last Sunday. Now, I should say--they didn't come to worship. They showed up just as I was locking the doors to go home, slightly before two. Two 20-somethings, at least one of them pulling on a cigarette. Both a bit scraggly, unshaven, unkempt-looking. They sort of sauntered toward me, making minimal eye contact.

"Hey."

"Hey," I said. "Can I help you?"

The first guy didn't seem to want to make a sentence. But he persisted:

"We are involved with this thing. And we thought you guys would want to know about it." He handed me a homemade 1/4 sheet black & white flyer. It said "Occupy Atlanta."

"Yeah, I know about the movement," I said. "I've been following it on Twitter."

"Oh, cool. Alright. And we were wondering if we could borrow some candles."

"Candles?"

"Yeah, we're occupying Woodruff Park and we're re-naming it 'Troy Davis Park' and tomorrow is his birthday and we're going to be holding a vigil. We were hoping you might have some candles we could use."

So, I didn't give him any candles. I might have, but I honestly don't know where we keep candles.

What I took from the interaction were these things:

- 1) This guy came to OUR church, nowhere *near* Woodruff Park. Turns out he had been there "about 10 years ago" and knew one of our church families and thought we might be sympathetic to the cause.

2) I felt old talking to him. I judged him by the way he dressed and the way he spoke. He just "presented" really poorly. He wasn't articulate about what they were doing or why. Not sure what Troy Davis has to do with Wall Street. It just was a bad, bad "sales pitch." And yet...

3) I was delighted. I am so so glad that young people in Atlanta are picking this movement up. And while virtually nothing about these young men's pitch to me was impressive, I still want to help them out. I think this movement has enough Jesus in it to make it worthwhile.

4) He came to our church! He thought--hey, folks at this particular church might want to be involved in this, the most anti-establishment of movements. I find that such a *shocking complement* about the ways our congregation's members have been involved in our community's life, that a 20-something who was there once 10 years ago might remember us and think, "those folks are radical enough to cold call them!" That's a sign from God that I'm in the right church if I've ever seen one!

I'll be headed down to Woodruff Park soon. Let you know.

Originally posted at [A Minister's Life](#)