

Voices to the Capitol



Meditation

February 2014

The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice.

Proverbs 13:23

Jesus asked: "Which of these do you think became a neighbor to the man who was attacked by the robbers?" The man responded: "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him: "Go and do the same."

Luke 10: 36+37

An Economics of Sharing in a Life Governed by Love for Neighbor

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan, who provided for the needs of a complete stranger after he had been beaten, robbed, and left for dead (Luke 10:25-37). Jesus told that story to expand our understanding of who is our neighbor, not to tell us to wait until someone is bleeding by the roadside before we help.

In telling his disciples to "go and do likewise," isn't he also calling us to make provisions for our neighbors who are victimized by their situation in life?

This call to seek justice for hungry and poor people requires us to take such compassionate actions to another level, moving beyond simple acts of sharing with those in need to the more encompassing action of advocacy. Through our advocacy for better government policies, we can help more families receive sufficient resources so they can keep from going hungry.

Proverbs 13:23 states, "The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice." Today the labor of poor people is essential to the success of our economy, yet many workers do not see a fair share of the harvest. It is unjust that many who may work full-time at low wages will not take home an amount adequate for their families' basic needs. The biblical call to do justice compels us to make sure that more of the harvest reaches those who produce it.

Prayer: O Christ, you free us from all forms of blindness. Living in the light of your grace, may we not turn away from those who suffer from hunger, poverty, and disease. Bless the efforts of all who work to bring healing and opportunity to those in need. Amen.

<http://www.bread.org/hunger/bible/reflections/love-for-neighbor.html>

This meditation and prayer are from Bread for the World, a ministry endorsed by UMCOR. Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, we provide help and opportunity far beyond the communities where we live.

Legislative Action

Many of our churches are involved in supporting food pantries, back pack programs, soup kitchens and other hunger programs. And the need in our states and nation has been increasing. But putting more food on the shelves alone will not be enough.

Back in 2010, faith leaders came together to speak out about the need to protect programs for

the poor in a statement called "**A Circle of Protection.**"

Write a letter to your legislators using your own words or sharing this statement with them urging them to protect safety net programs for the most vulnerable among us.



A Circle of Protection:
A Statement on Why We Need to
Protect Programs for the Poor

As people of faith, we are committed to fiscal responsibility and shared sacrifice. We are also

committed to resist budget cuts that undermine the lives, dignity, and rights of poor and vulnerable people. Therefore, we join with others to form a Circle of Protection around programs that meet the essential needs of hungry and poor people at home and abroad.

To read the **Principles of the Circle of Protection**, go to <http://circleofprotection.us/>

Additional Actions

1. Get informed about the situation of our children. Nearly one in four Kansas children and one in five Nebraska children are living in poverty. Read the **Kids Count Reports** for both states and advocate for our children and youth: <http://kac.org/kidscount/> and <http://voicesforchildren.com/kids-count/>.
2. Encourage your church to participate in the **2014 Bread for the World Offering of Letters** advocating for a reform of U.S. Food Aid to make it more efficient without increasing funding. Go to <http://www.bread.org/ol/2014/> for a wealth of information (bulletin inserts, bible studies etc.).
3. Participate in the **Lenten Prayers for Hungry People**. For downloading or ordering, go to: <http://www.bread.org/help/church/worship/lent/>
4. Participate in the **Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath week-end March 13-16, 2014**. Materials and ideas are available at <http://marchsabbath.org>.
5.  Register for the **Interfaith Peacemaking Workshop** on March 29th and 30th at First UMC in Lincoln. <http://gp-email.brtapp.com/viewemail/93225#toc3>

Voices to the Capitol is a resource with an alternating primary focus on peace/non-violence in one issue and on hunger/food justice in the next. It includes an invitation to use the gift of our voices to speak out on these issues by contacting our representatives and senators in Washington.

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