

The Two Feet

In our commitment to seek justice, we often talk about “solidarity with the poor” or the church’s “preferential option for the poor.” Below are two elements of such a commitment: direct service to the poor, and changing the social, political and economic structures that cause poverty. Thus, one foot of Christian commitment to the poor is in direct service with the *victims* of poverty, while the other foot is in our efforts to end *victimization*.

Outreach/Charity

Direct Service

helping people survive their present crisis in poverty

- Volunteer time or money to...
food pantries, food basket collections, clothing centers, shelters for the homeless, “crack baby” hospitals/centers, drop-in centers for the abused, overseas relief agencies
- Visit the economically poor, including the elderly, shut-ins, prisoners and AIDS patients
- Support pregnant teens
- Provide quality education for the poor
 - Transport elderly to church, grocery shopping, doctors, etc.
 - Sponsor an immigrant family
 - Provide services for poor single mothers
- Rehab apartments/homes for the homeless
- Provide job training for the disadvantaged
 - Tutor poor youth and adults
 - Teach ESL to immigrants

Social Justice

Social Change

removing the causes of the social problems by changing structures

- Educate toward critical thinking that leads to action to eliminate the root causes of social problems
- Raise awareness of conditions and causes of poverty
- Support & join networks that address social problems
- Work with and promote groups committed to positive structural change
 - Start a co-op or credit union
 - Monitor government agencies
 - Change corporate policies that hurt the poor through boycotts and letter writing
- Write letters to newspapers about issues of poverty
 - Join political protests
- Support people’s efforts at self-determination
 - Help with voter registration
 - Support political candidates willing to change economic priorities
 - Write and speak to legislators on behalf of the poor, the marginalized, and the environment.