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Teaching Leaflet



FOUNDATIONS FOR HOLISTIC MINISTRY COVENANT LAW: HOW ARE WE TO LIVE

Gleaning - Leviticus 19:9-10

Modern-Day Examples of Gleaning

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

One example of modern-day gleaning is a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture called SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), formerly known as Food Stamps. The first idea for the Food Stamp program has been credited to various people, most notably Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace and the program's first administrator Milo Perkins. Perkins said, "We got a picture of a gorge, with farm surpluses on one cliff and under-nourished city folks with outstretched hands on the other. We set out to find a practical way to build a bridge across that chasm." SNAP today is still administered by the Department of Agriculture and is intended to provide not only food to persons in poverty, but to provide market support to strengthen farming. It is a win/win in that surplus production can be utilized for the greater good.

Food Banks and Food Rescue Programs

Another example of modern-day gleaning is food banks and food rescue programs. One of the best-known food bank networks is Feeding America (formerly America's Second Harvest), which supplies more than two billion pounds of food and grocery products annually. Through Feeding America, surplus foods are donated, and then moved and stored until it can be delivered to agencies that ultimately feed hungry persons in need throughout the country. This tremendous amount of surplus food comes from various sources: 486 million pounds from national product donors, 494 million pounds from U.S. government programs; 843 million pounds from local product donors, and 198 million pounds from purchase.

Every day, one quarter of the food produced in restaurants, businesses and our own homes is left to go to waste. Food rescue is the practice rescuing unused portions of nutritious food from restaurants and other food service sites before they are tossed out. The food including meat, produce, dairy, bakery and shelf-stable items are collected from groceries, retailers, and other donors. Many food rescue programs take these unused portions of food and make nutritious meals for community agencies to serve to their participants. Examples of food rescue programs include DC Central Kitchen (www.dccentralkitchen.org), and The Campus Kitchen at Baylor University (www.campuskitchens.org).

Credit Practices

Responsible Lending

The Center for Responsible Lending (www.responsiblelending.org) is a nonprofit and nonpartisan research and policy organization. CRL works to protect homeownership and family finances by working to eliminate abusive financial practices. Included in the many issues the CRL works to end are predatory lending and payday loans. According the CRL, "every year, payday lenders strip \$4.2 billion in excessive fees from Americans who think they're getting a two-week loan and end up trapped in

debt...across the nation payday borrowers are paying more in interest, at annual rates of 400 percent, than the amount of the loan they originally borrowed. Despite attempts to reform payday lending, now an industry exceeding \$28 billion a year, lenders still collect 90 percent of their revenue from borrowers who cannot pay off their loans when due, rather than from one-time users dealing with short-term financial emergencies.”

Jubilee in Today's World

One organization working to bring Jubilee to the world today is the Jubilee USA Network. Jubilee USA is an alliance made up of over 80 religious denominations, faith communities, and social action groups working for the cancellation of debilitating debts to fight poverty and injustice in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. According to Jubilee USA:

In the Jubilee Year as quoted in Leviticus, those enslaved because of debts are freed, lands lost because of debt are returned, and community torn by inequality is restored. Today international debt has become a new form of slavery. Debt slavery means poor people working harder and harder in a vain effort to keep up with the interest payments on debts owed to rich countries including the US and international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The Jubilee USA Network brings together people to turn this reality around by active solidarity with partners worldwide, targeted and timely advocacy strategies and educational outreach.

Jubilee USA is a part of a worldwide movement of concerned people and groups seeking to cancel the debts of the poorest countries by the new millennium. In order to repay foreign debts, many poor countries are being forced to divert scarce government resources away from health care, education, and other vital services. The result has been to deny many children the chance to go to school, women access to prenatal care, HIV-infected persons access to counseling and treatment, and small farmers access to credit and technical assistance.

African countries now spend twice as much on average repaying foreign debt as on providing health care. The United Nations Development Program in 1997 stated, “Relieved of their annual debt repayments, the severely indebted countries could use the funds for investments that in Africa alone would save the lives of about 21 million children by 2000 and provide 90 million girls and women with access to basic education.” Most poor countries have tried very hard to repay these debts. In 1996, nations in sub-Saharan Africa paid \$14.5 billion on their foreign debt. But in 1995, they could only pay 57% of payments due. The reality is that the debt cannot and will not be repaid, and it is senseless for creditors to pretend otherwise. Countries cannot develop healthy economies when millions of their people are being denied basic health care and education and earn wages so low they can barely survive. A bold step to cancel poor countries' debt is the most practical way to restart their economies, protect the global environment, and reduce poverty.

Sources:

Kysar, Robert. *Called To Care: Biblical Images For Social Ministry*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

www.feedingamerica.org

www.dccentralkitchen.org/program

www.responsiblelending.org

www.jubileeusa.org

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