

Appendix B

Charity and Justice Responses

When people are poor, when people lack the basic necessities to develop fully as human beings, what has been the usual Christian response? For the hungry, we give food, for the homeless, we open shelters, for those who need clothes, we collect used clothing.

The social teachings of the Church have been very specific in the past hundred years directing us to ask not only how much money or food people need, but to ask why people are poor and needy. This approach to the problems examines the causes of poverty and injustices, not only their effects.

Below is a chart examining the distinctions between the works of charity and those of social justice.

The intention is not solely to clarify the different forms of Christian response to persons in need; nor pose one mode of response as superior to the other. Both are essential, neither is superior.

The issue is that we know out of which mode we are operating and to be sensitive to the needed use of both responses.

CHARITY	SOCIAL JUSTICE
Occasioned by an accidental event, e.g, act of God: floods, earthquakes, etc.	Condition of injustice not accidental, results from unfair or inadequate human systems, institutions, e.g. segregation, racism, sexism.
Assistance is to the individual victim.	Structural change is needed To relieve the victims: the Causes of the evil (structures) must be addressed.
Spontaneity: in it there is no attempt to identify and cope with the causes; relief is designed to go directly to the ones in need.	Addressing the causes calls for long term persistent and concentrated efforts; Short term, sporadic efforts are inadequate and ineffective.
Temporary provisions: immediate assistant to satisfy basic human needs, e.g, food, clotting, shelter, etc. Expectations are that conditions will return to normal and relief measures will no longer be needed.	Victims are usually found in similar conditions: inadequate food, poor housing and medical care, etc. But donating food or rent money won't address the environmental conditions until the causes are recognized and addressed.
Non-controversial actions: victims of natural calamities or individual tragedies are clearly identifiable. Questions are not whether to respond but how much should be given.	Root causes of injustices usually require questioning the institutions and social policies which violate the human dignity of groups of people. This kind of change is usually controversial
Example: Good Samaritan	Example: Exodus Story
The Gospel story doesn't attempt to survey the causes of highway banditry. The Good Samaritan provides temporary and adequate assistance.	Moses didn't ask for food and medicine for the local slave-labor force. He challenged the institutional injustice of the Pharaoh's system. Ultimately, Moses led his people to a new identity as a people.

The Ministry of Jubilee in the Episcopal Church is an attempt at being "a Christian community in which the drama of the streets and the inner silence of which God speaks are bound together." (The Standing Committee on The Church in Metropolitan Areas-1982)

While we are called to feed the hungry we are also equally called to address the cause of that hunger. Therefore our goal is to **know the difference** and **to be prepared to work in both areas** for the glory and honor of God.

