

From the Pulpit

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A recent photo shared over Facebook showed the inside of a lavishly decorated worship space. Underneath read the following caption: “MEGACHURCH: Because this is more important than feeding the starving.”

Most of the time we could leave off the “mega,” because our churches too often ignore the cries of poverty and injustice in our community and world.

We even had a popular television personality who encouraged his listeners to leave their church if it preached a message of social justice.

Yet, when we as a church ignore our call to justice, love, and peace, we ignore the call of the prophets and we ignore the call of Jesus.

Stephen Colbert perhaps put it best: “If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn’t help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we’ve got to acknowledge that He commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition and then admit that we just don’t want to do it.”

Jesus never did things the way the religious establishment expected. Whereas they had certain rules for the Sabbath, Jesus showed that the law of love trumps the law of Sabbath observance. Whereas they strictly determined who was clean or unclean, Jesus touched and healed lepers and feasted with prostitutes and tax collectors. He commanded the rich young ruler to sell all his riches, give to the poor and follow him. In parables he showed that God condemns the wealthy who ignore the cries of the poor. (Luke 12:16-21; 16:19-31)

In these words and actions, Jesus echoes the prophets’ lament: “I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.... Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:21, 24)

So the question is whether we as ones gathered in Jesus’ name will ignore the way of Jesus or whether we will follow in the way of Jesus and be a people of love and justice and peace.

The Spirit of God is at work. The Reign of God has come in Jesus. My prayer is that the church might be a part of it.

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