

IN TOUCH

I'M SORRY, BUT WE'RE NOT POOR IN AMERICA

Dear Friend:

We are not poor in America. Do we have people who are homeless? Yes. Do we have a higher number of people than usual out of work? Absolutely. Do we even have people who go to bed hungry? Definitely. How then are people not poor in America? Just the facts... First you must know the difference between absolute poverty and relative poverty. Absolute poverty is: unable to have access to life sustaining needs. Unable to literally afford or find enough food to live, limited or no access to safe drinking water, unable to live in shelter, no access to healthcare. (Please do not say: "Americans have no access to healthcare). The Hill-Burton Act requires that if anyone in America walks into a hospital sick, he/she must be treated. Roughly 735 million people, 10% of the world lives in absolute poverty. There are people in America who we classify as poor but relative to world economics if one lives on government assistance he/she is wealthier than 94% of the world's population. The poor in America are classified as living in "Relative Poverty." Relative poverty is defined as: relative to the surrounding economic environment a person is failing to thrive. For example, some people in Franklinton are not thriving in the economic system but they are not poor, they have access to food, a place to live, heat in the winter and maybe even have a car.

Unfortunately, when you call someone poor in this country he/she may automatically see themselves as a victim and believe they can't help themselves. Related to this is something I call: "The Poverty Industry." There are people /agencies in our country who do not want poverty to go away – they make a lot of money off of the poor. We need to pay more attention to poverty recidivism. Poverty recidivism measures how many people get out of poverty and do not come back. Financial resources should go to organization / agencies that have a high rate of success at moving people out of poverty, not keep them in poverty.

As Christians what should we be doing to help the poor? If we believe rich people should help the poor then every American should be writing a check to the third world! Space is limited so here are a few basic things we should do. First, do not ignore the relative poor in America. Shame on us if we do. Second, Franklin Church currently collects food for food banks – donate food! Third, volunteer or give financially to organizations / agencies that do a good job of moving people off of poverty and have a low ratio of administrative costs to services provided.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Mike

Prayer List: Bill Fisher, 2 fractured vertebraes, Norma Willis, in rehab.

Events: Saturday, June 20, 8:00 am All Church Work Day

For Sale: Pecans \$6.00 per lb.