



Distributive Justice

Ethical Points

- C Society is measured by how it treats the poor. Jesus tells us nations will be judged by how they treat their most vulnerable. (Matthew 25:31-46)
- C Government is responsible for the general welfare of its people which includes protecting the most vulnerable.
- C Government responsibility for the common good includes a just sharing of resources; *“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof,” (Psalm 24:1) means the earth’s bounty is to be shared.*
- C It is wrong to burden the afflicted while asking little of the well-to-do.
- C Budgets are moral documents. They show what we care most about and how it compares to other things we care about. (Wallis)

Current Situation

- C New York has the greatest gap between rich and poor among all 50 states.
- C About 2.76 million New Yorkers lived at or below the poverty level in 2005, down from about 3 million in 1995 – a drop of approximately 240,000. (NYS OTDA)
- C Yet the number of people receiving food stamps in New York has risen to 1.8 million, a 37 percent increase since January 2002. (NYS OTDA)



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- New Yorkers receiving cash assistance dropped from 1.7 million in April 1994 to 554,998 at the end of 2006 – a drop of approximately 1.145 million (NYS OTDA).
- The public assistance grant was last raised in 1990. The current benefit level is less than 50 percent of the poverty level.
 - C More full time workers are coming to emergency feeding programs for help.
 - C Families are working more hours but real wages have declined
 - C Without income supplements, many more minimum wage workers would be below the poverty level
- C Wealthy individuals and corporations avoid paying taxes through numerous accounting measures, including
 - C Using corporate status to avoid personal income tax
 - C Abusive tax shelters
 - C Shifting reportable income to other entities that don't owe NYS tax.

What Will Help

- C Make income supplements available to all who are eligible.
- C Increase the non-shelter portion of the public assistance grant from \$291 to \$450 for a family of three to reflect increase in cost of living.
- C Close corporate loopholes that enable those with the most blessings to evade supporting the common good.

(3/07)

Member Denominations

American Baptist Churches, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Empire Baptist Missionary Convention, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Religious Society of Friends, United Church of Christ, The United Methodist Church.

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