

Week six

What if poverty were history?

▶ Getting started

- Draw a line to match each quote with the person who said it.

a) "I have a dream today. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character."

Desmond Tutu

b) "I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation which must inevitably work for the downfall of slavery. 'The arm of the Lord is not shortened,' and the doom of slavery is certain."

Martin Luther King

c) "Those who sought to uphold an unjust dispensation had in fact already lost the fight, no matter how formidable and fearsome their arsenal. God was in charge in this moral universe. There was no way in which injustice, oppression, wrong and evil would have the last word."

Frederick Douglass

- What were they campaigning about? What do all of these quotes have in common?

■ Bible reading: Isaiah 65:17-25

|| Discussion questions

1. What appeals to you or inspires you about this vision?
2. How does the passage describe relationships between:
 - People and God?
 - People and their work?
 - Different parts of creation?
3. What signs of brokenness in those areas can we see today?

4. At first, v.21-22 seems to be about selfishness rather than sharing. Why is it so important for people to have their own land and homes?
5. Churches and faith groups were described as the ‘unsung heroes’ of 2005’s **MAKE POVERTY HISTORY** campaign. Do you think people of faith have something special to offer campaigns for justice? What might this be?
6. Read **G8 journey**. Do you agree with the conclusion? Why do we often prefer to compromise than to keep on campaigning?
7. What practical and spiritual gifts can your church offer to campaigns for justice?

G8 journey

“Christians have a particular contribution to the world of campaigning and the struggle for peace and justice. We are never satisfied. It is never enough for us until ‘justice flows like a stream and righteousness like a river that never runs dry’, until the blind recover their sight, the oppressed go free and the dead are raised to new life.

This attitude is extremely annoying to the G8 leaders, and others who operate in the world of realpolitik. While there is genuine delight at what has been achieved at the G8 summit, for faith-led campaigners it is not enough, for our faith leads us on to the promised land.”

Simon Topping, Methodist minister, organiser of a Jubilee Debt Campaign walk from Birmingham to the 2005 G8 summit in Scotland.

8. Consider the Lord’s prayer, as well as this passage. What kinds of things might we have in mind when we pray for God’s will to be ‘done on earth as it is in heaven’?

Activity

How have the six weeks helped or inspired you? Decide on one action that you can take as:

an individual _____

a group _____

a church _____

‘What next?’ (p.15) has some ideas.

† Closing Prayer