



For God's Sake, Save Darfur

Congregational Toolkit

Sunday, April 29

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WHY WE ACT

For God's Sake, Save Darfur

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did for me.’”

—Matthew 25:40

The genocide in Darfur continues to weigh heavily on our hearts. After four years of bloodshed and protracted suffering, the world has failed to muster the moral and political will to end the genocide. Deadlines have come and gone. Strong political statements and rhetoric have not been matched with equally strong political, economic, and diplomatic pressure to bring an end to this bloodshed.

Despite this political failure, we are also deeply encouraged by the broad spectrum of Christians who are speaking out together on this issue. More and more Christians are adding their voices to the throng calling for justice and peace in Darfur, and awareness of this crisis is growing. A recent survey showed that more than half of Americans—59 percent—now say they know “a lot” or “some” about the conflict in Darfur, compared to levels reported in 2004, when a similar question found that only 14 percent of Americans were familiar with the conflict. Education is working, and with growing popular support comes increased pressure on our elected officials to take substantive and decisive action to end the genocide.

Because of our faith, we know that we must not tire of being a voice for those whose voices cannot be heard. Like the persistent widow in the gospel of Luke who incessantly demanded justice, we must continually raise this issue with our friends, families, churches, and politicians. We should not let President Bush and those in power rest until there is peace. That is why we again come to you, asking you to speak on behalf of those suffering in Darfur.

Sojourners/Call to Renewal is partnering with the Save Darfur Coalition during the third annual “Global Days for Darfur,” April 23 to April 30, 2007. This week of rallies, marches, and vigils will call attention to the escalating violence and the continued failure of the international community to adequately respond to this crisis. Our unified message is that “time is running out” for the people of Darfur. “Global Days for Darfur” currently consists of 273 events in 175 cities and 42 states across the country (plus Washington, D.C.), as well as events in 20 other countries—and the number is growing daily!

We ask you to join us in this effort by making calls to President Bush, telling others to take similar action, urging your church to hold a “Darfur Sunday,” and even organizing your own local “Global Days for Darfur” event. We know that in matters of life and death, there is no left or right, there is only right and wrong. Please join us in telling President Bush, “For God’s sake, save Darfur.”

“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” —Luke 10:36-37

Background on the Crisis in Darfur

Since 2003, Darfur in Western Sudan has been embroiled in a deadly conflict. At least 400,000 people have been killed; more than 2 million people have been forced to flee their homes and now live in displaced-persons camps in Sudan or in refugee camps in neighboring Chad; and more than 3.5 million people are completely reliant on international aid for survival. The ongoing violence in Darfur has spilled over into neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic. Sudanese militiamen, working in concert with Chadian Arab militias, attack and burn villages, kill and rape civilians, and loot livestock and food supplies.

Sudanese armed forces and Sudanese government-backed militia known as “Janjaweed” have been fighting two rebel groups in Darfur, the Sudanese Liberation Army/Movement (SLA/SLM) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). The stated political aim of the rebels has been to compel the government of Sudan to address underdevelopment and the political marginalization of the region. In response, the Sudanese government’s regular armed forces and the Janjaweed—largely composed of fighters of Arab nomadic background—have targeted civilian populations and ethnic groups from which the rebels primarily draw their support—the Fur, Masalit, and Zaghawa.

The people of Darfur experience horrendous crimes, including the mass rape of women and girls, burning of homes and religious buildings, killing of babies, and other atrocities. The main perpetrators of these atrocities have been the Sudanese-government-sponsored Janjaweed militias, who have often operated with direct help from the Sudanese military. Infighting among the various rebel groups and factions has also taken a damaging toll. Not since the Rwandan genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a calculated campaign of displacement, starvation, rape, and mass slaughter. In fact, the only thing keeping the death rates in Darfur from skyrocketing is the presence of one of the most elaborate humanitarian aid systems the world has ever seen.

Unfortunately, that aid network is now coming under attack as well. In mid-January, a coalition of U.N. agencies warned that humanitarian operations in Darfur—the lifeline for millions—could collapse completely due to the increased violence and the intentional targeting of aid workers. More relief workers have been killed in the last six months than in the past three years combined. In crowded, insecure camps, the victims of Darfur wait for the arrival of promised U.N. peacekeepers—but only the all-too-familiar aerial bombings and Janjaweed attacks arrive. Thus the number of at-risk civilians continues to increase as the ability of agencies to deliver the basic necessities of life deteriorates. Localized famine is likely.

The men, women, and children of Darfur are being deprived of their humanity. Many of them have lost their homes, communities, families, and dreams for the future. Their government continues to deny that they need international protection, even as thousands more are displaced by government-backed attacks. Those who escape the initial attacks contend daily with the constant threat of further violence and the ever-present specters of disease and starvation.

These families need our support, and we can’t afford to wait any longer. The current peacekeeping force in Darfur, the African Union Mission in Sudan, or AMIS, is overwhelmed by the situation on the ground and agreed in early 2006 that the U.N. should take over its operations. The international community must approve and deploy a strong United Nations peacekeeping force for Darfur. This will take significant leadership from President Bush and the U.N. Security Council,

and significant contributions from all nations able to help get the force off the ground. The Sudanese government is resisting the deployment of a U.N. peacekeeping force in Sudan, claiming that such a force would violate the nation's sovereignty. But only a U.N. force will have the resources necessary to protect civilians and allow aid workers to do their jobs.

In addition to a peacekeeping force to provide security and stability, there must be a commitment to a peace process that addresses the root causes of this crisis. Thus, the U.S., U.N., and A.U. must work to facilitate a renewed Darfur peace process in order to find a permanent end to the genocide in Darfur. While the effort toward peace should be led by the U.N.'s envoy (Jan Eliasson) and the A.U.'s envoy (Salim Ahmed Salim), the U.S. should lend its full diplomatic support to a renewed peace effort, as it did to secure the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement—which ended the North-South Sudanese civil war.

Regarding these and other aspects of the Darfur crisis, the government of Khartoum continues to play a costly game of cat and mouse, making promises and appearing to take diplomatic steps, then going back on its word.

Let us stand together with the people of Darfur by lending our prayers, our support, and our voices to their plight.

Political Update on the Crisis in Darfur

Recent History. News this week reports that the government of Khartoum has agreed to allow more than 3,000 United Nations troops into Darfur, according to Sudanese Foreign Minister Lam Akol. This is certainly welcome news if it indeed turns out to be true, but if the past is any indication, then we are best served to view the promises of the Khartoum regime with caution. While time will tell if this latest promise can be trusted, it provides no excuse to lessen international pressure on Sudan to take this and other steps toward ending the genocide.

The United States. The Bush administration has recognized these atrocities—carried out against civilians primarily by the government of Sudan and its allied Janjaweed militias—as genocide beginning in June 2005. However, the Bush administration's policy toward Darfur remains divided. Some officials still think Khartoum can be gently persuaded to change course in Darfur if the right incentives are provided, while others want to pressure the regime with serious punitive measures. U.S. intelligence agencies complicate this debate, because they consider their Sudanese counterparts to be important partners in the global war on terror (especially concerning terrorist networks in Northern Africa).

Frustrated with Sudanese intransigence and backpedaling, at the end of November 2006 the U.S. announced that Khartoum had one month to accept the proposals that had emerged from the Addis Ababa meeting and agree to the hybrid force—or they would face the consequences of an unspecified "Plan B." President Bashir, in a last-minute letter sent to outgoing U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan on December 23, 2006, appeared to agree to the deployment of a 20,300-strong A.U.-U.N. force, accepting the parameters put forward by the U.N. and A.U.

Since then, however, Bashir recanted. "There are sufficient forces in the Sudan from African countries to maintain order," he said last month. "All we need is funding for the African troops."

This claim was directly contradicted by the head of the A.U. forces, Major General Luke Aprezi, who stated, “The force is too small to do the job. We need more troops on the ground.”

Moreover, the U.S. failed to make good on its threat of a “Plan B,” and was noticeably silent as the deadline came and went. President Bush eventually proposed a “Plan B”—a three-tiered plan to push Sudan to end the genocide—but he keeps delaying its launch. Hope and unrealized intent are insufficient to influence the Khartoum regime, and “Plan B,” as currently configured, is too little, too unilateral, and very, very late.

Most recently, the United States prepared sanctions against 29 companies owned by the Sudanese government to pressure Khartoum into accepting international peacekeepers in Darfur. However, it has delayed implementing sanctions against Sudan after U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon requested time to convince Khartoum to accept international peacekeepers in Darfur. “As a courtesy to the secretary general, we’ve agreed to that delay,” Andrew Natsios told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Sojourners/Call to Renewal. Sojourners/Call to Renewal has continued to use every means at its disposal to seek an end to the genocide in Darfur. In the fall, Sojourners/Call to Renewal partnered with the Save Darfur Coalition to create Evangelicals for Darfur, a campaign that brought together and lifted up the voices of evangelical Christians to call for an end to the senseless suffering in Darfur. We chose that name (Evangelicals for Darfur) not to exclude any other faith groups, but to recognize the special impact evangelical Christians from across the political spectrum can have on this crisis. The full-page Evangelicals for Darfur ad ran in *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and several other daily newspapers in cities with large evangelical constituencies (such as Orange County, Calif.; Wheaton, Ill.; and Colorado Springs). In addition to the ads, articles about the campaign appeared in 167 publications, including *The Washington Post* and Focus on the Family’s *Family News in Focus*. The story was broadly circulated after it was syndicated through the *Associated Press*. As part of that campaign, we also asked you to sponsor Weekends of Prayer and Action for Darfur in your churches.

Since then, Sojourners/Call to Renewal has been working on this crisis behind the scenes. Just before Christmas, Jim Wallis of Sojourners/Call to Renewal and Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention met with Bobby Pittman Jr., the National Security Council’s Director for African Affairs, on behalf of Evangelicals for Darfur. Mr. Pittman was positive and responsive as we urged that the administration move quickly from words to strong, real action. He assured us of the president’s commitment on this issue, and readily agreed that much more needs to be done.

And just last month, Jim Wallis and Adam Taylor (Sojourners/Call to Renewal’s Senior Director of Campaigns and Organizing) had a private audience with Andrew Natsios, President Bush’s Special Envoy for Sudan. During that meeting, Natsios was candid about the possibilities and barriers within the administration’s handling of the crisis. His candor and passion were refreshing, but it was also clear that there are still hurdles to getting the administration to commit in the ways needed to end this crisis.

GLOBAL DAYS FOR DARFUR

April 23rd – April 30th, 2007

Time is running out for the people of Darfur. Four years of genocidal violence has left more than 400,000 dead, 2.5 million innocent civilians displaced, and 4 million men, women, and children completely reliant on international aid for survival. Not since the Rwandan genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a calculated campaign of displacement, starvation, rape, and mass slaughter.

To call attention to the escalating violence and the continued failure of the international community to adequately respond to this crisis, activists across the world have come together to plan “Global Days for Darfur.” This week of rallies, marches and vigils will run from April 23 - April 30 and will highlight the fact that “time is running out” for the people of Darfur.

Please support your fellow activists in speaking out for the people of Darfur by joining an event in your area. (To find a Save Darfur Coalition-sponsored event in your area, go to <http://www.savedarfur.org/page/content/globaldays/>.)

In the faith community, we hope that this week of activities will culminate on April 29 with Darfur Sundays in churches around the country. On that Sunday, Christians across the country and around the world will unite in prayer and action for the people of Darfur.

What You and Your Church Can Do

The plan is to get as many churches as possible to do four things on April 29:

1. **Pray:** Incorporate prayer for the people of Darfur and for our decision-makers into your Sunday worship service.
2. **Preach:** Clergy can use the sample sermon and scripture selections in this toolkit to guide in preparation of a sermon about the crisis in Darfur and our Christian response.
3. **Teach:** Devote a Christian education class, Sunday school, Bible study, or even worship service time to education about the crisis in Darfur, using the resources in this toolkit and the additional materials available from the Web sites referenced in the “Resources” section.
4. **Act:** Ask your congregation to commit together to taking a few simple but powerful actions: Make one phone call and send five e-mails. Your call will be to the White House, asking President Bush to boldly lead the international community in doing what it takes to stop the genocide in Darfur. The five e-mails will be to five of your friends and family, urging them to join you in calling the White House.

TODAY, let us send a message to the president, hundreds of times over, telling him that we believe our shared Christian faith compels him to do everything in his power to bring an end to the genocide in Darfur.

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Suggested Scripture References

The Bible is full of passages and stories reminding us that our Christian faith compels us to act on behalf of the suffering people of Darfur.

Proverbs 24:11-12

Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, “But we knew nothing about this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who guards your life know it? Will he not repay each person according to what he has done?

Isaiah 2:3-4

“Come, let us go up the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

Isaiah 58:9-12

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called repairer of broken walls, restorer of streets and dwellings.

Micah 6:6-8

With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Proverbs 3:27

Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act.

Luke 21:15

For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

James 3:17-18

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

Matthew 25:31-46

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" And the king will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did for me." Then he will say to those on his left, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me." They also will answer, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?" He will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

James 2:15-17

Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself." "You have answered correctly," Jesus

replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Sample Sermon

GO AND DO LIKEWISE...

Luke 10:25-37

Sermon written by Virginia Lohmann Bauman.

First delivered on Nov. 19, 2006, at First Baptist Church of Granville, Ohio.

Revised for Sojourners Darfur Toolkit 4/17/07.

One day last November, when Darfur seemed far away from my life and work, I read an editorial in the newspaper by Nicolas Kristof from *The New York Times*. The story of Abdullah Idris caught my eye, and captured my heart. Abdullah Idris is a 27-year-old father of two who was captured by the Sudanese soldiers in the fields as he was farming. The soldiers tried to shoot Abdullah in the chest, but the gun misfired. So they beat him to the ground instead, and then they used their bayonets to gouge out his eyes. Mr. Kristof saw Abdullah as he lay on his back in a hospital bed, his eye sockets swathed in bandages soaked in blood and pus. A sister sat on the floor beside him crying; his wife and small children stood nearby, looking overwhelmed and bewildered. Abdullah was so traumatized by the incident that he has been unable to speak since, but he constantly reaches out to hold the hands of his family members.

Abdullah is one of countless victims of the organized and systematic destruction of Darfur by the government of Sudan and its allied militias. Often targeted because of their African ethnic identity, Darfurians have been attacked, displaced, and killed. Sexual violence against women is used as a tool in this genocide. The Darfurians who are still alive have been driven into the desert and refugee camps where harsh conditions threaten their survival.

As I learned more, I wondered, what is the U.S. doing? Surely we are fighting to prevent this genocide! I saw the movie *Hotel Rwanda*, as did much of the country, and I thought, surely our government must be doing something so that we don't have Rwanda all over again! To my profound dismay, I learned that our government has not provided the moral leadership to stop the genocide in Darfur, and while our leaders talk endlessly about resolutions, delays, and hesitations, more men, women, and children are slaughtered every day in Darfur.

Since that day when I read about Abdullah Idris, I have searched the Internet for updated information about Darfur. In addition to the horrific images that now haunt my sleep, I learned that since 2003, more than 400,000 people in Darfur in Western Sudan have been killed. More than 2 million people have been forced to flee their homes and now live in IDP (internally displaced persons) camps in Sudan or in refugee camps in neighboring Chad; and more than 3.5 million people are completely reliant on international aid for survival. The only thing keeping the death

rates in Darfur from skyrocketing is the presence of one of the most elaborate humanitarian aid systems the world has ever seen.

However, the aid network is now coming under attack as well. In July 2006 alone, more aid workers were killed than in the previous three years combined. Aid workers are also frequently arrested by the Sudanese government. If the aid network collapses due to violence, the monthly death rate in Darfur could top 100,000.¹ One hundred thousand people a month, dead by the side of the biblical Jericho road.

In the face of suffering and death, Jesus taught that doing nothing was not an option. Today's scripture reading—the parable of the good Samaritan, found only in the Gospel of Luke—makes it clear that doing nothing is not an option. That's one of the reasons Luke's Gospel is favored by liberation theologians. For the liberation theologians, it is important to engage in an action-reflection model in which we see, think, and act. Merely seeing or thinking about a problem is not enough—one must act.

So I re-examined the parable of the Samaritan. This well-known dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer, a scholar of the Law, is situated toward the beginning of Luke's travel narrative. Jesus has set his face to Jerusalem, and immediately before the parable, in vv. 23-24, he praises the disciples for being able "to see." But as the parable makes plain, it is not enough "to see." One must "do." The parable gives a vivid enactment of three characters who "see" the same thing, but only one undertakes to "do" something. I have been impressed in my study of the parable with the role of that two letter word, "do."²

In fact, the whole episode starts with the lawyer asking, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers with a phrase we know well: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; AND [you shall love] your neighbor as yourself."

The lawyer then wants to "justify himself," perhaps trick Jesus to show that he knows more about the Law, so he challenges Jesus by asking, "and who is my neighbor?" Now, that question could easily have resulted in a philosophical and theological debate. But Jesus refuses to play intellectual games; he refuses to keep the issues removed from the here and now. Because Jesus knows that the lawyer's question about neighbor is really a question about boundaries.

So, Jesus counters the lawyer's high-minded mental gymnastics with the parable of the Samaritan, who, unlike all of the religious people in the story, showed mercy on the injured man in the road. Jesus thus pulls the lawyer's question from theological mid-air and, as Dr. King once explained, Jesus places the question in the here and now on a dangerous curve in the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. And he talked about a certain man who fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and left him for dead. This man has no name or character details—all we know is his condition—he was robbed, stripped, beaten, and left for dead. In this way, the man the Samaritan helped represents every person in such a condition—every person in such a condition that we see, whether that sight comes directly on a dangerous road or from an Internet journey into a foreign land.

Now, in the parable three people saw the injured man. First, a priest was going down the road and he saw the injured man, but he did nothing to help the man and passed by on the other side of the road.

Second, a Levite came to the place and saw the injured man, but he too did nothing to help the man and passed by on the other side of the road. Both the priest and the Levite obeyed the

¹ According to Jan Egeland, U.N. Under-Secretary for General Humanitarian Affairs.

² For an excellent analysis of the phrase "to do" in the parable of the Samaritan, see William Willimon, "Belief in Action," 7/11/04, Pulpit Resource Vol. 32, No. 3, Year C, which inspired this sermon.

borders of their race, class, religion and theology, avoided the man they saw in need, and did nothing to help.

Third, and finally, a Samaritan came near the injured man while traveling. But he did not pass the man by. Instead, when he SAW the man, HE WAS MOVED WITH PITY. That's the key: he saw, truly saw, and he was moved by compassion to act, thereby transcending any perceived boundaries between himself and the injured man. For the Samaritan saw in the injured man a mirror of himself.

There is then a piling up of compassionate action verbs in the parable: the Samaritan went to the injured man and bandaged his wounds; he had poured oil and wine on the wounds; he put the man on his own animal; he brought the man to an inn and took care of him; the next day, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said: take care of him, and when I come back, I will repay you for whatever more you spend. Not only does the Samaritan directly help the injured man, he involves others in the task! He involves others in the humanitarian task of saving human life irrespective of society's boundaries, theological or otherwise.

Jesus concludes the parable not with a pronouncement of what is the correct interpretation or answer to the lawyer's question, but by pointedly asking the lawyer, the scholar of the Law, to draw his own conclusions. Jesus asks: Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers? The lawyer answers: The one who showed him mercy. The question is not answered by defining the limits of who is to be regarded as neighbor. Rather, the question is answered by shattering the boundaries delimiting neighbors from one another.

The parable then ends with that all important two-letter word "do;" the story ends with a "do command." Jesus says, Go and do likewise.

Dr. King used the parable of the Good Samaritan the day before his death, in a sermon that later became famous, as he urged pastors and laypeople to support the striking sanitation workers of Memphis, Tennessee. He detailed the risks of that biblical "bloody pass," the winding road from Jerusalem down to Jericho. Dr. King allowed that the priest and the Levite may have been simply afraid, warily wondering if the robbers still hovered about, or if the victim himself was a thief lying in wait in wounded disguise.

Dr. King explained: this means that the first question that the Levite asked was, "If I stop to help this man, what will happen to me?" But then the Good Samaritan came by. And the Good Samaritan reversed the question: "If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?"

That is the question facing us today. The question is not, if we stop to help the people of Darfur, what will happen to us? No, the question is, if we do not stop to help the people of Darfur now, what will happen to them? And we know the answer to that question, as did the Samaritan in Luke's parable.

We don't know what ultimately happened to Luke's Samaritan; but we do know what Jesus commands for us, that we "go and do likewise." Amen.

Prayers for Darfur

Heavenly Father,

We pray for those whose lives are lived on the margins of nations and who suffer from the wars that others fight around them. We pray for the warring factions, that they may see themselves under the gaze of God and those who suffer for their cause. We pray for the peoples of Darfur who are haunted by fear of violence, hunger, and hopelessness, that they may continue to be fed, visited, and defended. We pray for the work of peacekeepers, negotiators, and the humanitarian organizations

that security may prevail. We pray for the Government of Sudan and for her unity. We pray for peace in the name of him who is the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

- Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Merciful and compassionate Spirit
Be present to the suffering people of Sudan
Shelter the widows and the children
Comfort all who are weary and afraid
Bring relief to those who hunger and thirst
Center our thoughts with those who suffer in silence
Move us to recall our shared humanity
Unite us in our determination to respond to injustice
May we never forget! May we never forget!
Hear our prayer. Make our action swift.
Amen.
(From the United Nations)

AN OFFERING OF ACTION

Sunday, April 29, 2007

For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.

—Luke 21:15

The late Illinois Senator Paul Simon said:

If every member of the House and Senate had received 100 letters from people back home saying we have to do something about [the genocide in] Rwanda, when the crisis was first developing [in 1994], then I think the response would have been different.”

TODAY, let us send a message to the president, hundreds of times over, telling him that we believe our shared Christian faith compels him to do everything in his power to bring an end to the genocide in Darfur.

- We know that we serve a God who stands on the side of weak and vulnerable. Thus we must use our God-given power to speak out against injustice against God’s children.
- This Sunday, we will make a different kind of offering than perhaps we are used to.
- We will tith 10 minutes of our time today.
- We will use those 10 minutes to speak out against the suffering of our brothers and sisters being led to death in Darfur.
- We believe that God is calling us to do what we can to stop the genocide in Darfur. Today, in faithful response to that call, we will:

1) Call the White House comment line: (202) 456-1111

2) Give your message to the operator. For example:

“Hello, my name is _____ and I’m a Christian calling from [your church] in [your town]. I’m calling to tell President Bush that I stand behind him in leading the international community to do whatever it takes to get a U.N. peacekeeping mission on the ground in Darfur. After 4 years of genocide the time is long past for bold action. We are asking for the following measures:

- *the passage and strict enforcement of tough, multilateral economic sanctions against the Government of Sudan, as well as against individuals and companies complicit in the genocide;*
- *concrete, consistent, and effective cooperation with the International Criminal Court (ICC) on Darfur, thus sending a clear message to Khartoum that the administration places accountability for the crimes committed in Darfur as a higher priority than potential collaboration with the Sudanese government in the “war on terror”;*
- *the use of the U.S.’s relationships with governments around the world to “internationalize” pressure on Khartoum and create a united front for new and*

urgent action on Darfur, especially targeting China, Russia, and the European Union.

President Bush, use your power to stop the killing of God's children from going on for another day!"

- 3) Let us know you called by filling out the form available here:
<http://go.sojo.net/campaign/darfurcall/>
- 4) Send an e-mail to five of your friends and family, urging them to join you in sending a message to the White House.

RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE AND STAYING INVOLVED

As people of faith and advocates in this crisis, we bear the responsibility to become and remain educated about the situation affecting our brothers and sisters in Darfur.

The following Web sites and organizations are good resources for credible and current information. Visit them online to learn more about the history of the conflict, the current situation on the ground, and what you can do to make a difference.

Save Darfur Coalition

www.savedarfur.org

The Save Darfur Coalition's mission is to raise public awareness about the ongoing genocide in Darfur and to mobilize a unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of 2 million people in the region.

ENOUGH

www.enoughproject.org

A joint project of International Crisis Group and the Center for American Progress, ENOUGH's mission is to stop and prevent genocide and mass atrocities by promoting peace, providing protection, and punishing the perpetrators. They use field and policy analysis and strong policy advocacy to empower a growing activist movement for change.

Genocide Intervention Network

www.genocideintervention.net

Read up on the background of the conflict in Darfur and find out what's going on right now. Browse expert reports on the situation and take a look at Darfur-related multimedia.

SudanReeves.org

Analytic briefs and advocacy writings by Eric Reeves, who has spent the past seven years working full-time as a Sudan researcher and analyst. He has testified several times before Congress, has lectured widely in academic settings, and has served as a consultant to a number of human rights and humanitarian organizations operating in Sudan.

International Crisis Group – Darfur

www.crisisgroup.org

The International Crisis Group is an independent, nongovernmental organization working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

Refugees International – Darfur

www.refugeesinternational.org

Refugees International offers photo essays, personal stories from refugees in Darfur, policy recommendations, and a roundup of the latest news and commentary about Darfur from major media outlets.

Darfur Peace & Development Organization

www.dpado.org

DPADO is an international organization committed to working with indigenous people in Darfur to overcome hunger and poverty through integrated self-development and relief programs.

U.N. Security Council Report

www.securitycouncilreport.org

Security Council Report is an independent, not-for-profit organization affiliated with Columbia University's Center on International Organization. It publishes regular reports on the Council's existing and prospective agenda, supplemented by ad hoc bulletins on breaking news.

Passion of the Present

www.passionofthepresent.org

Passion of the Present is an online community where you can find and share ideas, information, and inspiration on how to stop the genocide in Darfur.

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