

Matthew/Micah Initiative for Directional Framework Matthew 25:35-36; Micah 6:8

Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice

One challenge with compassion, mercy, and justice is that there are so many potential matters to address that without some defining and guiding rubric there is 1) the potential for perceived randomness and arbitrariness which makes it hard to explain why certain areas receive attention and others do not and 2) a limited impact that can result from jumping from cause to cause.

Using **Matthew 25** as a biblical consensus agenda will give us *focus* in establishing both a compelling agenda and a *rallying point* for major initiatives. It gives intentionality, inspiration, and bones to living out **Micah 6:8** of “doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God.”

Each area of Matthew 25 would have three dimensions.

1. An annual meeting resolution about that dimension as an advocacy/justice statement
2. Local church study materials and resources for ministry for those looking for engagement locally
3. Major denomination-wide project that injects enduring ministry into the world

Example: I was sick and you visited me

- ◆ **Resolution:** Accessible health care
- ◆ **Local church:** Biblical study materials plus implementable ministry examples such as parish nursing, nursing home visitation programs, volunteering at low income clinics, etc.
- ◆ **Denomination-wide project:** Establish a network of low income health clinics along the lines of the Detroit project with Covenant Initiatives for Care; work with World Mission, Covenant World Relief and Paul Carlson to enlist medical mission opportunities.

Such an approach addresses an issue with dimensionality-- awareness-building and education, advocacy and action, and of both local possibilities and collective scale. It is rooted in a Biblical consensus, which allows us to get forward motion and experience early on with broad support. It leverages and links resources across multiple departments and institutions of the ECC, one of the organizing values of the department in the first place.

It has been said that people tend to over-estimate what they can do in the short term and under-estimate what they can do in the long-term. Imagine what could compound over time if we systematically moved through Matthew 25, knowing we were setting in motion ministry that would endure well beyond. And after such a demonstration, the Church will have the confidence to continue in yet even other ways.

Examples of Matthew 25 cause connections:

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| ◆ Hungry and you fed me | world hunger |
| ◆ Thirsty and you gave me drink | clean water initiative |
| ◆ Stranger and you welcomed me | immigration |
| ◆ Naked and you clothed me | micro-enterprise, homelessness |
| ◆ Sick...and you looked after me | health care |
| ◆ In prison... | criminal justice |

The order of pursuing these can shift around. For example, the exploration of the criminal justice issue is taking on a two year process.

This is not to the exclusion of other local causes that churches would choose to pursue based on their own contexts.