

Jesus, Light of the World;

illumine our steps this week.

Show us the path of generosity and justice.

Grant us clear vision;

so that we can recognize unfairness,

so that we can see what is needed,

so that we can know what is required of us,

so that we can see You in the face of those in need.

Amen.



SEE AND SUPPORT

Research several local agencies that your congregation may support. See which programs serve only survival needs (for instance, hot meal programs) and which encourage clients to grow and become independent. Does your community need more programs of either kind?

The Anabaptists

the common people began taking Luther's *priesthood of all believers* seriously, demanding equal access to God, land, power, and human rights. Luther himself drew back from this obvious conclusion. He harshly condemned peasants who found biblical reasons for rebelling against feudal authority in 1525.

Though most Anabaptists rejected the violence of both lords and peasants, they did not draw back from biblical teachings that favored the poor. Separating the social and spiritual consequences of the gospel made no sense to them. Equal access to God implied equal access to the fruit of God's creation.

While drawing its ranks from among society's destitute, the Anabaptist movement also reached out to the neediest. A prominent leader, Menno Simons, could imagine no other kind of discipleship. He asked how leaders of powerful, wealthy churches could dress in "silk and velvet, gold and silver, and in all manner of pomp and splendor," yet

SOMETIMES BOTH CONVERSION to Christ and conversion to poor people have occurred at once. Such was the case among Anabaptists in sixteenth-century Europe. The movement spread fastest among peasants, who for centuries had lived in near slavery, farming other people's lands.

allow fellow believers to beg for alms. How could they claim to be the true Christian church while "poor, hungry, suffering, old, lame, blind, and sick people ... beg their bread at their doors"? —Gerald W. Schlabach

RESOURCES

ANABAPTIST/MENNONITE FAITH AND ECONOMICS, EDITED BY CALVIN REDEKOP. UNIVERSITY PRESS OF AMERICA, 1994.
CLAIMING ALL THINGS FOR GOD: PRAYER, DISCERNMENT, AND RITUAL FOR SOCIAL CHANGE BY GEORGE D. MCCLAIN. ABINGDON PRESS, 1998.

AND WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR? POVERTY, PRIVILEGE, AND THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. HERALD PRESS, 1990, PP. 46-47. USED BY PERMISSION.