

Global Day of Prayer to End Famine - 10 June 2018

Famine & Displacement

Facts:

Forced displacement refers to all situations where people have been forced to move from their home or country, often due to armed conflicts or natural disasters. People often flee from their homes and sources for sustainable livelihood, carrying hardly any resources, driven into forests, deserts, inhospitable and hostile environments, making them more vulnerable to hunger, impoverishment, exploitation, and dependency. More violence, displacement, and hunger are ingredients for humanitarian catastrophes to be established as a vicious cycle and become protracted crises.

30.6 million people were internally displaced in 2017, which is the equivalent of 80,000 people displaced each day. Conflicts in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, Syria, Myanmar, and Yemen continued to force dramatic numbers of people to flee their homes. The common driver in most of the food crises around the globe is conflict. Today, around 80 percent of every dollar spent by the World Food Programme goes to operations in war zones. However, displacement is also caused by cyclones, violent storms and floods that swept across the Caribbean and South Asia destroying vital infrastructure and leaving millions of people homeless. Though Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for only 14 percent of the world's population, almost half of new conflict-related displacement took place in that region. There were 5.5 million new displacements associated with conflict and violence in 2017, double the figure for the previous year. The Middle East and North Africa accounted for 38 percent of new displacements associated with conflict and violence worldwide in 2017, with almost 4.5 million recorded. The displacements in the region were concentrated in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Myanmar.

It is noteworthy that most of the displaced people in the world are hosted by low and middle-income countries, such as Lebanon, Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, and Pakistan, not by the wealthy and the advanced nations.

Reflection:

*Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;*

*Hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.*

*Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress;*

He led them by a straight way,

until they reached an inhabited town. Psalm 107: 4- 7.

As we are reminded that we are sojourners too- '*strangers and exiles on the earth*' (Hebrews 11:13), we are instructed to welcome the stranger, the foreigner and the displaced. '*When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.*' (Leviticus 19:33-34). Godly people such as Job, manifested their devotion to God in the way they treated the itinerant and the unfamiliar- '*the stranger has not lodged in the street; I have opened my doors to the traveler*' (Job 31:32). The displaced person manifests all the characteristics of people in need, who are also a reflection of the Divine- the hungry and thirsty stranger, requiring clothes and accompaniment, who may also be sick or incarcerated. (Matthew 25:35-36).

Given adequate support and accompaniment, the displaced people can reenergize and renew the world. Joseph, who was a victim of human trafficking, with God's grace, eventually finds a way to contribute to society as the highest ranking official under the Pharaoh. (Genesis 37-50). He also facilitates his father Jacob and his family's move to Egypt to escape famine; where they receive work, land, and food. (Genesis 46-47).

We have to do all we can to truly overcome famine, by resolving conflicts and by promoting peace and justice; work to increase community resilience in facing climate change and natural disasters; and receive and care for displaced people, and help them re-establish their livelihoods and autonomy.

Prayer:

O Lord, open our eyes;
Help us to perceive the root causes of hunger and deprivation.

O Lord, open our hearts and minds;
Help us to be one with those who are displaced, hungry and thirsty, requiring accompaniment in the context of conflict, natural disasters, and climate change.

O Lord, open our hearts and minds;
Forgive us for the inaction and for the insufficient responses to the needs of the people who are displaced and are vulnerable to hunger.

O Lord, strengthen us to advocate and mobilize action to overcome hunger;
Help us to resolve conflicts and promote peace and justice and work to increase community resilience in facing climate change and natural disasters.