

A Common Foundation

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As people of faith with varying theologies and traditions, we are convinced of a remarkable convergence on fundamental principles that call us to common work in combating poverty and walking with people living in poverty:

Shared Principles for Work on Overcoming Poverty

- We believe it is the Creator's intent that all people are provided those things that protect human dignity and make for healthy life: adequate food and shelter, meaningful work, safe communities, healthcare, and education.
- We believe we are intended to live well together as a whole community, seeking the common good, avoiding wide disparities between those who have too little to live on and those who have a disproportionate share of the world's goods.
- We believe we are all called to work to overcome poverty, and that this work transcends both any particular political theory or party and any particular economic theory or structure. We believe that overcoming poverty requires the use of private and public resources.
- We believe we are called to make alliances within the faith community and with others in society who share the commitment to overcome poverty.
- We believe that overcoming poverty involves both acts of direct service to alleviate the outcomes of poverty and advocacy to change those structures that result in people living in poverty.
- We believe government is neither solely responsible for alleviating poverty, nor removed from this responsibility. We believe government is the vehicle by which people order their lives based on their shared vision. We believe society is well served when people of faith bring their values into the public arena. It is this remarkable convergence around issues of poverty and the common good that leads people of varying faith traditions to unite in calling on government to make a critical commitment to overcoming poverty.
- We believe the desire to overcome poverty is not simply a human idea, but is the desire of our Creator, and that the work to create a more just and whole society will be empowered by the Creator's presence. We invite each faith tradition to make explicit their expression of faith and how it understands this common foundation. On these shared principles, we together commit ourselves to work to ensure that no person is forced to live in poverty. Written by Bishop Peter Rogness, Saint Paul Area Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Permission to reproduce granted. Please click [here](#) to see a list of signers for the Common Foundation.