

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival

The Michigan Conference of the UCC has endorsed the campaign. Our faith leaders have judged that this initiative is a call to many of us who love Jesus. **What is this all about?**

50 years ago, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and a coalition of others called for a "revolution of values" in America, inviting people who had been divided to stand together against the "triplets of evil" -- militarism, racism and economic injustice -- to insist that people need not die from poverty in America, the richest nation ever to exist. Together with poor people across America -- black, white, brown and Native -- they built a Poor People's Campaign, announcing it in December 1967.

Now, over a decade in the making, the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, has emerged as a new fusion coalition to reignite the original campaign and to take up the unfinished work following Dr. King's death. The campaign seeks to build a broad and deep national, moral movement -- joining to fight to end systemic racism, poverty, militarism, environmental destruction and America's **moral decay**.

Who's behind the moral decay? The twin-forces of white supremacy and unchecked corporate greed; these forces continue to gain more power and influence, both in state capitals and the federal government.

What tools cause moral decay? The forces push aside a public moral commitment to remedy racism and poverty, and instead focus our national attention on personal 'morality'. They draw on old bigotry and fears, using coded racial appeals -- "don't give my hard-earned money to those lazy food-stamp users," or "I don't want to pay for the health care of someone who doesn't want to work," or "entitlements and social security are raising my taxes" -- and so many of us see, in our mind's eye, an undeserving person of color, an immigrant, a city-dweller.

So, why does this matter? When we hear our leaders attack the morality of those without work, without health care, or without retirement-protection, many of us then vote to cut taxes "to protect my money from the 'takers' in society." But, when we vote like this, we fail to see that safe guards -- a life-line when we are down, health care that heals us without financial hardship, or peace-of-mind in our old-age -- would REALLY help all of us.

The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival, will unite different groups of those most affected and will transform the political, economic and moral structures of our society. The Campaign will challenge those who have purchased political power in their attempts to blame poor people for poverty, blame immigrants for the death of the middle class, blame brown skinned people for our dysfunctional criminal justice system, and on and on....

This multi-year campaign will launch during this key election year on Mothers' Day 2018, with much publicity. It will involve a program of simultaneous direct action and civil disobedience in 25 states' capitals and Washington.

The campaign will force a serious national examination of the joint evils of racism, poverty, militarism, environmental devastation, and American moral decay. It will strengthen and connect informed and committed grassroots leadership in every state -- increasing the ability of this moral revival to continue to fight long after June 2018.

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW: Read [The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear](#), by Rev. Dr. William Barber; discuss the book in your church; bring together those who share your concerns about the injustice and brokenness in our communities, and show-up and be counted; get to know your neighbors who also want a moral, ethical and loving world. [poorpeoplescampaign.org]. Save the date, Monday, May 14 for a Moral Monday day of action!

Things will not change until enough of us stand up and demand it -- make it happen. Right now. You can make a difference. Would you support Dr. King if he were continuing his work today?! We must pay attention and commit. This is the important work of Christianity for the long-haul. For our communities, our children and, most deeply, our souls.