



A Theology of Sufficiency

by **Rev. John Dorhauer**

Rich Biblical traditions shaped Jesus' vision, including Micah 4: 3-4:

"God shall judge between many peoples and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

It is my personal belief that this concept, one that I call a theology of sufficiency, provides a strategic pathway to the just peace we seek. It is the unjust distribution of wealth that keeps the wheels of war turning.

Micah rightly discerns in the heart of God that the beating of swords in plowshares can only be possible when the conditions envisioned by God and described in that final verse come into play. When all on Earth have their own vine and their own fig, just enough to sustain themselves

and free from the wanton greed of others who covet their neighbors' goods.

At the heart of God's vision of all nations laying down their weapons and no longer learning the ways of war is the collective distribution of God's bounty to ensure that all are fed and sheltered. These are the underlying conditions that render the sword and the spear obsolete and that mandate their repurposing as implements of agriculture rather than of devastation.

I remember with great fondness and deep appreciation the first Sunday I walked into the church I served right out of seminary, Zion United Church of Christ in Mayview, Missouri. A town of 250 people ten miles from a gallon of gas and a loaf of bread, this farm rich community was deeply dedicated to the work of a just peace. On the wall inside the front door as you entered the sanctuary was a poster that hung for all the years I served there. It was a quote from UCC theologian and biblical scholar Luke T. Johnson and it read quite simply: "Whatever you possess that someone else needs already belongs to them."

Generosity, as a spiritual practice, provides a way for us to think together as a Church about a theology of sufficiency so that there can be enough resources for all. Together, we can relate to each other so that "all sit under their own vines and their own fig trees, and not one shall make them afraid."

Because of **You** our church changes lives.