

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,” and yet you do not supply their bodily need, what is the good of that?

—James 2:15-16

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

I have worked in international development for the last twenty years, and I am often asked which poverty is worse: poverty in developing countries or in the US. It is a question that is impossible to answer. Hopelessness cannot be measured, and ranking misery is a foolhardy exercise.

Many development agencies are working to find sustainable solutions that lead to long-term improvements that can be quantified in tangible outcomes. However, seeing the headlines on climate change and the refugee crisis, I am increasingly concerned about safety nets. What does one do when in immediate crisis? Long-term solutions in these moments of turmoil can seem empty to people who are going through great suffering and need help for basic survival.

It is important to periodically get out of our own space and think deeply and profoundly about others. Bodily needs of shelter, nutrition, safety and well-being cannot be ignored in order to solve more “noble” development pursuits. After all, what is the “good” of that? When people literally lose everything in a natural disaster, does it matter where they started out in life? Who helps? Today, I invite you to pray for long-term solutions and to give enough to transform the life of an individual or a family.

—Judith Morrison