The Two Feet

In our commitment to seek justice, we often talk about “solidarity with the poor” or the church’s “preferential option for the poor.” Below are two elements of such a commitment: direct service to the poor, and changing the social, political and economic structures that cause poverty. Thus, one foot of Christian commitment to the poor is in direct service with and to the victims of poverty, while the other foot is in our efforts to end victimization.

Charity / Relief Work
Helping people & the earth survive the present crisis

*Volunteer time or Money to food pantries, clothing centers, shelters for the homeless
*Visit the poor, lonely & prisoners
*Provide quality education for the poor
*Sponsor an immigrant family
*Plant trees & clean up vacant lots
*Reduce consumption, repair & reuse products, recycle

Justice / Social Change
Removing the causes of the social problems by changing structures

*Educate toward critical thinking that leads to action to eliminate the root causes of social problems
*Work with and promote groups committed to positive structural change
*Change corporate policies that hurt the poor through boycotts and letter writing
*Support people’s efforts at self determination
*Support political candidates willing to change economic and environmental policies

We need both feet to walk and keep our balance as Christians living in today’s world.

Obviously, this is not an all-inclusive list but it does show the two basic elements of the gospel call to seek justice for the poor.

(Adapted by the 8th Day Center for Justice from the Campaign for Human Development, USCC, Diocese of Charlotte)