

PRAYER FOR WORLD FAIR TRADE DAY -- May 12, 2018

God is concerned not just about our personal interactions with people, God is also concerned about our business interactions. Today is an opportunity to reflect on how fairly we treat others in the realm of business transactions. We reflect as well that our purchasing habits while appearing to be entirely local (I shop at local stores) have wide ranging impacts. The product I purchase was made or grown somewhere else, sometimes in conditions that do not fairly compensate workers for the work done. As Jesus reminds us, everyone is our neighbor, even our global neighbours.

A PRAYER

God who cares about our business and shopping practices, we hear the words of the prophet Jeremiah: "Woe to those who build their house by injustice, making their neighbours work for nothing, and not giving them their wages" (Jer. 22:13) and we are confronted by our greed, our self-centeredness, our sin.

We confess that we have benefitted from the unrealistically low wages and compensation paid to workers and farmers in other parts of the world. For we are more interested in a good deal and bargain prices, than in asking if we are paying a fair price for the products we purchase. We fail to seek justice in the way we spend our money.

We confess that we resist paying a fair price that would adequately compensate the producer and retailer, choosing instead to take advantage of bankruptcy sales and going out of business sales. We fail to show kindness in our business dealings.

We confess that we often separate our spiritual life from our business/consumer life, locking you, O God, out of our financial decision making. We fail to walk humbly with you in choosing how to use the financial resources you give to us.

We thank you for collectives and cooperatives, missions and agencies, that make it possible for us to purchase goods at a fair price. We pray that you would move us to use our wallets for your honour and glory, not only in our giving but also in our purchasing. Change our hearts so that we as consumers would willingly seek fairness in our dealings with others.

We pray for labourers and farmers around the world who do not receive a fair wage. Use us and others to advocate for them, use us and others to change the system so that they receive a fair wage.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus, who told of a landowner who gave all the workers in the vineyard a day's wage. Amen.

Peter Bush, Moderator
143rd (2017) General Assembly
The Presbyterian Church in Canada