

Governor Sam Brownback
Office of the Governor
Capitol, 300 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 241S
Topeka, KS 66612-1590

Dear Governor Brownback:

I am writing to you as an invited guest who plans to attend Governor Rick Perry's "Response" rally. As Governor Perry has declared August 6 as a day for reflection, I invite you also on that day to reflect upon Biblical teachings, especially those of Jesus, which focus on our communities, states, nations and our world. I also ask you to consider that day and every day how far the state of Texas falls from those teachings.

I am including with this letter an open letter to you that I support, providing a reminder of our state's shortcomings set alongside relevant Biblical references. Each statement also includes a vision for the future that I hope for and which I believe that you have the ability to impact in your own state.

Toward a blessed state and nation,

An Open Letter to Governor Rick Perry
www.DallasChristians.org

Dear Governor Perry:

You have called for August 6 to be a day of gathering "in humility and repentance." The Dallas Area Christian Progressive Alliance joins this call for repentance, a word which means to "go a new way." We call for repentance when we consider the condition of our state, the mandate from God to love our neighbors, and the vision of the future that is the answer to our prayers. We embrace government as one way to fulfill God's will on earth as it is in heaven*. Jesus called the NATIONS to judgment. The prophets he came to fulfill-Amos, Jeremiah, Isaiah in particular-condemned the governments of their day, the kings, for not serving the poor and the oppressed.

- Jesus says that the nations that care for the sick are "blessed," while those who do not he says are "accursed" (Matthew 25:31-45) Texas is first among all states in the percentage of citizens who are uninsured, and ranks number 41 in health services. Let us go a new way toward health care and health security and turn from the road that leads to the fate of the accursed.
- Jesus said in Mark 10:14 "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." Currently, one of every four Texas children lives in poverty. Funding to education has been severely cut for all children attending public schools even while our state ranks last among all states in issuing high school diplomas. Let us go a new way toward a time when no child in Texas lives in poverty and educational opportunity is available equally and for all.
- Jesus blessed the poor, told the rich that "you have had your fill," (Luke 6:20-21, 24) and said in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:12, "No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve God and wealth." The state of Texas is first among states in the gap between the wealthy and those living in poverty. Let us go a new way, a way in which not wealth but the common good is served. And let us not be as Judas, the keeper of the purse, who did not really care about the poor. (John 12:6)
- In Luke 4:19, Jesus declared "Good News to the Poor" and "the Year of Our Lord's Favor," the year of Jubilee when goods were redistributed and debts forgiven. Progressive taxation best captures the spirit of the Jubilee in our times. The bottom fifth of Texas earners pay over 12 percent of their income to state and local governments - more than three times the share of income that the state's richest taxpayers pay. Let the contributions to the common good not disproportionately fall on the backs of "the least of these."
- The prophet Jeremiah condemned a king, the leader of his day, for "mak[ing] his neighbors work for nothing and does not give them their wages." James the brother of Jesus [5:4] and Malachi [3:5] decry those who do defraud laborers of their wages. And Jesus himself in the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, taken literally, reminds us that the basic needs of workers must be met. Texas leads the nation in the percentage and number of people working at minimum

wage. One in three Texas workers don't bring home enough pay to keep a family of four out of poverty. Let us go a new way toward a day when all wages are living wages.

- Jesus also considered nations accursed when they do not welcome the stranger, alien, outsider, immigrant. (Matthew 25:31-45) Immigrant children who have only known life in the United States have been denied the opportunity to have legal status here and instead they and their families are often targeted for hatred and abuse by those who wear the name "Christian." Let us go a new path toward a blessed country that creates just laws that represent that we truly "love our neighbor."
- The earth and all that is in it belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). We are called to be stewards of God's creation, not its destroyer. Texas is the biggest polluter in the country, leading the nation in carbon dioxide and cancer-causing emissions. Let us go a new way by protecting the creation with which we have been entrusted as stewards.

We urge you to consider that August 6 as every day be one in which we strive to be more like Christ, who called us in the Great Commission to teach all that he commanded. Let us "be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves." (James 1:22)

THE DALLAS AREA CHRISTIAN PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE

* We share these values with other faiths and with all who care about humanity.