

Representative Josh Green's Invocation Prayer, delivered on the State House Floor
Wednesday, March 23rd 2005

Today, let us pray for guidance in our decisions on behalf of the people of Hawaii.

Let us pray that we will always be reminded of the great tradition of justice and social responsibility found in the Bible. And that we remember in our hearts that the Bible's teachings and commandments on public morality apply to our own time as well.

The prophet Isaiah reminds us again and again that God requires us to fight greed and exploitation, and to protect those unable to protect themselves.

Isaiah chapter 1, verse 17 tells us: "Learn to do good; seek justice; reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan; plead for the widow."

In our time, the gap between the rich and the poor everywhere continues to grow. In our own state, the average price for a home on Oahu is now over a half-million dollars. It is now out of reach for most people to own a home in the place where they grew up.

On the Big Island, the costs of land and housing have risen so much that the people who work in hotels, resorts and small businesses can no longer afford to live in the same area where they work.

In the book of Leviticus, God himself tells Moses that the land belongs to Him, not to human beings, and that we have a sacred obligation to steward the land with justice and social responsibility.

Leviticus chapter 25, verse 23 tells us: "The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine, for you are strangers and sojourners with me."

The prophet Isaiah also warns us against the danger of selling our lands to the highest bidder without restraint. We are warned against allowing our most precious resource to be concentrated in the hands of a few of the wealthy and powerful at the expense of the weak, forcing them out of their homes.

Isaiah chapter 5, verse 8 tells us: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place left."

Today, let us pray that we always remember the moral vision of these teachings. Let us humbly pray that we never forget the Bible's clear and unambiguous call for a just society.

A society where the weak are protected from exploitation by the powerful, and ownership of the land itself is not allowed to be concentrated in the hands of a wealthy few while the poor are forgotten.