Global Advocacy and Education

This section explains why advocacy is important to the work of Global Ministries, and provides ideas to help you and your group conduct advocacy on an issue important to you. Look on www.globalministries.org/advocacy to find more information on global issues, lists of advocacy organizations and campaigns, and tips for how to shape your advocacy message for the media.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy is commonly understood either as efforts specifically to shape US or international policies to better serve the common good, or as a broader array of actions to shape public opinion or behavior through educational, media or action-organizing campaigns.

Why do we do advocacy?

Global Ministries’ Standing Rules say “In such a world as this, [we] experience the interconnectedness of God’s world... a world desperately in need of healing.” The prophet Micah says we are required “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with...God” (6:8). The Church acts in order to seek God’s vision of justice and wholeness in the world.

Advocacy has many goals:

- **To create positive change in the world.** Jesus says “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). As Christians we have been transformed by grace to transform the world into the fullness God intends and Jesus makes possible. Many in North America are blessed with resources and the capacity to help others in need around the world.

- **To accompany others.** We are told to “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9). Global Ministries gives priority to “ministries of acompañamiento (in various forms and modes of presence) to and with people in critical situations.” Walking with others means we avoid doing merely what we think is best for those in need, but rather decide and act together to make positive change.

- **To take risks for truth.** The Gospel challenges us to bold action: “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:17-18). Global Ministries commits to provide “critical presence...meeting God's people and creation at the point of deepest need: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and/or economically.” This means not just responding to the symptoms of human need, or what has been called “trash-bag” ministry—picking (people) up from devastating circumstances, but also means to go deeper to address the causes behind global poverty and suffering. Uncovering the truth of those in need often reveals systemic injustice and inequity that must be redressed.
What values shape our advocacy work?

- **A commitment to the integrity of creation**
  “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.” *Psalm 24:1*

- **A commitment to peace building**
  “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.” *Matthew 5:9*

- **A commitment to serve the economy of God**
  “He has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor…to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” *Luke 4:18-19*

- **A commitment to strengthen human community**
  “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.” *I Corinthians 12:26*

What else shapes our advocacy positions?

- Policies and mandates of the Common Global Ministries Board, United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
- The experience of global partners and the communities they serve
- The cooperative witness of ecumenical and allied organizations, including Church World Service, advocacy coalitions in Washington, DC, and non-governmental working groups at the United Nations

*How can my group include advocacy in our global mission?*

Advocacy usually begins with a passion to respond to a particular concern, but an effective action requires planning. To plan your advocacy action on an issue consider the following steps:

1. **Pray and discern.** Ask “What is the change you want to happen?” Do you have a community committed to making change? A process of ethical discernment can help identify your common values and sharpen your focus on the issue. One familiar model is the resource “*See, Judge, Act*” (available from Global Ministries):
   a. “*See*”: Observe the situation; ask who’s winning and who’s losing?
   b. “…*Judge*”: What would scripture and our faith change about the situation?
   c. “…*Act*”: Faith inspires what action to create change in the situation?

2. **Prepare.** Effective advocacy requires preparation beforehand.
   a. Learn about your issue. Go beyond familiar media sources. See [www.globalministries.org/advocacy](http://www.globalministries.org/advocacy) for information and helpful links.
b. Determine your targets for change. What key person or situation will it be most helpful to focus your efforts on in order to make change happen? Church policies? Public attitudes? Government policies?

c. Finding allies can increase your power to effect change. Are there other faith groups, business or civic groups committed to the same cause? An organizing resource like Congregation-based Community Organizing (CBCO) can build your community of allies (see Interfaith Funders for resources, http://www.interfaithfunders.org/resources.html), or perhaps there is a national advocacy coalition your group can join.

d. What Global Ministries programs or resources may support your effort?

3. **Plan your strategy.** A small force can have a greater impact than a powerful action if you determine the right angle to push for change.

   a. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. What is working in your favor or blocking your way?

   b. Anticipate your outcome. Decide together what will count as success.

   c. Determine effective action for the context. There is no single answer to the question “What would Jesus do?” Remember, Jesus told his disciples “Be wise as serpents and as innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16). He recognized that different circumstances call for different approaches. Sometimes Jesus engaged in polite discourse with religious and political authorities, other times he broke conventions and protocols to eat with sinners and minister on the Sabbath. Sometimes Jesus employed tactics of demonstration (overturning the tables) and street theatre (the palm procession into Jerusalem on a donkey). Often a range of actions might reach the same goal, but considering your specific targets, strengths, allies, and anticipated outcomes, what approach to achieve the desired change seems most appropriate to the context? Maybe the picket line is the best tactic one time, when the negotiation table is better another time, and in still other contexts a combination of “insider” and “outsider” tactics achieves the best effect.

4. **Plan your message.** Your target audience and the tactic that your strategy suggests will help shape your message. Sometimes your message will be include a clear goal-statement or a set of commitments you hope to build public or decision-maker consensus around through your advocacy action. Other times it will include a set of talking points or policy language that you will introduce as an “ask” to policy-makers, who you hope will use the message to shape new policy affecting your global concern. Carefully thought-out messages and strategies also suggest what media to use (websites, email or social networking, billboard, print, video, etc.). Getting others, including the formal “media,” to convey your message further can be an important part of your strategy too.

5. **Evaluate and build on your experience.** Along the way and after your effort, take time to assess how things are going and what you may need to adjust to be more effective or to respond to changing conditions. Keep in mind your expected outcomes, but also recognize initial and middle-ground achievements. Don’t forget to appreciate the learnings gained from the process itself and from the establishment of a community of action and commitment. Remember each little step is an essential part of the process,
but it’s important to maintain your overall vision for the eventual outcome. A simple story illustrates this:

A person walking along came upon one man placing brick upon brick. She asked this man: “What are you doing?” He replied: “I’m laying bricks.”

She walked further and approached a second man placing brick upon brick. She asked this man: “What are you doing?” This man, wiser than the first, replied: “I’m constructing a sturdy wall.”

Finally she came upon a third man, like the others also placing brick upon brick. She asked this man: “What are you doing?” And this one, wisest of all, replied: “I’m building a cathedral!”

Some current Global Ministries advocacy efforts and resources are found in Appendix E.

Don’t forget, you may think you’re simply stacking bricks, but through our collective advocacy we can build cathedrals.
A GUIDE FOR THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
AND THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

QUICK BACKGROUND

The dispute in Sudan is long-standing and complex. The current most egregious situation is in the Darfur region of Sudan, which two rebel groups have claimed that the Sudanese government has long neglected, prompting an insurgency in 2003 that came just as the Government of Sudan was involved in peace talks over other protracted conflicts in southern Sudan. These two rebel groups are mostly African Muslims from a number of different ethnic groups. In seeking to defeat the rebel movements, the Government of Sudan increased arms and support to local militias, which have come to be known as the Janjaweed, composed mostly of Arabized African Muslims.

The Janjaweed have wiped out entire villages, destroyed food and water supplies, and systematically murdered, tortured, and raped thousands of innocent people. These attacks occur with the direct support of the government's armed forces. However, the conflict has always been more complex than how it is portrayed in the media, which has perpetuated the oversimplified perception that Arab militias (the so-called Janjaweed) are slaying African farmers. The situation in Sudan becomes more desperate and chaotic with the proliferation of armed groups with regularly shifting allegiances. Some Janjaweed, reportedly unhappy that they have not been paid by Sudanese government militias, are now fighting their one-time allies; in some cases they are also reportedly now protecting villages they once destroyed.

Most critically, the suffering is overwhelming. The United Nations estimates that 4 million people - roughly two-thirds of Darfur's population - are now dependent on some form of humanitarian assistance. As many as 250,000-400,000 people have died and 2.5 million have fled their homes. Without donations from faith communities, many more lives will be lost. In 2005, both the Disciples' General Assembly (www.disciples.org/ga/pdf/pastassemblies/05/resolutions/0520.pdf) and the UCC's General Synod (www.ucc.org/synod/resolutions/PROMOTING-PEACE-FOR-ALL-IN-THE-SUDAN.pdf) passed a resolution, "Promoting Peace for All in the Sudan," calling for an end to the violence. As Christians, we are called to act in the wake of these atrocities. This document provides ways individuals and communities can help our brothers and sisters in Sudan.

LOCAL CHURCH OPPORTUNITIES

Tents of Hope is a national, interfaith, community-based project that unites artistic creativity with social concern in response to the crisis in Sudan. The goal of the project is to draw attention to the crisis while encouraging donations of material support for the millions of uprooted persons in Sudan. Local churches are invited to create a simulation refugee tent in their communities and to transform it into a hopeful work of art by painting the tent. Tents of Hope will culminate in a collective action as local communities bring their tents and delegations to Washington DC for a national event in September, 2008. The event will help create more awareness and support for the people of Sudan. The website www.tentsofhope.org includes project guidelines, a photo gallery of tents, free downloadable posters, brochures, press releases, links to resources, a discussion forum and media coverage. Contact Tim Nonn, Project Administrator, for details at (707) 799-1056 or timnonn@comcast.net.
HUMANITARIAN AID

Week of Compassion (Disciples of Christ) and One Great Hour of Sharing (UCC) provide shelter, water, sanitation, medical care, trauma counseling, and livelihood assistance to Sudanese – both those returning to Southern Sudan following the peace agreement and those forced to flee the conflict in the Darfur region. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ are members of ACT/Caritas, a world-wide Christian faith-based alliance of relief agencies supporting humanitarian aid efforts in Sudan. You can support these efforts with your gifts of prayer and money. For further information and to make a secure contribution, go to: www.weekofcompassion.org or www.ucc.org/oghs.

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Week of Compassion has produced an abundance of worship resources on Sudan, available at www.weekofcompassion.org/pages/resources/WorshiponSudan.doc.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Global Ministries of the Christian Church (DOC) and the UCC features briefing papers, poems, art, updates from the ground, and news at www.globalministries.org/sudan. You may also download a FREE 4-week Study Guide on Genocide at www.dearsudan.org/documents/EG_Study_Guide.pdf. Additional resources are at www.africaaction.org. The National Council of Churches has produced a DVD on Sudan called Touch the World. You may view it online at www.ncbiusa.org/missioneducation/sudan/touch_sudan.htm or order a copy from UCC Resources at 1-800-537-3394.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is an international commitment by governments to protect populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, wherever they may occur. The United Nations invoked R2P for the first time in history in relation to Darfur. The most overwhelming need in Sudan right now is the need for safety and security as regular Sudanese citizens attempt to carry out daily activities in overcrowded and dangerous refugee camps. In August, 2007, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a 26,000-strong peacekeeping force for Darfur to replace the weary 7,000 member African Union force no later than December 31, 2007. While this peacekeeping force will be a giant step forward, we must continue to put pressure on our elected government officials to do everything they can to stop the violence in Sudan. We must call on Congress to fulfill the US’s commitment to fund UN peacekeeping operations. To access advocacy resources on Sudan, including your Congressional members’ contact information and a call-in script, please visit www.ucc.org/justice/issues/sudan. You can also utilize a congregational advocacy organizing kit from Dear Sudan, a letter-writing campaign in solidarity with the people of Sudan. See: www.dearsudan.org/kit.htm.
**Promoting Peace for All in the Sudan**

Disciples 2005 General Assembly Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution*

**NO. 0520**
(SENSE-OF-THE-ASSEMBLY)
PROMOTING PEACE FOR ALL IN THE SUDAN
ADOPTED by the General Assembly

**Background**

In the summer of 2004, the world began to notice the atrocities that continue to take place in the western region of the Sudan called Darfur, a place-name that literally means “home of the Fur people.” The name of the region offers a hint of the complexity of the problem, as the sovereign nation of the Sudan is made up of a collection of tribes, a diversity of religious faiths, and a range of ethnicities. As of November 2004 the number of civilian deaths in Darfur is in excess of 70,000, the number of village destroyed is in the hundreds, and the number of displaced persons exceeds 1.5 million, including 200,000 who have fled to Chad. Those called the janjawid (a term meaning “armed horsemen”) are primarily a migrant population who compete with the agrarian tribes in the western Sudan for basic natural resources. In order to quash possible uprising among the Fur, the central Sudanese government has given the janjawid arms and logistical support. This has both enabled the government to exert control over the remote region from the capital, Khartoum, and has given the janjawid a significant advantage in their local struggle, and they have used their strength to murder, execute, rape, and loot, to name some of the reported violations of human rights the janjawid have committed.

The atrocity perpetrated in Darfur—labeled genocide by many including the US—cannot be considered in isolation from the context of the current civil strife in the Sudan that has raged since 1983 between the government in the north and the tribes of the south. It is mistaken, however, to characterize this conflict as a religious war, pitting Muslim authorities against Black African Christians. Both perpetrators and victims of the violence in Darfur are Muslims, and Muslims throughout the Sudan are both Arab and Black African. A deeper look reveals a more nuanced and complex reality, in Darfur as throughout the Sudan. The conflict involves ethnic, linguistic, and religious aspects to be sure, set against an historical backdrop of advancing Arabicization, but it has at its core an attempt to control resources such as oil, water, and arable land.

The United States has played a central role in brokering a truce in the north-south civil war, which has commonly been implemented among contending communities by various trusted tribal and civil parties, including religious organizations like the New Sudan Council of Churches. The U.S. is very interested in encouraging the Sudanese government to carry out its commitments in the treaty. While the U.S. has been critical of the Sudanese government’s support for the janjawid and the resultant tragedy, it has been careful not to apply excessive pressure that would destroy the accomplishment of important breakthroughs on the north-south peace track.

* A parallel resolution “Promoting Peace for All in the Sudan” was passed at the 2005 UCC General Synod
Even as the international community debates how to move forward, the death and wanton destruction continues. International humanitarian relief efforts, including those associated with the churches, have been hampered due to denied access and desperately needed supplies being stolen. Security is lacking, and without the possibility for improvements in health and infrastructure, disease, hunger, and displacement will only continue.

WHEREAS, the crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan continues unabated; and

WHEREAS, violence and threats against the lives, health, homes, and security of the people of the region persist; and

WHEREAS, women in particular have been victims of brutal rape, have been captured and kept as sexual slaves, and have been denied their physical, emotional, economic, and human rights; and

WHEREAS, official policies of exploitation, racial discrimination, and marginalization have been used to incite social divisions and cultural animosities for political control and ideological ends; and

WHEREAS, the Sudan Council of Churches and the New Sudan Council of Churches have condemned the role of the Sudanese government in perpetuating the atrocities; and

WHEREAS, the international community including the United States has condemned the assault on the people of Darfur as genocide, but has not taken effective action to pressure the government of the Sudan to end the assault; and

WHEREAS, the lack of security and restrictions on access in western Sudan have hindered the provision of humanitarian aid by international agencies; and

WHEREAS, the conflict in Darfur should not be separated from the continuing conflict between the northern and southern regions of the Sudan;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the boards of directors of the Justice and Witness Ministries and Common Global Ministries (acting on behalf of the boards of Wider Church Ministries and the Division of Overseas Ministries) deplore the suffering of the Sudanese people over the course of decades of conflict, and particularly in the current crisis in the Darfur region; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the boards call upon the Sudanese government to cease hostile actions against civilians, to end support for militant groups committing violence, and to engage immediately in efforts to end the crisis in Darfur; to continue to work diligently to seek a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict against factions in the southern regions; and to institute national policies and encourage civil institutions that respect the language, culture, and religious rights and practices of all Sudanese, regardless of race, gender, or color; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the boards support efforts of the international community to intervene in bringing security to the region to ensure that the basic rights of the people are guaranteed, including the commitment of the African Union to provide peacekeepers to the region; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, given the continued systematic violence and widespread murder of civilians, the boards call upon the U.S. government to intensify efforts with the United Nations and the international community to seek a comprehensive peace in the Sudan that would end the conflict throughout the nation and ensure access to security and natural resources for all Sudanese; and authorize Justice and Witness Ministries and Common Global Ministries to advocate with the U.S. and the U.N. authorities to be so committed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the boards call upon the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to engage in prayer, study and public witness regarding the Sudan through resources available through Justice and Witness Ministries, the Common Global Ministries, and Church World Service; and encourage and coordinate worship, educational and public witness efforts among our ecumenical partners and non-governmental organizations that emerged from the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the boards call upon the United Church of Christ and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to contribute generously to the One Great Hour of Sharing and Week of Compassion special appeals to support efforts to deliver humanitarian relief and supplies to the region and efforts to aid the refugees and internally displaced of the Sudan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the boards submit this resolution, respectively, to the General Synod and to the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), meeting July 23-27, 2005 in Portland, Oregon.
A Call for Solidarity with the Persecuted in the Philippines, and an End to Extra-Judicial Killings and other Human Rights Violations

UCC 2007 General Synod 26 Resolution of Witness

(Resolution of Witness)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, More than 800 people have been murdered in extra-judicial killings in the Philippines over the past 5 years, and nearly 200 people have been forcibly abducted, with none of these cases solved;

WHEREAS, Those who have been killed or disappeared have been involved in work for economic and political justice within the legal framework, yet characterized by the Philippine government as destabilizers and enemies of the state;

WHEREAS, Our sisters and brothers of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, are subject, as are most of the citizens of the Philippines, to a culture of repression and terror, and additionally live and work with the awareness that 16 of the 27 religious workers killed to date [March, 2007] have been members of the UCCP;

WHEREAS, $179.6 million has been provided by the U.S. government to the Philippines, from 2001-2004 “to equip security forces” [See GAO report, July, 2005] with then-assistant U.S. Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz referring to the Philippines as the “Second Front in the War on Terror” [See on-line AsiaTimes, May, 2003];

WHEREAS, in a country where basic needs for health care, public education, and gainful employment are neglected, the Philippine government has allocated $208 million for military hardware upgrades to combat insurgency;

WHEREAS, As people of faith we cry out to the Most High to “listen and do justice for the vulnerable and the oppressed, so that mortals may bring terror no more;”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that General Synod XXVI calls upon The General Minister and President

- to communicate to the United States Congress that any future appropriations from the United States of America to the Philippines should be conditioned on the demonstrated promotion of human rights through effective prosecution, trial and appropriate punishment of those alleged to perpetrate, assist, tolerate or are otherwise responsible for human rights violations against civilian populations;
- to encourage Wider Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, Conferences, and Local Churches to advocate that military appropriations be conditional upon demonstrated promotion of human rights;
to ask individual members of the United Church of Christ, U.S.A., and Local Churches to pray for our partner church, the United Church of Christ, Philippines, in this time of upheaval, and to understand and be ultimately concerned for the economic, political, and religious dynamics of the country;

- to invite our ecumenical partners in the United States to join us in denouncing the extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances in the Philippines;

- to call upon Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to stop the executions and violence and call the perpetrators into account under the law;

- to call upon U.S. President George W. Bush to reconsider his 2003 description of the Philippines as a “model of democracy” and to pursue the realization of democratic rule in the Philippines;

- to maintain supportive communication with the UCCP;

Wider Church Ministries
- to encourage mission partnerships between Conferences and the UCCP;
- to maintain supportive communication with the UCCP;
- to provide and disseminate information on the current state of the Philippines to Local Churches & Conferences;

Justice & Witness Ministries
- to call upon U.S. government agencies and elected representatives to examine the links between U.S. funds and the violence and repression in the Philippines;
- to identify, through Justice and Peace Network communications, legislators who could be called upon to provide leadership in addressing policy and funding issues pertinent to the violations of human rights in the Philippines;
- to provide information and resources to raise awareness in Local Churches;

Conferences
- to express support and solidarity with the members of the UCCP in living out Jesus Christ’s Gospel message, particularly in promoting economic justice. (Luke 63 4:18-19);
- to establish linkages (dialogue, conversations, programs, etc.) toward mission partnerships with the UCCP.

Local Churches
- to seek out and employ avenues of advocacy for those persecuted in the Philippines;
- to prayerfully consider forming personal relationships with members of UCCP in affected areas for support and solidarity.

**FUNDING**
Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION**
Justice and Witness Ministries and Wider Church Ministries are requested to be the primary implementer of this resolution.
Global Advocacy & Education

“Stop the killings!” of Church Leaders in the Philippines

At 5:45 pm on Sunday, May 27, 2007 Pastor Berlin Guerrero of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) was leaving a church service with his wife and three children. His vehicle was attacked and he was abducted at gunpoint, forced into a van with a bag over his head, beaten and tortured. The next day he was taken to a police jail and charged with incidents that supposedly took place 20 years ago.

Captors replaced his computer files “with documents that belong to the so-called underground left.” He was forced to give names of family, friends, other church leaders, and students at the Union Theological Seminary south of Manila where he studies.

“They called me Pastor-Imposter,” Rev. Guerrero wrote from jail. “[They] lectured me on the ‘evils’ of communism and how the church, legal people’s organizations are ‘used’ to create trouble for criticizing the government.”

A Pattern of Killing

Since 2001 over 850 community leaders, journalists, human rights workers, labor organizers—and most notably nearly thirty church workers have been the victims of “extra-judicial” killings. Nearly 200 more have been abducted and remain missing. Sixteen of those murdered have been clergy, including one Conference Minister, or lay leaders of the UCCP, a partner church of Global Ministries.

Attacks against the Church and others who defend the rights of the poor are not new in this society where wealthy landowners control resources and power. Under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the 1970s and ’80s clergy were often targeted alongside communists and activists seeking democracy and labor rights.

When Arroyo took the Presidency in 2001 the pattern of killing and intimidation returned. Rev. Marcelino de la Cruz, a Methodist minister, was shot to death five months after Arroyo took power. Since then unidentified gunmen have killed hundreds who represent a challenge to the economic and political status quo. Labeling someone a “communist” or “leftist” creates an easy excuse for the government and local elites to target political rivals or advocates for the people.
Churches Respond to the Crisis in the Philippines

International Spotlight

Abductions of church workers are more common than murders since international attention has linked the violence more clearly to the government of Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Major human rights organizations have investigated the proliferation of targeted killings and lack of official prosecution and concluded a strong connection exists between the government and hired militants either condoned by or complicit with the military. Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have issued reports indicting the Arroyo government, and a special United Nations inquiry named Army General Jovito Palparan, now retired, as a “prime suspect” whose field of operations coincided dramatically with the pattern of extra-judicial killings throughout the country.

In 2006, a year in which 207 community leaders were murdered, U.S. and international officials and even business leaders began expressing concern about the implications against the Philippine government. In response President Arroyo was compelled to appoint a high-level commission to investigate and hopefully exonerate the government. However the Melo Commission, named for the Filipino judge who led the inquiry, proved honest and effective in its investigation of the military’s involvement. Consequently the Commission’s findings were hidden by Arroyo until the report was leaked to the public. International pressure on the Philippine government to “Stop the Killings” has since been mounting.

“We believe the kingdom of God can only be present when the hungry, sick, poor and imprisoned are cared for.”

Bishop Eliezer Pascua
United Church of Christ in the Philippines

“Let the Stones Cry Out”

In March 2007 a delegation of Filipino church leaders, including Bishop Eliezer Pascua of the UCCP and Rev. Sharon Rose Ruiz-Duremdes, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, traveled to Ottawa, Canada, New York and Washington DC, USA and to Geneva to present an exhaustive 90-page human rights report outlining the state-sponsored violence against the churches in particular.

The report, “Let the Stones Cry Out,” identifies the troubling convergence between the military-backed campaign against the poor and the government’s anti-terror policies instituted during Arroyo’s term in office. This dynamic presents a challenge for U.S. leaders who see the Philippines as an ally in the War on Terror. The Philippines, which has long been an anchor of U.S. policy and military in Asia, continues to give the Government of Philippines more military aid than any country in the region.

However the message that Bishop Pascua and the Filipino church delegation delivered in March during a hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on South Asian and Pacific was that the U.S. should ensure that its military and development aid to the Philippine government is not used for human rights abuses. The military has been using U.S. anti-terror funds to prevent the Church from speaking out for human rights and the poor. A military operation targeting the Church labels the UCCP an “Enemy of the State.” However UCCP General Secretary Bishop Eliezer Pascua replies “We believe the kingdom of God can only be present when the hungry, sick, poor and imprisoned are cared for.”
The Millennium Development Goals

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000 the largest gathering of world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals.*

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world’s time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions—income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion—while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights—the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security.

In April 2005, the Common Global Ministries Board passed *a Resolution to Recommend the Millennium Development Goals for Study and Action*. In April 2007 the Board issued a statement *One in Body and Spirit* which formally “endorses the Millennium Development Goals as a means to address global poverty and neglect, and encourages our churches and partners to seek ways to play an effective role in civil society to achieve them.” The Church plays an important role in working to meet these international targets by 2015.

1. **Goal 1: Eradicate Extreme Hunger and Poverty**
2. **Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education**
3. **Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women**
4. **Goal 4: Reduce Child Mortality**
5. **Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health**
6. **Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases**
7. **Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability**
8. **Goal 8: Develop a Global Partnership for Development**
Making Poverty History: Helping Meet the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals

Globalization is, in many ways, breaking down barriers between nations and this could be a good thing. Right now, however, its primary impact is making it easier for transnational corporations to enhance their profits by exploiting human and natural resources in developing nations.

The World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund tend to implement trade agreements which don't allow “nuisances” such as environmental protection and labor rights to interfere with transnational corporations making fast profits from unfettered investment expansion. It’s true that those who are the cheap labor are grateful for work – any work. When you are unable to put food in the mouths of your children or to get medical care for your aging parent any job is better than none. Working conditions, however, are generally exploitative. Many of these workers labor long hours for a dollar or two a day. There are usually no benefits, and if a worker unfortunately gets sick, the job may not be there for her when she gets well. Many of these companies employ children who also work long hours for very little pay, but for parents with a family that is hungry it seems more worthwhile to send a child to the factory than to send him to school.

If globalization could be about really leveling the playing field – that would be worth working for. Let’s globalize the availability of medical care, primary education, safe drinking water and food security. Let’s work for fair trade – trade that protects workers’ rights, gives them a living wage and does not interfere with local governments’ abilities to protect the human rights of its citizens. Let’s establish international environmental protection policies and labor rights so that transnational corporate profits do not rise at the cost of environmental devastation and human tragedy around the world.

If we work for justice around the globe, then we also work for peace. In a just society where everyone has access to food, water, education, jobs and human rights there will be less to fear, and hopefully less inclination to fight over limited social benefits. Human security is the best means to global security. The United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals are aimed at building a more just global community (www.un.org/millenniumgoals) and the ONE Campaign (www.theonecampaign.org) invites all of us to help the global community to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

What can you do?

1. Let your legislators know you want “fair trade” policies – ones that improve working conditions and wages for those who are growing the corn and making the tennis shoes.

2. Challenge yourself and your friends to think realistically about what this means for those of us who have had the competitive economic advantage in globalization. What will “fair trade” mean for us -- Economically? In terms of peace and justice? In terms of our faith?

3. Educate yourself about the policies of companies in which you invest your consumer dollars and commit to becoming informed about which companies are employing fair trade practices and providing living wages. Read “Shopping for a Better World” (Sierra Club Books, 1994). Visit www.responsibleshopper.org. Purchase a copy of Co-op America’s National Green Pages for $25 and learn which companies deserve your business!
4. Join the ONE Campaign toward “Making Poverty History” which advocates investing 1 percent of the U.S. Budget to foreign assistance to help globalize medical care, access to education, safe water and food security. Join at: www.theonecampaign.org/

5. Use the Global Ministries Resolution “On Globalization and Just International Relationships” as a study text in your church group and visit www.globalministries.org/advocacy for more information and resources on just economic globalization.

Progress

The world has made significant progress in achieving many of the Goals. Between 1990 and 2002 average overall incomes increased by approximately 21 percent. The number of people in extreme poverty declined by an estimated 130 million. Child mortality rates fell from 103 deaths per 1,000 live births a year to 88. Life expectancy rose from 63 years to nearly 65 years. An additional 8 percent of the developing world's people received access to water. And an additional 15 percent acquired access to improved sanitation services.

But progress has been far from uniform across the world—or across the Goals. There are huge disparities across and within countries. Within countries, poverty is greatest for rural areas, though urban poverty is also extensive, growing, and underreported by traditional indicators.

Sub-Saharan Africa is the epicenter of crisis, with continuing food insecurity, a rise of extreme poverty, stunningly high child and maternal mortality, and large numbers of people living in slums, and a widespread shortfall for most of the MDGs. Asia is the region with the fastest progress, but even there hundreds of millions of people remain in extreme poverty, and even fast-growing countries fail to achieve some of the non-income Goals. Other regions have mixed records, notably Latin America, the transition economies, and the Middle East and North Africa, often with slow or no progress on some of the Goals and persistent inequalities undermining progress on others.

Goals, targets and indicators

The internationally agreed framework of 8 goals and 18 targets was complemented by 48 technical indicators to measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. These indicators have since been adopted by a consensus of experts from the United Nations, IMF, OECD and the World Bank. For a list of goals, targets and indicators, see http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/index.htm
Global Ministries Resolution to Recommend the Millennium Development Goals for Study and Action

Common Global Ministries Board
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Adopted April 9, 2005

Widespread poverty remains a fundamental, debilitating condition of our global community. All 191 member states of the United Nations have pledged to meet a set of eight goals set out in a Declaration of the 2000 UN Millennium Summit that address poverty and related health and social problems like illiteracy, gender inequality, child mortality and environmental degradation. These eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are critical factors that must be met to ensure life, human rights, and the basic well-being for all creation as we move into an increasingly globalized world that risks leaving many behind.

The MDGs call for an effective “global partnership for development” that is based in securing new and better aid initiatives, more equitable trading rules and comprehensive debt relief. The goals are designed to be met by 2015, but five years on, their success will depend not only on governmental commitments but also on the support and collaboration of civil society groups. Many churches and church-related development organizations, including national and global ecumenical partners of Common Global Ministries, have endorsed the MDGs and undertaken efforts to identify and measure ways their development and advocacy programs meet these profound human needs targeted in the goals.

WHEREAS the Common Global Ministries Board has engaged in a study of globalization and matters of international economic justice, and

WHEREAS the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been endorsed by the National Council of Churches of Christ (USA) Governing Board on February 14, 2005, and

WHEREAS our partner church The United Reformed Church (UK) has endorsed the MDGs and invited our churches to join it in active campaigns to address issues of international economic justice that address poverty and related challenges to global development,

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Common Global Ministries Board commend the MDGs to the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ for study and considered endorsement, and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Global Education and Advocacy team continue to focus on ways to advocate for international economic justice and for global partnerships that meet development goals, and

BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Global Ministries Board consider participation in appropriate ecumenical campaigns seeking ways to achieve the MDGs, notably the MakePovertyHistory/ONE campaign and the Water for Life campaign.
One in Body and Spirit:
The Church’s Mission to the Poor,
the Millennium Development Goals,
and the ONE Campaign

Common Global Ministries Board
of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ
Adopted April 14, 2007

Our Mission to the Poor
The Church has no more critical mission than meeting the needs of the poor. In the U.S. and around the
world persons impoverished of basic needs are impoverished of human dignity. Without voice or choice in
life, too many of God’s children suffer not only the perils of circumstance, but risk degradation and death
from neglect, marginalization, or cruelty. Jesus claims the mantle of the prophet Isaiah in his ministry to
“bring good news to the poor.” The “Spirit of the Lord,” he says, “has sent me to proclaim release to the
captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s
favor” (Luke 4:18-19). As the Church is commissioned to carry on the ministry of Christ in the world, the
Common Global Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ
endeavors to meet the needs of the poor and oppressed through our ministries of Critical Presence. We
commit in our mission to “meeting God’s people and creation at the point of deepest need: spiritually,
physically, emotionally, and/or economically.”

Millennium Development Goals: A Hopeful Strategy
We share in ministries of accompaniment and presence with our ecumenical partners. Through these
relationships the Common Global Ministries Board (CGMB) is intimately mindful and prayerful of the
realities of global poverty. Economic globalization creates imbalances in trade, investment and
development that dispossess communities of sustainable livelihoods and uproot millions in search of jobs.
Sadly, as communication, commerce and technology increase the capacity to connect people and nations
around the world and provide opportunities where there once were none, the reality is that a rich few are
growing vastly richer while increasing numbers of poor are being left behind.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provide a hopeful strategy for identifying and addressing
benchmark improvements in development and human well-being by the year 2015. Despite pledges by
191 countries at the 2000 United Nations Millennium Summit, the goals have been pursued with varying
commitment by governments and civil society. Yet in communities around the world where serious
partnerships and plans have been put into place to address basic needs, advances have been
demonstrated against poverty and related health and social problems like illiteracy, gender inequality,
child mortality and environmental impairment, including lack of access to freshwater resources.

We despair that need and hopelessness persist in spite of advances in global wealth and development.
Our partners call us to engage in efforts to change the unjust and inequitable systems and structures of
our global economy. In April 2005, the CGMB passed a Resolution to Recommend the Millennium
Development Goals for Study and Action. In the resolution the Board voted to “commend the MDGs” to
our churches “for study and considered endorsement,” and in the process urged Global Ministries staff “to
advocate for international economic justice and for global partnerships that meet development goals” and to “consider participation in appropriate ecumenical campaigns seeking ways to achieve the MDGs, notably the MakePovertyHistory/ONE campaign and the Water for Life campaign.”

The Common Global Ministries Board affirms and endorses the Millennium Development Goals as a means to address global poverty and neglect, and encourages our churches and partners to seek ways to play an effective role in civil society to achieve them. Healing the physical as well as spiritual brokenness of poverty and want in our world is central to the heart of God’s will for the Church. The prophet Isaiah tells us this is the fast the Lord desires: “If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday” (Isaiah 58:9b-10). Midway through the period of MDG implementation, we call on our churches to continue to study and support efforts to meet the MDGs.

One in Body, Every ONE in Service
We are challenged in the scriptures to serve the poor: “How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action” (1 John 3:17-18). ONE: The Campaign to Make Poverty History is a concrete way to support efforts to end global poverty. Many nations have promised to commit 0.7% of their gross national product (GNP) to official development assistance (ODA), yet very few come close to that commitment. To increase foreign aid, the ONE campaign appeals not just to nations, but to individuals and organizations to do better—to commit 1% of their spending to end global poverty.

The Common Global Ministries Board encourages individuals and entities to engage in ways to end poverty. The CGMB commends the ONE campaign as an opportunity to raise awareness of global poverty and encourages governments to do their part to meet the MDGs by contributing 1% of their budgets to ODA. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ stand with the poor and work to change conditions contributing to poverty through Week of Compassion and One Great Hour of Sharing development and assistance projects, by gifts to the Disciples Mission Fund and the UCC’s Our Churches Wider Mission, through the ministry and advocacy programs of Global Ministries and our international partners, and with ecumenical partner agencies such as Church World Service and Action by Churches Together.

Every one has a part in helping to meet the basic needs so many are deprived of, and in doing so to help restore wholeness to the world. In his letter to the Church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul reminds the people that they are one, united in Christ, just as the members of a body are one, and that “if one member suffers, all suffer together with it.” (1 Corinthians 12:26a). Our global community, in which every person is created in the image of God and embodies equal dignity and worth as God’s child, suffers immeasurable pain and brokenness by the sin of division from each other and from our creator. Yet as we are each reconciled to God in Christ, we live in the hope of reconciliation one with another, and are shown a vision for renewed wholeness as God’s one creation. Together every one can make a difference to end global poverty.
**Breaking Down the Dividing Wall**  
Disciples 2005 General Assembly Sense-of-the-Assembly Resolution†

**Theological Rationale**  
For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. (Ephesians 2:14)

A central tenet of our Christian faith is the possibility for reconciliation among peoples. This human reconciliation through God's love was demonstrated by Jesus Christ, and reported to the people of Ephesus by Paul. We are called to be people of reconciliation and called to engage in the act of reconciliation. Barriers to reconciliation exist in many forms and in many places. When barriers are constructed, hostility that exists becomes exacerbated. Differences between peoples can only be addressed through bringing them together, not by adding further divisions. By breaking down walls that separate, we actively seek peace and reconciliation in the world in an attempt to follow Jesus' example. In doing so, we seek an end to hostility.

**Background Information**  
In June 2002, the State of Israel began an ambitious construction. Construction of a separation barrier also known as the "security fence" and as the "Wall"-commenced and continues to this day. According to Israeli plans, the barrier will be over 400 miles (650 kilometers) in length, at a cost not less than $1.6 million per mile ($1 million per km), and will exceed $1 billion for the entire project. The main barrier takes on many forms, including 8-meter high cement walls, 3-meter high electric and barbed wire fences, and a combination of the two. The infrastructure of the barrier that also includes a buffer zone on both sides, surveillance cameras, trenches, and observation posts compounds what Israeli human rights activist Jeff Halper calls the "matrix of control" of settlements, by-pass roads and checkpoints.

The barrier violates multiple international conventions, agreements, and resolutions, including article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter (prohibiting the use of force to violate territorial integrity), the Fourth Geneva Convention (prohibiting the destruction of land or property and the practice of collective punishment), and both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economical, Social, and Cultural Rights (defining rights of movement, property, health, education, work, and food). The barrier also is contrary to UN Security Council resolution 242 which calls for the "Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent [1967] conflict."

The barrier encroaches into the occupied Palestinian territories from along the entire perimeter of the West Bank, frequently abutting or intersecting Palestinian villages, while leaving agricultural fields, shops, and family members on the opposite, Israeli-claimed side of the border. In places like Qalqilya, the barrier loops prominently into the West Bank, enveloping entire Palestinian villages and creating ghettos with a single, narrow checkpoint guarding the entrances to these

† A parallel resolution “Tear Down the Wall” was passed at the 2005 UCC General Synod.
villages. It will result in Israel's effective annexation of roughly half of the West Bank, displacing and disconnecting Palestinians from their homes, families, neighbors, and fields. It is this encroachment and the resultant humanitarian crises that the Israeli Supreme Court addressed in its June 30, 2004 ruling, even as it found the motivation for the barrier, based on security concerns, justified.

In a more broad-reaching ruling on the barrier, the International Court of Justice ruled on the barrier's legality in a July 9, 2004 verdict. In sum, the decision rendered the construction of the barrier contrary to international law, recommended that the State of Israel end its construction and dismantle existing segments and that Israel pay reparations to those who have suffered loss as a result of the construction, and instructed the United Nations to pursue necessary means to address the illegality of the barrier.

Both Israel and the U.S. disregarded this ruling and thereby dismissed the relevance of international law. The U.S. continues to provide more aid to Israel than to any other country in the world. The impact of the visually, physically, psychologically and spiritually offensive barrier on the Palestinian people has been more devastating than abstract facts can convey.

Homes have been demolished, water supplies have been cut off, fields have been razed, villages divided, and access to the other side has been cut off. Farmers have lost their fields or lost access to them. Faith communities—including Palestinian Christians—have been denied access to houses of worship. Families have been split. According to UN estimates, 680,000 Palestinians (30% of the West Bank population) are directly affected.

The Sabeel Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem reports that "Palestinians have been separated from their places of employment, their farmlands, hospitals, schools, places of worship and their families. In the first phase of the wall alone, 100,000 trees have been uprooted; 35,000 meters of irrigation networks have been destroyed; and 75% of teachers and students living in the construction areas have had difficulty arriving at school." These effects further deteriorate the quality of life of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories.

WHEREAS, the ongoing violence has created fear, whittled away trust; and both Israel and Palestine have been deeply wounded politically, economically, physically, spiritually, socially, and psychologically; and

WHEREAS, the Israeli government, as part of its de facto policy of settlement and colonization, continues to construct the separation barrier, also known as the security fence and the wall, and plans to extend it to approximately 400 miles (650 kilometers) at a cost not less than $1.6 million per mile ($1 million per km), thereby rendering the internationally-endorsed Road Map for peace and other proposals for a negotiated two-state solution unachievable; and

WHEREAS, the wall unilaterally changes an international border without direct negotiations between partners, effectively annexes nearly 50% of Palestinian West Bank land, and destroys the contiguity of Palestinian life and land, rendering a Palestinian state unviable; and

WHEREAS, the barrier succeeds in confiscating Palestinian agricultural fields, water, and other natural resources, contributes to unemployment, and cuts populations off from such essentials of life as employment, education, health care, worship and family; and
WHEREAS, the Israeli Supreme Court has questioned the legality of the path of the separation barrier on humanitarian bases and the International Court of Justice has ruled that the barrier is, ipso facto, illegal; and

WHEREAS, the barrier has had devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians living in the occupied territories by destroying homes, fields, and mobility, severely obstructing health care, education, and even worship opportunities for Palestinians; and

WHEREAS, history demonstrates that walls build barriers and limit the opportunity for people in conflict to be in contact with each other and reconcile their differing points of view, and the U.S. has previously demanded that walls of separation be torn down;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), mindful of all previous General Assembly resolutions and all previous board resolutions and statements relating to the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and continuing to denounce violence on all sides, specifically affirms the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fully supporting the right of Israel to exist in peace with its neighbors and protect itself within secure and internationally recognized borders and at the same time asserting the same right to national sovereignty in a secure, recognized and viable state for Palestinians, who would control their borders;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon the Israeli government to cease the project to construct the barrier, tear down the segments that have already been constructed, and make reparations to those who have lost homes, fields, property, and/or lives and health due to the barrier and its effects as security for both peoples can best be achieved through an end to the occupation and efforts to encourage access and contact, rather than restricting and denying it; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly urges the U.S. government to persuade the Israeli government to abide by international law and agreements and withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly calls upon the U.S. government to engage actively, fully and fairly in a peace process that will lead to the peaceful coexistence of two states: Israel and a future Palestine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly encourages its members at all settings of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to engage in prayer, study, and dialogue about the barrier and to raise diligently with their governmental officials these concerns.


Confronting Climate Change

UCC Ecoaction Website:  http://uccecoaction.org/

A RESOLUTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
Passed by the 26th General Synod, 2007
This version is the resolution as amended.

Summary
The urgency surrounding climate change has grown significantly and, at the same time, the strength of the worldwide environmental movement among governments, corporations and citizen organizations has shown new strength. This resolution calls for responsible stewardship of God's creation, firm leadership by governments and business, energy conservation and urges all segments of the United Church of Christ to address global warming.

Theological Rationale
God calls Christians to be responsible stewards of God's creation, which includes ensuring the right of future generations to inhabit a livable planet.

Psalm 24 declares "the earth is the Lord's" and Genesis 1:31 proclaims, "God saw everything God had made, and indeed it was very good."

God's counsel to Job, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth" reminds us of the sacred character of God's creation and warns us against human efforts to exert godlike power over the earth.

Christian responsibility to God requires stewardship toward the natural world and compassion and justice toward the most vulnerable members of the human family. Those who love and serve God cannot help feeling concern that the harmful effects of climate change most severely touch the most vulnerable of the world's population.

Climate change is not simply a matter of scientific observation; it is becoming the story of God's children in need.

Background
The Twenty Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ in 1999 adopted a Resolution on Global Warming recognizing the serious environmental danger and emphasizing the biblical mandate that we act as stewards of God's creation; affirming the greater responsibility of industrial nations and especially the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; encouraging local churches, Conferences, Associations and national agencies to educate and advocate for ratification of the Kyoto Climate Change Treaty and urging us to examine our own lifestyles to assure the minimum production of wastes and emissions that threaten the environment.
All members of the United Church of Christ were urged to engage in advocacy and appeal to elected officials to support legislation that would regulate and reduce pollution and provide alternatives to the burning of fossil fuels.

Now, in 2007, as we observe the 50th anniversary of the United Church of Christ, the urgency surrounding climate change has grown significantly and, at the same time, the strength of the worldwide environmental movement among governments, corporations and citizen organizations has shown new strength, even in recent months.

Beginning in early February 2007 and nearly monthly since, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, representing 90% consensus among 2,500 scientists, has issued sobering reports, with recommendations, that the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities are driving climate change.

With the near unanimity among scientists about the causes of worldwide climate change and the new public interest in responsible care of the earth, it is appropriate, in fact imperative, that members of the United Church of Christ recommit ourselves to the care of God's precious earth and reaffirm our efforts to educate and advocate for responsible policies and practices.

Resolution
WHEREAS, the impact of global warming, as currently predicted and understood by leading scientists and scientific bodies around the world in reports of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, as well as in reports of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Academy of Sciences, will dramatically and negatively alter God's gracious gift of creation;

WHEREAS, the effects of global warming are already clearly evidenced in the melting of glaciers and shrinking of the polar caps, threatening the polar bear with extinction and the Native Peoples of the Arctic with loss of food resources, land, ancient traditions and ways of being in the world;

WHEREAS, experts speak with a profound sense of urgency and clearly state that the window of opportunity to avoid catastrophic climate change is rapidly diminishing;

WHEREAS, the predicted impact of global warming will have a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty, least developed countries, the elderly and children and those least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gases;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ admits Christian complicity in the damage human beings have caused to the earth's climate system and other planetary life systems, and urges recommitment to the Christian vocation of responsible stewardship of God's creation, and expresses profound concern for the pending environmental, economic, and social tragedies threatened by global warming, to creation, human communities and traditional sacred spaces;

WE FURTHER RESOLVE that the 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges the United States Government to respond to global warming with great urgency and firm leadership by supporting mandatory measures that reduce the absolute amount of green house gas
emissions, and in particular emissions of carbon dioxide, to levels recommended by nationally and internationally recognized and respected scientific bodies;

WE FURTHER RESOLVE that the 26th Synod of the United Church of Christ urges state and local governments to support and invest in energy conservation and, specifically, in sustainable, renewable and affordable systems of transportation, and calls on business and industry to lead in responses to global warming through increased investments in efficient and sustainable energy technologies that are economically accessible and just;

WE FURTHER RESOLVE that the 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges all segments of the Church to address global warming in their decisions and investments and in their educational and advocacy efforts;

TO THAT END, the 26th General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on the Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ, specifically Wider Church Ministries and Justice and Witness Ministries, to address the severe nature of this global warming crisis as one of the most urgent threats to humankind and, indeed, all of God's precious planet earth and that Local Church Ministries develop materials to help churches “green” their buildings.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.
Water for All

“By 2015 reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.”

United Nations Millennium Development Goal 7

www.globalministries.org/water

Global Ministries is a partner in the Church World Service Water for All campaign

2005-2015 is the United Nations Water for Life Decade

March 22 is World Water Day
Stories from Global Ministries

“Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!”

ISAIAH 55:1

Loving People Well

Collecting drinkable water can be a daunting task in rural areas of China. Recently, Anhui Seminary, located in Henan Province, identified 11 villages with severe water problems. Water was being carried great distances each day, and in some areas, residents were carrying water in plastic bags! The Seminary offered to reimburse the villages for 70 percent of the cost of a well. With the help of Global Ministries, the Seminary provided $1,000 to each village, while the remaining cost ($200–$300) was provided by the local families who were benefited by the well. Local villagers worked with technical staff to secure water and to dig the well. Each well serves from 500 to 2,000 people, depending on the size of the village.

The communities have named their wells, “Loving People” for the generous care of so many, and have numbered them “Loving People Well 1, Loving People Well 2” and so on. Word of the wells has spread, and now new villages seek assistance in building wells. To date, more than fifty wells have been built. While some of the villages have local churches, Christianity is still a minority religion in China. Through the Loving People Well program, villagers not only gain access to clean water, they also have the opportunity to experience Christ’s love.

Let us pray that we continue to discover ways to express generous love for people every day.

Water for All!

www.globalministries.org/water
“O God, my soul thirsts for you... as in a dry and weary land where no water is.”

Psalm 63:1

Global Warming and a Lack of Water

The tiny village of Gondegaon, India, knows little about global warming, but the village is living with warming consequences. Weather cycles there have always been extreme — droughts and monsoons — but the extremes have become more dramatic recently as a result of global warming. Women and children have traditionally been the water carriers. A severe drought has required them to go farther and farther for water — preventing many children from attending school and reducing the income women can earn from agricultural work.

Global Ministries provided a grant to be used for water resource development in rural, drought-stricken communities like Gondegaon. Some villages chose to clean out old wells that had filled with debris over centuries of use. Gondegaon installed pumps, pipelines and a concrete tank in the village. Now women can more easily provide the water they need for their households and are able to spend more time working in the fields to support their families. Children aren’t needed to haul water and can go to school instead. Village leaders have learned that they have the ability to improve their circumstances and have begun to think about what other improvements they might make.

O God, we are grateful for the dear water we have, and that we are helping to provide it to those who have none.

You make the difference...

The prayers and help you provide through your local congregations make possible the work and witness of GLOBAL MINISTRIES, which is supported by Disciples Mission Fund of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) of the United Church of Christ.
“We shall not finally defeat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, or any of the other infectious diseases that plague the developing world until we have also won the battle for safe drinking water, sanitation and basic health care.”

Kofi Annan, UN General Secretary

Did you know?

♦ Over 1.2 billion people do not have access to clean water.
♦ Over 2.6 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation.
♦ 1.8 million people die every year from diarrhoeal diseases.
♦ 1.3 million people die every year from malaria - and 90% of them are under the age of 5.
♦ The UN has declared 2005-2015 to be the “Water for Life” decade.

The 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Porto Alegre, Brazil in February 2006, adopted the statement “On Water for Life” (PIC 02-5), affirming access to water as a basic human right:

Water is a symbol of life. The Bible affirms water as the cradle of life, an expression of God’s grace in perpetuity for the whole of creation (Gen 2:5ff). It is a basic condition for all life on Earth (Gen 1:2ff) and is to be preserved and shared for the benefit of all creatures and the wider creation.

The Assembly calls upon all Christians and Churches to work together to provide access to water for all people.

What YOU can do to help!

♦ Pray for those without safe water to drink and use.
♦ Celebrate World Water Day on March 22 in your church or community. Copy this card as a bulletin insert or handout.
♦ Know where your water comes from – including bottled water – and use only what you need.
♦ Support public access to water for all of God’s people.
♦ Support water development programs worldwide – contact Global Ministries for ways to help.

Learn more at www.globalministries.org/water
Troubled Waters utilizes faith-based perspectives to lift up the importance of eco-justice concerning the world’s water supply. While most may view it as a study tool in their local house of worship, it is appropriate for viewing in interfaith or ecumenical settings. Alternate venues for the video include “seeker services” or community settings.

Preparation

Preview the video, if possible, well in advance of the group discussion. Think through applications of the video’s major issues of water pollution, access and privatization for your locale. You may wish to invite several local authorities on water issues to join the discussion group. Research possible ways for your group to volunteer in local/regional or global efforts to conserve water or protect the public’s water rights.

Ensure the space is appropriate for both viewing the video and discussing it. Test the equipment ahead of time. Have markers and a dry-erase board or newsprint pad available for use during the discussion. You may wish to provide paper and pencils to the participants so they may take notes as they view the video.

Viewing the video

Viewing time: 60 minutes. At the halfway point there is a brief fade-to-black screen. Decide ahead of time if you will show the video in its entirety in one setting. You may wish to stop the video at several points in order to discuss each segment.

If you decide to view Troubled Waters in one setting, be clear about how you want to focus the discussion, and how much time you have for discussion. If you choose to split the film into more than one discussion meeting, think through how to recap the video and re-start discussion.

Introducing the discussion

Choose which of the following discussion starters you will use after viewing to introduce the group to one another to encourage them to share their faith, and to gain a deeper understanding of the issues the video raises.

Ask each participant to introduce themselves to the group by name and complete this sentence: “Water is _______.” Or ask each person to recall a meaningful water memory.

As people introduce themselves, ask them to name something from the video they were surprised to learn.

Faith perspectives

Troubled Waters opens with diverse persons stating the importance of water from their faith perspectives. Give examples of songs, stories or passages from your own tradition that focus on water. What symbolic qualities of water do they imply?

The video starts with the issues but from “the lens of faith.” Water is a gift from God for all. Can this premise change how you think about water usage?

One religious leader quotes Mohammed as saying that “people are partners in three things that are basic to human life: water, grass (on which animals feed), and fire. People must share these things that they cannot do without.” If we accept this starting point for interfaith dialogue, what other eco-justice concerns might we partner to work on together? How might such partnership assist us in understanding each other?

Meditate on the text, “Let justice roll down like an ever-flowing stream.” What qualities of water offer a glimpse of how justice works? How would you paint or sketch the stream named “Justice”?

Pollution, access to drinking water, privatization

Does your study group live within or outside the Great Lakes area? If you were a member of Congress, how might you characterize the pros and cons of a plan to limit use of Great Lakes water to the eight states and two provinces within its catchment area? Do you put more weight upon individual rights or upon the rights of all humanity?

Does your community have new housing developments sprouting up where agricultural lands once flourished? How do these communities affect the watershed? Write a collective “prayer of confession” about the ripple effect of our actions and lack of awareness of their effects that speaks about our culture’s need for bigger houses and greener lawns.

Do we take our clean tap water for granted? In the “developing world,” it is usually young girls who must walk as many as four miles a day to obtain a daily ration of fresh water — less than three gallons a person. How might industrial water over-use and environmental impacts like global warming affect the availability of fresh water around the world? Learn how organizations you support might be working with local partners to develop water systems or provide emergency water supplies in situations of critical need.

Where water is scarce, such as in the Middle East, who controls the water can become the basis of conflict. Are you familiar with other situations where neighboring villages or cross-border communities compete or even battle for scarce water sources?

Sometimes fresh water resources exist but are made inaccessible to the people who need it. The video briefly mentions a “water war” in the year 2000 in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Have someone paint a more complete picture about that effort to block the privatization of water rights.
List all the reasons why people in your group have drunk bottled water. Do these actions make you complicit in “taking the people into slavery by water?” as one speaker puts it?

Do you know what national corporation manufactures the brand of bottled water you most often drink? Do you know where that water comes from, who gets paid for those water rights and what the resulting conditions are for the locals whose water table is affected? If not, assign research and report the findings.

Troubled Waters shows examples of confrontation and cooperation. List examples of partnership and cooperation you recall from the video. Add to the list any other examples of which people in your discussion group have knowledge. Can you reach agreement about one or two concrete ways your group can encourage or support any of these existing partnerships? If so, you may be like Moses listening to God’s discerning voice and striking the rock to bring forth water in the desert.

Explore action steps

Conserve at home: Fix leaky faucets, run the dishwasher only when full or wash dishes by hand, take shorter showers, buy bottled water less frequently, adopt landscaping practices that use less water. What are some other household water conservation efforts? Ask participants to pick one and commit to it for at least one month. Together plan a light-hearted way of holding each other accountable for their commitment to conserve.

Partner with local activists: Have the group develop a list of local organizations that address one or more of the issues raised in the video. If they cannot name many such groups, assign this task as “homework” for the group. Plan a second discussion group meeting for the purpose of sharing information and discerning a concrete task for the group to undertake in support of water purity or access for all. Potential partners might include local high schools, colleges, scout troops or environmental organizations.

Educate yourself and your organization: Ask a research librarian to collect a list of books, Internet websites and videos in addition to the resources listed below. Check for United Nations, denational, and National Council of Churches or World Council of Churches resources. Plan a service of worship or study opportunity within your organization or faith community to raise awareness about water issues.

Discern God’s call for justice: Venture to look for a deeper commitment. Explore ways to stand in solidarity with those whose right for water is denied. Plan ways of affecting government actions that limit the privatization of water. Support organizations that partner with the water projects and advocacy goals of community groups in other countries.

Additional Resources

Worship and Bible Study


When was it that we saw you ... thirsty? One Great Hour of Sharing & Planning and Resource Guide. Cleveland United Church of Christ; Wider Church Ministries, 2006. Water-themed educational activities, worship and preaching resources related to the ecumenical offering and the development and assistance programs it supports around the world.

Worship With the World: Water. Elkhart, Ind.: Church World Service, 2005. A sampling of voices of the thirsty people worldwide that the relief and development organization Church World Service supports, alongside prayer, scripture and liturgical suggestions.

Background Resources

Amer, Hussein A. and Aaron Wolf, eds. Water in the Middle East: A Geography of Peace. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000. These essays focus on political and development challenges of sharing the limited resources of the Jordan River. Cooperation as a framework for peace is explored.

Barlow, Maude and Tony Clarke. Blue Gold. New York: New Press, 2002. Two of the leading advocates for a more just use of water provide a chilling and provocative account of the state of water use and workable options to the present situation.


Olivera, Oscar. Cochabamba: Water War In Bolivia. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2004. A personal account of the people’s rebellion against privatization of water and sanitation services in Cochabamba in 2000. Olivera was one of the principal forces that led to a reversal of the decision to privatize.

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UCC One Great Hour of Sharing™ <ogohsucc.org>

Global Ministries, United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), <globalministries.org/water>

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