



Economic Justice Issues

Explanations and
Suggested Action Steps
for Key Issues

**A guide to Church teaching and action steps
for congregations and individual activists on
some of the economic justice issues facing
people in the United States**

Prepared by the
Advocacy Committee of the
Episcopal Network
for Economic Justice

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Dear Reader,

In this document, you will find brief papers on 23 issues currently facing American society and the Episcopal Church. Each follows a similar format: explanation, church teaching, and suggested action steps. The papers were written by a diverse group of our members and ENEJ recommends them for your consideration and comment without necessarily endorsing all their content. We do not claim to have covered all the vital issues and welcome your feedback and participation in making this set of papers more accurate and complete.

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- 2) The Real Threat to Family Values*
- 3) Why the Economy Isn't Working for Workers*
- 4) The Global Economy*
- 5) Making Sense of the Recession*
- 6) The Church and Its Money*

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We invite you to join our network, receive our newsletter and participate in our interactive listserve. Join us at www.enej.org or write to us at meamon@aol.com (Mike Maloney, staff) or sanmateo921@yahoo.com (Dianne Aid, President).

Dianne Aid, TSSF

President



TABLE OF CONTENTS

First Edition (December 2005)

#1 Predatory Lending	D-5
#2 Immigration: Images and Reality	D-8
#3 Taxes and Economic Justice	D-11
#4 Outsourcing: Economic Efficiency or Global Exploitation?	D-14
#5 Racism and Economic Oppression	D-17
#6 Fair Trade	D-20
#7 Affordable Housing	D-23
#8 Living Wages	D-27
#9 Hunger	D-32

Second Edition (February 2008)

#10 Crisis of Working Poverty	D-36
#11 Immigration Update	D-38
#12 Socially Responsible Investments	D-41

Third Edition (February 2009)

#13 Racism and Economic Justice	D-47
#14 The Effect of the Price of Gas on the Working Family	D-52
#15 Economic Impact of the War	D-55
#16 Environmental Justice	D-59
#17 Fresh Water and Economic Justice	D-63
#18 Children's Health	D-68

#19 The Millennium Development Goals	D-72
#20 Prisons and Incarceration.....	D-77
#21 The Economic Impact of the Prison-Industrial Complex.....	D-84
#22 Health Care Policy and Economic Justice	D-88
#23 Access to Fresh Local Food	D-94

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Paper # 1

Predatory Lending

What is wrong

Predatory lending refers to the misleading packaging of high fees, costly credit insurance and other charges into loans to unsophisticated borrowers. These loans are often compounded by refinancing that, instead of benefiting borrowers, primarily generates fees for lenders.

Predatory lending strips billions in wealth from low-income consumers and communities in the U.S. each year. Borrowers lose an estimated \$9.1 billion annually due to predatory mortgages, \$3.4 billion from payday loans, and \$3.5 billion from other lending abuses, such as overdraft loans, excessive credit card debt, and tax refund loans.

A debtor's payments can rise unexpectedly as one lender sells the loan to another company. Due to the compounding of high interest, these loans may never be paid off. In the case of high interest home equity loans, the lenders foreclose when the borrower fails to pay, driving debtors out of their homes.

Predatory financial activities come in various forms:

- Payday loans and cash leasing services that can charge interest at an annual percentage rate of up to 390%.
- Instant check cashing services which include high fees for cashing checks.
- Rent to own TVs, appliances, furniture, etc, again with high and often poorly-disclosed interest rates.
- Car title loans which combine the services of loan sharks with a pawn shop for automobiles.
- Predatory and sub-prime home loans, high interest home equity loans, and mortgages with balloon payments.
- Industrial loan and thrift companies
- Tax preparation agencies that charge high rates for loans on anticipated tax refunds.
- Banks and lenders that sell loans borrowers do not need.

One of the most egregious—and fastest growing—examples of predatory lending, the payday loan industry, emerged from rural Tennessee in 1993. That year there were 200 sites; now there are over 22,000 nationwide. 105 million households used payday lenders in 2003.

The payday loan industry has persuaded 37 states to legalize its practices. Their political action committees make campaign contributions to state legislators in an effort to gain access and influence their votes. Hired lobbyists work to get favorable legislation passed. Even respectable U.S. banks such as Wells Fargo

and JP Morgan Chase help fund the payday loan industry by extending their credit lines.

Who is affected?

Payday lenders target the working poor with bank accounts and jobs, who live from payday to payday and have an annual income of \$25,000 (2002).

Military servicemen are particular targets. Predatory lenders of all kinds cluster around military bases to prey on military personnel; bad debts could cause dismissal from military service.

Other targets are the poor who lack access to bank loans, credit cards or wealthy relatives. High risk borrowers who cannot get loans from mainstream financial institutions often turn to predatory institutions. Others caught in these loans are the elderly, minorities and the poor. Loss of jobs, illness, and emergencies are reasons for seeking these loans. Unfortunately, some do not know how to budget or indulge in impulse spending.

Our faith

In 2001, ECUSA's executive council passed a resolution instructing the treasurer to vote in favor of all shareholder resolutions asking financial companies to avoid underwriting and servicing predatory loans. During the 2002-03 shareholder season, ECUSA made affirmative proxy votes on linking executive compensation and progress on predatory lending with Citigroup.

The Bible has many references against usury and oppressing the poor.

"If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them." -Exodus 22:25

"Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from them...You shall not lend them [your kin] money at interest taken in advance..." --Leviticus 25:36-37.

Remedies

1. Churches can create credit unions or participate in ecumenical and secular efforts to establish credit unions and wealth-building strategies such as individual development accounts.
2. Congregations can conduct financial seminars on money and budgeting, taxes and tax refunds, credit and predatory lending.
3. Congregations can monitor predatory lending PACs to determine who gets their money, and publicize the results.

4. Dioceses can become directly involved. For example, the Diocese of New York has proposed a three-pronged anti-predatory lending initiative to:
- Establish a \$1 million fund for small and medium-sized loans to homeowners for repairs and other critical needs. Funds will come from the Diocese, ECUSA's Economic Justice Loan Fund, and Seedco, one of the nation's leading community innovators and lenders.
 - Recruit commercial banks to refinance existing predatory loans.
 - Participate, with other community organizations, in an educational campaign to help homeowners locate and access non-predatory sources of loans.

The Diocese hopes their initiative can have a significant impact on foreclosures and other tactics of predatory lenders now operating in upper Manhattan and the Bronx.

5. Congregations and dioceses can join with others to support legislation that curbs the activities of predatory lenders. Episcopal and United Methodist churches in South Carolina worked to get a good predatory lending law in South Carolina. There have been efforts to pass a law in Missouri and in Tennessee. Local governments in Cincinnati and other cities have had to respond because predatory lending causes blighted neighborhoods.

Verna M. Fausey
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Paper #2

Immigration: Images and Reality

The following comments and stories of individuals come from undocumented Mexican nationals who are living and working in the United States. Immigration policy varies according to country of origin. This writer's experience is with several Mexican communities, and it is from this experience that I share.

In virtually every restaurant kitchen, housekeeping staffs of hotels and airports, in every field and orchard in the western United States, Mexican and Central American workers fill the employee rolls, working long, underpaid hours, often sporadically, yet not free to take other jobs. The vast majority of these workers are undocumented, working in jobs American-born workers and legal immigrants do not want.

Family Life

Migrant life is extremely difficult on family members. Many migrant workers live in conditions beyond belief. Several years ago, advocacy groups in eastern Washington tried to encourage employers to provide some temporary housing. The employers even rejected a tent city, and one large employer took the stance that his responsibility ended with providing employment. Affected employees included children working in the fields. Landlords refused to rent to migrant families because they could not sign a lease. Churches rallied to house 62 individuals (including young children) within church buildings. It took several years to begin to develop housing resources for families who harvested and processed the crops in this farming and "friendly" community.

Many former migrant workers have settled down in the United States, desiring to provide a more predictable life for their children. They have become home and business owners, have bank accounts, participate on community boards and action groups, and are members of churches, often taking leadership roles in these groups. Some serve in professional capacities in the banking and education professions. They live under the shadow, however, of being deported at a moment's notice for something so minor as a traffic stop, which begins a domino effect eventually bringing them to the attention of U.S. Immigration Services. Families have been separated for weeks while a deported parent attempts to re-enter the United States, paying up to \$5000 to get across the border.

Employment and Benefits

Miguel worked for a sixty-hour week under the hot June sun cutting asparagus. His pay was \$80.00 in cash. Miguel was part of a crew. The crew leader was a documented worker and the only one to receive a paycheck. Miguel and the rest of the crew were paid from the trickle down of the crew leaders check. Miguel

was paid only for the asparagus that went to the market fresh and received nothing for what he cut that was used for canned and frozen products.

Undocumented workers who do receive paychecks have the standard social security, income tax and unemployment taxes withheld. Most will never be able to collect their social security benefits, and they do not qualify for unemployment benefits. Fake social security cards and “green cards” (authorization-to-work cards) cost around \$300 at weekend swap meets and other locations. An individual can work with the social security number for about a year before the records show it to be not valid. The money that was withheld goes into a general Social Security Trust Fund. Undocumented families are not eligible for any type of public assistance.

How does our faith inform us for action?

There are many Biblical stories of immigration and migration, from Abraham, Joseph and the Exodus to the exile in Babylon. Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to respect the dignity of every human being. Undocumented workers are often victims of racism, poverty and violence. The Church has a call to advocacy on their behalf.

General Convention has adopted at least nine resolutions in the past twenty years addressing refugee and immigrant rights. In 2003, the Convention called for expansion of the temporary worker program to include all employed immigrants. In 1997, a General Convention resolution asked Episcopalians to advocate that needy immigrants not be denied benefits.

Faith communities are often the first places immigrants turn for help and community in a strange land. It is a place where they find compassion and the familiar. In many dioceses, growth in churches is coming from Hispanic and other immigrant communities. I have been involved with many Bible studies around the Exodus as an Education For Ministry mentor. I have also been a part of Bible study groups with Mexican immigrants who can relate first hand to wandering across a desert (as they did when they crossed the U.S. – Mexican border). It is a very powerful witness. Newcomers enrich our liturgies. The immigrant community has much to give to mainstream communities.

Together as brothers and sisters we are called to advocate for changes that allow persons who are working and contributing to our communities and supporting families in their home countries to live a life of productivity and peace, where there is justice and hope for all.

The last general amnesty for undocumented immigrants was in 1986. We can look for ways to advocate for amnesty through immigrant rights groups in our own communities and through communication with our elected officials. We can become familiar with rights immigrants are granted. The American Civil Liberties Union has published a short card in English and Spanish informing immigrants

and others of their rights, for instance, police officers do not have a right to ask for proof of legal status in the U.S. (there has been recent pressure to change this law, however). In the shadow of September 11, 2001, immigrants are under scrutiny, and profile stops have increased. The market for jobs that the undocumented fill is ever present, and their ability to maintain those jobs has become greater risk as the border inspections become more militant, and the cost of “coyotes” (those who smuggle people across the border) increases.

The image I close with is from several years ago. I had been with a family who had just crossed the border. Walking across at Imperial Beach, California, they had only the wet clothes on their backs, no money and three small children. Some friends questioned me as to the ethics of helping people to break the law. I imagined a gate at the border and asked myself whether Jesus would open the gate, or slam it shut...

Dianne Aid
Seattle, Washington

Paper #3

Taxes and Economic Justice

In 2003, Alabama Governor Bob Riley, a conservative Republican, began a push for a radical overhaul of the state's tax code that would have increased taxes on upper-income Alabamans while reducing the burden on the state's poor. Riley had a long record in Congress as a tax-cutter and came to the Alabama state house with strong conservative credentials, so his tax proposals surprised his supporters and opponents alike. Where had this sudden conversion come from?

It came, in large part, from an article published in the Alabama Law Review by Susan Pace Hamill, a University of Alabama law professor who was working on a graduate degree in theology during a sabbatical. Her article, titled "An Argument for Tax Reform Based on Judeo-Christian Ethics," argued that Alabama's tax system was not only unfair but, from a Christian perspective, immoral; it so burdened low-income families with excessive taxation while limiting taxes on the well-to-do that it flouted the clear ethical teachings of the Bible to do justice to the poor. Riley (who is a Southern Baptist) used much of the same moral and biblical language in his campaign for tax reform.

Ultimately, Riley's proposal was defeated in a referendum, with the state's wealthy interests as well as the Christian Coalition of Alabama leading the opposition to reform. But the experience raises an important truth for us to consider as both Americans and as Christians: our current tax system is unjust.

What is wrong

Susan Pace Hamill, the author of the article that impressed Governor Riley, focused only on Alabama's state tax system, which she persuasively identified as the most regressive and unjust in the country. But at the federal level as well as in many other states, the tax code burdens poor and middle-class Americans while giving huge breaks and advantages to the wealthy. Here are just a few examples:

- Since the 1960s, the top corporate and income tax rates (i.e. taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals) have dropped sharply, while the payroll tax (which hits the poor and middle class hardest) has more than doubled. Today only 7% of federal government revenue comes from corporate taxes, while 40% comes from payroll taxes.
- Taxes on wages, which is the only source of income for most working- and middle-class Americans, are higher than the tax on capital gains, which is the primary source of income only of the wealthiest Americans. The federal tax code is gradually being rewritten to shift taxes completely away from wealth (with cuts in taxes on capital gains, investment dividends, and estates), and onto wages and work.

- The 6.2% payroll tax that funds the Social Security system applies to only the first \$90,000 of a person's income. Breaking through that barrier (which 90% of Americans never do) gives you the equivalent of a 6.2% tax break on everything else you earn. For millionaires, the payroll tax barely even registers, while for many working Americans it is a bigger burden than the federal income tax itself.
- Because of requirements written into federal law, individuals and families claiming the Earned Income Tax Credit (a credit for the working poor) are audited by the IRS three times more often than wealthy individuals, and eight times more than business partnerships.
- The federal tax code is full of loopholes available only to people wealthy enough to hire the lawyers and accountants who can find (or create) them. While most Americans pay their taxes automatically through employer withholding, rich investors and business owners can shift money around until it is practically impossible to trace and tax.
- Tax (and service) cuts at the federal level are increasing the pressure on states to supply and pay for necessary services. Unfortunately, state and local taxes tend to be even worse than the federal system in hitting the poor and working class much harder than the well off.

What can we do

- Most importantly, pay attention! People generally think that tax policy is too technical or too complex or just too boring to understand. That's exactly what those who benefit from the current unjust system love to hear. But you don't have to be a CPA to understand that a tax that's 6.2% on someone making \$15,000, and 0.04% on someone making \$15 million, is unfair. (That's how the Social Security payroll tax works.) Likewise, our current tax policies mean that effective tax rates are going down for wealthy people and up for middle-class families. That's not hard to understand--and, if you're concerned about economic justice, it shouldn't be boring--even if the details about it are complicated. With the current ideological direction of the federal government, the system is likely to get even worse in the near future, so keep on top of what is going on in Washington and in your state.
- Spread the word. Incorporate discussion of the tax system into parish education programs. Speak about taxation in terms of biblical justice--Susan Pace Hamill's law review article is an excellent source for biblical references and theological arguments on tax justice. This is a message that should especially resonate for middle-class families: it's primarily they who will pay more and benefit less as taxes are shifted away from the wealthy.

- Find out about “tax clinics” or other free resources in your community to refer low-income people for tax help. Many law and business schools and nonprofit organizations run these volunteer-based services; if there isn’t one in your community, look into setting one up. Many low-income people don’t claim refunds or tax credits they are eligible for (such as the Earned Income Tax Credit), or they spend money on tax preparers to do something no more complicated than filling out a 1040EZ. (These paid preparers also push “instant refunds,” which are actually short-term loans with poorly disclosed but shockingly high fees and interest rates.) Basic education and free advice can save poor families a lot of money at tax time.
- Unlike the direct actions that we can take on many economic justice issues (establishing credit unions or CDC’s, for example), we can’t set up our own alternative to the tax system. This means it is vitally important to make demands on the politicians who write tax law, and hold them accountable. Let your political representatives know that we consider tax fairness a moral imperative.

More resources

- The best book on the realities of the current tax code, and written in very clear English, is David Cay Johnston’s *Perfectly Legal: The Covert Campaign to Rig our Tax System to Benefit the Super Rich—and Cheat Everybody Else* (Penguin, 2003). Johnston has also published an essay on the topic in *Sojourners* magazine (April 2005): <http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0504&article=050410>
- United for a Fair Economy (the producers of ENEJ’s economic justice education units) has resources on a wide range of economic policy issues: <http://faireconomy.org>
- UFE also offers questions and answers about tax policy and tax fairness: http://www.faireconomy.org/econ/state/Talking_Taxes/index.html
- Susan Pace Hamill’s paper “An Argument for Tax Reform Based on Judeo-Christian Ethics” is available at: <http://www.law.ua.edu/pdf/hamill-taxreform.pdf>
- The following three organizations are think-tanks focusing on taxation issues--good for anyone looking for more technical or in-depth analysis of tax issues or for information on specific topics:
 - Citizens for Tax Justice: <http://www.ctj.org>
 - Tax Policy Center: <http://www.taxpolicycenter.org>
 - Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: <http://www.cbpp.org>

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Paper # 4

Outsourcing: Economic Efficiency or Global Exploitation?

What is outsourcing?

In recent years, outsourcing (especially offshore outsourcing) has become a significant hot-button issue with implications both to the United States economy as well as to the welfare of the American worker.

The simple definition of outsourcing is an arrangement in which one company provides services for another company that could also be performed in-house. As taught to any MBA student, outsourcing certain functions makes good business sense because it enables a corporation to focus on its core competencies. As a result, outsourcing business functions such as payroll processing to a company which specializes in payroll processing makes sense much in the same way that hiring a lawn care service might be a reasonable way for a family to get their grass cut while attending to more pressing family and work responsibilities.

More and more, corporations are outsourcing an ever broader array of functions to suppliers in successively cheaper locales. No longer are these the non-core support services that had been part of the traditional argument. As in earlier decades when companies moved production from labor union strongholds to places in the Sunbelt where labor unions were scarce, employers looked to reap even more lucrative cost savings beyond the borders of the US. The current era of offshore outsourcing had begun.

Why is outsourcing thought to be a good thing?

Traditionally, the same issues that applied to the simple case of a company outsourcing its payroll operations applied to entire industries. A nation could argue that moving the production of a commodity or finished product to another country made sense if that country possessed more plentiful resources for producing it. This certainly had been the argument for international trade. Why should Japan, with limited land resources, try to grow its own wheat, when Russia or the United States have superior land resources for this? In the world of the global corporation, multinational corporations own subsidiaries all around the world that can produce products by using the best resources at the most competitive prices. The consumer is then able to purchase goods and services at the best prices.

Moreover, a nation with vast human resources is able to employ its workers as the need for traditional agricultural employment wanes through improved farming

technologies. These jobs are often a step up from what would be available if the industries remained in the more developed world.

Contrary to the theory, however, in the real world not quite everybody wins.

What are some of the costs of outsourcing?

From the American perspective, the most immediate result of outsourcing is the loss of jobs in many of our communities. A plant closing can devastate a community, not only leaving many of the residents jobless, but also reducing the tax base, threatening schools and government operations.

One could argue that from a global perspective, one job lost is another gained. Once all of this frictional unemployment is resolved, the worker who lost her job will be retooled with new skills for the “new economy.” In the 1990s, this proved to be true for many workers when it seemed that job losses were eclipsed by large numbers of new jobs in the growing service economy.

But, also from a global perspective, the new job that placed the old job looks very different. It is rarely possible to replace one job with one costing the company a fraction as much without sacrificing worker safety, environmental standards, or human rights. The criticism of these effects is not limited to the United States:

Ashim Roy, the President of several unions representing General Electric workers in Gujarat in western India, said, “The jobs that multinational companies destroy in the US outnumber the jobs they create in India, as workers are working harder and longer. The companies create insecure jobs at near-poverty level wages with inhuman working conditions. We want to work with our sisters and brothers in the US and elsewhere to prevent exploitation and guarantee jobs with fair wages and human dignity for all.”¹

Thus, this “efficiency” is really coming at a huge cost borne not by the corporation, but by society-at-large.

What has the Church said about outsourcing?

At its General Conventions of the Episcopal Church, there have not been resolutions specifically on the subject of outsourcing. But we can apply what’s been stated regarding worker justice issues at a global level.

We need to frame this discussion in a new light: Rather than the American worker vs. the workers of the world, we need to see this as a conflict between the needs of the global worker against the needs of the global corporation.

¹ Sreekha, N.C., 12/03/2004, “Anti-Outsourcing Cry Comes from Indian Labor Unions”, *India Post, News Report*, 12/03/2004.

What should we be asking our legislators to do?

Push for local, regional, national and international labor standards so that the workers in one part of the world don't possess an unfair competitive advantage based on the exploitation of human and natural resources.

Ask that corporations receive tax incentives when they produce good jobs for workers and risk losing these benefits when they export jobs, especially to places which compromise human rights, health and safety standards and environmental protections.

What should we do?

"We have met the enemy... and he is us" – Walt Kelly, creator of *Pogo*

Sometimes we forget that we are the shareholders who demand higher returns on our investment. We are also the consumers who shop around for the best prices. We should always consider a corporation's labor practices and their affinity toward outsourcing when determining whether to buy their products, or to own shares of their stock.

We should also encourage our parishes and dioceses to carefully invest endowment funds, taking corporate policies regarding outsourcing and worker justice into account.

Jeff Dey
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Paper #5

Racism and Economic Oppression

The term “racism” covers a multitude of sins. These include prejudiced attitudes, intentional discriminatory behaviors, and social structures that, without anyone’s active intent, automatically confer advantages on whites and disadvantages on people of color. Each of these components of racism is destructive on its own; together they create and perpetuate inequalities of many kinds, including economic inequality.

Public opinion surveys show a change in whites’ racial attitudes over the last fifty years. White respondents are less likely to say that African Americans, Latinos and others are inherently inferior, but are more likely to attribute these groups’ poverty to a lack of motivation or work ethic. This is because white Americans increasingly believe that discrimination is a thing of the past. The most common “racist” attitude among whites today, then, is a state of *denial*.

Has discrimination disappeared?

Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibits the more intentional forms of discrimination in employment, housing, education and so on. This legislation has undoubtedly diminished the incidence of this type of discrimination, but has not come close to eradicating it. Audit studies, in which pairs of job candidates or housing applicants of different races are matched in terms of qualifications, repeatedly and consistently show continued discrimination by employers and landlords (see e.g. HUD’s 2000 Housing Discrimination Study). Lawsuits have also uncovered many examples of deliberate discrimination: in 1996, Texaco agreed to a \$176 million settlement when a secret recording revealed executives belittling African Americans and conspiring to destroy documents pertaining to an earlier discrimination lawsuit.

Even more pervasive, and easier to miss, is a more subtle form of structured inequality referred to as “institutional discrimination.” This occurs when practices that seem racially neutral produce racially negative consequences. Examples abound: a factory moves from the inner-city to the suburbs, and public transportation linking the two locations is inadequate, so inner-city residents – disproportionately people of color – have lost those jobs. Our tendency to fund schools with local property taxes means that children in the poorest neighborhoods attend the worst schools, where they’re ill-prepared for college. Requiring job applicants to have a college degree appears racially neutral, but disproportionately screens out certain nonwhite groups, since they’re less likely than whites to have a college education.

The insidious thing about institutional discrimination is that it does not require discriminatory *intent*. No bigots are needed; all that’s needed is that we continue

to do business as usual, without examining too closely the consequences of our conventional practices.

The fruit of discrimination

But the consequences are staggering: the median family income for a black family in 1950 was 54% of the median white family's income; even by 2000 it had grown to only 64%. Over 23 percent of African Americans live below the poverty level, compared to 5.3 percent of non-Hispanic whites, and with the exception of a few years, black unemployment rates have been at least double those for whites since World War II. For Latinos, the picture is not much better: median family income in 2000 was 59 percent that of whites, with 20.2 percent of families under the poverty level, and unemployment rates twice those of non-Hispanic whites.

Further, while Asian Americans are often lumped together as a "model minority," many groups within this category are struggling: 42 percent of Cambodians and 62 percent of Hmongs, for example, live below the poverty line. Even more established, "successful" Asian groups such as Chinese, Filipino and Korean Americans have poverty rates higher than those of whites.

Our faith

Jesus said that the entire life of faith hangs on love of God and love of neighbor. Challenged as to who constitutes one's neighbor (Luke 10:29), he made it clear that everyone is included, even and especially those we would most like to exclude. So we know who our neighbors are, but what exactly does it mean to *love* them?

In his book *Prophetic Reflections*, Cornel West argues that love is not principally a set of feelings, but a set of commitments. The first is to the premise of *imago dei* – that is, that all people are made in the image of God, which confers on them dignity and worth independent of their social status. The second commitment is to *analysis*: we cannot claim to love our neighbors if we can't be bothered to understand their problems. But analysis without *action* – the third commitment – is dead.

Action

What kind of action can the Church take against the economic and other consequences of racism? The problem is too large to be addressed by a simple set of steps, but the Episcopal Church has already recognized two points as fundamental. First, in 1994 General Convention passed a resolution committing to "strengthening the recruitment, retention, and education of people of color for the ordained ministry," and we need to continue to recruit both ordained and lay people of color to positions of leadership. The greater the range of perspectives

present in our conversations about race, the more productive they will be. But people of color need to be equal participants in these conversations, not tokens, and not “representatives” of some imagined consensus within their communities. For white people to define the issues and determine the actions to be taken “on behalf of” people of color is not the way forward, so diversifying our leadership is of the utmost importance.

Second, in 2000 General Convention passed a resolution requiring all leaders in the Church, both lay and ordained, to undergo anti-racism training. These programs are critically important, not only to raising awareness about racial issues, but to opening dialogue on matters that we usually prefer to avoid. For these programs to have a real impact, however, they must go beyond the “airing and sharing” of feelings about race, and include concrete, substantive information about the status of racial groups and the state of race relations, both in the Church and in the nation. Given that a major barrier to racial progress in our time is the denial by so many that we have a problem, presenting evidence of that problem should be a priority.

How do we love our neighbors? By seeing Christ in them, and doing for “the least” of his brothers and sisters what we claim to be willing to do for him. We need the intellectual integrity to work at understanding our neighbors’ problems, and we need the moral courage to take action based on that understanding. In short, we must take our neighbor seriously; our Lord has made it clear that *he* will take it personally.

Susan Pitchford
Seattle, Washington

Paper #6

Fair Trade: A Socially and Economically Just Way of Global Trading

Global trade

Every society has engaged in trade and the societies that rose to prominence were those that mastered the art of commerce. Historically, those people and societies with access to the best trade routes, the best land and the best skills relentlessly exploited those who did not.

Globalization refers to a system of global trading between nations. Currently, the most widely recognized and practiced system is known as free trade as in NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement, not yet finalized).

As the 21st century dawned, crushing poverty, soaring debt and ongoing political instability forced developing countries to skew their economies toward producing natural resource exports, frequently at the expense of their own people. As a result there exists a vast inequity in the distribution of the world's assets that is immoral and unjust. The world population is approximately 6 billion. Of that number, 5 billion live on less than \$2 a day. The wealth of the top 1% of households now exceeds the combined wealth of the bottom 95%.

The way in which big multinational corporations go about doing business is making the rich richer and the poor even more mired in poverty. Big business gets wealthier by exploiting poor workers all over the world, mostly in already impoverished developing countries. The dissolution of tariffs guaranteed in international trade pacts like NAFTA allows large corporations to use cheap labor from developing countries to produce the most goods possible at the expense of workers. The use of child labor and sweatshop conditions further increases profit for big business and increases the misery and poverty of workers.

Fair Trade – the alternative

Fair Trade, or Alternative Trade, refers to the exchange of goods based on principles of economic and social justice, human dignity, community, and environmental sustainability. The key goals of Fair Trade are to empower low-income, disadvantaged or otherwise marginalized artisans, craftspeople and farmers around the globe to better their conditions, and to promote understanding between them and First World consumers. Fair Trade increases the living standards of small-scale farmers and artisans in Asia, Africa, Latin America and other developing regions. Fair Trade businesses must meet the most rigorous standards for ensuring worker well being and empowerment.

Advocates of Fair Trade seek to create a system of global exchange that works for producers and consumers.

What are the benefits of Fair Trade?

Fair Trade is an investment in people and their communities. Fair Trade businesses pay a fair wage in the local context that covers the cost of merchandise as well as giving the producer a good financial return. They provide equal opportunities for all people. Producers often give back to their communities by educating children, investing in schools and health clinics and encouraging further development programs.

Fair Trade businesses engage in environmentally sustainable practices. Farmers use integrated crop management and organic practices by avoiding the use of chemicals to control pests. For example, 85% of Fair Trade coffee is organic.

Fair Trade businesses provide healthy and safe working conditions and do not engage in the use of child labor.

Fair Trade empowers women. Over 60% of Fair Trade producers are women and they are often the sole source of income for their families. Women are encouraged to participate and assume leadership roles in local cooperatives and women's programs.

Fair Trade businesses provide financial and technical assistance to producers whenever possible. Long term and stable relationships between importers and producers are essential and eliminate exploitative middlemen in global trading.

Fair Trade practices are supported abundantly in scripture and church teachings

Our Baptismal Covenant calls upon us to "seek and serve Christ in all persons," to "strive for justice and peace among all people" and to "respect the dignity of every human being." This is exactly what Fair Trade practices and principles strive for in addressing the economic and social injustices created by current big business trade practices.

What can you do to support the Fair Trade Alternative?

Become a **Conscious Consumer**.

- **Read labels** and try to avoid buying items from countries likely to be engaged in unfair trade practices.
- **Buy Fair Trade** items on-line. Every purchase improves the life of a producer family in a developing nation.
- **Find a store** near you that stocks Fair Trade products.
- **Educate yourself**. Visit the **Fair Trade Resource Network** at www.fairtraderesource.org. FTRN gathers and compiles research and

data on Fair Trade advocates and galvanizes Fair Trade organizations and individuals seeking to get involved. FTRN seeks to raise consumer awareness about improving people's lives through Fair Trade Alternatives.

- **Support local produce farmers** who are using organic farming techniques.

What can my church do to support the Fair Trade Alternative?

- Buy **Bishop's Blend** coffee or another Fair Trade coffee available locally. Invite your congregation members to a coffee hour where they can learn more about the difference Fair Trade makes for coffee farmers.
- Make **Fair Trade purchases** part of your church's purchasing priorities.
- Hold a **Fair Trade Holiday Craft Sale** featuring crafts from local **Fair Trade** businesses.
- **Start a campaign** to visit local supermarkets, restaurants and businesses to encourage them to carry Fair Trade coffee, chocolates and other items.

Additional resources

Here are some websites for more information on Fair Trade and to buy Fair Trade products.

Fair Trade Federation
www.fairtradefederation.org

Far East Handicrafts
www.fareasthandicrafts.com

Fair Trade Resource Network
www.fairtraderesource.org

Global Exchange
www.globalexchange.org

Fair Trade Foundation
www.fairtrade.org.uk

Equal Exchange
www.equalexchange.com

Co-Op America
www.coopamerica.org

Oxfam International
www.oxfam.org

International Federation for
Alternative Trade
www.ifat.org

TransFair USA
www.transfairusa.org

Sweatshop Watch
www.sweatshopwatch.org

Jubilee 2000
www.jubilee2000uk.org

Free the Children
www.freethechildren.org

Multinational Monitor
www.essential.org/monitor/

Barbara Novak
Chicago, IL

Paper #7

Affordable Housing

The problem

Even as the real estate boom (or bubble?) of recent years has increased the wealth of homeowners and the overall health of the economy, millions of Americans still struggle with the problem of affordable housing.

Housing is the largest expense in the budgets of most Americans, but for the poor and near poor it is often overwhelming. Nationally, more than one in four households face a housing cost “burden” (the federal government defines this as spending more than 30% of after-tax income on housing); among low-income households, the figure is more than half.² Minimum-wage earners and single-parent households are at especially high risk for excessive housing cost burden.

Excessive housing costs threaten the present economic conditions as well as the long-term financial security of families. Unaffordable housing can lead to overcrowding, as families are required to force more people into less space; to excessive debt, as households are forced to borrow more to meet their housing costs; and even to poor health, as money spent on housing is unavailable for other needs, such as medical care and good nutrition. Renters with burdensome housing costs are particularly disadvantaged, as their expenses make it nearly impossible to save enough to buy and build equity in their own home.

Causes of the problem

The crisis in affordable housing is a complex economic problem, with various causes. For many households, low wages or unemployment may simply make it difficult or impossible to pay the rent or mortgage (a particular problem in areas with declining or depressed economies). Other families may earn a decent income, but live in an area where especially high housing costs consume a burdensome portion of that income (this is the case in many “hot” housing markets on the east and west coasts). Still others may have been victimized by predatory lending (see the relevant article in this booklet) or housing discrimination). Housing issues are often community- and even neighborhood-specific, so the exact character of housing affordability problems can vary widely from place to place and from household to household.

Most generally, though, the central cause of affordable housing problems is the small (and diminishing) supply of affordable units. All things being equal, developers prefer to invest in properties at the higher end of the market, leaving a shortage of housing for low and moderate-income people. Many federal

² “Meeting Our Nation’s Housing Challenges,” Report of the Bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission Appointed by the Congress of the United States, 2002.

subsidies that gave private investors an incentive to supply affordable housing are running out, causing many affordable units to be converted to market-rate housing, or else fall into disrepair and abandonment.

The federal government has been steadily reducing its support and subsidization of housing for low-income people. According to the Los Angeles Times, “the amount of money that Congress and the president have authorized to be spent on housing assistance has plunged by nearly two-thirds in the last 25 years, from an inflation-adjusted \$82 billion in 1978 to \$29 billion [in 2003].”³

The position of the Bible and the Church

The idea of hospitality is central to biblical teachings, especially in the gospel and the prophets. Isaiah insists that a proper fast to the Lord requires “bring[ing] the homeless poor into your house” (58:7). Jesus speaks often of the duty to welcome the poor stranger, perhaps most dramatically in Matthew 25 (“And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? Just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.”). Jesus and his disciples themselves traveled in poverty and depended on others to open their homes and offer shelter. In sending the disciples forth on their missions, “He said to them, ‘Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money--not even an extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.’” (Luke 9:3-5)

The Episcopal Church’s 2003 General Convention reaffirmed the church’s commitment to safe and affordable housing for low-income households.

What to do

In advocating for affordable housing, it is especially important to engage government officials and decision-makers at the local level, where most housing issues are actually decided. Affordable housing advocates can insist that permits for major new economic development projects (particularly those supported by taxpayers) include significant provisions for affordable housing.

In urban areas undergoing gentrification, advocates should demand that this process be well managed. Gentrification of marginal areas can bring a rise in property values, safer neighborhoods, and better schools. Unfortunately, it can also lead to the displacement of the low-income residents who saw the area through its more difficult times. It is essential to maintain an adequate supply of affordable housing to avoid this unfair outcome.

Lobbying at the federal level can also affect the amount of money devoted to ensuring affordable housing. Advocates can tell their representatives to stop the

³ Peter G. Gosselin, “The Poor Have More Things Today -- Including Wild Income Swings,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 2004.

decline in federal spending on housing for low-income people, and support policies that enable expanded homeownership for low-income and first time buyers.

Beyond advocacy, moreover, many churches and faith-based organizations across the country are actively and directly involved in developing affordable housing for their communities, often through nonprofit community development corporations (CDCs). Communities with acute shortages of adequate housing have been transformed by the efforts of church-based development. ENEJ and affiliated organizations and congregations have developed an impressive amount of experience and expertise in developing affordable housing. See the section below for examples.

Other resources

Stacia M. Brown, "Building Hope: Faith-based initiatives tackle the affordable housing crisis," *Sojourners*, February 2004.

<http://www.sojournal.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0402&article=040223>

Episcopal (and other faith-based) CDCs involved in affordable housing development (this is a very partial list):

Abyssinian Development Corporation

4 West 125th St.
New York, NY 10027
212-368-4471
www.adcorp.org

Bethel New Life, Inc.

4950 W. Thomas
Chicago, IL 60651
773-473-7870
www.bethelnewlife.org

Episcopal Housing Corporation

4 East University Parkway
Baltimore, MD 21218
410 366-6200
(Daniel McCarthy, Executive Director)

St. Edward's Redevelopment Corporation

605 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
(The Rev. Dr. Richard L. Tolliver)

Beaver Street Enterprise Center

1225 West Beaver Street
Jacksonville, FL 32209
(Jackie Perry, Manager)
904-265-4700
www.freshministries.com

Episcopal Community Development

31 Mulberry Street
Newark, NJ 07102
973-430-9986
(Carla Lerman, Executive Director)
ecd07102@dioceseofnewark.org
<http://www.dioceseofnewark.org/ecd/>

Episcopal Housing Ministry
St. Michael's Episcopal Church
Raleigh, NC.
919-884-0110
(Robert Henley)

John Mark Summers
Brooklyn, New York

Paper #8

Living Wages

What is wrong

Some economic development strategies attract businesses by offering huge tax breaks and other benefits. This model frequently brings in employers of low wage jobs. Without sufficient income, families are forced to use city and county services to provide for their basic food, health and housing costs.

On the other hand, economic justice activists can be encouraged by the progress of various living wage campaigns. A national study showed that living wage laws are not only attracting increasing support (with over eighty now enacted since 1994 and dozens more pending), but are actually working to reduce poverty levels.

In 1994 Baltimore food bank operators noticed that many of their clients were full-time employees with city contractors. The contemporary living wage movement began when Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (BUILD) worked with unions and community groups to raise wages for city contractors. That year, Baltimore enacted a living wage law.

Proponents generally define a “living wage” as the amount a full-time worker must earn to pay for basic needs—housing, food, childcare, transportation, health care and taxes. Living wage campaigns highlight the gap between wages and the cost of living for working families. Local ordinances require a wage of at least \$8.20 an hour—much higher than the current minimum wage of \$5.15. Some ordinances require a higher wage if no benefits are offered. (The federal minimum wage amounts to \$203 per week and \$10,702 per year—below the national poverty threshold of \$12,682 for a single parent with one child and \$18,660 for a couple with two children.)

As living wage campaigns began to have success, some large employers took notice. At least five states—Arizona, Colorado, Louisiana, Missouri and Utah--passed laws that ban any local living wage ordinances. In 2003 the Tennessee state senate passed such a bill; however, its companion remained in a house committee.

The reluctance of state legislatures and city councils to pass living wage (or minimum wage) laws has forced proponents to mount ballot initiatives or referendums. When the Albuquerque city council refused to pass a minimum wage, ACORN coordinated a petition campaign to put the issue on the ballot. The proposal would have raised the city’s minimum wage to \$7.50 an hour and applied to businesses with ten or more employees. Opponents mounted a television and radio campaign claiming the proposal violated citizens’ privacy, and the measure failed October 2005

What is the broader importance of the living wage movement? How significant is it in the larger scheme of critical social justice issues facing the church, such as hunger, poverty, racism, sexism and the justice of the economic system itself? It may be helpful to look at the term itself: living wage.

Unlike the term “minimum wage,” which is an economic category, the notion of a “living wage” has a moral connotation. Behind it is a simple but powerful premise, namely that anyone who works full time for a living should not have to live and raise a family in poverty. But it is not yet widely recognized that living wage campaigns and the strategy driving the leading advocates of the movement embrace much more than just the aim of raising the wages of low-income workers. The movement embraces a larger vision and is basically about three things: power, the distribution of power, and the responsibility of government to ensure that fairness and justice prevail in our cities and communities (and ultimately in our nation).

The living wage movement addresses larger systemic issues--hunger, racism, sexism, economic injustice and the powerlessness of those at the bottom of the ladder, who are disproportionately people of color and women. All of these issues, needless to say, are deeply intertwined with the present tolerance of an unjust economic order.

Our faith

“My chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” --Isaiah 65:22

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”--Luke 6:31

Theologian Walter Brueggeman observes God’s rescue of the enslaved Israelites as told in the Exodus story: “That rescue, however, was not an easy miracle. It was accomplished through tedious, nerve-wracking negotiations led by Moses, supported and authorized by God. In some part, this emancipation of the helpless poor who became Israel is accomplished by human agency that refused to accept degrading poverty and economic injustice as a permanent or legitimate social condition.” Brueggeman’s description of the prolonged facedown between Moses and the Pharaoh before the Israelites were liberated is an apt template for the growing living wage movement around the country. It is apt not only in the great effort it demands, but also in the vision of new hope that is empowering its refusal to accept degrading poverty and injustice as an ongoing social condition.

The General Convention of 2000, reaffirming a similar resolution in 1997, passed a resolution “Poverty: National Support for the Implementation of a Just Wage.” It urged bishops and leaders within their dioceses “actively to support the ongoing implementation of a living wage within the institutions of the church and continue to advocate the passage of living wage ordinances at all government levels.” In this vein the 2003 General Convention passed resolutions supporting both our

involvement in living wage campaigns in our communities, and our need to pay the Church's own employees a living wage. The same convention urged Congress to raise the federal minimum wage to at least \$8.70 an hour--the hourly equivalent of an annual wage at the current federal poverty line, \$18,100 for a family of four.

The Diocese of Los Angeles has taken the lead on an interfaith level and within the Episcopal Church. The Diocese has pushed parishes and missions to bring their own employees into compliance with a "living wage" standard, parallel to that stipulated by the City of Los Angeles under the city's own living wage ordinance (passed in 1997). It does recognize that in some cases of hardship there will be exceptions; the diocesan resolution is, like the national one, not binding.

In October 2005, the Episcopal Church's Executive Council announced plans to ask the 2006 General Convention to authorize a survey of employment of lay employees, their compensation and benefits.

What can we do

1. Participate in and support local and state living wage campaigns.
2. Participate in and support living wage campaigns at local colleges or universities.
3. Oppose state legislation barring counties and cities from enacting living wage ordinances.
4. Find out if your church and diocese pays non-clergy employees a living wage.
5. Participate in studies. The Diocese of Los Angeles has done this.

Additional resources

Organizations

Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ)
Contact Michael Maloney at e-mail: meamon@aol.com
Web site: www.enej.org

ACORN
88 3rd Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11217
Phone: (718) 246-7900
Fax: (718) 246-7939
E-mail: natexdirect@acorn.org
Web site: www.acorn.org

Living Wage Resource Center
88 3rd Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 11217
Contact: Jen Kern at (718) 246-7900 ext. 230
E-mail: naacorncom@acorn.org

Established by ACORN in 1998, it tracks the living wage movement and provides materials and strategies in living wage campaigns.

Economic Policy Institute (EPI)
1660 L Street NW, Suite 1200
Washington, CC 20036
Phone: (202) 775-8810
Fax: (202) 775-0819
E-mail: epi@epi.org
Web site: www.epi.org

National Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice
1020 West Bryn Mawr, 4th floor
Chicago, IL 60660
Phone: (773) 728-8400
Fax: (773) 728-8409
E-mail: info@iwj.org
Web site: www.iwj.org or www.nicwj.org

Books and videos

Living Wage Campaigns: An Activist's Guide to Building the Movement for Economic Justice by David Reynolds. 2003 Cost \$15 (make check to ACORN)
Order from ACORN, 739 8th St. SE, Washington, DC 20003. This *Guide* has profiles of successful campaigns, information on building a coalition, doing research, responding to opponents, and conducting an electoral strategy. It has a draft of a model ordinance. Portions of the *Guide* are available on the Internet in a PDF format at www.laborstudies.wages.edu

The Rev. Canon Dick Gillett has several resources including a video and printed materials. Contact the Rev. Canon R. W. "Dick" Gillett, 1281 E. Orange Grove Blvd. Pasadena, CA 91104, Phone: (626) 309-4146 or e-mail: dgillpas@mindspring.com.

Let Justice Roll Down: American Workers at the New Millennium A video, made by the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, placing the struggle of low wage workers in a larger economic justice perspective, focusing on the struggle of workers in Los Angeles and the response of the interfaith community there. The video is newly available in English and Spanish in a 10-minute version, and also in the original 30-minute version (English only). There is also 46-page printed

booklet of the same title, with detailed economic analysis and religious response and resources, published in Dec. 1999.

“It’s About More Than Just Wages” is a short (4-page) introduction to the concept and the significance of the rising living wage movement in the country, with special relevance for the religious community. See *The Witness* web site, www.thewitness.org/agw/gillett.

Dick Gillett and Verna M. Fausey
Pasadena, CA and Nashville, TN

Paper #9

The Problem of Hunger and The Blueprint to End Hunger

What is wrong

Every year, nearly 35 million Americans, including 13 million children, are threatened by hunger. Many children rely on a free school lunch as their only meal of the day. Many elderly people eat too little to maintain good health. Working parents often skip meals so that their children may eat. Food banks have had to keep evening hours so that working poor families may have access to food contributions.

Across the state of Pennsylvania, 1.2 million people -- about one in 10 -- live in households where someone goes without enough food to eat, according to anti-hunger advocates. In Allegheny County alone, it is estimated that more than 85,000 people use food pantries to feed their families. Pennsylvania pantries reported that between 2001 and 2005, as the national poverty rate steadily increased, they saw a 23 percent increase in people needing help. The same statistics are echoed nationwide.

The decrease of adequate and affordable housing and of low-income rental assistance programs, the rising cost of utilities, expensive and often inadequate health care, lack of adequate child care subsidies for low-income working families, and a unrealistically low minimum wage all mean that working poor families simply have less and less money to spend on food.

Among industrialized countries, the United States is the only one that still tolerates widespread hunger within its borders. At the 1996 World Food Summit, the United States pledged to cut domestic food insecurity in half by 2010, but progress against hunger has been far below the rate needed to reach that goal.

Sadly, the last resort for families with hunger has been weakening as state and federal budgets cut resources for food security. Over the past several decades, U.S. leaders have worked in a bipartisan way to develop national nutrition programs such as the child nutrition programs, the Food Stamp Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). These programs are often our last line of defense against hunger. Although they are effective, today these programs are severely under-funded and fail to reach many people. By strengthening the programs and improving people's access to them, we can do much more to reduce hunger.

Our faith

[Matthew 25]

A General Convention resolution passed in 1985 (A080) called on the government to reorder budget priorities to alleviate hunger. This was echoed by the February 1995 Executive Council meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, that called on the church to support federal nutrition programs. We have been quick to respond to human suffering and mindful of the responsibility that wealth brings. But despite our abundance and charitable spirit, we all have much work to do to assure that every American is adequately fed.

What can be done

On June 3, 2004, Hunger Awareness Day, the National Anti-Hunger Organizations (NAHO) released a working document, "A Blueprint to End Hunger." As part of the document, *The Millennium Declaration to End Hunger in America* calls upon our nation's leaders and all people to join together to end hunger in America. We are called to work together, private and public leaders, community, religious and charitable groups, so that we may achieve an America where hunger is but a distant memory and we live true to the values of a great nation.

Recommendations as we prepare to raise a strong moral voice of public support:

- We can declare the ability to purchase needed food as a basic human right. We can move toward a future where everyone enjoys that right as a realistic, affordable and morally compelling goal for the United States. We know how to end hunger and other advanced industrialized nations already have done so.
- We can remember in prayer that the common good is achieved through political will of all faithful people.
- The Episcopal Public Policy Network can join with the NAHO when immediate national public policy action is called for.
- We can encourage diocesan participation and parish engagement in the study and recommendations of "A Blueprint to End Hunger."
- We can encourage dioceses to participate in and recommend letter writing campaigns and active support for needed legislation.
- We can encourage engagement in state and local e-advocacy and a commitment to address every legislative level with the power to act to end hunger locally.
- We can support our local allies in our communities by working on locally recommended hunger advocacy, and by supporting local food banks and hunger education organizations.
- We can observe National Hunger Awareness Day (June 3) in our dioceses and parishes. National Hunger Awareness Day was first recognized in 2002, and provides a platform for American anti-hunger organizations to speak out and raise awareness about the serious problem of hunger in the United States. More than 34 million Americans - including 13 million children - depend on help each year from a national network of more than 50,000 food banks and food rescue organizations, community and faith-

based charities, and government agencies. To learn more, visit www.hungerday.org.

More resources

The Blueprint to End Hunger can be accessed at <http://www.frac.org/Blueprint%20to%20End%20Hunger.pdf>

National Anti-Hunger Organizations

America's Second Harvest www.seconharvest.org
Bread for the World www.bread.org
Center on Hunger and Poverty www.centeronhunger.org
Community Food Security Coalition www.foodsecurity.org
Congressional Hunger Center www.hungercenter.org
The End Hunger Network www.endhunger.com
Food Research and Action Center www.frac.org
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger www.mazon.org
The National Interfaith Hunger Directors RESULTS www.results.org
Share Our Strength www.strength.org
World Hunger Year www.worldhungeryear.org

Wanda Guthrie
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

SECOND EDITION

FEBRUARY 2008

The Crisis of Working Poverty: Realities, Responses, Networking Opportunities

- Advocates for social and economic justice in the church are well aware of the existence of poverty and increasing income inequalities in the United States. Nonetheless it's useful to have some basic figures at our fingertips so we can keep challenging people to understand that they represent real lives of real working people right in our own churches and communities. So here are some data:
- As of 2006, about 36.5 million people living in the U.S. were under the poverty line, representing an annual income of less than \$20,600 for a family of four.
- A minimum "living wage" for a family of four – one barely adequate to meet real costs of food, housing, health care, transportation and other necessities – ranges from about \$35,000 to above \$40,000 annually, depending upon location. Even with the long-overdue passage and signing of a bill last year to raise the federal minimum wage, it remains pitifully inadequate. (The new wage will rise from \$5.15/hr to \$5.85/hr in July and to \$7.25/hr in 2009.)
- The number of people without health insurance has climbed to 47 million.

In the last two years for which data are available, the Congressional Budget Office says that income inequality among households grew ore quickly than any other two-year period on records, back to 1979. Over those two years the growth of inequality transferred \$400 billion from the bottom 95 percent to the top 5 percent of the population.

We can consider three responses to address these crippling realities, assuming we want to enable and empower people:

1) Living wage campaigns

After a surge of victorious living wage campaigns in cities large and small in the early years of this century, the number of cities with living wage ordinances has leveled off at about 150. ACORN, the national community action leader in such campaigns, has refocused its actions on organizing at the political level to pass state minimum wage laws (many of which are higher than the federal law). It is also waging state or municipal campaigns to win paid sick days for workers and related benefits.

At the 2006 General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed two resolutions on these topics. One, D047, commits the church “at all levels to contract solely with union hotels at its meetings, or to obtain confirmation that local prevailing ‘living wages’ are paid by all hotels the church uses.” While something of a step forward, in practice the determination of what a reasonable ‘living wage’ should be in a particular locale, as well as finding out the wages a hotel might actually be paying its employees, has proved difficult. As a general rule we recommend an hourly wage of at least \$12 for hotels where there is no union, and/or paid health care benefits of at least \$2. We need to push for dioceses to adopt policy statements establishing these norms, as well as explicit adherence to Res. D047 above. The best resource for checking out hotels is the non-profit INMEX (Informed Meetings Exchange), at www.inmex.org.

2) Advocacy and support for workers in organizing

The other 2006 resolution, C008, reaffirmed the right of workers to organize and form unions. It also affirmed “the right to organize and form unions for seasonal and migrant workers who historically have been deprived of those rights. We support the right to organize and form unions as a means to securing adequate wages, benefits, and safety conditions for all workers. We encourage all levels of the church to be informed about, and act accordingly, when rights of workers to associate is being jeopardized. Current and recent organizing campaigns that religious groups in the West Coast have participated in include hotel workers, grocery workers, janitors, home care workers and ports truckers.

3) Community benefits agreements

This is a relatively new strategy that is having striking success in reshaping how land use and economic development decisions impact the lives of ordinary working families. The CBAs are basically an organizing strategy to address workers’ basic needs, such as affordable housing, living wage jobs, local hiring, and health care. The campaign participants are diverse constituencies, including community organizations, organized labor, environmental groups and interfaith organizations. Together, they painstakingly build power to change public policy decisions at the municipal and sometimes regional level. Thus, the long-practiced conventional models offering developer-friendly incentives with little or no thought to broad community welfare are rejected for more progressive people-oriented goals for the common good. The most successful victories have occurred in the Los Angeles area, with a network of community groups from Southern California, the Bay Area and Seattle beginning to share a common vision. The vehicle for this networking and community building is The Partnership for Working Families, with affiliated groups now formed coast to coast. Website for information is www.communitybenefits.org. A related website with a plethora of information and examples of collaborative successes is the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy at www.laane.org.

Dick Gillett
Seattle, Washington

Immigration Update

A battle cry for ending racism and dashed hopes for millions...

Immigration enforcement

In last may of 2007, at 5:00 a.m., ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) knocked on doors of an apartment complex in Shelton, Washington. ICE claimed they only intended to pick up an individual on a warrant; another 16 were taken as collateral (they just happened to be undocumented people present). The burning questions is, if ICE intended to pick up just one individual on a warrant why did they have three vans waiting? These early morning raids are quite typical in a punitive immigration enforcement. Children witness their parents being taken away. This scene reminds me of a movie depicting some obscure country the United States has declared war on to “protect human rights and dignity.”

ICE is now known to wait around convenience stores early in the morning and confront Latinos about their immigration status. This can only be summed up as racial profiling. Workplace raids have been massive and are happening all over the country: in New Bedford, MA, Cincinnati, OH, Portland, OR, and the list goes on and on and on. Families left behind are in disarray, in a high percentage of cases, children are U.S. citizens and there is no guarantee that the country of origin of the undocumented parent will allow easy immigration. Family reunification statutes under U.S. immigration law currently are designed to keep immediate families together, but they are subject to change.

Since June 2007, when proposed immigration reform, which would have allowed the estimated 12 million undocumented people in the United States to pay stiff fines and begin a process towards legalization failed to make it to the Senate floor, several towns, cities and even states have taken it upon themselves to develop local immigration enforcement ordinances. These ordinances are being challenged in federal courts and are being overturned (i.e., in Hazelton, PA).

There is great confusion about local law enforcement's role in immigration enforcement. Some cities, like Seattle, WA, are “sanctuary” cities, and police do not ask the immigration status of individuals they encounter in traffic stops and arrests. Just a few miles north of Seattle, however, the police department in the City of Lynnwood offers ICE courtesy desk space in its police department/jail. Domestic violence advocates and other social service workers are very concerned about these practices of cooperation with ICE, because victims are afraid to come forward and report crimes.

Economics and the workers

It is well known that undocumented immigrant workers are close to being a slave class in the United States. Many work for low and even below minimum wages and have no benefits; even basic health care for children of immigrants in some places has been cut. There is controversy over whether the immigrant work force drives wages up or down, what the cost is in social services compared to taxes paid by undocumented workers and the cost of education for their children. Even in higher paying jobs such as construction, employers cannot attract a sufficient workforce outside of the immigrant workers. Most undocumented workers pay into Social Security and unemployment insurance, but can never realize those benefits. Even a person who is eventually legalized cannot claim retroactive Social Security.

There are reports from all over the country that crops are rotting in the fields because the labor force is not able to come due to tighter border security. Some California farmers have moved their operations to Mexico, following the labor force.

Even with the raids, the tighter border security and workplace enforcement, 12 million people are not going to disappear overnight. If they lose their jobs due to the no-match Social Security letters or have been arrested by ICE and are out on bond and prohibited from working, most will still work, but deeper in the shadows where the abuses are hidden from the eyes of most of us who reap the benefits of their labor.

The broken immigration system

“So why don’t they just get visas or become citizens?” “My grandparents came to this country and they became Americans and were proud of it.” This is some of the rhetoric that we hear over and over.

The last general amnesty was in 1986, more than 20 years ago, and there has been virtually nothing since. On occasion, immediate family members could adjust status within the U.S. (meaning that if they were already here with a spouse, parent or adult children they would not have to leave the country when a visa became available). This is not an option now. The backlog for processing visas is very long - anywhere from two to fifteen years, depending upon the category.

The bill that could not get to the Senate floor due to insufficient votes to move it forth (although the majority of senators voted for it) was being referred to as “amnesty,” and this was a hot button for the anti-immigrants groups. The proposal was anything but amnesty. A family of four could expect to pay over \$10,000 to finally be granted permanent residency. Could most afford to pay that amount? Of course not, but would they make sacrifices and find a way? Yes.

So how does our faith tradition inform us?

Scripture is full of stories of immigrants, sojourners and travelers. From the call of Abraham and Sarah to Mary and Joseph's flight into Egypt, we see God calling communities to move for safety, for survival, to bring new life to new lands. The story of Israel going into Egypt is somewhat parallel to what is going on in our immigrant communities today. The first wave of immigrants from Latin America was welcomed during World War II to work on the farms that soldiers had left. They came, driven by starvation in their own countries. Something happened to Egypt; the government changed and became fearful of the growing Israeli community and enslaved them. The story did not turn out so well for Egypt, as Moses led Israel to freedom. When will we ever learn, when will we?

What can we do?

- Become informed about the issues.
- Become involved in the New Sanctuary Movement
- Reach out to the immigrant community around your church
- Call congressional representatives and support compassionate immigration reform
- (Executive Council has officially supported the Sanctuary Movement and General Convention Comprehensive Immigration Reform)
- Be aware of how many items you use in a day and services you receive that have passed through the hands of immigrant workers – and give thanks.

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Paper # 12

Socially Responsible Investments

In 1971, The Episcopal Church (TEC) filed the first religious shareholder resolution at a corporate annual meeting. Presiding Bishop John Hines asked General Motors to cease business as usual in South Africa. Since then, the socially responsible investment movement has grown to include many religious and individual investors, unions, foundations and public and private pension funds.

When a church institution such as TEC, as an owner of stock in a corporation, introduces a resolution affecting corporate behavior or votes its shares at a corporate annual meeting or by proxy, it exercises an important fiduciary responsibility and supports TEC's social witness often along with other religious institutions and socially concerned investors. TEC was a founding member of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), an ecumenical organization that takes the lead in promoting such shareholder action. However, activists comprise only a small percentage of stockowners and there is a need to get mutual fund shareholders to talk back to their mutual funds by casting proxies. A Ceres study revealed that only two percent of assets of the 100 largest mutual funds supported global warming shareholder resolutions.

In 2001, religious investors filed 132 (out of 226) resolutions in 96 companies; in 2002, 144 (out of 251) resolutions in 99 companies. In 2004, 210 shareholder resolutions were filed. As of March 11, 2005, 211 resolutions had been filed. Top issues in 2005 were the environment (especially global warming and renewables), political contributions and lobbying activities, fair employment, animal welfare and corporate governance.

In 1972, TEC's Executive Council formed the Social Responsibility in Investment Committee to monitor church investments. General Convention Executive Council resolutions guide TEC's proxy voting and shareholder advocacy. In 2002, TEC filed resolutions with ten of the companies in which it held common stock and voted "yes" on more than 100 resolutions filed by others, according to TEC's web site. It is a good result when resolution sponsors and corporate management reach agreements prior to officially filing a resolution for a shareholder vote.

Investor activity can take the form of portfolio screening to avoid buying or to intentionally purchase shares of corporations involved in certain products or services, or placing funds with socially responsible portfolio managers and mutual funds. TEC does some screening of its portfolio and does not own stock in tobacco manufactures, companies doing business in the Sudan and companies among the top five Defense Department contractors which receive more than 50% of their revenue from military contracts.

Community investing is another form of socially responsible investing. These are investments, usually loans, which provide an opportunity to capitalize projects of (usually) non-profit organizations whose work is consistent with the investor's mission. Such investments support affordable housing development, nonprofit facilities, childcare centers, small business development and micro enterprise lending. Community development financial institutions (CDFIs), the vehicles for community investing, include community development banks, community development loan funds, cooperative associations, credit unions, micro-enterprise funds and venture capital funds.

In 1988, General Convention passed a resolution calling on TEC to establish a ministry of community investment and economic justice directed to community-controlled economic programs of the disadvantages, with a special focus on land trusts, housing cooperatives, worker-owned businesses and community development credit unions. This resolution, known as the Michigan Plan, was the impetus for TEC creating the Economic Justice Loan Fund, which has made seven million dollars available for lending to CDFIs.

TEC uses its position to press for social changes on issues including corporate governance, the environment, equality in organizations, fair lending and responsible use of capital, international operations, militarism and specific products and services.

Since 1988 the Episcopal Church's Economic Justice Loan Fund has made \$7 million available for lending to community development, financial institutions such as community development loan funds, credit unions and venture capital funds.

Our faith

While the Bible does not provide specific guidelines on how many independent directors a corporate board should have, Jews and Christians are sensitive to the issues of power and inequality.

“If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be.”

Deuteronomy 15:7 (NRSV)

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori notes on the church web site “the importance of exercising proper stewardship of our corporate investments through Socially Responsible Investing (SRI).” She adds that the church, as an investor in equities, “has a moral and ethical obligation to ensure that the corporations in which we invest our resources pursue profits in a socially responsible manner.”

Over the years, General Convention and the Executive Council adopted resolutions on socially responsible investing on a variety of issues.

- Militarism--divest from the five top defense contractors; ask companies to cease bidding on nuclear weapons
- International operations--right of workers in China, divest from companies doing business in the Sudan
- Environment--promote renewable energy sources, climate change, hazardous chemicals
- Disassociate from offensive imagery of American Indian communities
- Glass ceiling report on removing impediments to career advancement of women and people of color
- Avoid underwriting predatory loans
- Divest from tobacco companies
- Protect children from sex trafficking

What Can We Do?

Religious institutions and individual investors should look at where their money is invested. Consider factors besides the rate of return and the risk factor. If your diocese, parish or organization plans to invest, obtain TEC's guidelines.

Determine if endowed parishes practice socially responsible investing criteria in their investments. Pressure the endowed parishes' organization, the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal parishes, to adopt socially responsible investment guidelines.

Place funds with socially responsible portfolio managers and mutual funds, and in community investing.

File resolutions regarding investments at General Convention and at diocesan conventions.

Encourage TEC to budget more funds in the church's Economic Justice Loan Fund.

Resources

Social Investment Forum
1612 K Street NW#650
Washington, DC 20006
Phone: 202-872-5361
Fax: 202-42-5725
Website: www.socialinvest.org

The trade association of SRI professionals and organizations has complete information on SRI opportunities, including mutual funds and community investing, recent trends, research and updates.

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)

475 Riverside Drive, #1842

New York, NY 10115

Phone: (212) 870-2293

Fax: (212) 870-2023

Web site: www.iccr.org

Coalition of 300 faith-based institutions, including denominations, religious communities and others. These include Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish investors.

Opportunity Financial Networks

(Formerly National Community Capital Association or NCCA)

620 Chestnut Street, #572

Philadelphia, PA 19106

Phone: (215) 320-4310

Fax (215) 923-4755

Web site: www.opportunityfinance.net

Network of 170 private sector community development financial institutions; has information about all funds in your area.

CERES

99 Chancy St., #601

Boston, MA 02111

Phone: (617) 247-0700

Fax: (617) 267-5400

Web site: www.ceres.org

A Boston-based coalition of investors and environmental groups, it helped launched the Investor Network on Climate Risk (INCR) in November 2003.

Investor Responsibility Research Center, Inc. (IRRC)

1350 Connecticut Ave., NW

Washington, DC 20036

Web site: www.irrc.org

This not-for-profit investor advisory firm was founded in 1972.

Domini Social Investments

536 Broadway, 7th Floor

New York, NY 10012

Phone: (202) 352-9200

Publications

Community Investing: An Alternative for Religious Congregations Seeking a Social as Well as a Financial Return. Episcopal Network for Economic Justice. 1999.

Socially Responsible Investing: Making a Difference and Making Money by Amy Domini. Dearborn Trade. 2001.

Engage God's Mission: Policy for Action

The Social Policies of the Episcopal Church, USA

Office of Government Relations

110 Maryland Avenue NE, #309

Washington, DC 2002-5626

Phone: 1-800-228-0515

Fax: (202) 547-4457

Web site: www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn

Published by TEC's Office of Government Relations, this lists resolutions adopted by General Convention and Executive Councils between 1991-2003. A few prior selected resolutions are included.

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Paper # 13

Racism and Economic Justice**What is the Issue?**

The connection between racism and economic injustice is strong. Poverty is a form of social violence, one of many to which persons and communities of color are subjected to a greater than average degree. Worldwide, poverty is the norm rather than the exception. Our present economic system is organized for the benefit of a small minority of non-poor who make the major economic decisions that affect everyone else. Even those who benefit in small ways are still worse off than they would be if wealth and decision-making were more fairly distributed. Inequitable distribution of wealth, disparities in access to essential goods, services and relationships, and unequal access to credit, education, and employment are some of the chief forms this violence takes. To this, we should add environmental racism, in which toxic waste, poor air and water quality, and other environmental problems disproportionately affect communities of color.

Racism is part of an interlocking system of oppression and privilege and cannot be understood in abstraction from oppression based on class, sex, national origin, religion, disability, or sexual orientation. Poverty is by no means the only form of violence involved in racism and white privilege. With the end of slavery and legalized segregation in the United States, however, poverty retains a degree of social acceptability that is no longer so openly accorded to other forms of racist violence. The existence of wealthy and middle class persons of color by no means undermines this point. These children of God are still harmed by a system of privilege and dominance, of which poverty is only one of many tools. Solidarity in the struggle against class-based oppression on the part of poor whites and people of color, as well as a common struggle against racism and other forms of oppression, are inseparable elements in any effective work for justice and peace. For too long, elites have successfully played to racism among working class whites, often cloaked in coded language, in order to sustain a political economy (increasingly a global one) rife with deadly injustice.

Resources from Holy Scripture and the Church's liturgy

God creates all humankind in God's image and likeness (Gen 1:26-27). Seen in this light, all sorts of human differences are interesting facts about us, but they cannot form the basis for the kinds of oppressive violence on the basis of difference that come into play in racism. Moreover, "race" is itself a socially constructed and problematic concept, tied up with pernicious ideas about "purity." The myth of our descent from two common ancestors, Adam and Eve, points to a profound truth. All human beings share a genetic heritage despite (always partial) geographic and cultural isolation that leads to observed "racial" differences. There is plenty of sharing of genetic material across "racial" lines, not only in "bi-

racial" or "interracial" persons but also in those who are identified, by themselves or others, as belonging to only one particular "race." Race is a real part of our social landscape but it is a cultural, historical, and mutable reality, and not a difference in "natural kind." The doctrine of our creation in God's image and likeness ought to be employed to challenge these reified distinctions in a direct manner, but we should do so in a way that also celebrates difference. The diversity of the world is meant to reflect God's glorious beauty and not to become an occasion for violence (including the violence of poverty) committed against our neighbor. Through God's abundant gifts and faithful struggle, another world is possible.

The doctrine of the image of God grounds our promise in the baptismal covenant to "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being." (BCP, p. 305) Response to this promise is insufficient to the extent that it involves merely a change in attitude. Striving and respecting are far more active than that. They involve struggle to transform unjust practices, relationships, and institutions, in which we all participate and in which some of us have vested interests. Holy Baptism entails the rejection of racism when we renounce "the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God." (BCP, p. 302). As Dr. King taught, racism, like other forms of oppressive violence, harms both the oppressed (first and foremost) and the oppressor (as well). This should form an integral part of baptismal catechesis and confirmation instruction, and it should be preached and taught publicly, especially but not only when baptismal vows are renewed.

In the Gospels and in Acts, Jesus is portrayed as the fulfillment of God's gracious and salvific will for all, seen throughout salvation history and proclaimed in Isaiah and other prophetic writings. In the liturgical year, this is especially evident in the season of Advent (see the year A readings, esp. Isaiah 2:1-5, 11:1-10 and Is. 40:3, which is used as an opening sentence for Morning Prayer and quoted by John the Baptist in Luke 3:6) and on the feasts of the Epiphany and Pentecost. At Pentecost in particular, we hear in Peter's sermon a citation from Joel 2:28-32, which speaks of God's Spirit being poured out on all flesh. As patristic theologians (both Greek and Latin) insist, in the particular man Jesus, the divine Logos is united with humanity in all its manifold diversity. In the Gospels, Luke's decision to trace the genealogy of Christ back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38) and his special concern with Samaritans and Gentiles throughout the Gospel present opportunities to preach the Gospel in connection with anti-racist struggle. In John, there is also a concern with the mission to Samaritans (Ch. 4), but it is in the transitional chapters to the so-called "book of glory," (Raymond Brown) that we observe the significance of the cross in bringing Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20ff.). In the hour of his lifting up (crucifixion-resurrection-exaltation), Jesus draws all people to himself (John 3:14-16, 12:32).

A related teaching is found in the writings of Paul and associated epistles, which take up the problem of how the Gentiles can be incorporated into the People of God without first becoming Jews. In the baptismal formula of Galatians (3:27-28),

the hostile division between Jew and Gentile, which understood as such bears some similarities to theories of race, is seen to be overcome in Holy Baptism. In Ephesians, the author expands on this idea when he speaks of God creating "one new humanity out of the two" (2:15) as Jews and Gentiles come together in one flesh in the Body of Christ and of Jesus "breaking down the dividing wall of hostility" (2:14). This is confirmed by John's vision of the elders and saints singing a new song, in which Christ the Lamb ransoms saints "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelations 5:9, cp. BCP, pp. 93-94).

Racism, classism, and other forms of oppression run directly counter to the egalitarian vision present in creation, incarnation, and Holy Baptism. They also contradict the essential character of the Eucharistic assembly as a mixed body of "all sorts and conditions," which eats and drinks together in one place. In the context of the table-fellowship of Jesus, differences become gifts that enrich the community's life and the common good (1Corinthians 12-13, Romans 12), and social divisions call into question the community's discernment of the Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper (1Corinthians 11:17-34).

Actions of General Convention

Gathered in General Convention, the elected leadership of the Episcopal Church has taken action to combat racism as it affects both Church and society. It is important to realize that racism manifests itself in the Church not just as a privately held prejudice, but also as a social and institutional evil that wounds the Body of Christ and compromises our witness to the Gospel. Actions by General Convention and other official bodies do not exhaust the Church's response to racism, nor should they be allowed to become merely symbolic gestures to absolve the Church from its responsibility to make real changes at every level of the organization and in the surrounding culture. As with racial lines, the lines between Church and culture are essentially permeable and fluid (see K. Tanner, *Theories of Culture*). The doctrine of creation and the Gospel itself mandate our struggle against racism. Even if the Church took no "official action," beyond what is in the Bible and the liturgy, fighting racism and other forms of oppression would still be the responsibility of every baptized person. Again, this fact should always be stressed in catechesis and confirmation preparation, when expounding on the baptismal covenant and the significance of the Eucharistic assembly.

Some actions of General Convention seem aimed primarily at transforming the Church itself. The canons make the strongest statement in Title I, canon 17, section 5: "No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons." Other relevant canons concern discernment for lay and ordained ministries (III.1.2), the election of a rector (III.9.3), the acceptance of letters dismissory (III.9.4), and the granting of licenses to officiate (III.9.6).

Resolutions spell out the Church's commitment to eliminate racism from its own life through recommendations for parishes and dioceses (1982-A062, 1991-D043, 1994-A047); support for inclusion and justice in clergy deployment (1976-A064, 1991-A090, 1994-A045) and in recruiting and equipping lay leaders (1994-A046); and the specific mandates for the composition of and process used by interim bodies of the General Convention (1991-A082, 1991-A085, 1994-D135, 1997-A051). In some cases, particular processes of monitoring or institutional structures of accountability are called for (1979-D083, 1979-B059, 1985-A078, 1988-A092, 1988-A112, 1991-A199, 1991-D113, 2003-A010). The requirement for anti-racism training for seminarians and lay leaders is particularly noteworthy (2000-B049, cp. 2006-A092), as is the Episcopal Church's call to study how we may have benefited economically from the practice of slavery (2006-A123). The Church has also called for its practices of socially responsible investing to reflect its anti-racist commitment (1982-D124) and for questions of racism to be taken into account when awarding vendor contracts (2000-B041).

Other actions of General Convention are aimed at combating racism in society. In addition to some more general statements (1991-B051, 1994-A048, 1994-D029, 1994-D136, 1997-A039, 1997-A128, 2000-A047, 2000-B006, 2003-D025), particular social ills bound up with racism are also singled out and particular policies commended to redress injustice. The Church's repeated commitment to its own affirmative action policy also contains an affirmation of the principle of affirmative action (1979-D083), which has general policy consequences and which has not been rescinded in an era when affirmative action is increasingly under assault in the courts. The Church has condemned the Klan and similar hate groups (1979-D066) and opposes discrimination in private clubs (1979-D079). The racism of our prison-industrial complex is addressed in resolutions supporting the repeal of mandatory sentence guidelines (2003-A008) and a moratorium on the construction of new maximum control prisons (1994-D010). There is a specific rejection of racial profiling and violence against Muslims and people of color (2003-D077). The Church has condemned environmental racism (2000-D005). The plight of at risk children is specifically tied to the development of anti-racism curricula (1994-B017). The Church has committed to study how racism affects our society's response to HIV/AIDS (1997-A046). Given the connection between social geography and racial injustice, affirmation of a commitment to urban ministry may serve to question suburban strategies of congregational development with racist overtones (2000-D052). Perhaps the strongest particular policy recommendations concern the Episcopal Church's support for legislation to make reparations for the economic consequences of slavery (2006-C011).

General convention shows some awareness of the need for specific policies to combat racism as it affects particular communities. For example, racism sometimes takes the form of xenophobic violence and discrimination against immigrants, and the Church has expressly rejected this form of racism (1994-D132). In problematic language, the Church has also taken a stand in promoting Church wide advocacy of "Indian Rights" (1985-B007).

In some cases, the Episcopal Church has taken a position regarding struggles against racism and other forms of oppression in countries where the Episcopal Church does not have a presence but which are served by other member churches of the Anglican Communion. For example, we have expressed support for the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (1976-D036), for minority rights in Japan (1991-D052), and, albeit somewhat cautiously, for the Palestinians (1991-D122). We have also called on the U.S. government to condemn caste-based oppression and untouchability (2000-D024).

It would be a mistake, though, to draw an overly sharp distinction between those actions designed to bring about justice in the Church and those designed to transform the world. An Anglican, incarnational ecclesiology presupposes an intimate relationship between the Body of Christ and the body politic. This perspective, albeit in a slightly different form, has survived even when we are no longer the established Church. As Gandhi and Dr. King taught us, self-purification is the necessary precondition for non-violent struggle.

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Paper # 14

The Effect of the Price of Gas on the Working Family

Over the past summer (2008), we all felt the effects of gas reaching \$4 and beyond. It was noticeable everywhere one looked. And while recent months have seen an easing of the gas price crunch (due, unfortunately, to the overall economic slowdown which is causing financial harm throughout the society), it is important to reflect on and remember that, for many people, a spike in the price of gas or other necessities is not just a pinch or a bit of a pain. These are the people for whom this is a real crisis.

I work at The House of Concern in Seneca County, New York. It is a food pantry and general assistance program. We try to provide food for a seven-day period. People are able to access the pantry once a month. We have always served a variety of people, but last summer saw a dramatic rise in the number of new clients. Prior to that summer, we served 170 families in a typical month, and out of that number we had maybe 10 new clients. Those were usually people who had something unexpected happen, such as a job loss or illness.

In July, we served 192 clients and out of that group were 32 new families. In August, we served 219 families and had 26 new families.

The newcomers all have similar stories. They work, they have families and they had a choice of filling the gas tank or buying food. If they bought food, with the rising costs at the grocery store, they had no money left for gas. If they didn't fill the tank, they couldn't go to work. If they didn't go to work they would not have the money to buy food. For the most part, these are the people who make "too much" to receive food stamps. The food stamp regulations have not changed to counter the rising cost of fuel or other necessities.

Some of you may be thinking that these people should use public transportation, but that is not an option for the most part around here. Rural areas have limited, if any, public transportation and jobs usually involve a commute, often of 20 miles or more. That is a lot of gas.

We are also seeing a group of people who have not had to come to a pantry in years but now can no longer survive without doing so. I had one such woman in this past summer. She has a full-time job that she has had for several years. She brought home \$320 a week. Out of that she paid \$110 for childcare and \$51 to fill her gas tank. That left her with \$159 with which to pay rent, utilities, food and anything else that comes up. The \$51 to fill the tank was only to pay to go back and forth to work. If she needed or wanted to go anywhere else, that cost went up. Luxuries like a phone and cable were dropped. It left little room for

insurances and car maintenance was completely unaffordable. There was no cushion for any emergency. These people are coming to our food pantry.

This is one story from one day at the food pantry. I could give you many others. I could tell you that our numbers of elderly people actually went *down* over the summer, because, as one older person explained to me, "Most of us just can't afford a car and gas anymore." So these people tried to carpool together, but that was not always easy. They also sometimes took the bus, but riding a bus when you are 80 and carrying bags of groceries is also not easy. Also, the bus runs only hourly, leading to long waits which were sometimes just too much for them. So they pooled their money and tried to come in together.

Our pantry is not unique. This is a situation that was and is being played out in food pantries all over, taking a toll on the food that pantries have to offer. The summer months are notorious for low donations. August is usually the lowest month of the year for donations. For many of us in that time of year, the shelves empty and funding is non-existent.

Our faith

"Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:37-40)

"If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be." (Deuteronomy 15:7)

What we can do

In his second inaugural address in 1937, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said, "The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much: it is if we provide enough for those who have too little."

The gap between the haves and the have-nots is getting wider. On July 31st of this year Exxon reported an 11.68 billion dollar profit for their second quarter. It was the biggest quarterly profit ever by a US corporation.

- Public awareness is key to addressing this issue. On July 31st, after hearing about Exxon's amazing second quarter and figuring out the monthly statistics for the food pantry where I work, I wrote an e-mail that was picked up by the local paper and ran in its editorial section. I let people know just what kind of crisis we were facing with growing numbers and needs. The community response was immediate and heartfelt. To date, we have brought in \$27,000 for the pantry. This money came from

individuals and groups seeing the need in their community and rising to the challenge to do what they could. They gave food and money, and they volunteered. They took the words of caring for their neighbors to heart and they acted upon them. It is important to personalize stories and make people feel ownership of the issue. Facts and figures are important, but it is people who are affected by this situation, and it is people that we need to focus on.

- Support local food banks. Know where your local food pantry is. Find out their needs. Have your parish “adopt” a pantry.
- Take up a special collection once a month for monetary donations.
- Encourage diocesan participation in letter writing campaigns for needed legislation.
- Encourage state and local advocacy towards the goal of ending hunger.
- Support hunger education organizations.
- Observe National Hunger Awareness Day (June 3) in your parishes and dioceses.
- Organize and participate in food drives.
- Make our voice heard politically. Let the politicians know that it is not all right that people have to decide between gas in their cars and food on their table. Refuse to elect those who think that it is.
- Start programs in our dioceses such as the one that was started by United Ministries in South Carolina. It was called “Our Eyes were Opened.” The program’s goal was to educate the “haves” to make wise and compassionate decisions for helping those in poverty, the belief being that helping those with wealth to better understand the reality of poverty will enable them to be better stewards of their wealth.

Resources

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Ehreneich, Barbara, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, 2001 Henry Hold & Co. LLC.

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Diane Draheim
Seneca Falls, New York

Paper # 15

Economic Impact of the War

Introduction

Like all wars, the justice or injustice of the War in Iraq may be judged on both the intentions of the warring nations and the impact of the war on the respective citizens of the warring nations. The war in Iraq fails on every ground to satisfy any claim to being a 'just' war from the perspective of intention as well as from the perspective of impact, but especially economic impact.

From the point of view of those affected in the United States, there is a perverse economic impact from the war that has at least two major dimensions:

- 1) the disproportionate burden of economic detriment placed on the most vulnerable of American society and
- 2) the loss of social cohesion and commonwealth enjoyed by all the citizens of the United States.

The issue surveyed in this brief paper, therefore, addresses the perverse economic impact of the War in Iraq in terms of economic vulnerability for specific groups and the loss of wealth in the nation as a whole.

Lost Social Infrastructure Due to the War in Iraq

\$500,000 a minute and \$750 million a day are the current estimated money costs of the war in Iraq. This is a war whose total costs are hidden in federal off-line budgets and 'emergency' allocations. Most observers agree that the final costs will be close to two trillion dollars.

Even were this magnitude of cost providing national security or funding an ethical national obligation, it would be questionable. That the war is doing neither constitutes infamy. Perhaps its most shameful domestic characteristic is the unequal burden placed on the most vulnerable in American society in terms of funding trade-offs for tax dollars to support the war.

The public financial context for the trade-off is the \$656.1 billion so far paid by American taxpayers to support the war.¹ (Remember this figure does not include other money and budget transfers and off-line allocations.) Alternative expenditures spent for society's well-being could have been:

Note: The format of this paper disallows any discussion of just war theology. My stipulative definitions, viz.: intention and burden are well attested in the expansive literature and are not intended to be inclusive but rather a minimal threshold.

¹ National Priorities Project 2008, <http://www.nationalpriorities.org/tradeoffs?>

- 193,370,980 people receiving health care for one year OR
- 679,232,570 homes with renewable electricity for one year OR
- 4,170,626 public safety officers for one year OR
- 11,251,447 music and arts teachers for one year OR
- 101,437,848 scholarships for university students for one year OR
- 5,103,740 affordable housing units OR
- 289,177,337 children with health care for one year OR
- 90,037,052 Head Start places for children for one year OR
- 10,777,823 elementary school teachers for one year OR
- 9,479,502 port container Inspectors for one year

The Disproportionate Burden of the Economic Cost of the War

This picture is stark in terms of social waste, but it is horrifying when seen within the context of the lives of those most vulnerable in American society. I focus on hunger and poverty as a joint indicator of who the vulnerable are and how they are at greater risk due to the economic impact of the war.

The Hungry

It is estimated that roughly 13 million households in America suffer from food insecurity defined by the federal government as those households who do not have access to enough nutrition to enjoy "active, healthy living." It is estimated that households with children had twice the rate of food insecurity than adult-only households. About half of these households do not have access to federally supported programs such as food stamps.²

The Poor

Poverty in America further defines vulnerability. About 15% of American families live in poverty. Children living in poverty comprise about 18% of the population. A shocking 31% of American families live at or below 200% of the "poverty level" (defined by the federal government as "a family of three with two children is considered 'poor' if they live on less than \$14,824"³). Poverty in America pre-dates the Iraq war but the vulnerability of the poor is deepened by the drain on federal funds that could have been used to address the growing crisis of need. A decade of extraordinary need was a policy result prior to the war in Iraq. Two events are representative:

- 1) In 1996, President Clinton and Congress eliminated the federal entitlement to public assistance.
- 2) Under the Bush administration's newer block grant program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), states decide whether and how to offer

² NPP reports, "The participation in the Food Stamp Program declined after 1996 because the welfare reform law eliminated Food Stamp benefits to most legal immigrants and many able-bodied adults without dependents. Other provisions reduced the allotment a participant could receive."

³ NPP Quick Report on Poverty, 2008.

benefits and must impose time limits and work requirements for recipients. States themselves are suffering reduced revenues and so the debate around public assistance has centered largely on the 'drain' of tax dollars spent on needy families. (Spending on TANF is less than 1% of the total federal budget.)⁴

Given that approximately 93% of those on welfare are women and children, the reduction of tax-funded federal support by way of TANF limits amounts to a sentence of life-long poverty and inter-generational social and economic disability. The Bush administration created a policy option that preempted any possibility of addressing hunger and poverty by allocating federal tax dollars to war abroad instead of addressing life issues at home.

The hungry and poor represent those on the bottom of the economic-social ladder. They suffer from this war because they are vulnerable to the economic displacement of social services that governments can no longer provide due to wartime conditions. The foregone social good for American people in general due to this irresponsible war is astronomical, but there is an additional cost far beyond the dollars-and-cents calculation.

The Loss of the Common Wealth and the Christian Response

The loss of social cohesion, represented by division and despair within suffering communities of the poor and within the country as a whole, is an immeasurable cost of the war. That economic component must be estimated beyond the two trillion dollar war cost as the economic burden shifts to the poor and middle class.

When one calculates the trade-off costs in lost educational opportunities, health care provision, police and fire provision and the innumerable other lost social services, the picture is clear. Less clear is the insidious loss of the bond of sociability that we call a commonwealth. This "wealth" is not shifted to another group, nor is it recoverable. It is a dead loss. Its product is alienation and death.

As Christians, we merely need to look at Christ to know our duty in response to this harm. That response is the cross we need to pick up and carry.

Matthew 16: 24-26

Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?'

⁴ NPP also reports, "At \$17.5 billion, the cost of TANF roughly equals the amount that will be given to millionaires in the latest round of tax cuts in this year alone."

Resources

National Priorities Project
243 King St. #239
Northampton, MA 01060
(403) 548-9556

<http://www.nationalpriorities.org>

Center for Economic and Policy
Research
1161 Connecticut Ave. NW #400
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 293-5380
<http://www.cepr.net>

Economic Policy Institute
1333 H St. NW, Suite 3000, East
Tower
Washington, DC 20005-4707
(202) 775-8810
<http://www.corporations.org/index.html>

Institute for Policy Studies
1112 18th St. NW #600
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 234-9382
<http://www.ips-dc.org>
<http://www.ips-dc.org/inequality>

Friends Committee on National
Legislation
245 Second St. NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 547-6000
1-800-630-1330
<http://www.fcnl.org/index.htm>

Human Rights Watch
392 Fifth Ave., 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299
(212) 290-4700
<http://www.hrw.org>

Women's Action for New Directions
691 Massachusetts Ave.
Arlington, MA 02476
(781) 643-6740
http://www.wand.org/wand_home.htm

Rev. Dr. Elaine McCoy, PhD
Elyria, Ohio

Paper # 16

Environmental Justice

The problem and who is affected

Coal is a major source of electricity in the country. Half of our energy comes from coal-fired power plants. At the same time, coal is one of the “dirtiest” sources of energy available, with ash full of arsenic, lead and other chemicals and minerals, and coal extraction and utilization practices contribute heavily to environmental pollution. However, the coal industry and the Bush administration say the jobs and energy from the mines outweigh any damage.

In the spring of 2008, church-going environmentalists joined other citizen activists in an effort to stop coal companies from blowing up Tennessee’s mountains.

In mountaintop removal, coal companies clear-cut all of the trees, use shoveling machines to scrape the trees, dump the rock and dirt in nearby valleys, remove top soil from the mountains, and stuff fertilizer and fuel oil into drill holes to blast up to 1,000 feet off the mountain top to reveal the coal seam.

Zeb Mountain in Campbell and Scott counties in Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau was dubbed the “poster child of ugly mountains.” All this was in spite of the state’s investing \$100 million to acquire and protect the area. But the state owned only the surface and timber rights. National Coal, located in Knoxville, owned the mineral rights.

At least 100 people lived within one mile of the mines. The blasting damaged some of the homes. The process contaminated and degraded the water supply (streams, water wells and ground water), destroyed wildlife habitat and polluted the fish, making them inedible. Coal truck traffic has created high noise levels.

Coal industry lobbyists succeeded in killing a bill in the Tennessee state legislature to stop the practice of mountain top removal. Five rural state representatives, sitting on a subcommittee, argued that National Coal’s property rights trumped the public interest. They chose to save 234 jobs when the company threatened to leave the state.

Around the same time, citizen activists protested a pending renewal of National Coal’s mining permit on Zeb Mountain at a hearing at the federal Office of Surface Mining (OSM). In spite of the protests, OSM renewed the five-year permit.

During the last twenty years, regulations enacted in the late 1970s or early 1980s have been weakened, while funding to enforce regulations has been reduced. In

late 2008, the Bush administration proposed changes to allow mountain top mining near streams, ease air pollution standards for power plants near national parks, and exempt factory farms from the Clean Water Act. Another draft of proposals weakened the endangered species act so it would not be used as “a back door” to regulate gases blamed for global warming. The Bush administration timed the changes to go into effect before the 2008 presidential election.¹

The extraction and use of coal is an example of an environmental justice problem that impacts a wide range of broader social and economic problems, as in the following examples:

1) Climate change. One of these problems is climate change that threatens the lives of people and the world. “Climate change is a threat not only to God’s good creation but to all of humanity,” said Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts-Schori. She adds that climate change “has produced rising temperatures, storms and floods, heat related deaths. Climate change exacerbates extreme world poverty and poverty is hastening global warming.” (*Episcopal Life*, May 2008)

The Presiding Bishop told the bishops meeting in Lambeth, “It is the poorest on this globe who suffer the most from climate change already and will continue to suffer the most in the future.” She cited the example of Alaskans who lost homes due to melting permafrost.

Reports done by the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative and also Redefining Progress show that African-Americans and other minorities living predominately in vulnerable areas are harmed by climate change through heat-related deaths, asthma, and pollution, storms and floods.

2) Environmental Racism. Environmental racism is the practice of placing polluting industries and landfills in minority or low-income areas. Economically distressed communities have often had to choose between under-employment and migration and accepting landfills, pulp mills, smelters, polluting industries, coal fired plants and surface mining. Toxic wastes and chemicals from landfills have contaminated water wells and ground water. These are often located in or near poor and minority communities.

To take one recent example, in July 2008 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an air quality permit for construction of the Desert Rock coal fired power plant on the Navajo reservation. This came in spite of protests from state and local officials, Navajo tribal members and citizen groups. The reservation is home to two other coal power plants (including the Four Corners), coal mines, waste disposal areas, oil and gas operations plus a uranium mine and related operations that create waste and pollution. However, the Navajo tribal government wanted the Desert Rock plant due to jobs and revenue—an example

¹ *The Tennessean*, July 6 and August 12, 2008

of the choices forced by the combination of difficult economic and environmental situations.

Our Faith

“...fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”
(Genesis 1:28, NRSV)

The Bible teaches us of God’s role in creation and that we are stewards of that creation. It is our responsibility to do what we can as the church and as individuals to challenge the destruction that is around us. “Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others, and to your honor and glory” (BCP, p. 388).

The bishops at the 2008 Lambeth Conference declared that ecology and economics are related.

The Episcopal Church has adopted a number of environmental justice resolutions in past general conventions. It has:

- Affirmed that global warming threatened the future of God’s creation, especially the poorest and most vulnerable, and supported efforts to reduce global warming.
- Adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which includes as Goal 7 to “ensure environmental sustainability.” Specific objectives are: to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and integrate the principles of sustainable development in the country’s policies and programs.
- Supported legislation eliminating the practice of locating pollution industries disproportionately near neighborhoods inhabited by people of color or the poor. Another resolution opposed environmental racism.
- Opposed the practices of mountain top removal and valley fill mining and other operations that threaten the ecology and low-income communities.
- Encourage dioceses, congregations and communicants to become active stewards of their water resources.

The Church’s Executive Council has taken a number of positions. It has:

- Instructed the Episcopal Church’s treasurer to vote in favor of all resolutions asking companies to report on how they will promote renewable energy sources.
- Instructed the treasurer to vote in favor of shareholder resolutions asking companies to issue reports on the effects of their business activities on climate change.
- Urged the President and Congress to provide funds and leadership in an effort to encourage renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation

In 2007 the Diocese of Southern Ohio adopted a resolution to study and make policy recommendations about “just, reasonable and sustainable communities, economic development in Appalachia and minority communities.” Additional resolutions implementing this will be proposed.

What We Can Do

- Be alert to legislation related to the environment and economic justice in Congress and state legislatures.
- Make connections between environmental injustice and worker injustice, economic inequality and environmental and economic racism.
- Promote community gardens.
- Promote green energy.
- Promote alternatives to fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas).
- Promote socially responsible investments (SRI) based on environmental in dioceses and congregations with endowments.
- Urge individuals and congregations to conserve.

Resources

Episcopal Public Policy Network
110 Maryland Ave., N.E. #309,
Washington, D.C. 20002
1-800-228-0515, (202) 547-7300,
FAX (202) 547-4457
www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn

Episcopal Ecological Network
<http://www.eenonline.org>

The Episcopal Church Network for
Science Technology and Faith
Published *Catechism of Creation: An
Episcopal Understanding*
[http://www.episcopalchurch.org/scie
nce](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/science)

Walter Brueggemann, *The Land—
Place as Gift, Promise, and
Challenge in Biblical Faith*, Fortress
Press. 2nd edition, 2002.

The Interfaith Power and Light
Campaign and The Regeneration
Project
220 Montgomery Street, #450
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 561-4891
Web: www.theregenerationproject.org

*(There are also many state Interfaith
Power and Light organizations.)*

National Council of Churches Eco-
Justice Programs
110 Maryland Ave NE, #108
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-2350
Web: www.nccecojustice.org

Verna M. Fausey
Nashville, Tennessee

Paper # 17

Fresh Water and Economic Justice

When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. Isaiah 41:17

Connecting ecology and the economy enriches economic justice. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in his “ecology and economy” 2005 lecture at University of Kent, challenged beliefs surrounding the separation or opposition of these two. Williams stated that the economy is a “wholly subsidiary of the environment and that the Earth ultimately controls economic activity.”

Today’s water problems require us to *SEE Justice* - that is, to connect social, environmental and economic justice issues. Every diocese in ECUSA should address the problems that threaten fresh water resources in the USA and in their companion dioceses around the world: increased demand for water, over-consumption, water abuse and use and privatization of water.

David L. Feldman, Ph.D., former University Tennessee Department of Political Science Chair, in his papers about faith-based stewardship of water and the case for a global freshwater policy writes: “...freshwater management is a growing global environmental challenge. According to the World Resources Institute, the world's thirst for water is likely to become one of the most pressing resource issues of the 21st Century as demands of a growing population increase. Conflicts over water supply are likely to worsen as surface and groundwater supplies become over-stressed. A number of inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations report that developing and developed countries face a far-reaching crisis as a result of growing reliance on irrigation for crop production; rapid urbanization and attendant growth in water consumption; diminishing supplies due to stream and aquifer depletion and deteriorating and/or poorly maintained urban water infrastructure; and, internecine conflict over the control of water. “

Maud Barlow writes in her book, *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle for the Right to Water*: “... the global water justice movement is demanding a change in international law to settle once and for all the question of who controls water.” She declares the right to water is a human right and a public trust and that a binding law to codify this right is needed. This should ensure that states have the obligation to deliver sufficient, safe, assessable and affordable water as a public service.

Barlow and other water experts tell us that many rich governments and their corporations benefit from making water a commodity. Several groups around the world are mobilizing in their communities and countries for constitutional

recognition of the right to water within their borders and at the United Nations for a full treaty that recognizes the right to water internationally.

Water is becoming big business with annual revenues estimated at more than \$300 billion worldwide. Not surprisingly the United States accounts for more than half of this number, and this is expected to grow as water scarcity becomes more apparent. Water rights and municipal water supply systems are two of the fastest growing market areas.

In the past decade, large multinational corporations have assumed control of water supply systems throughout the world. Privatizing state water utilities is evoking protests. Many countries and cities have embraced this in order to attract private capital and expertise needed to build or expand expensive water systems and services. We need strong government oversight to monitor rate increases and provide environmental safeguards and quality service for remote communities. The World Bank has made privatization of urban water systems a condition for receiving new loans and debt restructuring. The benefits and loss of this condition for new loans should be carefully monitored.

Ownership of water (and water as “an economic good”) has been an uneasy one on the international scene. Private industry has tremendous resources that can help solve the water crisis. However, solutions must be placed in humanitarian, ecological and spiritual as well as economic contexts. A large part of the crisis we have now entered results from the rejection of sustainability and the universality of human rights by powerful economic interests who favor competition to decide who will win and lose in wars for dwindling resources.

The Role of the Church and Religious Communities

Roberta Savage, justice advocate in Diocese of Virginia and former Executive Director of Associations of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators (ASIWPCA) in her Sewanee 2007 Water Conference presentation stated: “Societal equity and ownership of environmental resources are pivotal to any discussion of water policy. ... People’s need for sustenance and sustainable water collide with global markets and corporate interests. This global ‘tug of war’ for water is intimately connected to modernity, social justice, democratization, private ownership versus public resources, and the fight for self-determination.” Savage thinks creating a national and ultimately a global water budget and finding the balance between need, want, fairness and survival is a role tailor-made for the community of believers.

The General Convention in 2003 resolved to advocate public policy that ensures accessible clean water for all. Environmental ministry leaders in Province IV have been tracking the implementation of the two water resolutions and have

expanded the focus for scientific and ethical principles that govern a solid water ethic.¹

What Can We Do?

That the planet's fresh water is consumed profligately is beyond doubt, particularly in the area of agriculture, which accounts for 70 percent of all water use. And half or more of that water is lost to evaporation or runoff. Getting more out of each drop of water is imperative, for as the world's population increases and the demand for food soars, unchecked irrigation poses a serious threat to rivers, wetlands and lakes.

Drip irrigation, which uses perforated tubing to deliver water to crops, uses 30 to 70 percent less than traditional methods and increases crop yields to boot. The first drip systems were developed in the 1960s, but even now they're used on less than one percent of irrigated land. Most governments subsidize irrigation water so heavily that farmers have little incentive to invest in drip systems or other water saving methods.

Lester Brown, in his eco-economics research, estimates the services provided by freshwater in today's markets are worth two trillion dollars! The economic value of freshwater services enables us to save wetlands, watersheds and other natural resources. Years ago, Robert Kennedy Jr. facilitated an excellent economic concession that enabled New York City to save millions on water purification equipment by increasing watershed protection around the water reservoirs. Keeping the watersheds cleaner cost much less than new man-made water purification systems. This work illustrates dynamic ecology and economy relationships. More attention should be given to economic concessions that include economic value of services provided by natural resources. This expands environmental sustainability and justice issues.

"Saving Energy by Saving Water" is new focus for several conservation groups including the Diocese of Alabama Stewardship of Creation Task Force and the Diocese of Tennessee Environmental Ministry Team. Web links to these diocesan programs are posted at <http://www.provinceiv.org/Resources.html>. Connecting energy and water issues helps saves money, natural resources, eco-systems and communities. In many places around the world, much has been written about green alternative energy, especially about energy-efficient light bulbs. Too few people know that most hot water heaters use more electricity (electricity primarily produced from coal fired power plants) than the light bulbs in our churches and homes. More people should know that a typical American

¹ Some of this work can be found on the www.sewanee.edu/ENTREAT website. You may read the water resolutions at <http://eenonline.org/about/resolve.htm>

home today, running a hot water faucet for *five minutes* uses as much energy as leaving a 60-watt light bulb on for *fourteen hours*.

Considering the 46 billion spent per year globally on bottled water, it is most difficult to accept that we have not funded the estimated \$1.7 billion needed per year, beyond current spending, to provide clean drinking water to everyone on earth. The amount of money spent on bottled water is just one issue of many. Each gallon of water that is bottled requires an additional two gallons of water for its processing. Bottles require more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 cars for a year. Bottled water is even more expensive than \$5 a gallon gas. Why pour oil and money down the drain when you can get your own reusable bottle and fill it up at home?

Actions

- Expand and support advocacy work of *Episcopal Network for Economic Justice* (ENEJ) and *Episcopal Public Policy Network* (EPPN)
- Avoid using bottled water unless absolutely necessary. Use reusable stainless steel containers and carry tap water with you when traveling. At public events and at home, offer pitchers of water. Find out where the bottled water sold in your stores comes from and its environmental and economic impacts.
- Support the water and MDG programs of *Episcopal Relief and Development* (ERD) and *Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation*. Inspire your parish to study ERD's March 22 World Water Day promotions that address serious water problems around the world. More than 1.6 million children die each year from illnesses caused by drinking contaminated water. Every day, 25,000 people die from preventable diseases such as cholera and typhoid after drinking unsafe water.
- Purchase ERD gifts that provide clean drinking water to children and their families in rural communities plagued with poor sanitation, unhealthy hygiene and polluted water sources.
- Promote programs that help women play a central part in provision, management, and the safeguarding of water and challenge privatization as well as corruption, which marginalize the voices of women and whole communities in many parts of the world.
- Learn the connections between energy and water conservation, especially watershed and warming (climate change issues). Promote sustainable building and landscape practices.
- Promote gardens and agriculture practices that reduce water consumption and tolerate droughts.
- Many water projects are connected to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) especially MDG #7 - Ensure environmental sustainability. Environmental issues surrounding clean, adequate water resources and sanitation are integral pieces of the MDGs. See www.er-d.org/mdg to learn

how to promote these goals and make poverty history with 0.7% giving. Working on MDGs enables us to SEE Justice and be dynamic justice workers.

Resources

The three papers below were presented in *Water for Life: Conserving Water for Nature and People* the ENTREAT Sewanee conference in 2007. These can be downloaded at www.sewanee.edu/ENTREAT.

Water Rights and Dynamic Water Policies - Roberta Savage

Water and Sustainable Development – The Rev. Canon Jeffrey Golliher, Ph.D., is the program associate for Environment and Sustainable Development for the office of the Anglican Communion Observer at the United Nations.

Protecting and Healing Rivers One Watershed at a Time: Secular & Religious Collaborative Programs – Joyce Wilding. (This presentation was prepared for International Conference and Civilization at University of WI, La Crosse June 2006 and was used in Sewanee and Province IV programs).

United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP Freshwater Site

Joyce Wilding, TSSF
Province IV Environmental Ministry Leader
Kingston Springs, Tennessee

Paper # 18

Children's Health

"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not been restored?" *Jeremiah 8:22*.

The health of our children and the pre-natal care of their mothers is so important an issue that it is the subject of much legislation, study, publication, and organizational involvement. This paper will focus on these topics in the United States, and will consider these areas: nutrition as prevention, health coverage, availability of health care, and the Episcopal Church's response.

The Importance of Good Nutrition

Children's nutrition in conjunction with the Food Stamp Program has been studied by C-SNAP (Children's Sentinel Nutrition Assessment Program) at the Boston Medical Center. The study has taken a hard look at children in what they call "food insecure" homes. Food insecurity is defined as limited or uncertain access to enough nutritious food for all household members to lead an active life – in other words, hunger. According to C-SNAP's statistics, 12.6 million children in the United States live in food insecure homes.

Nutrition is so important a factor in the lives of infants and young children that a lack of access to adequate healthy food is responsible for an increased risk of illness and compromised immune systems. Insufficient healthy food leads to iron deficiency, anemia, deficits in cognitive development and behavioral and emotional problems. Children from food insecure homes are twice as likely to suffer from poor health and one third more likely to be hospitalized.

However, even with food stamps, access to healthy food can be a problem. Many low-income urban areas are described as food deserts owing to a lack of supermarkets and therefore, dependency on corner marts and fast foods. While cheap and filling, it is at a cost to health and nutrition. Added to this is inflation in food costs. The Labor Department reported that from May 2007 to May 2008, food prices increased 5.1%. However, the cost of healthy and staple items increased at a much higher rate. For example: fruit, 7%, vegetables, 10%, bread, 12%, milk, 26% and eggs a whopping 40%.

What can be done? Communities need to invest in the Food Stamp Program (which in October, 2008 was renamed the Supplemental Assistance Program [SNAP]). This will benefit people over the short as well as long term. USDA studies show that every \$5.00 of food stamp benefits generates \$9.20 in local economic activity. Other effective actions include citywide coalitions, such as the Boston Collaborative for Food and Fitness and the Philadelphia Food and Fitness Alliance. Also helpful can be equipping farmers' markets with wireless

EBT (electronic benefit transfer) card readers, which can improve access to local fruits and vegetables in communities with limited fresh food options.

The Importance of Health Care and Coverage

Central to the ongoing health of children and families is health insurance. For those who cannot afford it on their own or do not have employers who provide coverage, this becomes an insurmountable problem. An answer to this need is SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program). This is Title XXI of the Social Security Act and is jointly financed by the federal and state governments and administered by the states.

Families that do not currently have health insurance are likely to be eligible and families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid may also be eligible. Each state has different eligibility rules but in most states children under 19 whose families earn less than \$36,200 per year are eligible.

For little or no cost, this covers:

1. doctor visits
2. immunizations
3. hospitalizations
4. emergency room visits

Information on eligibility is available to families through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Discrepancies in Availability of Health Care

That there are discrepancies in the quality of health care for children on a state-to-state basis probably goes without saying. Just what do these inequities look like?

In a July 2008 article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, a chart shows a break down of variations in performance, divided into five categories:

1. Access
2. Quality
3. Costs
4. Equity
5. Potential to lead healthy lives

While no state ranked in the top quartile all the way across the board, fortunately none ranked completely in the fourth either. The top five states (in ranking order) include: Iowa, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts and Ohio. The researchers concluded that "If all states reached benchmarks achieved in the top-performing states, an additional 4.6 million children would have health insurance; 11.8 million more children would get their recommended annual medical and dental

checkups; and 1.6 million fewer children would be at risk for developmental delays.”

Episcopal Church Response

And what is the Episcopal Church’s response? In October 2007 the State Children’s Insurance Plan (S-CHIP) expired, and when it came up for renewal President Bush vetoed it. Congress then organized an override of the veto. The Episcopal Church Center joined a long list of religious organizations which wrote an impassioned letter in support of the override.

Our Presiding Bishop, Katherine Jefferts Schori, wrote, “Whoever cares for the least cares for the divine image in our midst. The health and well being of children, especially those living in the richest nation in the world, should never be reduced to political ideology, and I urge Congress and the Bush administration to renew S-CHIP legislation promptly.” Bulletin inserts were available to individual parishes, and parishioners were urged to contact their local legislators. S-CHIP continues today.

The General Convention of this church has a history of concern for child health such as Resolution B018, entitled Comprehensive Children’s Policy. This resolution was passed at the 75th General Convention held in 2006. Proposed by The Rt. Rev. William D. Persell of Chicago, this resolution “urges Episcopalians and the Episcopal Church at every level to work to ensure that government provide adequate funding for programs that combat social and economic conditions that place children at risk or diminish children’s ability to achieve their full potential in the world.” It further resolves “that the General Convention receive and endorse the National Council of Church’s comprehensive policy statement entitled *The Church and Children: Vision and goals for the 21st Century Policy*. The Episcopal Church is a member of the NCC whose governing body, the General Assembly, passed this statement on November 11, 2004 to ensure that “all children have the opportunity to develop and flourish.”

In the body of this resolution, under the heading of HEALTH, the resolution states that “Every child and family has a right to guaranteed quality, comprehensive health care. All children deserve to live in a healthy environment that allows them to thrive. Therefore, we commit to:

- Ensure quality pre-natal care is available for all
- Focus on prevention as a key to preserving the health and well-being of children
- Ensure that no child go hungry
- Implement an effective health and nutrition education curriculum
- Work for publicly funded, integrated, accessible and high quality mental health care
- Develop partnerships for clean air, water, land and a healthy ecosystem.”

Both houses concurred.

The Executive Council of the church, also committed to children's needs, in February 2005 passed a resolution reaffirming the Church's commitment to children.

The United Nations in 2000 dedicated themselves to eight goals, which when once identified became the Millennium Development Goals, to be accomplished by the year 2015. The Episcopal Church has taken these on. Goal four is to reduce child mortality. Its aim is to: "reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five." A quote from the UN web site states that "at this time eleven million children below age 5 still die every year from preventable causes – about 30,000 a day." Goal five is to improve maternal health. Target areas are to "reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio" and "achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health."

These are big goals. The problems, in this country alone, are huge. What are we to do? The solution appears to be education, legislation and the unceasing vigilance on the part of people of prayer.

Barbara Larsen
Diocese of Chicago

Paper # 19

The Millennium Development Goals

What is the Issue?

As of this writing, 26,500 to 30,000 children throughout the world die *each day* due to poverty. This number is equivalent to:

- 1 child dying every 3 seconds
- 18 children dying every minute
- A 2004 Asian Tsunami occurring every week
- Almost 10 million children dying every year
- 60 million children dying between the year 2000 and 2006

“They die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.”¹

Nearly half of the more than 6 billion people on earth are poor. Poverty can be defined as extreme (or absolute) poverty, moderate poverty and relative poverty. Extreme poverty is defined by the World Bank as living on less than \$1 a day. Those living in extreme poverty are unable to meet the basic needs of survival, are chronically malnourished, lack safe drinking water and basic sanitation, healthcare, education, perhaps lack even a rudimentary shelter and do not possess the “basics” such as shoes or adequate clothing. Extreme poverty is defined as the “poverty that kills.” Unlike moderate or relative poverty, extreme poverty now exists only in developing countries. Moderate poverty is defined as living on \$1 to \$2 a day, a condition in which basic needs are met but just barely. Relative poverty is defined as a household income level below the national average and means lacking things that the middle class of a society take for granted.

The World Bank estimates that approximately 1.4 billion people live in extreme poverty. This estimate does not reflect the recent and ongoing global food shortages and rising costs of energy, which could bring another 100 million people into poverty.

Our Faith

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and to bring the homeless poor into your

¹ A spotty scorecard, UNICEF, Progress of Nations 2000

house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not hide yourself from your own kin? (Isaiah 58: 6-7)

Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?.....The King will reply, Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me. (Matthew 25: 37-40)

These passages are a clarion call to care for those in need and a reminder of what our call should be as followers of Jesus, to give priority to caring for the hungry, thirsty, and needy of the world. “Massive poverty and obscene inequality are such terrible scourges of our times – times in which the world boasts of breathtaking advances in science, technology, industry and wealth accumulation- that they have to rank alongside slavery and apartheid as social evils...Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings. ...Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an action of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life...” (Nelson Mandela, 2005)

What can be done

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) goals were agreed to in 2000 by 189 heads of state and government, including the United States, to address the deepest material brokenness of the world. These measurable interwoven goals which are to be met by 2015 include: (1) Cut in half extreme poverty and hunger; (2) Achieve universal primary education; (3) Promote gender equality and empower women; (4) Reduce child mortality; (5) Improve maternal health; (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; (7) Ensure environmental stability; and (8) Develop a global partnership for development with targets for aid, trade and debt relief.

In 2003 the Episcopal General Convention passed Resolution D-006 which endorsed and embraced the achievement of the MDGs, challenged all dioceses and congregations to give 0.7% of their annual budget to support the MDGs, and directed the Episcopal Office of Government Relations to advocate for the US government to keep its promise to give 0.7% of its gross national income to international development programs. By the General Convention of 2006, 41 dioceses had pledged a minimum of 0.7% of their budgets to MDG ministries, with work toward that commitment happening in 24 other dioceses.

“The church has said that our larger vision will be framed and shaped in the coming years by the vision of shalom embedded in the MDGs – a world where the hungry are fed, the ill are healed, the young educated, women and men treated equally, and where all have access to clean water and adequate sanitation, basic health care, and the promise of development that does not endanger the rest of creation. That vision of abundance is achievable in our own

day, but only with the passionate commitment of each and every one of us. It is God's vision of homecoming for all humanity." (Katherine Jefferts Schori, 2006)

When the Millennium Development Goals were adopted, the nations of the world pledged to "spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty". We are now more than half way toward 2015 and while some progress has been made, we still have a long way to go.

What can one person do?

- Pray for the organizations we support, or issues we care about
- Pray that the church and our nation have the will to address global poverty
- Preach and teach on the MDGs on a regular basis
- Study about global poverty, invite speakers to come to our churches and community meetings who have been actively involved living and working with those living in extreme poverty.
- Write about the MDGs in your parish and diocesan newsletters, share the stories of what others are doing in your community to address poverty
- Give 0.7% of your family budget to projects or organizations that are addressing global poverty
- Encourage your church, your diocese and community organizations to commit 0.7% annually to the MDGS
- Organize a trip to a developing country and connect with a local church. Go as pilgrim, listen to the stories of joy and despair, share your lives. Find out from the people living there what they need, not what we think they need.
- Write your Congressmen and the President to remind them of the United States commitment to meet the millennium development goals
- Ask candidates for political office what their plans are to meet the challenge of global poverty
- Keep informed on government action regarding debt relief and other measures that address global poverty, lobby your representatives to do the right thing

Resources

Study

Alkire, Sbina; Newell, Edmund, What Can One Person Do?, Faith to Heal a Broken World. 2005, Church Publishing Inc

Sachs, Jeffrey; *The End of Poverty, Economic Possibilities for Our Time.* 2005, Penguin Press.

United Nations Development Programme

One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017 USA
Tel: +1 (212) 906-5000
Fax: +1 (212) 906-5364
www.undp.org/mdg
www.un.org/millenniumgoals

Pray

Micah Challenge USA is a Christian campaign that is part of a global Micah Challenge campaign.

www.micahchallenge.org

Act

Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD)

815 Second Ave.

New York, NY 10117

1-800-334-7686 ext. 5129

www.er-d.org/mdg

Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation,

6209 Pershing Ave

St Louis, MO 63130

Phone: 314-348-6453

www.e4gr.org

The [ONE campaign](http://www.onecampaign.org) is a new effort to rally Americans -- ONE by ONE -- to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE will be promoted with the help of a diverse coalition of faith-based and antipoverty groups, celebrity spokespeople such as U2 lead singer Bono as well as corporate partnerships and local ONE Campaign organizers. The [ONE campaign](http://www.onecampaign.org) is a new effort to rally Americans -- ONE by ONE -- to fight global AIDS and extreme poverty. ONE will be promoted with the help of a diverse coalition of faith-based and antipoverty groups, celebrity spokespeople such as U2 lead singer Bono as well as corporate partnerships and local ONE Campaign organizers.

www.onecampaign.org

ONE Episcopalian™ is a grassroots partnership between The Episcopal Church and the ONE Campaign to rally Episcopalians – ONE by ONE – to the cause of ending extreme poverty in our world and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/ONE/>

Myra Kingsley
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Paper # 20

Prisons and Incarceration

What is the Issue?

My small-for-his-age 16 year old parishioner, after sitting in adult jail for three months, will be tried as an adult on felony charges. (He'd found a gun, which was stuffed in his waistband when he took a "friend's" empty wallet; when the police nabbed him at the Arby's store, he gave his brother's name at first.) No kid wants more to be good than Denzel, but -- with Bipolar, ADHD, IED, learning disabilities, borderline IQ, and the "school to prison pipeline" history of a disadvantaged child whose mom couldn't get him the help she knew he needed from age 5 -- he'll go to prison most likely, for 2 to 8 years. This time.

He has the most engaged public defender I've encountered in a long time. She paid attention to Denzel's history, was able to get a continuance and order a second psychiatric evaluation before the bench trial is scheduled. But, she said, "There's no place the judge can send him for the treatment you're talking about. What you need to work on is prison reform!"

Even with the best outcome we could hope (not guilty by reason of insanity), Denzel would still be facing a world of few choices and many pitfalls, with his incomprehension of reality, inability to understand consequences, and lack of impulse control. Denzel could not cope with learning that he was going back to jail for a month; he was escorted out shouting, crying, and struggling, by four officers. His mother wept, "My greatest fear has been that he won't be able to control himself, and he'll end up dead or in prison."

There is little unique about Denzel's story; to many families, it is predictable at every turn. It takes grand patterns to become the nation with the most incarcerated persons, proportionate to our population, in the whole world. Not only that: the USA, with five percent of the world's population and 25 percent of the world's inmates, has more people incarcerated than any other nation in the world. More than the "authoritarian regimes" and "terrorist states". More than China with all its people. According to the most recent counts, a one in a hundred person in the US is an inmate. *

Break it out by demographics and the story is more disturbing. Incarceration is not an equal opportunity employer in this country. Currently, one out of 106 white men, one out of 36 Hispanic men, and one out of 15 African American men in the US is incarcerated. The imprisonment of Black males in South Africa under apartheid in 1993 was at the rate of 851 per 100,000. In the US in 2006 it was 4,789 per 100,000.

A striking majority of inmates had school problems indicating learning disabilities, and/or did not finish high school. According to US Bureau of Justice, 56 percent of US inmates have psychiatric disabilities needing treatment. Socio-economic level and stability in the family of origin is a reliable predictor of who will go to prison, on the broad scale.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, in the famous judgment scene of chapter 25, when the King says to the just, "I was in prison...", "some translations go on, "...and you visited me." It is important to visit the prisoners, to remember their names, to pray for them and bring the message of redemption. But the Greek verb in the text is from the same root from which we get "episcopos" -- and it means to see to, to be concerned for and to act in the interests of, *to make the well-being, inclusion, and reconciliation of the prisoners our business*. The just who inherit the Kingdom are those who become the pastors of the inmates; and as the rest of that scene makes clear, it is not in a disembodied spiritual sense that we are shepherds. *In order to "visit" in the sense required by the Gospel, we will have to understand the unjust patterns and dismantle them.*

What is the pattern of social and political decisions which makes Denzel's story so normal and familiar? There are several important actions going on in recent decades which impact the story, and these are the places where Episcopalians can join with other people of faith, using our rightful voice as citizens, to demand a more sane, reasonable, and healing approach.

1. The Children's Defense Fund has documented the "cradle to prison pipeline" and is not alone in recognizing the glaring need for this change: pre-judicial intervention through early childhood and family support programs that will help children to be ready for school when they start, and identify families who need assistance to deal with mental health and other challenges so that these do not become barriers to their children's participation. Every child who is kept out of juvenile court and detention through this process represents a major payback on the public investment in real dollars as well as social strength.

2. Lack of diversionary and alternative programs for at-risk and troubled youth. Add to this the trend of charging, trying, and sentencing children as adults. Children like Denzel are not going to be helped by two or eight years in prison. By the time they reach his level of emotional and behavioral disturbance (having lacked the needed early interventions), they need comprehensive long-term treatment. This is expensive of course: it may even approach what taxpayers pay to keep inmates incarcerated.

3. An overloaded and overworked public defender roster dealing with a constant surge of indigent defendants. The typical plan is to work out a plea bargain with the State even before consulting with the defendant; there is no time to investigate a plea of "not guilty" on its merits, to build a case, to examine evidence and subpoena witnesses. Poor defendants learn that they have no

choice but to plead guilty to the least disastrous of a frightening range of possibilities, or they can surely expect the worst outcome.

4. Incarceration for offenders who have not injured others; prison rather than treatment for those whose illegal behavior is related to addiction or mental illness. In some cases this is due to mandatory sentencing laws, in others to the absence of alternatives to jail or prison within the judge's jurisdiction.

5. Mandatory sentencing laws which have persistently increased prison time per sentence, although this has been demonstrated to have no deterrent effect on crime or recidivism.

6. "Persistent offender" laws (such as "three strikes and you're out") in many states, which turn minor infractions and parole violations into decades or life in prison.

7. Criminalization and prison time for an ever-growing list of former misdemeanors, with no evidence that these reclassifications deter the incidence of those actions or more serious crimes.

8. The "cost-saving" measures of removing educational, mental health, and human services from prisons, reflecting punitive attitudes in the political arena as "corrections" philosophy has shifted from reform to punishment. Not only are the health, retraining, and safety of inmates compromised. The chances of an ex-inmate who has served his time re-entering society successfully are further reduced.

9. The revolving door of recidivism due to lack of re-entry assistance, the stigma of a "record," and the extreme difficulty of finding employment with a felony in one's past.

10. Recent policy decisions to criminalize and incarcerate undocumented immigrants simply for being found working, or driving, or in their homes --in some cases housing them in prison camps with their families while awaiting deportation processing.

To handle the upsurge in the prison population, counties and states either reap benefits by leasing available inmate beds to neighboring jurisdictions, or contract out their inmates at a per diem rate if they can't afford to build more facilities.

In addition, the once-flagging private prison-for-profit industry, now consolidated mostly in two large corporations, has gained new contracts to build and operate prisons in many states, some of them being filled with inmates from other states. Though the evidence on the whole indicates they are no more efficient or effective than state-run prisons, they do make profits through non-union policies, understaffing, non-provision of services, and contracting out prison labor to private employers.

In some places, for example, undocumented workers now held in prison are contracted out to work the same farms –seeing earnings as low as \$.45 an hour-- from which they would have been arrested had they been working before at minimum wage. In some states, prisoners are the workforce who produce office furniture and other items which state agencies are required to buy in order to "support local industry". Contracting for prison labor is even touted in some corrections websites as the "local employment" alternative to outsourcing. It bypasses both union standards and prevailing wage laws, and not surprisingly has been likened by human rights groups to a new form of slave labor.

Like the cost of war in the national economy, the "war on crime" can be seen as a war on the poor at the state level. The resources most needed for the common good are diverted to the cost of the prison system; the services defunded by this transfer are those most needed by disadvantaged citizens; and these are the people most likely to end up in the prisons.

If US citizens were actually so much more violent and incorrigible than all the other people of the world, if minority people were actually worse people than those of western European descent, if the huge upsurge in incarceration were actually effective in preventing recidivism or making a safer society, these patterns might be understandable. But while a basis in reality is lacking for these political and social decisions, there is a clear link between the economic interests and the ideology guiding the policy decisions.

The two largest for-profit prison corporations, The GEO Group (formerly Wackenhut) and Corrections Corporation of America, are among an impressive list of major funder-participants (along with Exxon, Bell South, R.J. Reynolds, and WalMart, for example) in the American Legislative Exchange Council, founded in 1973 by Paul Weyrich, also co-founder of the conservative Heritage Foundation. ALEC works to recruit and "arm" state legislators; its corporate sponsors actually co-write legislation which is then introduced in every state to promote their agenda with the following among other hallmarks: Rolling back civil rights legislation; preventing or undoing environmental protection measures; diverting funds away from social and human services; defunding public schools through diversion of their funds to vouchers, charter schools, and home schoolers; tort reform to limit the ability of plaintiffs to sue corporations; privatization for profit of public services wherever possible; "tough on crime" legislation that guarantees criminalization of more people and a growing stream of new and longer-term inmates.

What Can We Do?

In 2001 ALEC boasted more than a third of state legislators as members, and was responsible for hundreds of acts passed in state legislatures. Their influence has continued to grow. While ALEC is recognized and rewarded at the national level for its coordinated implementation of the grand plan (gaining

commendations from President George W. Bush and members of his administration), its *action at the state level gives Episcopalians in their dioceses the opportunity to respond as we are called*, caring for those who are incarcerated. If we are to affect the future of our burgeoning inmate population, *we must respond with grassroots organizing, helping our legislators to get "smart on crime," instead of letting corporations write the laws that make us the most imprisoned nation in the world.*

Examples of actions include:

1. Donate to and volunteer with organizations that serve former offenders and advocate for criminal justice reform in your state.
2. Write to your state representative about the need for smart-on-crime, evidence-based criminal justice reform that reduces crime, lowers rates of incarceration, and saves tax dollars. For example, let them know that spending on education is more effective at preventing crime than building more prisons. Advocate for policies that strengthen public education and human services.
3. Encourage business leaders in your community to hire ex-offenders, helping them overcome barriers that inhibit their successful re-entry into the community.
4. Educate yourself and your community on pressing issues and opportunities for reform in criminal justice. Some resources are:

National Hire Network <http://www.hirenetwork.org/>

Public Welfare Foundation

<http://www.publicwelfare.org/Programs/Default.aspx?progid=1>

Soros Foundations Network, Open Society Institute

<http://www.soros.org/initiatives/issues/law>

Unlocking America: Why and How to Reduce America's Prison Population, 2007
JFA Associates

<http://www.jfa-associates.com/publications/srs/UnlockingAmerica.pdf>

* Other countries in TEC, prison populations per 100,000, most recent figures available according to International Centre for Prison Studies: Colombia, 144; Ecuador 94; Honduras 161; Puerto Rico 356; Dominican Republic 147; Venezuela 79; Haiti 72; Micronesia 79; Taiwan 263, Virgin Islands 549; British Virgin Islands 488; Convocation: Austria 95; Germany 91; France 91; Belgium 93; Italy 83.

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http://www.childrensdefense.org/site/PageServer?pagename=c2pp_report2007

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<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/law/research/icps>

One in One Hundred: Behind Bars in America 2008, The Pew Center on the States
<http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/One%20in%20100.pdf>

Sentencing Project <http://www.sentencingproject.org/>

Ohio Policy and Justice Center, <http://www.ohiojpc.org/>

Prison Policy Initiative, <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/>

Robert G. Lawson, "PFO Law Reform, A Crucial First Step toward Sentencing Sanity in Kentucky," *Kentucky Law Journal*, 2008-9, Vol. 97 No. 1

Federal Prison Industries, Inc. <http://www.unicor.gov/>

This Alien Life: Privatized Prisons for Immigrants by Deepa Fernandes, Special to CorpWatch,
February 5, 2007 <http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=14333>

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<http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/199812/prisons/3>

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<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0822/p14s02-wmgn.html> *Employers must pay \$2 an hour in Arizona for the projects studied, of which most goes to the contracting prison and some goes to the court.*

Meredith Kolodner, "US Immigration Enforcement Benefits Prison Firms," *New York Times*, July 19, 2006
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/19/business/19detain.html?_r=2&pagewanted=2&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

The Real Cost of Prisons Weblog
http://realcostofprisons.org/blog/archives/2008/03/new_mexico_imm.html

California Prison Industry Authority <http://www.pia.ca.gov/>

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July 2006.

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SourceWatch, "American Legislative Exchange Council"

http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=American_Legislative_Exchange_Council

Common Cause, "American Legislative Exchange Council"

<http://www.commoncause.org/site/pp.asp?b=1497709&c=dkLNK1MQlwG>

American Legislative Exchange Council

<http://www.alec.org/am/template.cfm?section=home>

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Paper # 21

The Economic Impact of the Prison Industrial Complex

What is the Issue?

The prison system is similar to the giants of big business in terms of its budget. States spend nearly \$50 billion a year on prisons, while the cost to the federal government exceeds \$5 billion. Unlike big business, however, the prison system is mainly a non-profit, tax dollar funded enterprise at both the state and federal level. In the state of Georgia alone, the Department of Corrections reported fiscal year 2006 expenditures of just over \$1 billion. Moreover, the costs far outweigh the benefits, if recidivist and crime level rates are considered. In fact, some argue that removing an inveterate criminal from the streets simply opens a 'new', albeit illicit, job position for someone else. Thus, there is no decrease in criminal activity, only an increase in tax dollars needed to house, supervise and 'reform' the incarcerated individual. Plus, more than one out of every 100 adult Americans is in jail or prison, according to a *Washington Post* article in February of 2008.

Another factor in a cost-benefit analysis relates to the loss of 'human capital'. There are many studies that evidence the loss of family and community vitality when (1) a member of the labor force is incarcerated and (2) social service dollars are needed to support dependent family members (children and single parents). Additionally, mixed conclusions have been drawn from studies of programs and specialized facilities which target changing "criminal thinking" and/or curing drug and alcohol addiction linked to criminal behavior. The increased costs attributed to these programs and/or facilities can not be justified incontrovertibly by lower recidivist rates, or the recovery of human capital.

At the local level, however, prisons do bring tax dollars into a community, if only from an increase in the median income of its residents. Likewise, small businesses benefit: the corner gas station, the local grocery store, entertainment arenas and the like. In fact, many small, rural towns view prisons as a viable local industry and part of their economic development strategy. The question is, though, do the benefits equate to the billions of tax dollars spent?

The concept of privatization was adopted as a means of stemming the tremendous outflow of state and federal tax dollars. This strategy fit with not only a very vocal public call for privatization of many governmental services, but also the need to balance popular 'Get tough on crime' policies with overcrowding in penal institutions and the bleeding of tax dollars away from other services managed by states. In other words, it was a win-win for politicians.

After almost 30 years of tracking the effects of privatization, studies by the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) show that projected fiscal savings of twenty percent were overstated. In fact, privatization accounts for only a one percent savings per year on the average. In addition, there are hidden costs associated with privatization, such as local subsidization of capital construction and infrastructure development. Plus, state corrections departments find they have little control over administrative policies and day-to-day operations in the private facilities. For these reasons, privatization at the state level has slowed.

At the federal level, on the other hand, the use of privately operated prisons and detention centers has expanded. This phenomenon is explained, in part, by the hefty fines mandated by new legislation aimed at controlling prison overcrowding. Overcrowding has been linked to other legislation which increased the crime level (misdemeanors to felonies) of certain illegal activities committed by documented or undocumented immigrants flowing into the country.

The Politics of Criminalization and Morality of Justice

Since criminalization of any activity tends to follow the ideology of those in power, the laws enacted and their administration are politically driven, often with little attention to their deleterious effects. We want our neighborhoods and towns to be safe, so we elect 'Get tough on crime' politicians and extend the powers of law enforcement. The cost in tax dollars increases yearly; our courts are overburdened; more and more Americans are going to prison; and crime levels don't appear to be decreasing.

Politics aside, what is "just" about incarceration, the staple of the prison industrial system? How do we determine when justice has taken place? Is it "just" for a police officer to risk his or her life intervening in a domestic dispute when charges are not pressed by the victim nor picked up by the State? What sentence would a parent consider "just" for the impaired driver who killed his or her son? Is it "just" for a system to promise equality before the law when the reality could not be further from that ideal? "Criminal justice", for sure, is an enigmatic term, and an oxymoron to some.

Church and Scriptural Guidance

If we are to discern our position within the interplay of the politics of criminalization and the morality of justice with any modicum of grace, it is reasonable that we would look to the Church and Scripture for guidance.

The Church passed several resolutions in 2000 pertaining to this issue: a moratorium on maximum control unit prison construction; observance of human rights and needs of prisoners; and exploration and study of restorative justice for the nation's criminal justice system. In addition, we were urged to be active in public policy decisions affecting the growing prison industrial complex on local,

state and nation levels, and asked to encourage parish visitation programs to inmates, as well as support and training to newly discharged inmates.

The Scriptures call us to visit and pray for the imprisoned. We are to be 'just' and to pray for 'just' treatment of prisoners. Above all, we are called to love God first and foremost, and to love others as we love ourselves.

What Can We Do?

Keeping in mind the resolutions of our Church and the words of the Scriptures, positioning ourselves as "angels" of solutions rather than demagogues of problems, is important, particularly where the politics of criminalization and the morality of justice blur the straight edges of cost-benefit analysis. It is essential that we avoid the pitfalls of obscuring our work with only economic considerations and/or our political biases.

Our first step might be to establish a committee of interested and committed church representatives who would facilitate the gathering of information and its synthesis into critical issues for discussion. Ways to do this might be: (1) getting to know our governmental representatives; (2) having thoughtful conversations with those in positions of power in the prison industrial complex; and (3) visiting prisons, detention centers and the like with open minds and prayerful hearts.

If we are to give wise counsel in terms of our position and an action plan, we must remember that there are many faces of justice, and there is an authenticity to simply being present and sensitive to the suffering of individuals; the sometimes odious tasks delegated to those who work in the system; and the justice of consequences.

Some possibilities we might discover in the process include: (1) we are already positioned and taking just steps; (2) we are transformed by the process of discernment, rather than by any specific rhetoric we speak or action we think prudent to take; and (3) we are being called by God to be sensitive to a complex issue and to relay this sensitivity to our parishes and parishioners.

Resources

Books and Articles

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2. Felson, Marcus (2002). *Crime and Everyday Life* (3rd Ed.). Sage Publications, ISBN 0-7619-8761-4 (Paperback).
3. Lanier, Mark M., and Henry, Stuart (2004). *Essential Criminology* (2nd Ed.). Perseus Books, ISBN 0-8133-4090-X (Paperback).
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7. Williams, Franklin P., and McShane, M. (2004). *Criminological Theory* (4th Ed.). Prentice Hall, ISBN 0131113879 (Paperback).

Web Sites: Statistics and Reports

1. Department of Justice: Bureau of Justice Assistance
<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA>
2. Federal Bureau of Prisons
<http://www.bop.gov>
3. Georgia Department of Corrections
<http://www.dcor.state.ga.us>
4. The Sentencing Project
<http://www.sentencingproject.org>
5. U. S. Government Accountability Office
<http://www.gao.gov>

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Paper # 22

Health Care Policy and Economic Injustice

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.”

--Martin Luther King, Jr.

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

--The Baptismal Covenant, BCP, p.305

“The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being. It is not a privilege reserved for those with power, money, or social standing.”

--from the **International Declaration of Health Rights**

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

--Article 24, **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted and proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948

What is the Issue?

The current health care system in the United States of America is characterized by the creation of barriers set up by privilege based on wealth. It is marked by major disparities in access to care, in availability of treatment modalities, and in health care outcomes, with significant differences in morbidity and mortality depending upon one's socioeconomic status. Consider the following statistics:

- In 2007, 45 million nonelderly people in the United States lacked health coverage
- More than eight in ten uninsured people (81%) come from working families
- About two-thirds of the nonelderly uninsured are from low-income families (income below 200% of poverty, about \$42,400 for a family of 4 in 2007)
- More than one in three people (35%) living in poverty are uninsured, compared with one in twenty people (5%) with family incomes at or above four times the poverty level
- Adults age 19-54 make up the majority (71%) of the nonelderly uninsured, but nearly 9 million children lacked health coverage in 2007
- Since 2000 the number of nonelderly uninsured has grown by 8 million—with the only decline in the number of uninsured occurring in 2007, largely driven by an increase in public coverage

- Uninsured adults are five times as likely as the privately insured to lack a usual source of care (54% vs. 10%) and four times as likely to postpone care due to cost (26% vs. 6%)
- Fully half of the uninsured report paying for health care and health insurance is a serious problem¹

Scriptural and Church Responses

Michael Moore in his documentary *Sicko* asks of Americans, “Who are we” as a society to sacrifice sound health in favor of corporate profits? This question might be rephrased, “Who are we,” The Episcopal Church, the body of Christ, to sacrifice sound health in favor of corporate profits? Is a corporate-driven health care system compatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Is a corporate-driven health care system compatible with our baptismal covenant?

Jesus clearly is concerned with healing and health in scripture. In truth, a large portion of the gospels is reflective of his concern for health and healing, particularly with a preferential option for the poor and marginalized:

- The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mk 1:29-31)
- The sick healed at evening (Mk 1:32-34)
- The healing of a leper (Mk 1:40-45)
- The centurion’s servant (Matt 8:5-13)
- The Healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12)
- Healing of a woman with hemorrhaging (Matt 9:20-22)
- Jairus’ daughter (Matt 9:18-26)
- Two blind men healed (Matt 27-31)
- The healing of a demoniac who was mute (Matt 9:32-34)
- The healing of the man with the withered hand (Mk 3:1-6)
- Jesus heals the multitudes (Mk 3:7-12)
- The Gerasene demoniac (Mk 5:1-20)
- Healings at Gennesaret (Mk 6:53-56)
- The healing of many sick people (Matt 15:29-31)
- The healing of the deaf person with a speech impediment (Mk 7:31-37)
- The healing of the boy with a spirit (Mk 8:14-29)
- The healing of the crippled woman (Lk 12:10-17)
- The healing of a man with dropsy (Lk 14:1-6)
- The healing of ten lepers (Lk 17:11-19)
- The healing of Bartimaeus (Mk 18:46-52)

The Episcopal Church has in the past addressed health care as a Christian concern:

¹ Figures from Kaiser Family Foundation(www.kff.org/uninsured/h08_7813.cfm)

- Resolution 1988-D108, titled, “Advocate for Appropriate Health Care for All Who Are Ill:” Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That this 69th General Convention direct the Presiding Bishop and the Executive Council, in light of the strains upon the health care system exerted by the AIDS Epidemic, to direct the Washington, D.C. office of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America to adopt a strategy to advocate for all persons suffering from illness by creating appropriate levels of cost-effective health care, for example, hospices and alternative health facilities.
- Resolutions A010, “Advocate Legislation for Comprehensive Health Care,” and A099, “Call for a System of Universal Access to Health Care.” Both resolutions passed by the 70th General Convention in 1991, called for universal health care as a basic right, the former calling for advocacy from agencies of The Episcopal Church, and the latter for action in the federal government.
- Resolution A057, “Adopt Church Principles on Access to Health Care,” passed by the 71st General Convention in 1994: Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopt the following four principles as the position of the Episcopal Church regarding health care:
 1. That universal access to quality, cost effective, health care services be considered necessary for everyone in the population.
 2. That “quality health care” be defined so as to include programs in preventive medicine, where wellness is the first priority.
 3. That “quality health care” include interdisciplinary and interprofessional components to insure the care of the whole person—physiological, spiritual, psychological, social.
 4. That “quality health care” include the balanced distribution of resources so that no region of the country is underserved.²

In addition to the above actions of The Episcopal Church, Executive Council affirmed the right of individuals to care by the adoption of Resolution NAC 024 at its meeting on February 11-14, 2005 in Austin, Texas:

Resolved, The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, USA meeting in Austin, Texas February 11-14, 2005, reaffirms the commitment of the 70th General Convention asserting the right of all individuals to medically necessary health care, including long-term services; and be it further

Resolved, that the Executive Council calls on the President of the United States and the United States Congress to preserve and protect the Medicaid and Medicare programs as an essential national commitment to serve the needs of the least among us; and be it further *Resolved*, that the Council calls on Episcopalians and the Episcopal Church to advocate for Medicaid and Medicare coverage that ensures access to

² Scott, Marshall. “Health care Redox,” posted by Jim Naughton on Episcopal Café website on April 19, 2007. Resolution number 1994-A057 may also be viewed at http://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_resolution-complete.pl?resolution=1994-A057

affordable, comprehensive health care as well as long-term care for children, the working poor and elderly of this country.³

What Can We Do?

What further can The Episcopal Church, individuals, and congregations do to break down the health care barriers set up by privilege based on wealth existing in the United States?

The Episcopal Church, its dioceses, and all parishes must create task forces on health care policy for study, advocacy, and nonviolent action to bring about significant reform based on Christian morality. Barriers set up by privilege based on wealth may be broken down by love of God and love of neighbor. Christian values that inform our spiritual covenant are compassion, the common good, equitable distribution of our resources, and a preferential option for those who are vulnerable—the poor, the sick, the broken-hearted, and all who are marginalized in our society. It will be necessary to take the vows of our baptismal covenant seriously, placing these vows above the ways of a corporate profit system of health care. It is time for a single payer national health program.

The following findings are now well documented:⁴

- Administrative costs consume 31 percent of US health spending, most of it unnecessary.
- Half of all bankruptcies are caused by medical bills. Three-fourths of those bankrupted had health insurance at the time they got sick or injured.
- Taxes already pay for more than 60 percent of US health spending. Americans pay the highest health care taxes in the world. We pay for national health insurance, but don't get it.
- Despite spending far less per capita for health care, Canadians are healthier and have better measures of access to health care than Americans.
- Business pays less than 20 percent of our nation's health bill. It is a misnomer that our health system is "privately financed" (60 percent is paid by taxes and the remaining 20 percent is out-of-pocket payments.).
- For-profit, investor-owned hospitals, HMOS, and nursing homes have higher costs and score lower on most measures of quality than their non-profit counterparts.
- Immigrants and emergency department visits by the uninsured are not the cause of high and rising health care costs.

³ Accessed on 10/9/2008 at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/1866_70828_ENG_Print.html

⁴ Accessed on 8/14/2008 at http://pnhp.org/single_payer_resources/pnhp_research_the_case_for_a_national_health_program.php. Physicians for a National Health Program, 29 E Madison Suite 602, Chicago, IL 60602 (research articles supporting the findings are included at this website).

- The uninsured do not receive all the medical care they need—one-third of uninsured adults have chronic illness and don't receive needed health care. Those most in need of preventive services are least likely to receive them.
- The US could save enough on administrative costs (more than \$350 billion annually) with a single-payer system to cover all of the uninsured.
- Competition among investor-owned, for-profit entities has raised costs and reduced quality in the US
- The Canadian single payer healthcare system produces better health outcomes with substantially lower administrative costs than the United States
- Computerized medical records and chronic disease management do not save money. The only way to slash administrative overhead and improve quality is with a single payer system
- Alternative proposals for “universal coverage” do not work. State health reforms over the past two decades have failed to reduce the number of uninsured.

Resources for study, advocacy, and action include: ⁵

- VISION & VOICE: Faithful Citizens & Health Care, an adult education resource to engage people of faith in dialogue about reform, available FREE on the web at www.visionandvoice.org . It also includes video of religious leaders speaking about health care through the lens of faith values.
- COPING WITH THE COST OF HEALTH CARE: How We Pay for What We Need?, an adult discussion guide published by National Issues Forums that presents three approaches for deliberation. It is also available as a FREE download at http://www.nifi.org/discussion_guides/detail.aspx?catID=12&itemID=11480 (information also available about how to purchase).
- The National Council of Churches Health Task Force and the Committee on Children and Families have joined together to publish the 1st edition of the NCC Health Care Alert Bulletin Insert. This first edition is designed to help members of the faith community understand the magnitude of the health care problem in our country. Four different formats available to download on the NCC Health Task Force website at www.health-ministries.org . To subscribe to receive the link to the Health Care Alert Bulletin Insert with description, go to www.health-ministries.org and click on “New Articles” under the word “Syndication” on the right side of the homepage. Or, these documents may be downloaded from the Health Care Alert Bulletin Insert box on the top right of the homepage. These NCC Health Care Alert Bulletin Inserts will be published at least monthly and more often as needed.

Other resources include:

⁵ From the PA Council of Churches

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality <http://www.ahrpr.gov/>
- Alliance for Health Reform <http://www.allhealth.org/>
- American Public Health Association
<http://www.apha.org/NR/rdonlyres/40E68094-E47F-465B-9F27-0ADFF161120F/0/UninsuredFactSheetFinal.pdf>
- Center for Health Care Strategies <http://www.chcs.org/>
- The Commonwealth Fund <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/index.htm>
- Galen Institute <http://www.galen.org/>
- The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation <http://www.kff.org/uninsured/index.cfm>
- National Coalition on Health Care <http://www.nchc.org/>
- Institute of Medicine <http://www.iom.edu/?id=19175>
- Physicians for a National Health Program <http://www.pnhp.org/>
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
http://www.acog.org/departments/dept_notice.cfm?recno=11&bulletin=4472
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation <http://www.rwjf.org/>

The church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state. It must be the guide and the critic of the state, and never its tool. If the church does not recapture its prophetic zeal, it will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority.

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Paper # 23

Healthy People, Healthy Planet: Issues in Access to Fresh Local Food

What is the Issue?

Susan Klein, nutrition specialist with Iowa State Extension, addressing the Lutheran Sunday Scientist Symposium on Food and Faith in Des Moines on October 31, 2008, drew a marked contrast between the price of calorie-dense, nutrient-poor foods and lower calorie nutrient rich foods. A diet of low calorie nutrient rich foods may cost up to \$36.32 per day for 2000 calories while a comparable diet of calorie dense nutrient poor foods may be had for as little as \$3.52. Prices are increasing faster for the nutrient rich diet than the nutrient poor one, widening the gap.

While our economy was beginning its down hill tumble this fall, MacDonald's was one of the few corporations whose sales went up. CBS television news reported an eight percent increase in October for the fast food giant. All one need do is pay attention to advertisements from chain restaurants to see that the pitch has shifted from quality, or even quantity, to price. What you can get at the drive up window for \$1, or with table service for \$6.95?

Inexpensive food is inexpensive usually because it is made from the handful of food crops that are subsidized: corn, soybeans, wheat and rice. If it isn't made from one of these crops, it probably eats one of them. We produce more calories than we need in the United States - 3800 per person per day. In order to entice people to buy those excess calories, value is added to food by processing. Corn becomes corn syrup, soy becomes partially hydrogenated fats, wheat is milled, and they are combined in thousands of artful ways. This may increase convenience, important to those who work multiple low wage jobs to stay afloat and have little time to cook, but does nothing for nutritive value.

The picture which these facts point to is one of a people who are overfed and undernourished, and a land where soils and aquifers are depleted, waste streams swell with over packaging, and fossil fuels are consumed in fertilizing, herbiciding, processing and transporting food.

Current popular non-fiction (see resource list below) has brought these problems to the attention of many of us, but not always emphasized the disproportionate impact on the poor. Many of our urban areas and old suburbs are food deserts, where convenience stores sell sweet and salty snacks, soft drinks, alcohol and tobacco, but no fresh local

fruits and vegetables and few healthful whole grains. Obesity and type 2 diabetes continue to rise among adults, teens and children.

The 2002 United Nations definition of adequate food is instructive here.

Right to adequate food is a human right, inherent in all people, "to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective fulfilling and dignified life free of fear."

The implications are that food security means not just enough calories, but good nutrition, culturally appropriate foods, and social, economic and ecological sustainability.

What are our sources for addressing this through scripture and church

Scripture's agricultural world is so different from modern industrial agriculture, or even modern sustainable agriculture, that it is impossible to find texts which provide instant solutions to the breakdown in our food system. Some broad scriptural themes we might look to are the value of diversity in creation, God's preferential concern for the poor, food as a communal experience, and freedom from anxiety.

The resolution on food systems and spirituality passed at the 2003 General Convention provides some clues as to how we might respond. It authorized our *"Office of Government Relations...* to advise elected and appointed government officials and other secular and religious bodies of its concerns about food sources, biodiversity, genetic engineering, ownership and distribution of our food sources, and related issues concerning the health and well-being of ourselves and future generations." It also lifted up the need of people to know what's in their food, where it came from, how it was processed, and how it affects planetary health.

Some progress was made in fulfilling this resolve during the recent wave of legislative action around the renewal of the Farm Bill.

What can we do?

At the same Sunday Scientists conference, Jerry DeWitt, Director of the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, opined that congregations must begin to address food issues. Collecting and distributing canned goods to the poor is simply not enough: we must speak up and speak out in our communities.

DeWitt and Klein agree that the point of concern through which congregations may enter this matrix of issues is food and health. The challenge is not to get stuck in our

individual or household food and health issues - a comfortable rut for middle class consumers - but to look at things systemically.

Klein pointed out that we must change the landscape of our food system. Too often major food processors and middle class folks conspire to put the blame on individuals for making poor choices about diet and exercise. Instead we need to think about making it easier for people to make positive choices. We can learn much from the anti-tobacco movement. Cigarette companies still want to portray smoking as a personal choice, but changing attitudes and access has done much more than changing individual minds to curb health impacts of smoking.

Church folk must advocate for a changed food landscape. We must not wait five years for the next renewal of the Farm Bill to turn up the heat under policy makers, to let them know we were not happy with the role food issues didn't play in our long presidential campaign, and demand continuing conversation.

Locally we can work for farm to school, farm to campus, and farm to senior center programs so that at least some of the food prepared and eaten in those places comes from local farms, strengthening sustainability and the local economy, and putting the emphasis in menus on fruits and vegetables, not commodities. We can also find out if farmers' markets in our area take SNAP cards (new name and delivery system for food stamps) and are certified for WIC. If not, we can work to make it happen.

At our churches we can join a burgeoning movement and organize community gardens. If the parish doesn't have a side yard or back acre, there may be a vacant lot nearby which the owner would be happy to lend for the purpose. Some congregations cooperate with nearby schools to have a garden. More and more congregations are recognizing that community gardens meet a need for fresh local produce and for reconnecting people in the community across generational and cultural lines.

We can start a backyard gleaning effort. Many neighborhoods have fruit trees whose fruit goes unused. What would happen if we connected older folks who have fruit trees they can no longer manage with students doing service learning by pruning and picking?

Urban and suburban churches can also partner with a nearby CSA. Often community-supported farms are willing to make a drop at a church if they have multiple shareholders there. Church members who can afford it might pay a little extra to subsidize the cost of a CSA share or half share for a low income household or individual in the church's neighborhood.

Churches are a great place to re-skill the neighborhood. Even when fresh produce is available from a nearby farmers' market, community garden, or CSA, people often don't

know how to cook with fresh vegetables, let alone how to extend the season through drying or canning. We can put our church kitchens to use as places for generation-to-generation transmission of kitchen skills that stretch our food dollars and decrease our food miles.

Resources

*There are many current books, such as those by Michael Pollan, Barbara Kingsolver, and Paul Roberts which describe our current food system. Even the President-elect read the Michael Pollan article in the fall food issue of the *New York Times Magazine*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/magazine/12policy-t.html>

*The Oakland Institute is critical of food system dysfunction and injustice globally and nationally. Of special interest to this issue paper is their piece on food deserts and national grocery chains. http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/pdfs/facing_goliath.pdf

*Holy Nativity Church in Westchester, California, (Diocese of Los Angeles) has a community garden and is involved in relocalization efforts, among other things. Check out their Environmental Change-Makers handbook. <http://www.envirochangemakers.org/>

*The Mennonite Central Committee cookbook *Simply in Season* has useful information as well as recipes. A comprehensive study guide to ethical issues around food systems may be downloaded from their web site. <http://www.worldcommunitycookbook.org/>

*Visit my blog, where I aggregate many more resources and articles, and offer opinions on food news and issues. <http://www.justgleanings.blogspot.com>

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