

THE CHURCH: A SHEPHERD FOR THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Achieve universal primary education
Promote gender equality and empower women
Reduce child mortality
Improve maternal health
Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
Ensure environmental sustainability
Develop a Global Partnership for Development

It is you who have devoured the vineyards; the spoil of the poor is in your house. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? Isaiah 3:14-15

In 2000, the United Nations developed the Millennium Development Goals to challenge the world to halve extreme poverty by 2015. A World Bank study in 2003 reported that the richest fifth of the world's population receives 85% of total global income, while the poorest fifth gets just over 1%. As people of God, rooted in our faith and inspired by the life of Jesus, we are called upon to make the MDGs a reality. These goals are based on a fundamental set of values which were first affirmed in the UN Charter of 1945: Justice, Equality, Dignity, Solidarity, Freedom, Equity, Tolerance, Shared Responsibility/Partnership and Respect for Nature. We underpin these with Truth-Telling, Reconciliation and Peaceful Resolution of Conflicts.

While the MDGs fall far short of being a comprehensive model for global socioeconomic justice, they are a hopeful start. Wealthy developed nations have committed themselves to contributing at least 0.7% GNP (70 cents out of every 100 dollars) toward development assistance -- decoupled from the narrow interests of donors and respectful of the poverty reduction strategies of recipient countries. Shamefully to date only five countries have met their commitments, while some of the richest and largest have fallen far short.

The MDGs offer humanity a *Kairos* moment, an opportunity to extend to the very poor a chance to live with dignity through sustainable, people-centered development. The Church, like a good shepherd, guides us in making the MDGs a reality through:

A PROPHETIC RESPONSE – Lead campaigns, such as the Global Call for Action Against Poverty/ONE Campaign, in articulating the sense of urgency and the moral imperative underlying the campaign to end the needless suffering and death of millions, which is an affront to all men and women who are made in God's image.

A PRAYERFUL RESPONSE -- Take each of the eight MDGs to God in prayer, both individually and communally. Renew our dedication to solidarity with the world's poorest.

A PASTORAL RESPONSE – Support direct sustainable development efforts, such as Church World Service's people-centered projects to provide access to water, food security, basic health care and education to deprived communities in the Global South. As dioceses, congregations and individuals, dedicate 1% of annual income toward achieving the MDGs.

This is a decisive moment in human history. Together, we have the means to abolish global poverty; with God's help, let us seize the opportunity to do so.

The Ecumenical Working Group on the United Nations is a group of representatives of Christian organizations that meets regularly to exchange information and perspectives on working with the United Nations. The group provides an informal framework for the ecumenical community to engage the United Nations on issues of great concern to Churches and Christians around the world.

Below is a list of member organizations:

**Member Organizations
Ecumenical Working Group on the United Nations**

1. AME Church
2. Anglican Observer to the UN
3. Baptist World Alliance
4. CCIA World Council of Churches
5. Church Women United
6. Church World Service/ CWS-NCCC
7. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
8. General Board of Church & Society - UMC
9. General Board of Global Ministries, Women's Division - United Methodist Office - UN
10. Global Action on Aging
11. Global Ministries Board/UCC Disciples
12. Loretto Community
13. Lutheran Office for World Community
14. Maryknoll Office for Global Concern
15. Medical Mission Sisters
16. Mennonite Central Committee
17. Presbyterian UN Office
18. Sisters of Mercy
19. The Salvation Army/USA National
20. UCC Justice & Witness Ministries
21. UCC Wider Church
22. Unitarian UN Office
23. Women's Missionary Society/African Methodist Episcopal Church
24. World Federation of Methodist & Uniting Church Women
25. World Student Christian Federation
26. World Vision UN Office