

, that In fact, to study any of the websites of what used to be known as “mainline” Protestant churches is to come to the inevitable conclusion that are nothing but ACLU activists with clerical collars.

Don't take my word for it. Check out the ACLU website then go to the websites of the United Church of Christ (www.ucc.org), Lutherans (www.elca.org) Presbyterian Church (www.pcusa.org) United Methodist (www.umc.org)

Now, on the occasion of this 63rd anniversary Peace Memorial Ceremony, we offer our heartfelt lamentations for the souls of the atomic bomb victims and, in concert with the city of Nagasaki and with citizens around the world, pledge to do everything in our power to accomplish the total eradication of nuclear weapons.

UCC

Peace, Justice and Reconciliation projects; Lew Johnson, a retired lawyer from the Seattle area, served in the United States Army during that same conflict and was serving in Europe when the use of the atomic bomb ended the Pacific conflict. Having these two with me made the historical context of Sadako's original story palpable and real, enlarging it as well to incorporate more than just the conflict in the Pacific theater.

Lew told me that one of the reasons he wanted to come along was that, at the time, he was estatic that the use of the bomb had brought the war to a final conclusion -- and that he would not have to run the risk of being killed during what everyone assumed would be a bloody land invasion of the Japanese home islands. Later that morning, after we had deposited the cranes and worked our way through the exhibits at the nearby Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum graphically detailing the impact of that single weapon on the life of the entire city, Lew took me aside and told me that, for the very first time, he had begun to ask himself if maybe, just maybe, had he lost his own life in exchange for the Bomb NOT being used, the sacrifice might have been a worthy one.

<http://www.ucc.org/justice/palestineisrael/>

Excerpt:

the tremendous economic suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people by the U.S. role in the continued deterioration of the Palestinian condition, coupled with Israeli unilateralism. Congress continues to deny direct U.S. assistance to the Palestinian Authority, especially under its newly-elected government. The occupation has strangled Palestinian commerce and industry, raised unemployment and added to the misery of an already economically desperate people.

What is Media Empowerment?

Media Empowerment means communities taking back the power to define themselves, their needs and their vision. It means empowering people with the knowledge and skills to make media work for justice in their communities by:

- Monitoring and making the mainstream media accountable around their framing of issues
- Participating in making media that truly represents themselves and their lives
- Ensuring ways to distribute untold stories and histories that create connections, unity and inspiration to demand a just world.

Mission

The Media Empowerment Project grows out of the United Church of Christ's historic legacy of dedicated involvement in the civil rights movement. The project began as the organizing arm of OC, Inc. in 2004 and is grounded in the belief that a powerful social movement is possible today and that media and communications are central to building it.

MEP is seeding locally-driven, innovative strategies in diverse communities to demand and build media justice. MEP sites integrate issues of media access and accountability into the existing organizing for basic needs and rights in their respective communities.

The United Church of Christ speaks prophetically that health care is a basic right and that our health care system must provide comprehensive, quality, affordable, accessible and available health care for all. Key General Synod Resolutions and Pronouncements (Synods 10, 11, 18 and 21) bear witness to our prophetic vision.

In the past few years, several attempts at passing a comprehensive immigration reform have been made by members of Congress. Unfortunately, these efforts at bipartisan cooperation on such a critical issue have been derailed by anti-immigration activists who insist on a policy made up exclusively of border enforcement and deportation of undocumented immigrants.

The General Synods of the UCC have spoken on the issue of immigration repeatedly:

- General Synod XIII issued a pronouncement calling the church to advocate for the rights of immigrants and for the reunification of immigrant families.
- General Synod XXIV recognized the severity of the Border crisis and its cost in human lives.
- General Synod XXVI resolved that UCC congregations advocate for a policy that allows immigrant workers and their families to live and work in a safe, legal, orderly and humane manner through an employment-focused immigration program that guarantees basic worker's rights, achievable and verifiable paths to residency, and the possibility to travel between the U.S. and their homeland.

Sadly, the anti-immigrant rhetoric espoused by some legislators and radio and television personalities has resulted in an ugly patchwork of punitive, draconian measures being adopted in cities and states around the nation. Similarly, the detention and deportation strategies enacted by ICE (Immigration Control Enforcement), such as raids in places of employment, have resulted in children being left behind, alone, while their parents were whisked away.

The immigration debate is filled with code words: "amnesty," "terrorism," "illegal aliens," "anchor babies, and innumerable phrases that seek to equate unauthorized workers with terrorists and criminals. The vitriol that seems to be acceptable when referring to undocumented workers is deeply disturbing, especially when viewed from a faith perspective. The term "illegal alien" is completely dehumanizing and conjures up visions of dangerous extra-terrestrials.

Poor displaced farmers who have migrated north out of desperation, as the only possible way to support their families, are thus viewed as less than human, and they become "the other" with whom we share no human bonds.

The faith community has identified some principles for a comprehensive immigration reform:

- Recognize that the current Militarized Border Enforcement Strategy is a failed policy. Since the fencing and border blockade strategy was implemented, thousands of migrants have lost their lives in the desert. The fences drive migrants further into remote desert areas, thus endangering their lives in the heat and the disorienting vastness of the desert. Border enforcement policies have also resulted in severe damage to the fragile desert ecosystems.
- Address the status of undocumented persons currently living in the United States and offer an earned path to citizenship. Many workers have lived in the shadows for decades. They have families, roots in the community and frequently own their businesses. Rather than deportation, a path that includes the paying of fines and leads to permanent residency will strengthen communities, families and local economies.
- Make family unity and reunification the cornerstone of the U.S immigration system. Without proper documentation and the ability to travel, immigrant families are often kept apart indefinitely. Families must be allowed to reunite and to immigrate together as a unit.
- Allow workers and family to enter the United States to live and work in a safe, orderly and humane manner through an employment focused immigration program.
- Recognize that the root causes of migration lie in environmental, economic, and trade inequities.

In this election year we must make our voices heard. We must speak the language of faith, not fear. We must advocate for legalization, not deportation. We must raise our voices on behalf of families torn asunder by the affects of trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), ICE and an alphabet soup of disempowerment.

Connect

The concepts of stranger, alien and sojourner furnish useful metaphors for interpreting the biblical and theological heritage of the church and God's actions in human history. From the estrangement with God and the expulsion from the Garden, to the wandering Aramean Abraham, to the exodus from Egypt, to the continuing reminders of the prophets, history suggest a temporary sojourning quality of human existence. Further, as a stranger, God in Christ was born without a home and died outside the city wall.

While God acts through the stranger, the human response to the stranger is too often fear, indifference and callousness. To the human community, the stranger remains the outsider, the different one who threatens and offends the customs of the community, the scapegoat for neighborhood decline. The community of God is always open to the hungry, the poor, the sick and the stranger. Yet human community protects and shields itself with walls and boundaries – and with exploitative employment policies offering immigrants substandard wages and repressive immigration policies.

God utilizes the stranger and the wanderer to challenge and replenish the human situation, and to proclaim grace and mercy as well as righteousness and life. For it is not only that Jesus was sent as a stranger, but that Jesus came as the stranger who brings us life and more abundant life. God's actions culminate when all of God's people are "reconciled one to another, no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the Saints and workers of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19)

(JUSTICE IN IMMIGRATION: A Pronouncement of the Thirteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ)
Helpful Links

May 31, 2007

We don't have all the answers! Check out the work of the following organizations. This list gives some of the organizations and websites that staff of the UCC refer to when we receive election-related information requests from our members.



Voter Registration and Get-Out-the-Vote information

- [State By State Voter Registration Info](#)
- [Free Native Vote Trainings](#) [Every other Friday join the NCAI Native Vote team]
- [Federal Election Commission](#)
- [League of Women Voters](#) [resources in Spanish]
- [Project Vote](#)
- [Vote 411](#)
- [APIA Vote](#) [Information targeted at Asian and Pacific Islander Voters]
- [Coalition on Black Civic Participation - Unity 08](#)
- [Women's Action for New Directions Adult Study Guide](#)

Youth and Young Adults

- [Rock the Vote](#)
- [New Voters Project](#)
- [United States Student Association](#)
- [HeadCount](#)
- [Mobilize.org](#)
- [Declare Yourself](#)
- [Choose or Lose](#)
- [Vote Latino](#)
- [18 in 08](#)
- [Black Youth Vote](#)
- [Future Majority](#) [Progressive Youth Blogs on Politics]
- [Hip Hop Caucus](#)
- [The League of Young Voters](#)

Faith-Based Voter Projects

- [Faithful Democracy](#)

- Interfaith Alliance
- Sojourners: Christians for Peace and Justice

Voting Policy and Reform

- Demos
- Center for Voting and Democracy
- People for the American Way
- Why Tuesday?
- Common Cause

Voter issue information and constituency mobilization efforts

- National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
- NAACP Voter Empowerment Program
- National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium
- National Congress of American Indians
- National Council of La Raza
- National Council of Women's Organizations
- National Organization on Disability
- Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
- National Coalition for the Homeless
- Center for Community Change
- The Brennan Center for Justice [Info on Felony Disenfranchisement]
- Youth Leadership Initiative

United Methodists

<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=4924319&ct=6646607>

<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.2808821/>

http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=2837503&content_id={E00F6CCD-AEEA-4FC7-B73C-062076AF7A5D}¬oc=1 Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

http://www.umc-gbcs.org/atf/cf/%7B689fea4c-8849-4c05-a89e-c9bc7ffff64c%7D/ISRAEL-PALESTINE_STUDYRESOURCEGUIDE.PDF

January 26, 2009

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FAITH

in action

News and Views from the United Methodist Board of Church and Society

2009 legislative priorities

Systemic reform woven throughout

By Wayne Rhodes, Editor, Faith in Action



WASHINGTON, D.C. — The United Methodist General Board of Church & Society (GBCS) has set its legislative priorities for the 111th Congress. The six priorities address issues as sweeping as overcoming global poverty to as specific as increasing spending for international family planning. Systemic reform, however, stands out as the lynchpin holding all of the priorities together.

Systemic reform stands out as the lynchpin holding all of the priorities together.

The priorities support actions taken last year by the denomination's highest policy-making body, General Conference. Meeting every four years, General Conference approves the denomination's "Social Principles" and *Book of Resolutions*, which sets forth United Methodist stances on many issues.

GBCS's legislative priorities are set by the social action agency's work area directors in consultation with its top executive, Jim Winkler. He said the priorities all represent areas that the faith community can bring a unique voice to the legislative process by focusing on justice and, increasingly, stewardship of creation.

The six legislative priorities for 2009 are reform of the U.S. health-care system; just, humane immigration reform; strengthening the social safety net; investing in a "green-energy" future; overcoming global poverty; and increasing levels of U.S. spending for international family planning.

Reform of U.S. health-care system

Reform of the U.S. health-care system is the priority of GBCS's work area on Alcohol, Other Addictions, and Health Care. The health of people throughout the U.S. is jeopardized every day by lack of access or huge gaps in access to health care, according to the Rev. Cynthia Abrams, director of the work area. She said 45.7 million people are uninsured in the United States, and a mounting number is underinsured or has expensive and inadequate health care.

United Methodist position on health care has heavily influenced this process.

"Major health reform efforts are underway in Congress and with the new administration," said Abrams. She added

that it isn't clear yet what the legislative package will look like.

"Faith groups have worked together to develop a solid foundation of principles to guide legislative efforts," Abrams said, adding that the United Methodist position on health care has heavily influenced this process.

"A society where each person is afforded health, wholeness and human dignity expresses God's intention for abundant life," Abrams stated. "An inclusive, accessible, affordable and accountable health-care system lives out God's intention."

For more information about health-care reform, contact [Abrams](#) at (203) 488-5636.

Just, humane immigration reform

GBCS's Civil and Human Rights work area has set "just, humane immigration reform" as its priority this year. "Common sense tells us that the immigration system is badly in need of reform," said Bill Mefford, director of the work area.

Common sense tells us that the immigration system is badly in need of reform.

According to Mefford, effective reform must be comprehensive in nature. He said this reform must entail a path to citizenship for all undocumented immigrants, protection of the rights of workers and reunification of families.

"Scripture calls us as people of faith to welcome the Sojourner," Mefford emphasized.

For more details, contact [Mefford](#) at (202) 488-5657.

Strengthen Social Safety Net

John Hill, director of GBCS's work area on Economic and Environmental Justice, pointed to the uncertainty in the economy as a reason for strengthening the social safety net. "As economic uncertainty grows," he said, "we must protect those living on the economic margins, particularly children." For example, he said GBCS will work to strengthen and expand programs to ensure every child has access to proper nutrition.

For more information on this priority, contact [Hill](#) at (202) 488-5654.

Invest in Green-Energy Future

Pushing for legislation that mandates investing in a "green-energy" future is a response to the call to be faithful stewards of God's creation, according to Hill. "GBCS supports a transition to green, low-carbon energy alternatives," he said. "Adopting a new energy policy with a strong federal investment in clean alternative energy sources will reduce global warming pollution, generate jobs and lead us toward a sustainable future."

GBCS supports a transition to green, low-carbon energy alternatives.

For more information on this priority, contact [Hill](#) at (202) 488-5654.

End Global Poverty

GBCS supports legislation that helps to end global poverty, said Mark Harrison, director of the agency's Peace with Justice work area. He said foreign aid reform, fair trade, debt cancellation and major reform of international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, are instrumental ways the United States can lead to end poverty on God's world.

For more information, contact [Harrison](#) at (202) 488-5645 or [the Rev. Liberato Bautista](#), assistant general secretary, United Nations and International Ministry, at (212) 682-3633 ext.3112.

Increase Funding for International Family Planning

Linda Bales, director of the Louise and Hugh Moore Population Project at GBCS, has a 2009 priority of increasing funding for international family planning. She said the purpose is to ensure access to the full range of health services, including family planning.

Increased spending on international family planning should include support for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), according to Bales. UNFPA estimates that one in three deaths related to pregnancy and childbirth could be avoided if all women had access to contraceptive services.

That means some 175,000 women each year could be saved.

"That means some 175,000 women each year could be saved," Bales said, "and many more could avoid severe or long-lasting injuries."

Bales said that in many countries, though, funding for family planning has been curtailed. "GBCS will work with various population/reproductive health groups to secure additional funding for family planning services around the globe," she said, "because the potential life-saving benefits are so immense." She said greater access to family planning can reduce the spread of AIDS, allow couples to space their children, reduce abortions and child and maternal mortality.

"As followers of Christ we are called to bring health and wholeness to all God's people," Bales stated. "United Methodism's founder, John Wesley had a burning passion for health and the desire to see people have access to goods and services needed to live life abundantly as well as faithfully."

Bales said that speaking out in the public square on behalf of the marginalized and those who lack services is one way to achieve a world of justice and freedom from pain and suffering.

For more information, contact **Bales** at (202) 488-5649.

In addition to these six priorities, each work area also selected three other areas of legislative importance this year. All priorities are available in .pdf format by clicking on **2009 Legislative Priorities**.

The General Board of Church and Society is one of four international general program boards of The United Methodist Church, which has more than 11 million members worldwide. The board's primary areas of ministry are Advocacy, Education and Leadership Formation, United Nations and International Affairs, and resourcing these areas for the nearly 35,000 local churches of the denomination. It has offices on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., and at the Church Center at the United Nations.

Action Networks

GBCS's program staff sponsors Action Networks that provide information on these and other advocacy issues. The networks are free. They include legislative updates, advocacy resources and identify opportunities to take action.

Action Networks address:

- Alcohol and Other Addictions
- Civil and Human Rights <=>Health and Wholeness
- HIV & AIDS
- Mental Health
- Peace with Justice
- United Methodists Against the Death Penalty
- Isaiah Circle (U.N. and International Affairs Advocacy) and
- Women and Population

Information is distributed via e-mail. You can subscribe to any or all of the networks.

You can join a network the following ways: by mail to General Board of Church & Society, 100 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002; by fax to (202) 488-5639; or online at [UM Power](#) or www.umc-gbcs.org>>My GBCS.

For more information, go to My GBCS on the GBCS Web site, or contact [Donna Brandyberry](#) at (202) 488-5641.

Date: 1/26/2009

**Methodist church lists dozens of pro Palestinian groups
Only a few Jewish, and of the Jewish most are of the we'd rather walk peacefully
into the ovens again' variety.**

**Urges divestment of US companies doing business in Israel,
Opposes the wall that keeps terrorists out**

Jewish Organizations

- Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions: "Resisting Occupation, Constructing Peace: People Rebuilding Palestinian Homes"
<http://www.icahd.org/eng/campaigns.asp?menu=4&submenu=2>
- Jewish Voice for Peace: "U.S. Military Aid and Israel"
http://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/publish/article_17.shtml
- Union for Reform Judaism Resolution: "Unilateral Withdrawals, Security Barriers, and Home Demolitions:
Striving for Security and Peace for Israel and the Middle East," June 2004
http://rac.org/_kd/Items/actions.cfm?action=Show&item_id=930&destination=ShowItem
- The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism: "Jews, Christians, Muslims Meet at Conservative Jewish Campus in Jerusalem to Pray for Peace"
http://www.uscj.org/Praying_for_Peace_in6850.html

Muslim Organizations

- American Muslim Alliance
<http://www.amaweb.org/>
- American Muslim Taskforce
<http://www.americanmuslimvoter.net/>
- Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
<http://www.cair.com/>
- Islamic Society of North America
<http://www.isna.net/>
- Muslim Public Affairs Council
<http://www.mpac.org/>

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Uganda, Sudan Dem Rep of Congo, Colombian, Cuba
Philippines

Episcopal church

Disinvestment from all defense contractors

Further, the 1930 Lambeth Conference declared that "war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ." This statement has been reaffirmed by several Lambeth Conferences since 1930,

Throughout the day, Jefferts Schori heard a constant message of Muslims and Christians united in their witness and common mission for peace, justice and reconciliation.

Joined by Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem Suheil Dawani, who was visiting Gaza for the first time since his installation in April 2007, Jefferts Schori was encouraged by the hospital's commitment to providing essential healthcare in the Palestinian territory that has been severely affected by Israel's blockade of Gaza.

Israeli officials have said the blockade, enforced since January 17, has been necessary to put pressure on militant Palestinians to stop firing rockets into southern Israel. But regular power cuts, food and water shortages, lack of fuel, and attacks from the Israelis are placing immense pressure on the local population.

"We will go home and tell the story and continue to pray for peace," Jefferts Schori said.

"This is a place of love and reconciliation," Tarazi said, acknowledging the unity between Muslims and Christians in Gaza. "We are all children of Abraham working in mission to help one another."

Following the June 2007 conflict between Hamas and Fatah, known as the Battle of Gaza, the area is controlled by the Palestinian Islamist militant organization Hamas.

During the afternoon, the Presiding Bishop's delegation heard about the work of two Palestinian human rights organizations, Al Mezan Center and The Palestinian Centre.

She acknowledged her gratitude for what the Palestinian community is able to accomplish with minimal financial resources. "But you are rich in human resources," the Presiding Bishop said, and noted that she had been blessed to see many prophets on her visit.

Presbyterian link to Hiroshima Peace Site Now, on the occasion of this 63rd anniversary Peace Memorial Ceremony, we offer our heartfelt lamentations for the souls of the atomic bomb victims and, in concert with the city of Nagasaki and with citizens around the world, pledge to do everything in our power to accomplish the total eradication of nuclear weapons.