



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

TIME FOR JUSTICE!

God's Plan of Restoration to Wholeness

In 2005, The International Affairs Committee introduced our church to the vision of "Building the Common Good" with a report on water. This year's focus is global public health.

The Bible reveals God's desire to restore a broken world and to heal its wounded people. Revelation envisions a new creation in which God's saving power flows in the river of the water of life and flourishes in the tree of life whose "leaves...are for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2). Here is beautiful imagery of God's compassion for the world! In the healing ministry of Jesus we encounter God's compassion for each person.

The church's mission is to "permeate all of life with the compassion of God" (Living Faith 9:1:3). The church plays an active role in God's plan of restoration. In biblical times apostles healed the sick. Today the church provides care in many ways. The PCC encourages health policies and programs that include everyone, especially the marginalized and impoverished. The church challenges structures and attitudes that interfere with the just and equal sharing of resources essential for good health. Christians are mindful of the new realm of God in which "Nothing accursed will be found" (Revelation 22:3a).

No disease. No war. No hunger. No fear. This is God's will and humanity's dream. This is the church's mission, accomplished not by our own strength, but by the healing and compassionate power of God.

Time for Justice! is based on the report of the International Affairs Committee to the 132nd General Assembly, June 2006. The full report is found in Acts & Proceedings 2006. **Time for Justice!** may be read as a Minute for Mission, or printed as a bulletin insert or newsletter article to inform members of the international concerns of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and ask for their prayerful consideration of these matters.

TEXT: Dineke Kraay EDITING & DESIGN: Gail Turner PRAYER: Wendy Paterson



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Prayer for God's Plan of Restoration to Wholeness

Leader: God of creation, your Word reveals your compassion for a broken world.

People: WE KNOW YOU DESIRE HEALTH AND WHOLENESS FOR ALL PEOPLE.

Leader: Your heart aches when you see so much suffering and woundedness.

People: YOU CARE ABOUT YOUR WORLD AND FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL.

Leader: As you envision restoration and healing for your world, you call upon the Church to work with you.

People: WE ARE HUMBLLED AND HONOURED TO BE CHALLENGED TO SERVE IN THIS WAY.

Leader: Caring God, you call the church to be involved with policies and programmes that provide access to public health for all your people.

People: HELP US TO BE DILIGENT, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE POOR AND MARGINALIZED ARE IGNORED OR TREATED UNFAIRLY.

All: MAY WE WORK TOGETHER TO INSURE JUSTICE FOR ALL AS WE STRIVE FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD. WE PRAY IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT HEALER, JESUS CHRIST.

AMEN

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Global Public Health

Global Public Health is the second report by the International Affairs Committee to the General Assembly in the series “Building the Common Good.”

Public health is understood as the organized and publicly supported efforts of a society to improve the health of its people.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared in 1978:

[Health], which is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, is a fundamental human right and that the attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important world-wide social goal...

There have been tangible improvements in global public health since the end of World War II. Programmes to eradicate smallpox and polio and to control river blindness have been highly successful. Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT) helps reduce infant mortality. Measles vaccination programs have significantly reduced childhood deaths in several countries in southern Africa.

These advances in public health are reasons to rejoice. Still, more is needed, especially in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections.

An agency of the WHO reports “Donors and developing countries alike must increase funding for primary health care in order to address basic health needs.”

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Prayer for Global Public Health

Leader: Healing God, we know that 'health' is about so much more than just our physical bodies.

People: WE ARE GRATEFUL THAT YOU CARE ABOUT OUR MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING ALSO.

Leader: We rejoice in the improvements experienced in living conditions and in controlling many diseases around the world.

People: BUT WE KNOW THERE IS STILL MUCH WORK TO BE DONE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF HIV/AIDS.

Leader: Compassionate God, help us to understand and believe that health is a fundamental human right, not limited to a privileged minority.

People: OPEN OUR EYES TO OUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS GLOBAL CITIZENS.

Leader: Show us how to encourage our governments to give our fair share in support of world-wide public health.

All: KEEP US EVER MINDFUL OF THE NEEDS OF THOSE OFTEN FORGOTTEN AND NEGLECTED. WE ASK THIS ALL IN JESUS' NAME.

AMEN

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Barriers to Global Public Health

Global Public Health is the second report by the International Affairs Committee to the General Assembly in the series "Building the Common Good."

Almost thirty years ago the World Health Organization (WHO) declared public health a human right. While there have been major advances, there are several diseases which continue to ravage the global south

Major causes of death in the global south include:

Tuberculosis	1.7 million
HIV/AIDS	2.6 million
Malaria	2.2 million
Pneumonia	3.9 million

Developing countries account for over 90% of the global disease burden. This is perpetuated by extreme poverty and social inequality. The *Global Public Health* report notes:

Poverty is the reason why babies are not vaccinated, why clean water and sanitation are not provided, why curative drugs and other treatments are unavailable.

There are few incentives for pharmaceutical corporations to invest in the research and development (R&D) of new drugs for diseases endemic in the global south because the main consumers of such drugs cannot afford them. Only 10% of global research and development focuses on illnesses that account for 90% of the global diseases burden.

The public sector needs to become involved in the research and development of drug treatments for diseases that afflict people in the global south.

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Prayer for Barriers to Global Public Health

Leader: God of the universe, we are reminded today that public health is a global human right.

People: YET WE OFTEN FAIL TO REALIZE THAT GOOD HEALTH IS ONLY A DREAM IN MANY COUNTRIES

Leader: While we complain about crowded emergency rooms and wait times for surgeries, our brothers and sisters in the global south continue to die from treatable diseases like tuberculosis and malaria.

People: GIVE US EYES TO SEE THIS INJUSTICE AND MOVE OUR HEARTS TO CARE.

Leader: Help us understand that extreme poverty is generally what prevents changes and improvements to health.

People: POVERTY MEANS THAT CHILDREN WILL NOT BE VACCINATED AND CLEAN WATER, SANITATION AND EVEN BASIC DRUGS WILL NOT BE ATTAINABLE.

Leader: Understanding God, this problem seems overwhelming. We know there is little incentive to change when there is no financial profit to be gained.

People: MOVE US TO COMPASSION. WORK IN OUR HEARTS THAT WE MIGHT GROW TO LOATH THIS INEQUALITY AND INJUSTICE.

All: TEACH US TO PRAY AND TO ACT, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

AMEN

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Public Health and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Marking the new millennium, the United Nations (UN) met in 2000 and declared: "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the human race from want."

Eight MDGs were established. The first goal is to eradicate extreme poverty. Three goals focus specifically on health: to reduce child mortality, improve maternal health and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases. All of the goals have implications for public health.

All the member states of the UN, including Canada, pledged to meet these goals. Six years later, it has become obvious that the MDGs addressing public health will likely not be met. Two of the barriers to reaching the MDGs are insufficient funding for development assistance and inadequate measures to strengthen public health institutions in the third world.

The International Affairs Committee recommended to the 132nd General Assembly that the Government of Canada be requested to promote public health measures, direct the Canadian International Development Agency to support projects which strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of the public health sector, and approve a timetable to reach 0.7% of Gross National Income as the portion of the budget dedicated to Official Development Assistance by 2015.

The General Assembly adopted these recommendations.

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Prayer for Public Health and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Leader: God of health and wholeness, we acknowledge that our good intentions are often sidetracked and other concerns take priority.

People: THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS ESTABLISHED BY THE UNITED NATIONS IN 2000 WERE SUPPORTED BY COUNTRIES LIKE CANADA.

Leader: We pledged to do such things as eradicate extreme poverty, reduce child mortality, and combat malaria, HIV, and other diseases.

People: BUT WE HAVE NOT DONE WELL AND THE HEALTH OF OUR GLOBAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS HAS NOT IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY.

Leader: Inspire us again, oh God, we pray. Encourage us to pray for governments and for decision-makers to recommit to these just Millennium Development Goals.

People: HELP US TO KNOW YOUR HEART OF COMPASSION. TEACH US TO DO OUR PART TO PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH AROUND THE WORLD.

All: USE US AS YOUR PARTNERS IN RESTORING YOUR BROKEN WORLD. IN JESUS' NAME.

AMEN

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