

The Millennium Development Goals and the Episcopal Church

*"I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you welcomed me."*

- Matthew 25:31-46

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals agreed to in 2000 by 189 heads of state and government -- including the United States -- from around the world that address the deepest material brokenness in the world today (You can read the entire Millennium Declaration here -

www.e4gr.org/doc/UN_Millennium_Declaration).

Poverty the likes of which we just don't see within the United States. Poverty like

*1.2 billion people living on less than \$1 a day.

*110 million children who aren't allowed even a full course of primary education

*Half a million women a year dying of complications from childbirth and pregnancy.

*A child under 5 dying every three seconds from preventable, treatable causes

*8,000 people (more than died in the September 11 attacks) dying *each day* of HIV/AIDS and much, much more.



What are the MDGs?

Click on the link after each goal for more specific information about the goal and What One Can Do to make it happen.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/1.html)
2. Achieve universal primary education (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/2.html)
3. Promote gender equality and empower women (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/3.html)
4. Reduce child mortality (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/4.html)
5. Improve maternal health (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/5.html)
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/6.html)
7. Ensure environmental sustainability (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/7.html)
8. Create a global partnership for development with targets for aid, trade and debt relief (www.e4gr.org/mdgs/8.html)

For much more information about the MDGs, be sure and visit these sites:

*U.S. Millennium Campaign - www.endpoverty2015.org

*UN Development Programme's MDG pages - www.undp.org/mdg

*TheWorld Bank's MDG site - ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/GMIS/home.do?siteId=2

What's so special about the MDGs?

***They are specific** - These aren't just broad wishes and dreams. Each goal has specific targets and indicators of success. There are precise monitoring mechanisms in place to assess progress and report cards issued regularly (Access the past three years of reports, statistics and progress charts here - <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Host.aspx?Content=Products/ProgressReports.htm>)

***They are time-bound** -- We're not going to achieve the MDGs "someday" ... we are going to achieve these goals by 2015. The clock is ticking.

***They are achievable** – Despite the titles of each goal (which can be misleading) the MDGs will not end extreme poverty. For example, the first goal will not eradicate extreme poverty -- only cut in half the number of people living on less than \$1 a day -- leaving much work left to go. The MDGs are an achievable first step (and there will be more after the MDGs are achieved). Some have even argued that they are not in fact millennium, but ‘minimum’ development goals. To set the bar any lower than this would be morally unacceptable. Individual goals have already been achieved by many countries in the space of only 10-15 years.

***They are collaborative** -- The problems we face are so huge no one nation or people can solve them alone ... but working together we can get the job done. The MDGs are less a centralized program and more a global social movement. Governments, civil society, international financial institutions, faith communities and many more have signed on to work together to achieve these goals. This partnership is itself the eighth Millennium Development Goal.

***They are appropriate to our 21st century world** -- For the first time in human history we have the combination of the resources, technology and delivery systems to achieve these goals and more. All that is lacking is the will. The MDGs give a focus for that will ... if we are willing to give it.

Why should we as Christians care about the MDGs?

The MDGs aren't a new idea for Christians ... we've been doing this stuff as long as there's been a church! Our scripture and tradition is overflowing with God calling us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick, nurture children, steward creation and everything else the MDGs are about. The MDGs give us a structure not only for answering a divine call that has echoed through the millennia, but a structure for connecting our work for God's mission of global reconciliation and healing to a worldwide effort that can bring the whole planet together.

***The MDGs are about mission, plain and simple.
The Church is about mission, plain and simple.
The two are a natural fit.***

For an excellent exposition of how the MDGs are a natural 21st century incarnation of the mission trajectory of the church, read the Rev. Dr. Ian Douglas' "Why Should We As Christians Care About the MDGs" here (www.episcopalchurch.org/3577_83850_ENG_HTM.htm). Additionally, as you click on each one of EGR's MDG pages (links above), you will find scriptural mandates for this mission ... as well as stories of the spiritual transformation that happens when people of faith give themselves for the love of the world as Christ did.

What has the Episcopal Church done to embrace the MDGs?

The first step toward embracing the MDGs happened before they even existed. In 1998, all the bishops of the Anglican Communion meeting at the Lambeth Conference called on “all dioceses to fund international development programmes ... at a level of at least 0.7% of annual total diocesan income.” (Lambeth 1998 1.15(k)) 0.7% is the portion of the Gross National Income of the rich nations of the world it would take to achieve the MDGs and has become the benchmark for minimum giving toward those goals. You can read more about 0.7% giving and where the figure came from here (www.e4gr.org/documents/14). The statement also raised important issues of international debt and economic justice and called on all members of the Communion to “co-operate with other people of faith in programmes of education and advocacy within our dioceses, so that we may help to help to raise public awareness of these vital economic issues that impact so deeply the daily lives of the poor.” (Lambeth 1998 1.15(j))

At the 2000 General Convention in Denver (held two months before the Millennium Summit, at which the MDGs were signed), the Episcopal Church passed Resolution A-001, affirming the portions of Lambeth 1998 highlighted above and urging all dioceses to participate in education, advocacy and 0.7% giving. Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold also established “Jubilee” as the theme of that 2000 Convention, bringing to the forefront issues of global relationship and renewal as well as those same international debt and economic justice issues championed by the Jubilee 2000 movement – of which the Anglican Church was a primary mover.

At the 2003 General Convention in Minneapolis, the Episcopal Church passed Resolution D-006, which:

- *endorsed and embraced the achievement of the MDGs
- *challenged all dioceses and congregations to embrace 0.7% giving
- *directed the Episcopal Office of Government Relations to advocate for the U.S. government keeping its promise to give 0.7% of GNI to international development programs and urged all Episcopalians to contact their elected representatives and likewise advocate.

By General Convention 2006 in Columbus, Ohio, 41 dioceses had pledged a minimum of 0.7% of their budgets to ministries working toward the MDGs, with work toward that commitment happening in an additional 24 dioceses. Several major church bodies, including Episcopal Relief and Development and the Office of Government Relations, had adopted the MDGs as the structure for their work ... and Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation (the prime mover of D006 in Denver) had begun to grow a grassroots movement of individuals, congregations, dioceses and organizations throughout the church to ignite, inspire and resource engagement with the MDGs.

General Convention 2006 was a giant leap forward for the Episcopal Church and the MDGs. More than 700 people attended EGR's U2charist kicking off what the House of Bishops later affirmed as a convention “affirmed and inspired” by “our commitment to the ministry of reconciliation and the relief of global human suffering.” At that Convention, the Episcopal Church passed:

-A010, which received and affirmed the "Call to Partnership" -- an ecumenical and interfaith communique for the achievement of the MDGs

-D022, which

- *established work toward achieving the MDGs as a mission priority of the Church.

- *urged the creation of a line item of no less than 0.7% (circa \$900,000) for work that supports the MDGs (this was later included in the budget)

- *designated the Last Sunday after Pentecost as a special day of "prayer, fasting and giving in The Episcopal Church toward global reconciliation and the MDGs."

- *urged all diocese to establish a body or commission to mobilizing their people toward the achievement of the MDGs

- *endorsed "The ONE Campaign" through establishing "ONE Episcopalian" and urging all congregations, dioceses and individuals to join it.

Since then, the following has happened:

- *The Executive Council, in partnership with ERD and Jubilee Ministries has taken the 0.7% national budget line item, rounded it up to \$1 million and established the Millennium Development Goals Inspiration Fund, to which "individuals, congregations and dioceses be encouraged to contribute an additional \$2 million." \$2 million of the funding will be allocated to NetsForLife (www.netsforlifeafrica.org) an Anglican partnership for malaria prevention in Africa. The remaining \$1 million will go to "initiatives in the Caribbean and Latin America focusing on public health issues."

- *An estimated 72 dioceses are giving at least 0.7% of their budgets toward MDG-related ministries.

- *A worldwide Anglican Communion gathering for the MDGs (TEAM - Towards Effective Anglican Mission) was held in March in Boksburg, South Africa and galvanized support around the communion for God's mission of global reconciliation.

But more than that, the energy throughout the Church for God's mission continues to grow in ways big and small. As we look to the future, there's no limit to how God can use us to further this mission ... and how the church and the world can be transformed in the process.

For more information about the MDGs and What One Can Do for God's mission of global reconciliation, go to the Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation website – www.e4gr.org.