

What One Can Do – Advocate

Why Advocate?

Jesus said to Pilate, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice."

Political advocacy is a critical piece of God's mission of global reconciliation and making the Millennium Development Goals a reality. Jesus continually spoke truth to power and used his own power to help those on society's margins. As Christians, we are called to follow in that example -- to raise our voices for those whom the powers of the world would push to the side.

The MDGs and God's dream of abundant life for all will not be achieved without significant systemic change ... the kind of change that can only happen if our U.S. government forgives crippling debt, dramatically increases development aid, restructures trade policies and establishes a foreign policy that recognizes our increasing global interdependence and that the economic health and human security of one effects the health and security of all.

These things are within our power ... but our leaders will only do them if we insist. Conventional wisdom is that voters don't care about foreign policy. It's up to us to prove that wrong – to let our leaders know they will only get our votes if they pay attention to *our issues* – the MDGs and life abundant meant for all.

What One Person Can Do (Individual Advocacy)

The beauty of individual advocacy is it really takes very little time. One of the best things you can do is take a morning and go to your legislator's office and talk with them about the MDGs. But there are also of plenty of things to do that literally take less than five minutes of your time.

-Be a ONE Episcopalian – Go to www.episcopal.grassroots.com/ONE/Join/ and join millions of Americans and thousands of Episcopalians who have taken the ONE pledge to Make Poverty History. Find out more (and get your ONE shwag) at www.one.org.

-Wear the White Band– It takes 2 seconds to put on the ONE White Band in the morning ... and all day long it will remind people that Making Poverty History is important to you (and you'll be surprised how many questions you'll get about it ... questions that become opportunities to talk about the MDGs ... and how your church really cares about global poverty).

-Join the Episcopal Public Policy Network – EPPN is the Episcopal Church's lobbying office on Capitol Hill. When you join, you will get periodic email alerts when MDG issues (or other major issues on which the Episcopal Church has policy) come before Congress, enabling you quickly to contact your senators and representatives telling them how you feel they should vote. Responding to most alerts takes less than 2 minutes. Join at www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn

What One Congregation Can Do (Congregational Advocacy)

-Become a ONE Episcopalian Congregation – Have your church make the ONE commitment and join more than 100 Episcopal congregations churchwide. Find out more at www.episcopalchurch.org/ONE.

-Bring a Legislator to Church – Invite your senators & representatives to your church for services and a Q&A session ... and let them know that you care about the MDGs!

-Have a Letter-Writing Party – Great for youth groups ... or anyone. Using resources from Bread for the World (www.bread.org), write letters to your legislators telling them to support MDG funding.

Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation + www.e4gr.org

"That all might have life, and have it abundantly." John 10:10

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Here are some excellent MDG advocacy opportunities for One person, One family, One congregation and more.

The Episcopal Public Policy Network - Every Episcopalian should be a part of EPPN. When you join, you will get periodic email alerts when MDG issues (or other major issues on which the Episcopal Church has policy) enabling you quickly to contact your senators and representatives telling them how you feel they should vote. Responding to most alerts takes less than 2 minutes. Sign up at www.episcopalchurch.org/eppn -- and then tell all your friends to sign up, too. Also email EPPN director Mary Getz (mgetz@episcopalchurch.org) to get an EPPN poster with signup cards to hang in your parish hall or narthex.

ONE Episcopalian - The Episcopal Church's partnership with the ONE Campaign (www.one.org), a broad-based nationwide grassroots movement to rally all Americans ... One-by-One ... to push our government toward aid and trade policies that will eradicate global poverty and achieve the MDGs. www.episcopalchurch.org/ONE

Micah Challenge USA -- a Christian campaign that is part of a global Micah Challenge campaign. Their aims are to deepen our engagement with impoverished and marginalized communities; and to challenge leaders to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and so halve absolute global poverty by 2015. Go to the action page on their website -- http://www.micahchallenge.us/take_action.shtml to find out about their advocacy efforts for the MDGs.

Bread for the World - One of the most respected Christian organizations advocating for the poor and hungry. Bread (www.bread.org) provides wonderful advocacy resources including worship resources, a monthly podcast, strategies for engaging your church in advocacy, ideas for campus ministries and college groups, and lots of basic information about hunger at home and abroad. They also do an annual Offering of Letters Campaign and have good guidelines for writing letters to your Congressional representatives. The Episcopal Church is a denominational partner of Bread for the World, and Bread is a leading partner in the ONE Campaign.

CARE - CARE's advocacy efforts are targeted at empowering women and girls in the fight against poverty. Their National Day Of Action toolbox is an excellent source of information and action possibilities to improve girls' education around the world. The CARE Action Network is another great way to keep up to date on legislation coming before Congress that directly effects women and children living in extreme poverty. Find out more at www.care.org.

OXFAM - Oxfam's international lobbying efforts focus on changing policies and practices in ways which will ensure that poor people have the rights, opportunities and resources they need to improve and control their lives. See the Policy and Analysis of their website (www.oxfam.org/en/policy) for excellent background information on important issues. Check out their International Strategic Plan: "Demanding Justice". Also see Oxfam America's list of advocacy focus issues.

*You can find more advocacy resources on the Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation website
www.e4gr.org/action/advocacy.html*

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