

# WITNESS IN WASHINGTON WEEKLY

The Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

October 5, 2009

This week's messages are-

- Urge Senators to Support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- Health Care Reform - The time for action is at hand
- Jubilee Sunday/Stand Up Weekend: October 16-18
- National Day of Action on Health Care: October 20
- Esther 4:14 - A Leader is Challenged to Act for Her People

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## Urge Your Senators to Support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

Speaking at the U.N. on September 24, President Obama explicitly affirmed the U.S. commitment, under international treaties, to eliminating nuclear weapons.

Now Congress needs to get on board. A first test will be whether the Senate will ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which prohibits all nuclear test explosions.

The most powerful countries in the U.N. have reaffirmed their commitment to "general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

In 20 years, no U.S. president has explicitly stated our treaty commitment to eliminating nuclear weapons, nor has the goal of nuclear disarmament had the kind of national and global support that it has today.

To realize the vision of a world free from nuclear weapons, Congress must get on board. Write your Senators today asking them to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Your voice and your Senators are key in accomplishing this goal.

[Click here for background information about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.](#)

### Sample Email

I was glad to learn that President Obama led the U.N. Security Council to endorse a resolution calling for worldwide nuclear disarmament. Specifically, it called on the global community live up to its nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons, ban the production of nuclear weapons fissile material, and negotiate a series of treaties leading to a nuclear-free world.

President Obama, many of our most prominent retired civil servants including former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Sen. Sam Nunn, and hundreds of religious leaders have endorsed this goal. Yet the Senate seems to be a handful of votes short from the 67 votes necessary to ratify the CTBT.

Please join the call for nuclear disarmament and speak out now in favor of one important first step: Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

### **General Assembly Guidance**

...Acutely aware of the pivotal roles of both the United Nations, as the focal point of responsibility for the world community, and the United States, as the major power in that community, the 212th General Assembly (2000) reaffirms its long-standing call to end the arms race, and urges continued support for the United Nations as it seeks to fulfill its still-valid mandates of the elimination of war, the protection of human rights, the development of the world rule of law, and the promotion of better standards of life for all; ratification of and adherence by the United States to those existing international treaties that it has not yet accepted, such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the Treaty on Land Mines;

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### **Health Care Reform: The time for action is at hand**

The full Senate is projected to consider a health care bill the week of October 12<sup>th</sup>. This measure will be a merger of the bill that came out of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in July and the Finance Committee's bill.

Your voice on health care for all is important. An inclusive, accessible, affordable, accountable health care system is within reach, if policymakers decide to act for the people. They need your challenge, support and witness. Let your Senators know that you support health care reform that is:

- **Inclusive**, offering a guarantee of health care for every person regardless of individual circumstances.
- **Accessible**, eliminating all barriers to the care which contributes to our health and wholeness as individuals and as a society.
- **Affordable**, ensuring that we use our abundant health care resources effectively, efficiently, and equitably.
- **Accountable**, calling for shared individual and institutional responsibility in a system of timely, quality and safe care that treats body, mind and spirit.

### **General Assembly Guidance**

In 2002, the General Assembly approved "Advocacy on Behalf of the Uninsured," in which it:

- Reaffirm[ed] the church's commitment to advocacy for a national medical plan.
- Encourage[d] presbyteries, sessions, and the members of congregations to be advocates for universal health care and to support advocacy efforts in their local communities to bring public and private entities together in this effort.
- Encourage[d] members of Congress to recognize the importance of universal health care - that is, equal, accessible, affordable, and high-quality health care for all persons residing in our nation.

In 2008, the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly:

- Endorse[d] in principle the provision of single-payer universal health care reform in which health care services are privately provided and publicly financed.
- Direct[ed] the General Assembly Council, through appropriate offices including the National Health Ministries, the Washington Office, and the Presbyterian Health, Education, and Welfare Association (PHEWA), to advocate for, educate about, and otherwise pursue the goal of obtaining legislation that enacts single-payer, universal national health insurance as the program that best responds to the moral imperative of the gospel; monitoring progress toward this goal and reporting back to the next two General Assemblies (2010 and 2012).

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### **Jubilee Sunday/Stand Up Weekend: October 16-18**

Jubilee Sunday annually provides an opportunity for communities of faith to hold a Sunday service focused on the principles of Jubilee. We hope that your congregation will add your voice to millions across the globe speaking out against global poverty this October by holding a Jubilee Sunday service and participating in the Stand Up!

The concept of "Jubilee" is based on the Old Testament injunction (Deuteronomy 15:1 and Leviticus 25:10) to grant debt remission. Together, we have made a concrete difference in the lives of the world's poorest people over the past decade. The global Jubilee campaign for debt cancellation has secured more than \$90 billion in debt relief. More than ten million children have gone to primary school for the first time in Africa thanks to debt relief.

Join Jubilee Congregations around the United States in dedicating part or all of your time together to pray for global economic justice, deepen the communities understanding of the debt issue, take concrete action for debt cancellation for all impoverished countries, and receive a special offering to support the work of the Jubilee USA Network. This year, Jubilee Sunday will be held in conjunction with Stand Up & Take Action, a weekend of people around the world standing up against poverty and in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

[Click here to download the Jubilee Sunday/Stand Up Worship Resource.](#)

### **General Assembly Guidance**

The 210th General Assembly (1998) reaffirmed the action of the 208th General Assembly (1996) which called for debt relief as found in the policy paper, "Hope for a Global Future." The foundation for this reaffirmation was support for "Jubilee 2000," a movement to cancel the crushing international debt of impoverished countries by the new millennium. ("Jubilee 2000" is based on the Old Testament injunction to grant debt remission on "Jubilee" from Deuteronomy 15:1 and Leviticus 25:10.) The resolution endorses and supports the "definitive cancellation of international debt in situations where countries with high levels of human need and environmental distress are unable to meet the needs of their people. . . in a way that benefits ordinary people and facilitates their participation in the processes of. . . debt relief." (PC(USA), 1998, p. 676) The complete text of this resolution can be found in PC(USA) Minutes, 1998, p. 676.

The 211th General Assembly (1999) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) then reaffirmed the action of the 210th General Assembly (1998) calling for debt relief, and recommended study materials for congregations include the "Report of the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches."

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### **National Day of Action on Health Care: October 20**

Congressional activity on health care reform will likely be in its endgame when communities around the nation participate in events to coincide with a National Day of Action on Health Care on October 20<sup>th</sup>. A wide call has been sent out to many local, regional and national organizations to plan and participate in events that will draw the attention of policymakers and express public support for health care reform. Each event will have its own style, tone and message, depending on the organizations that choose to participate. Find out what's happening in your community and be a witness for comprehensive health care reform.

On and around October 20<sup>th</sup>, faith communities will participate in the National Day of Action on Health Care through services of remembrance, candlelight vigils, prayer breakfasts, Jericho marches, and other activities.

[Click here to learn more.](#)

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### **Esther 4:14 - A Leader is Challenged to Act for Her People**

For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.

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## Help Us Help You!

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Individual Remittance Processing  
P.O. Box 643700  
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700.

Designate the Washington Office, ECO # 865714.

Or click here to give online: <http://www.pcusa.org/washington/support.htm>

Thank You.

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