

TALKING POINTS FOR ENEJ RESOLUTIONS

I. RESOLUTION A111: ECONOMIC JUSTICE MINISTRY WITH LOWER INCOME AND WORKING PEOPLE

***Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, that the General Convention affirm and adopt the following actions as the policy and program for Economic Justice of The Episcopal Church during the next six years:**

The Episcopal Church shall urge Episcopal congregations to continue to engage in the traditional acts of mercy in which many congregations and Jubilee Centers participate: food pantries, clothing closets, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other programs.

The Episcopal Church shall urge each Episcopal congregation to fully and wholly know its neighbors, to develop relationships with the disenfranchised in their community, knowing people by their names, and to form a local partnership with an agency that is working with people of little income or few financial resources.

The Episcopal Church shall continue and deepen its advocacy and shall urge its dioceses and congregations (in concert with the Episcopal Public Policy Network) to advocate for legislation which provides adequate levels of support and opportunities for all people.

The Episcopal Church shall urge dioceses and congregations to promote and participate in church-based community organizing whereby people of the local community exercise the power of numbers and conviction to bring their needs to the attention and effective action by elected officials and governmental bodies.

The Episcopal Church shall support and participate in and shall urge dioceses and congregations to support and participate in various models through which low-income people can take control of their own lives and meet their own needs: models such as community development corporations, housing corporations and cooperatives, and small business development.

The Episcopal Church at every level shall be encouraged to make loans and deposits at a level of one to ten percent of its financial assets to community development financial institutions (community loan funds, community development banks and credit unions, and micro-loan business funds) to support local community development, and, where helpful and necessary, to create such a financial institution themselves.

The Episcopal Church shall develop at the national level a community development loan fund which is open to deposits from Episcopal dioceses, congregations, organizations and members with a goal of becoming a \$24 million fund that will support the “community-controlled economic development programs of the disadvantaged” (quoted from the Economic Justice Resolution of the 1988 General Convention).

THE CHALLENGE

Despite a major increase in productivity by U.S. corporations and workers in the last thirty years salaries and fringe benefits of workers have remained the same or have decreased.

During the same period family savings have also decreased and personal debt has increased.

Borrowing from mortgage equity has also increased as people make up for decreasing income to cover emergencies and major expenses, like health care and sending youth to college.

Lower income families have experienced significant reductions in assistance and services and received less support for subsidized housing, and practically no health insurance is provided for lower income working families who don't qualify for Medicaid.

ANALYSIS

The neo-conservative mantra of "no new taxes" has urged the government at all levels to cut services available to low income people to the bone. Governments are encouraged to leave assisting the poor to the churches and other charitable organizations. The failure of this philosophy is demonstrated by the high number of children in this country who now go to bed hungry.

OUR TRADITION

Overcoming the deep breach between the poor and the rich of this country (and of the world) is a major mandate of the Christian church, so much so that, according to the gospel, crossing over that breach to provide greater resources (including jobs and economic opportunity) to lower income people will be the basic qualification for those who will be offered salvation.

RATIONALE FOR THIS RESOLUTION

The ENEJ sees a continuum between congregations' charitable work and promoting and supporting justice for and with lower income people. The Network encourages the traditional works of mercy and close relationships with the disenfranchised in the neighborhood. For the last twenty years the Network has been more directly involved in advocacy for the poor, community organizing, creating community models of local development, and enlisting the church and its members to invest in community development financial institutions that support community development. Since General Convention 2000 we have also advocated expanding and changing to The Episcopal Church's Economic Justice Loan Fund in order to draw more resources to dioceses and provinces of the church that lack needed investment funds.

II. RESOLUTION A112: BUDGET FOR RESOLUTION A111: ECONOMIC JUSTICE MINISTRY FOR AND WITH LOWER INCOME PEOPLE.

Resolved, The House of Deputies concurring, that the 76th General Convention fund the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice (ENEJ) at a level of \$100,000 per year for the coming triennium so that it can continue and increase its mission of supporting and assisting economic justice work at every level of the Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That ENEJ collaborate with and report to the Advocacy Center.

The Episcopal Network for Economic Justice is a membership organization arising out of the work that followed the church's implementation of GC resolution 1988-Taking Action for Economic Justice. The Network consists of several hundred individual, congregational and diocesan members. The requested funding will provide much needed resources to help the ENEJ assist the church in rising to the challenge of the current economic crisis.

THE ENEJ BUDGET NARRATIVE 2010-12

Each year since General Convention in 2006, the ENEJ has received \$15,000 per year from TEC, which it has increased several times over by raising dues and donations from individuals, congregations, organizations and dioceses. At this time of major financial crisis that affects everyone, the ENEJ requests added financial commitment from the Convention in two areas:

- 1) The ENEJ requests \$50,000 to support The Episcopal Church in expanding the scope of the loan fund envisioned originally by the 1988 economic justice resolution and called for again in a Convention resolution passed in 2000.
- 2) The ENEJ requests an additional \$35,000 for three years to extend its grass-roots work in the provinces and to support the ENEJ's collaboration with other networks, organizations, and institutions of the Church.
 1. Devote \$20,000 per year to expand and further develop provincial networks for economic justice. The ENEJ plans to hold provincial conferences followed by ongoing organizing, training, and technical assistance that the present budget does not afford.
 - a. \$10,000 per year to offer initial conferences in two provinces each year (2010-12)
 - b. \$10,000 per year to work within the provinces in which the ENEJ has held conferences, helping them build their provincial networks: identifying ongoing economic justice ministries, encouraging new initiatives, offering continuing educational events, providing technical assistance from the entire the ENEJ network. The ENEJ's particular focus during this triennium will be working in provinces with high numbers of Native Americans, in concert with the Church's Program for the Alleviation of Domestic Poverty.

2. \$15,000 per year to support the ENEJ's increased collaboration with other networks in the Church which are significantly involved in economic justice work:
 - a. Collaborate with the Jubilee Ministries Network toward more empowerment through community organizing, community development models, and political action at the local and state levels (\$5,000/year for 2010-12)
 - b. Partially support the cost of a national forum in 2010 of theologians, economists and those in economic justice ministry. The ENEJ will facilitate follow-up to the forum in 2011-12 by linking theological institutions and educators with those doing economic justice ministry in the broader Church. (\$5,000/year for 3 years).
 - c. Support the Immigration Network in the Church for three years, at \$5,000/year, for the modest costs of their ministry: phone, travel, transportation, meetings and conferences.

PROPOSED USES OF GRANT FROM TEC:

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>
Administrative Costs	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Development of Provincial Networks	20,000	20,000	20,000
Collaboration with Other Networks:			
Jubilee Ministries Network	5,000	5,000	5,000
Theological Network	5,000	5,000	5,000
Immigration Network	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Total	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Economic Justice Loan Fund	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>	<u>50,000</u>
Total	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

RESOLUTION III: THE CRISIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SYSTEM

That the Episcopal Church support the creation of a new regulatory agency at the international level, possibly within the structure of the United Nations, with the authority to promote and enforce agreed-upon principles of fair trade and regulations governing international trade, commerce and the environment.

THE CHALLENGE:

1. The negative impact of international corporations and the international financial system on the world economy, particularly as seen in the current fiscal crisis.
2. International companies are linked together in many ways but there is no international body with the authority and responsibility to regulate their action on behalf of world citizens and the environment.
3. Companies are moving their facilities to countries which have lower taxes, environmental regulation, and labor standards.
4. Small farmers in struggling countries cannot compete with subsidized agribusiness in the developed countries.

5. Many free trade treaties have not been fair to all the stakeholders (e.g., the workers, the consumers, the larger community, the environment).

ANALYSIS

The World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank do not adequately represent all the nations and people of the world, and therefore are not sufficiently democratic to effectively and fairly regulate the world economy. They primarily represent the major powers (G8) and the larger corporations and financial institutions.

OUR TRADITION

In our western tradition the government acts as the protector of last resort for those who don't have a voice of their own, (e.g., the workers, the environment, the poor). A truly democratic body at the international level would best safeguard against economic injustice.

RESOLUTION IV: REGULATION AND THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The Episcopal Church shall support comprehensive government regulations over economic transactions in the financial and banking sectors, particularly to prevent practices that negatively impact moderate and lower income people.

THE CHALLENGE

It is clear to most of us that the deregulation of corporations, particularly in the financial industry, primarily caused the current fiscal crisis. For example, banks and other financial institutions made many questionable and often exploitative home mortgages which became worthless or nearly worthless paper in 2008-09. This led to thousands of home foreclosures, the devaluation of the housing stock, a major loss in share value in the stock market, a scaling back of companies, employment, salaries and retirement savings.

ANALYSIS

Corporations are licensed by the state to carry out certain goals for the community, chiefly to produce goods and services and provide jobs. Reasonable profit to the stockholders is an incentive to carry out these goals. However, profit too often becomes the main mission of the corporation, benefiting the stockholders, often with negative impact on workers, consumers, local communities, and the environment.

OUR TRADITION

Every institution (not only corporations, but also churches and other institutions) needs regular examination and monitoring from within and from without to help it be faithful to its mission. Since the board of directors of a corporation primarily represents the owners

(stockholders), the State as licensing agent has the responsibility to develop regulatory policy to protect those other stakeholders who might be affected negatively by the corporation.

RESOLUTION V: CANCELLATION OF THIRD WORLD DEBT

That the Episcopal Church, in order to help cut in half extreme world poverty (Millennium Development Goal #1) support legislation that”

- **Extends cancellation of debt to additional heavily indebted impoverished countries with “IDA only” status at the World Bank and a per capita income of less than \$3 a day (Jubilee legislation),**
- **Includes strong safeguards to ensure that the money freed up by debt cancellation will be used to combat extreme poverty in qualifying countries,**
- **Calls on the U.S. Treasury Department to prevent the practice of vulture funds by designing legal remedies to curtail vulture fund activity, providing legal support to countries being sued by vulture funds, and providing technical assistance to developing country governments.**

(Explanatory note: “IDA only status” means the poorest countries; “vulture funds” take advantage of these countries by buying up their debt for pennies on the dollar and then trying to recover up to ten times the purchase price from the indebted countries.)

THE CHALLENGE

The Millennium Development Goals, endorsed by the General Convention of 2003, call for a 50% reduction of extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. We are falling short of meeting these goals. “The World Bank and the United Nations have estimated that anywhere from \$40 billion to \$75 billion annually will be needed globally if we are to achieve the MDGs. Some of this can be achieved through additional aid, but expanded debt cancellation is critical as well.” (Jubilee 2000 Website) The leaders of the G8 countries, under pressure from the Jubilee Movement, cancelled some debts of some countries in 1999 and again in 2005. However, there is far more to be done.

ANALYSIS

As Jeffrey Sachs (author of *The End of Poverty*) and his associates report, “Dozens of heavily indebted poor and middle-income countries are forced by creditor governments to spend large proportions of their limited tax receipts on debt service, undermining their ability to finance vital investments in human capital and infrastructure.” Dr. Sachs says that if the developed world assisted these countries and their citizens to get to the first rung of the development ladder, they then will be able to take the next steps themselves.

OUR TRADITION

The Jubilee legislation of the Book of Leviticus sought to counteract the progressive centralization of wealth in Israel by periodically (every seventy years) restoring the land to its

original owners. “The Jubilee...aimed to dismantle structures of social-economic inequality by releasing each community member from debt; returning encumbered or forfeited land to its original owners; freeing slaves.” (Ched Myers in *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*.)

RESOLUTION VI: IMMIGRATION: ECONOMIC JUSTICE IMPLICATIONS

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that the 76th General Convention recognize that all people living in the United States are entitled to protection provided by due process of law and that all immigrants and their families are entitled to receive protection granted by our laws and Constitution.; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention call for a moratorium on raids carried out by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at work sites, transportation systems, community gatherings, roadside check points and private residences leaving families torn apart and children parentless; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention advocate for a return of congressional consideration and implementation of comprehensive immigration reform which will allow millions of undocumented immigrants who have established roots in the United States and are often parents and spouses of U.S. Citizens to have a pathway to legalization; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention deplore conditions found in immigration detention centers and call for an accountability to ensure detainees are provided with humanitarian treatment, adequate food and medical care and sanitary conditions; and be it further

Resolved, that the General Convention (a) call for termination of the 287 G partners program which allows local police agencies to enforce immigration law, and (b) return that enforcement to Federal Immigration Agents, leaving local law enforcement agencies to the work of keeping communities safe, and (c) provide for a sense of safety for immigrant victims of crimes to come forward and report without fear of detention and deportation, and be it further

Resolved, that in as much as youth are a priority of the Episcopal Church, that the 76th General Convention support the principles of the American Dream Act that include provision for conditional legal status and eventual citizenship for undocumented youths provided they attend college for at least two years or that they serve the United States in other capacities, for example in AmeriCorps or the military.

THE CHALLENGE

Twenty years ago the federal government granted a general amnesty for immigrant workers. Immigrants who could demonstrate “good character” and financial stability and were able to pay a penalty could apply for legal permanent residency and eventual citizenship. As of 2007/2008 an estimated 12 million undocumented or out-of-status immigrants lived in the U.S., and there has been virtually no path to legalization for more than 20 years. However:

- Immigrants are the backbone of the service, food-producing and construction industries in the U.S.
- They contribute to the economy by the payment of taxes: all pay sales taxes, most pay income taxes, many pay property taxes as well.
- Immigrant families are often a blend of U.S citizens/legal residents and undocumented /out-of-status individuals. Recent strong immigration enforcement and the militarization of the border have led to severe family separation.
- Immigrants have become the scapegoats of the current economic crisis.

ANALYSIS

Given a choice, most people would prefer to remain in their own countries. Immigration is often the only and desperate choice for the wage-earner of a family who can no longer afford to feed, clothe and house the family.

On the other hand, the most frequent criticism against making immigration easier is “they are taking our jobs.” However most fill jobs that go unwanted and unfilled by U.S. citizens. Because the system is so back-logged, employers who want to follow the legal path are not able to bring people into the country. Meanwhile crops are not planted or harvested and tourist attractions have had to close down due to the labor shortage.

One wonders whether the deeper reasons for being anti-immigrant are the dislike or fear of people who are foreign, who look different, speak a different language.

OUR TRADITION

Scripture is full of immigrant stories. In the Book of Genesis Abraham and Sarah make their journey to the land that God had promised them and their descendants. The Book of Leviticus reminds us that we are to welcome strangers as citizens in our lands. There are two major stories concerning immigration into Egypt: in the first Jacob’s family were economic refugees due to famine in the land; in the second Mary and Joseph as political refugees sought sanctuary with the child in Egypt.