



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate

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Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” *Matthew 25:37-40*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Matthew’s Gospel presents us with images of impoverishment and a righteous response. Such images compel our own response when faced with the effects of dire human need. Poverty is a reality that knows no borders. Our awareness of poverty and our response to alleviate the suffering that grows out of poverty extends its reach to the four corners of the earth. We continue to focus on the global reach of our mission priority to achieve the Millennium Development Goals – the eradication of extreme global poverty by 2015 in the developing world. In addition, we are ever aware of the daily struggles born out of poverty that affect local communities in the United States. Today we commend to the Church a **Model for Domestic Poverty Alleviation**.

Faith in the Balance: A Call to Action is an outgrowth of the Summit on Domestic Poverty that was hosted in May 2008. While the summit was a time to recognize and celebrate the work of organizations represented, it was also a time to explore new and innovative strategies for more effective collaboration and responses to poverty, based on Scripture and our Baptismal Covenant. Those possibilities draw from the expertise of those who are daily “doing justice.” This report provides a coherent way to follow up on the Summit by drawing the whole of the Church in the United States into the ministry of poverty alleviation while nurturing our faith experience. It shines light on the path before us as we seek wholeness for all people and all creation. The recommendations that follow provide a framework for an overall strategy for domestic poverty alleviation, as well as a structure for an initial endeavor in Native American communities.

We call attention to the enclosed Executive Council Jubilee Advisory Committee resolution submitted in the Blue Book. We call the Church to make a special focus in the new triennium, recognizing that many of the poorest counties in the United States are among Native Peoples living on reservations. The resolution gives priority to our sisters and brothers of this continent, whose populations have increased while disparities in income, economic security, health and health care, and quality of life have continued to worsen. We call this Church to use this model to establish measurable goals that build capacity and sustainable communities through development initiatives, in partnership with local dioceses and tribal governments. We hope the model will develop and be appropriated alongside ongoing efforts in other

parts of our Church such as Appalachia, inner city neighborhoods, rural and migrant worker areas and in diverse communities wherever the effects of poverty are in need of healing.

May we continue God's mission through the work of this Church, as we embody the healing and feeding ministry of Jesus Christ, directed toward *shalom*. May this truly be a time of Jubilee and making the whole creation new. May it be so.



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Bonnie Anderson, D.D.
President, The House of Deputies

Executive Council's Jubilee Advisory Committee: Resolution to Establish a program for the Alleviation of Domestic Poverty:

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 76th General Convention commend the Presiding Bishop's Summit on Domestic Poverty that met in May, 2008, recognizing with gratitude the witness and ministry of all those who work to address domestic poverty and stand with the poor and marginalized; and be it further

Resolved that the Episcopal Church recognize the pressing challenges to those living in poverty and the working poor throughout this nation and call for new and innovative strategies to address issues related to: nutrition, employment, childcare, education, healthcare, environment, housing, as well as equal protection under law and cultural affirmation, and in particular be it further

Resolved, that the Church as a special focus in the new triennium, recognizing that many of the poorest counties in the United States are among Native Peoples living on reservations, gives priority to our sisters and brothers of this land whose population has increased while disparities in income, economic security, health and health care, and quality of life continue unabated, and be it further

Resolved, that a program be developed at Church Center, reporting to Executive Council, with measurable goals for an advocacy program to federal, state and local governments to reduce poverty in these counties, and measurable goals to build capacity and sustainable communities through development initiatives working with local dioceses and tribal governments, and that a minimum funding level of \$400,000 per annum be made available from the General Convention for these initiatives, and be it further

Resolved, that primary coordination be in the Advocacy Center, particularly the Office of Jubilee Ministries and Domestic Justice, The Office of Native American Ministries and the Office of Government Relations, working with the Executive Council Committee on Indigenous Ministries and in partnership with other appropriate offices from the mission Centers and other bodies as may be identified such as the Episcopal Church Foundation.