



Living in God's amazing grace

June 2005

As the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and as president of the Lutheran World Federation, I affirm the support of the ELCA for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed upon by 189 world leaders at the United Nations' Millennium Summit in 2000.

The goals to be achieved by 2015 are

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;
2. Achieve universal primary education;
3. Promote gender equality and empower women;
4. Reduce child mortality;
5. Improve maternal health;
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
7. Ensure environmental sustainability; and
8. Create a global partnership for development.

The Millennium Development Goals give us a tremendous opportunity: a plan to save the lives of the eight million people who die every year from poverty. With simple investments in infrastructure and health systems, people can escape the cycle of poverty, but many times they cannot do it on their own. Millions of families are too poor to buy the simple tools or medicines that can improve their lives dramatically. The current aid given to poor countries too often does not reach the people for whom it is intended. Debt has become a new form of slavery for the most impoverished countries, preventing them from investing in their people and entering into global markets.

In the ELCA social statement, *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All*, this church says, "Sin disrupts our bonds with and our sense of responsibility for one

another. We live separated from others on the basis of income and wealth, and resent what others have. Huge disparities in income and wealth . . . threaten the integrity of the human community.” The Goals seek to heal the integrity of the world community, and “give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.” (Psalm 82:3)

Challenged by the scandalous reality of hunger in an abundant world, the ELCA has for 30 years responded to the crisis of chronic poverty around the world and close to home through the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. This church’s work to fight poverty is lived out in our nearly 11,000 congregations, where together we discern God’s will for justice and daily bread for each member of the human family. Through relief, development, education, and advocacy, the ELCA walks with people living in poverty to work together to restore God’s vision of wholeness, peace, and justice. However, that vision requires us to do more. We are called by God to address the systemic causes of hunger and poverty. Such a commitment will require political will and the massive mobilization of efforts to meet this great challenge.

I urge the people of the ELCA to learn about and support the Millennium Development Goals. To learn more go to www.elca.org/advocacy and sign up for the ELCA e-advocacy network. To take action, join the ELCA and the Lutheran World Relief endorsed “ONE Campaign.” The ONE Campaign asks that the U.S. use an additional 1% of its total budget to help provide basic needs like health, education, clean water, and food for the world’s poorest countries.

In Gods amazing grace,

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