



James Gossett/MCC

THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS Hunger for Justice

by Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach

This year the MCC Washington Office turned 40. Milestones like that one tend to prompt reflections back on what has been, and dreams about what might be.

For all of those 40 years, the *Washington Memo* has been one of the main ways we communicate about our work. It's been ten years since the *Memo* was redesigned, and as you can see, we decided that our 40 year anniversary was a good time to make some changes.

We want to continue to provide you with a quality print resource that analyzes U.S. public policy from an Anabaptist perspective. But we also wanted to make it more visually appealing, so we added photos and switched to color.

In recent years the internet has also had a huge impact on how we receive information. People now expect instant news on what is happening, and in Congress, the status of bills can change rapidly.

Because of this, we have launched the *Washington Memo Blog* (see p.9) and will soon be introducing an electronic monthly newsletter. We continue to post information on our website and to send out issue-specific action alerts via e-mail (to sign up, see p.11). All of these provide ways to get updated information about fast-changing public policy debates and how best to advocate for peace and justice.

Meanwhile, we are shifting from an 8-page newsletter printed *bimonthly* to 12 pages delivered *quarterly*. The extra space allows us to provide more in-depth public policy analysis, as well as more space for theological reflections. We have also added worship resources to use in your local congregation, highlights from our online resources, and a new Advocates' Corner.

This first issue is dedicated to the global food crisis—a “food crisis that shouldn't be”—and coincides with World Food Day on October 16. For MCC, whose original work grew out of a response to famine, this is a timely and critical issue. There are many ways to respond to the food crisis—by donating to MCC's food programs, being aware of our own consumption habits and, as we highlight here, by advocating for just policies. For more on MCC's response to the global food crisis, visit mcc.org/foodforall.

We hope you find this—and future issues—useful. As always, we look forward to hearing from you. ✱

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A Food Crisis that Shouldn't Be

Melissa Engler/MCC



by Theo Sittler

We are living in a world that is more connected than ever before, where decisions made in one part of the world have consequences that are felt globally. In this context, the world is now living through a global food crisis of unprecedented scale, reach and devastation.

The crisis caught international attention when *food riots* broke out across the globe, in Haiti, Bangladesh, Ethiopia and elsewhere. People tired of rising food costs took to the streets.

According to the United Nations, food commodities in the global market have risen by 83 percent over the last three years. Corn prices have climbed to double the price a year ago. Wheat prices are 40 percent higher than 2007 and the price of rice is three times last year's level.

This unprecedented rise in price has left millions of people hungry and desperate. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food reports that an estimated 854 million people are currently living in a state of *food insecurity*.

Josette Sheeran, director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), put it this way, "What we are seeing now is affecting more

people on every continent, destroying even more livelihoods and the nutrition losses will hurt children for a lifetime."

Two factors believed to be exacerbating the food crisis are neo-liberal economic policies and investor speculation in food commodity and oil markets. Other factors, including biofuel production (p.7), climate change, increased demand for higher protein foods, and lower yield in some producer countries also play a role, but will not be discussed here.

Neo-liberal economic policies have devastated local economies and people's livelihood in the global South. As countries began to take part in the global market, decision-makers from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) began instituting conditions for loans, including structural adjustment programs. Structural adjustment most notably involves domestic shifts to privatize state-owned industries and reduce trade protections.

The story of Haiti is a case in point. Until the mid-1980s Haiti was a

self-sufficient rice producing country. Under pressure from the IMF and the World Bank, due to its accumulated debt and conditions for future loans, Haiti was forced to radically change its economic system. Haiti's trade protections were dismantled, making it the most economically *liberal* country in the Caribbean, which made it vulnerable to cheap imports and dependent on external sources

of production. By the early 1990s rice imports from the United States outpaced local production. Poor Haitian farmers were forced to compete for market share with

subsidized rice from the United States and Haiti's agricultural industry ended up in shambles. Now, as global prices rise, many Haitians cannot afford to buy rice.

In the current food crisis, countries like Haiti, and many in Sub-Saharan Africa, which are "net food importers," are at the mercy of the global market, unable to feed their own people.

Investor speculation. "Money moves prices and money moves markets." As Wall Street's housing crisis began to emerge, large sums of money

The current food crisis presents opportunities for true reform.

flowed into the food commodities futures market—as much as \$300 billion. This has played a major role in food price inflation.

Michael Masters, a hedge fund investor for more than 12 years, recently testified before Congress and attributed much of the increase in food prices to speculation in the commodities market. Fundamental economic principles of supply and demand played less of a role and institutional investors collectively played a major role in driving the commodities price increase. Speculative investing in the commodities futures market is when an investor buys a product for re-selling rather than for use and every time the product is re-sold, the price goes up.

Speculative investing also contributes to the increase in fuel costs, which directly impacts the cost of food. According to Aldo Caliari, an economist at the Center of Concern, the impact on the price of crude oil is \$20–30 per barrel.

Investors have banked millions of dollars while millions of people worldwide have gone hungry, unable to keep up with increased prices in a volatile market.

Recommendations

The current global food crisis brings many challenges but it also presents opportunities for true reform and changes that can effectively work for the common good. Any attempt at reform or response must take a short, medium and long term approach.

Short term. Millions of people are hungry right now; millions are dying. Sheeran has compared this disaster with the 2004 Asian tsunami, calling the food crisis a “silent tsunami.” This must be treated as a disaster and emergency response must take effective, rapid measures. Over the past several months many nations and non-governmental organizations, including MCC, have responded with large sums of

To view a sample letter to your member of Congress visit our blog at washingtonmemo.org or call the office at (202) 544-6564.

Eating Local in Haiti

In April, after a week of demonstrations, Haitian President René Préal, in a televised address, called for calm and responded, “The only solution [to the food crisis] is national production.”

With these words, Préal became a welcome ally to a local movement co-founded by Mennonite Central Committee called *Kore Pwodiksyon Lokal* (KPL) in Creole, which means “support local production.” In the months leading up to the protests, KPL members spoke at conferences and aired television commercials about the importance of local consumption.

KPL coordinator Ari Nikola notes that in urban centers, where the majority of protests occurred, there is no lack of food. “Go into the open-air markets, and see bags of rice, vegetables and mangoes,” he states. “The problem is the lack of financial capacity to actually buy the food.”

Much of this problem, he says, is the result of the neo-liberal economic policies which were implemented, starting in 1986. As a result, an estimated 830,000 rural farming jobs were lost, which led to migration to urban areas, unemployment and food insecurity.

In response, KPL has recently started filming for a weekly television program that will show various ways Haitians can address food concerns through local consumption. For Nikola, this is an opportune time for change. “Supporting local production revalues what our country produces. This is the long-term solution.”

For more information on the movement, visit buylocalhaiti.blogspot.com.



emergency food aid. Food aid must be monitored and evaluated according to changing needs. Additionally non-emergency food aid policies must be carefully evaluated for negative impact on local markets.

Medium term. Food aid will only be a “band-aid” measure if structural changes do not take place. The loopholes in speculative investment must be fixed as a medium term measure. Masters, an ardent believer in the free market system, asked, “Should asset allocation trump human rights?” His answer, “Never!” Masters also said, “Markets without rules don’t work.”

At the time of writing, Congress was in the process of considering legislative measures to regulate and create transparency in the commodities and oil futures markets. Measures such as these can help to ensure that institu-

tional investors do not sacrifice human rights for capital gains.

Long term. The global food crisis has been in the works for a long time. Millions of people were already dying of hunger before the riots caught international attention. A sustainable response to the crisis requires a long term approach that addresses a major root cause of the problem. Neo-liberal economic policies have disabled the ability of a country to produce the food it needs to feed its own people. Nations must be allowed to decide their own food security strategies and design policies that will effectively address the problem in their local context.

After the riots in Port-Au-Prince, the Haitian president René Préal proposed that Haiti begin to invest more in its own agricultural industry in or-

(continued on page 6)

Cookbook Theology: An Anabaptist Perspective on the Global Food Crisis

by Rachele Lyndaker Schlabach

I've met more than one Mennonite who first became aware of Anabaptists through the *More-with-Less Cookbook*. The cookbook was commissioned by MCC in the mid-1970s in the midst of a food crisis. It has become something of a classic, encouraging readers to think about their consumption patterns.

Since then, MCC has commissioned two additional cookbooks: *Extending the Table* and *Simply in Season*. I have enjoyed many delicious recipes from these books, as the stains and hand-written notes in my copies of them suggest.

But the cookbooks also point to some biblical themes that can shape our response to the current food crisis and beyond.

More-with-Less. The subtitle of this book is “suggestions by Mennonites on how to eat better and consume less of the world’s limited food resources.” It encourages reducing our consumption of meat, refined sugar and processed foods. The cookbook reminds us that our choices have an impact on others.

God has created the world with an abundance of resources, more than

enough to feed everyone a healthy and sustainable diet (see Psalms 65, 104 and 145).

But sin enters into the picture, and we become greedy, taking more than our fair share. In addition to our individual food choices, U.S. trade policy has set up an unfair system with subsidies and trade restrictions (pp. 2–3). In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus tells the story of a rich man who plans to tear down his barns and build bigger ones, hoarding the land’s generous harvest (12:13–21). Jesus uses the story to illustrate that we should trust instead in God’s provision (12:22–34).

Extending the Table. The second book in the series highlights recipes from around the world and encourages us to enjoy the richness of flavors found within different cultures.

Its global perspective reminds us that we in the United States are just one small part of the world community. This brings us an appropriate sense of national humility, as well as responsibility, given the serious inequities present in our world (see Amos 3:1–2, together with 6:1–7).

Furthermore, each one of us in the human family is made in God’s image

(Genesis 1:27). The writer of 1 John reminds us that because we are children of God, we are to reflect the divine image by caring for one another in love (1 John 3:1–2, 17).

Simply in Season. The newest cookbook in the series stresses the importance of eating seasonal, locally grown food and encourages us to connect directly with farmers and growers.

One primary reason for moving away from our current food system, with its heavy reliance on fossil fuels to transport food, is the toll that it takes on our earth. We must work for food policy that is sustainable, for God’s good earth and for the wellbeing of future generations. Indeed, the “earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24:1).

In her preface to *More-with-Less*, Doris Janzen Longacre writes that there is no “single answer to the world’s food problem. It may not be within our capacity to effect an answer. But it is within our capacity to search for a faithful response.” Indeed, we who have experienced the Bread of Life can do no less. ✱



Valerie Smith/MCC

“The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season. You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.”
—Psalm 145:15–16

Worship Resources

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice . . . is it not to share your bread with the hungry?” (Isaiah 58:6–7)

Scripture texts

Psalm 65, 145; Luke 12:13–34 (reflections on these texts on p.4)

Children’s story

See MCC’s FoodBasket Fun Page for children, available online at mcc.org or by calling 1-888-563-4676.

Prayer of confession (adapted)

Unison: This earth is yours, O God. You created its riches the water, the land, the minerals—sufficient resources for all your children’s needs. We confess that we are not good stewards of all you have placed in our care. Too often we think of ourselves first and only.

Leader: Creator God, forgive us.

Men: We are short-sighted and selfish with your gifts, squandering today what needs saving for tomorrow,

Women: hoarding “ours” instead of sharing what is yours, refusing to use some gifts at all.

Unison: Gracious One, forgive us.

Leader: We seek comfort and security for ourselves at the expense of bare essentials for others.

Unison: Show us your way, Lord, to bring Good News to the poor.

Women: We refuse to be swept into the whirlwind of your Spirit that will challenge and change us.

Men: We object, complaining that we have challenge and change enough that disrupts our lives.

Leader: We look for reasons to reject new ways to respond to your Word.

Unison: O Breath of God, breathe fire into us again!

Men: We expect our government to protect us and our basic human rights.

Women: But we do not insist on fulfillment for others of those basic needs.

Unison: Forgive our lack of vigilance. In a country where we have both a voice in government and a responsibility to use it, we have not been good stewards of the gift of citizenship.

Leader: Fill us with the transforming power of your love.

Unison: Show us new ways to respond to your Gospel. Challenge and equip us to turn our compassion into action. Amen.

—*Banquet of Praise* (Bread for the World, 1990)

Benediction

Go forth in peace, and be of good courage; hold fast that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And may the God who fills the hungry with good things fill us all with Christ-like love and with a consuming hunger for justice in our land and in our world. Amen.

—*Banquet of Praise* (Bread for the World, 1990)



Dan Manshka/MCC

Songs and hymns

I sing the mighty power of God (*Hymnal: A Worship Book* 46)

Brothers and sisters of mine are the hungry (*Hymnal: A Worship Book* 142)

Let us break bread together (*Hymnal: A Worship Book* 453)
As rain from the clouds (*Sing the Journey* 40)

My soul cries out (*Sing the Story* 124) ✪

For more information and worship resources

Bread for the World: bread.org

Seeds of Hope: seedspublishers.org

Food Security, HIV/AIDS, and Peacebuilding

by Earl Zimmerman

Rising food costs in India, while still manageable, are worrisome, forcing the government to take various remedial steps such as severely curtailing rice exports and reducing import tariffs on food items. MCC programs in rural development have become increasingly important in this new global environment. The scary part is the thin margin on which millions of poor people survive in the global South. It wouldn't take much to tip the balance toward massive hunger and even starvation.

MCC FoodBasket Toolkit

The toolkit is for churches, schools and other groups who want to learn about food issues and MCC food projects around the world. Includes four-session curriculum, children's activities, fun page for children, storybook, DVD, stickers, a giving calendar and more. Available online at mcc.org/catalog or by calling 1-888-563-4676.



Earl Zimmerman

I recently visited a part of rural India where MCC works at HIV/AIDS prevention, development and peacebuilding. Food security, HIV/AIDS, and peacebuilding are linked in this part of India, where there is a long history of government neglect in providing basic infrastructure.

Rising food prices give a new urgency to meeting the needs of poor people around the world. Rural and urban realities are linked in India. These people's lives are also linked to

the energy and consumption patterns of those of us who live in wealthy countries. It will take all of us working together to create a more just and sustainable world. ✪

Earl Zimmerman is an MCC Co-Representative in India. Earl and his wife Ruth have been serving in India since 2007.

This is excerpted from Earl Zimmerman's blog. To read the full blog entry visit kolkatareflections.blogspot.com/.

A Food Crisis that Shouldn't Be (continued from page 3)

der to boost local production. Developing nations should not be penalized for wanting to protect their own markets.

La Via Campesina, an organization that represents a movement of small-farmers, puts it this way, "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own food and agriculture.

Food sovereignty does not negate trade, but rather, it promotes the formulation of trade policies and practices that serve the rights of peoples to safe, healthy and ecologically sustainable production."

The UN Special Rapporteur has said, "This is an intolerable situation, because it is a preventable one." This

disaster, unlike a tsunami, cyclone or earthquake, was caused by human practices and policies. Therefore it must be addressed in a thoughtful, comprehensive manner. Policymakers must be willing to recognize the failures in the current system and work at comprehensive reform that will truly address the needs of people. ✪



Food or Fuel?

How Biofuels Are Contributing to the Food Crisis and Harming the Environment

by Tammy Alexander

Not long ago, corn-based ethanol was touted as a clean, renewable solution to reduce our dependence on oil. When burned it emits less carbon dioxide, the supply can be replenished year after year, and the industry supports farmers here in the United States.

The problem is that not only does ethanol cause far more harm to the environment than initially thought, but subsidies and mandates for biofuels are significant contributors to the current food crisis.

In 2006, four billion gallons of ethanol were produced using 14 percent of the U.S. corn crop. Production is expected to increase to 30 percent of the corn crop by 2009 and 40 percent by 2015. As more corn is diverted to fuel, less is available for food. Additionally, as farmers plant more corn, they plant less of other staple foods such as soybeans and wheat, driving

up those prices as well. The International Food Policy Research Institute estimates that biofuel mandates and subsidies are responsible for one quarter to one third of the recent rise in food prices.

Even though nearly a quarter of the U.S. corn crop this year is expected to be used to make ethanol, this will account for only about 4.5 percent of the U.S. gasoline fuel market. As demand and mandates for biofuels increase, the effect on food crops—and, consequently,

food prices—is huge. These effects are being seen outside the U.S. as well. Across Latin America and Asia, land that was previously used to grow food is now being used to grow fuel.

The production of biofuels is also having devastating environmental effects around the world. Previously, it was thought that corn-based ethanol provided 20 percent fewer carbon

The corn needed to fill one SUV with ethanol could feed one person for an entire year.

World Food Day: October 16

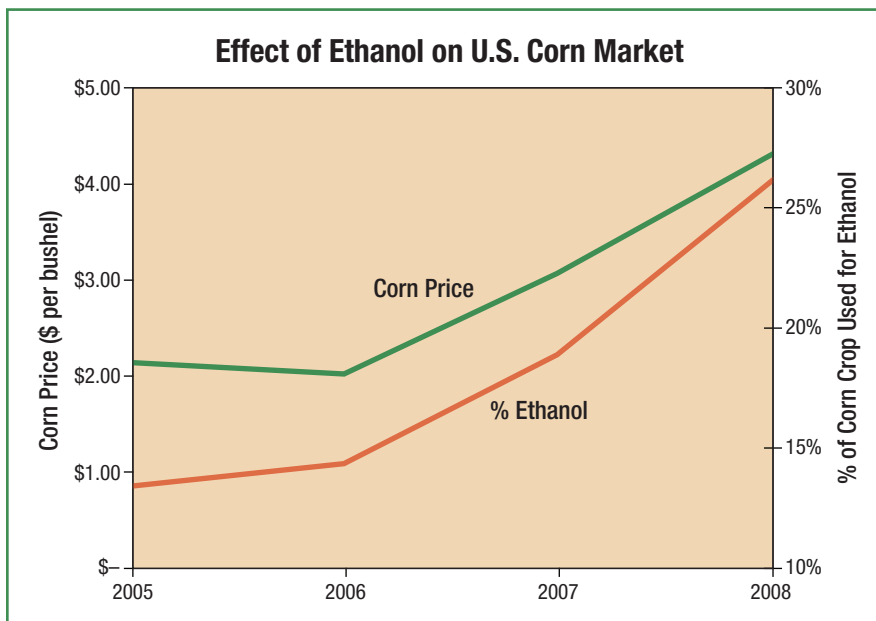
World Food Security: The Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy is the theme of this year's World Food Day. For more information, visit worldfooddayusa.org.

emissions than gasoline. However, a February 2008 study in the journal *Science* which took into account the destruction of forest and prairie land to grow biofuels found that, in fact, the net effect is a *doubling* of greenhouse gas emissions.

In places like Brazil, Indonesia and Malaysia, forests are being cleared to grow biofuels. This has no small effect on global warming: 20 percent of current global carbon emissions come from deforestation. In addition to these effects, ethanol production uses fossil fuels and scarce water resources and creates large amounts of hazardous fertilizer run-off.

As our elected officials look toward increasing the use of renewable resources, it is important that they look at the *entire* picture when it comes to biofuels. Current corn-based ethanol mandates must be reduced. Some biofuel sources—such as sugarcane, switchgrass, and agricultural waste products—show potential, but require further research. Any policy on biofuels must consider the effect on the environment and on world food markets.

As we struggle with high gas prices and look for U.S. policy solutions, we must balance our want for cheap energy with the need for food around the world. Our search for quick solutions should not lead to the destruction of rainforests. Neither should it increase the hunger in the belly of one child. ✨



The Farm Bill and U.S. Hunger Programs

by Emily Welty

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act, otherwise known as the Farm Bill, is a large piece of legislation that must be renewed by Congress every five years. The most recent Farm Bill became law on June 18, 2008, when both chambers of Congress voted to override a presidential veto.

The Farm Bill is a wide ranging bill that also contains guidance for conservation, trade, energy and nutrition programs in the United States.

The complete text of the Farm Bill can be found online by going to thomas.loc.gov and typing in H.R. 6124.

More information on the effect of the bill on domestic hunger issues can be found at Bread for the World's website: bread.org.

How does the 2008 Farm Bill affect domestic hunger programs?

- The Farm Bill allocates \$10.364 billion for nutrition programs in the United States.
- This includes an additional \$7.8 billion for the food stamp program. The food stamp program is the largest single program in the Farm Bill. The food stamp program has been in operation since 1939, providing access to food for low income families. The USDA estimates that the food stamp program provides benefits to approximately 26 million people in the United States each month.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) received an additional \$1.6 billion in funding. TEFAP provides food to state distributing agencies such as food banks who then distribute the food to local agencies such as soup kitchens or local food banks. TEFAP first began in 1981 to distribute food commodities to local households in need of emergency food assistance.
- The 2008 Farm Bill also expanded the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to receive an additional \$9.9 million. This program provides free snacks of fresh fruit and vegetables to children in elementary school.
- A related provision in the bill encourages the provision of whole grain foods in school lunch programs.
- The Farm Bill specifically encourages and directs USDA to consider the advantages of locally grown food when it is procuring food items for other programs.
- An additional \$5 million will be added to a program which allows low-income senior citizens to purchase food at farmers' markets and community supported agriculture projects.

Emily Welty served as an intern in the MCC Washington Office this past summer.

35.5 million

Total number of people in the United States who are "food insecure" (lack consistent access to enough food)

17.2%

Percent of children in U.S. who are food insecure

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2006



Matthew Lester/MCC

washingtonmemo.org

Introducing the Washington Memo Blog

Technology has irreversibly sped up the pace of communications in Washington. The publishing delay of the *Washington Memo* has made it difficult to suggest direct action on bills in Congress, since the political landscape can sometimes change before the *Memo* reaches your mailbox.

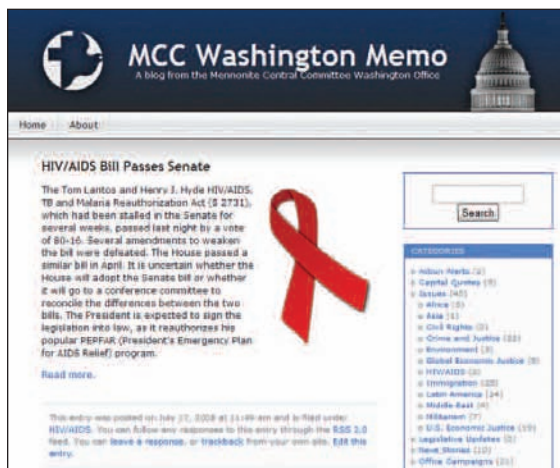
One way of providing up-to-date information on important legislation has been through our website, mcc.org/us/washington. An additional new way is our blog, washingtonmemo.org.

[Washingtonmemo.org](http://washingtonmemo.org) provides Anabaptist commentary on the political action occurring on Capitol Hill and elsewhere. The blog includes:

- Legislative updates
- Excerpts from news stories
- Capital quotes
- And much more!

Visit washingtonmemo.org for the latest updates from the MCC Washington Office on issues including:

- Civil Rights
- Climate Change
- Cluster Bombs
- Colombia
- HIV/AIDS
- Immigration
- Jubilee Act
- Negotiations with Iran
- Sudan
- U.S. Institute of Peace
- U.S. Torture Policy



mcc.org/us/washington

Website Resource Highlights

Over the past few months, MCC Washington Office staff members posted a number of informative new resources on the Washington Office website, mcc.org/us/washington. Some highlights include:



The Sudan Web Campaign:

Learn. Share. Advocate. The Washington Office's Sudan

Web Campaign provides the resources to do all three. Read background information. Download a small group study guide and posters for your church. Contact your representatives in Washington. And register your congregation to participate in a nationwide effort to advocate for peace in Sudan, Nov. 9–16. mcc.org/us/washington/sudan



Migrant Trail 2008:

Last summer, two Washington Office staff members participated in the Migrant Trail, a 75-mile walk that traces the paths migrants take from Mexico to Arizona. Web resources about the walk include background information about the Migrant

Trail, journal entries written in the Arizona desert, border statistics, migrant stories, and advocacy suggestions. mcc.org/us/washington/walk



Trade As If People and Earth

Matter: A new brief on sustainable trade practices is now available. The resource, created by the Interfaith Working Group on Trade and Investment, suggests new alternatives to agricultural, investment, and intellectual property policies. mcc.org/us/washington/issues/economicjustice/tradealternatives.pdf

—Compiled by Gabe Schlabach.

Advocates' Corner



The Advocates' Corner highlights current advocacy work by Anabaptist congregations. Please let us know about what your congregation is doing, so that we can include it in a future issue.

COLOMBIA

In April, congregations from across the United States, Canada and Colombia participated in *Days of Prayer and Action for Peace in Colombia*, an effort to both pray and advocate for an end to the decades-long conflict in Colombia.

The Honorable Gabrielle Giffords
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep Giffords,

I am writing to express my gratitude for your recent vote against fast track status for the Colombia Free Trade Agreement. I wanted to express in writing some of my concerns about the free trade agreement, should it be brought back for a vote in the future.

As a member of Shalom Mennonite Fellowship, a local congregation in Tucson, AZ with a sister church in Bogotá, Colombia, I have heard of the difficulties that my Colombian sisters and brothers face. I have heard stories about people being displaced from rural communities to Bogotá and the challenges they confront to make a new living in a place that is not their own, without access to the land on which they worked. Often, people barely survive in urban areas after the trauma of their displacement.

Thank you for considering these concerns.

Sincerely,

Jodi Read
Shalom Mennonite Fellowship
Tucson, Arizona

The Honorable Robert Casey
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

For the past two days Mennonites all over the U.S. have been responding to cries for help from our brothers and sisters in Colombia by joining "Days of Prayer and Action for Peace in Colombia." Two months ago I wrote to ask you to oppose the Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

Now, in addition to this, we are urging our legislators to end all military aid to Colombia. Plan Colombia has not succeeded in reducing the availability of cocaine in the U.S. and, because of the armed conflict it promotes, Colombian civilians are dying by the hundreds.

Therefore I urge you to vote against the FTA and to work to end all military aid to Colombia.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Horst
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Excerpt from response:

Dear Ms. Horst,

Thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding Colombia.

I believe that the United States must have a balanced foreign policy toward Colombia that respects American values of human rights and the rule of law, eliminates drug cartels and terrorist groups and promotes fair trade practices.

I am also deeply concerned about the United States entering into yet another free trade agreement with a country that has insufficient labor protections. Since 2001, Pennsylvania has lost over 190,000 manufacturing jobs. For the United States to move forward with a free trade deal, Colombia must demonstrate its commitment to tough labor and environmental standards. However, it is unlikely that Colombia will agree to these standards in the near future.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts with me.

Sincerely,

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

NATIVE HEALTH CARE

Mennonite Church USA has been vocal in its support for the Native American Apology Bill sponsored by Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.). This apology would be the first time the U.S. government has officially apologized for the sins it has committed against the Native Peoples of the Americas.

In February, the apology bill was amended onto an important Native health bill, the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which passed the Senate (83-10) but has since stalled in the House.

The Peace and Justice Support Network of the Mennonite Church has been especially strong in pushing for the apology's passage, and they have strongly supported this health legislation. In June, Mennonite Church USA signed onto an interfaith letter to House leaders, urging them to move the legislation forward.

Emmanuel Mennonite Church of Saint Paul, Minnesota has also taken an active role in advocating for the Native Health Bill. The church sent a letter to their Minnesota representatives. An excerpt:

Your dedication to the people of the great state of Minnesota has been exemplary. You have provided a great service to us, and it is my prayer that you continue to do so for many years to come.

Please be so kind as to send a response regarding your decision to support and cosponsor this important resolution. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Please take initiative to ensure that this reauthorization, so long delayed, is passed, and voice your support for moving H.R. 1328 and the Resolution of Apology through the House on a bi-partisan basis.

TORTURE

During the month of June, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture sponsored a campaign to have congregations across the country display "Torture is Wrong" banners outside their sanctuaries. More than 300 congregations of various denominations in all 50 states participated, including:

- Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship (Boise, Idaho)
- Bethel College Mennonite Church (North Newton, Kan.)
- Houston Mennonite Church (Houston, Tex.)
- Community Mennonite Church (Harrisonburg, Va.)
- Fort Collins Mennonite Fellowship (Fort Collins, Col.)

Many of these congregations also sent letters to their representatives in Washington, urging the U.S. government to oppose torture.

For more information about the banner campaign, or to order a banner for your congregation, please visit nrcat.org. ✳



High School Essay Contest

Don't forget to tell your favorite teenager about our annual essay contest. This year's topics include the global food crisis, U.S. energy policy, and gun laws. Essays must be postmarked by December 15 and prizes will be awarded. More information is online at mcc.org/us/washington.

✳ IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Senator _____
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3121
senate.gov

Representative _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 224-3121
house.gov

President Geroge W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
(202) 456-1111
president@whitehouse.gov

MCC U.S. Washington Office
920 Pennsylvania Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 544-6564
mccwash@mcc.org
mcc.org/us/washington
washingtonmemo.org

✳ SIGN UP!

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✳ UPCOMING DATES

October 16

World Food Day

November 9–16

Week of Waging Peace in Sudan
(mcc.org/sudanaction)

Advent 2008

Worship resources on Israel-Palestine available from Churches for Middle East Peace (cmep.org)

December 15

High school essay contest deadline.

WASHINGTON MEMO is published quarterly by Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office staff. To subscribe, send \$10 to MCC, P.O. Box 500, Akron, PA 17501-0500. For address changes, send both addresses to MCC.

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All biblical quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.



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Hunger for Justice

“Corn prices have climbed to double the price a year ago. Wheat prices are 40 percent higher than in 2007 and the price of rice is three times last year’s level.

“The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food has called the global food crisis ‘an intolerable situation, because it is a preventable one.’ This disaster, unlike a tsunami, cyclone or earthquake, was caused by human practices and policies. . . .”

Read more inside.