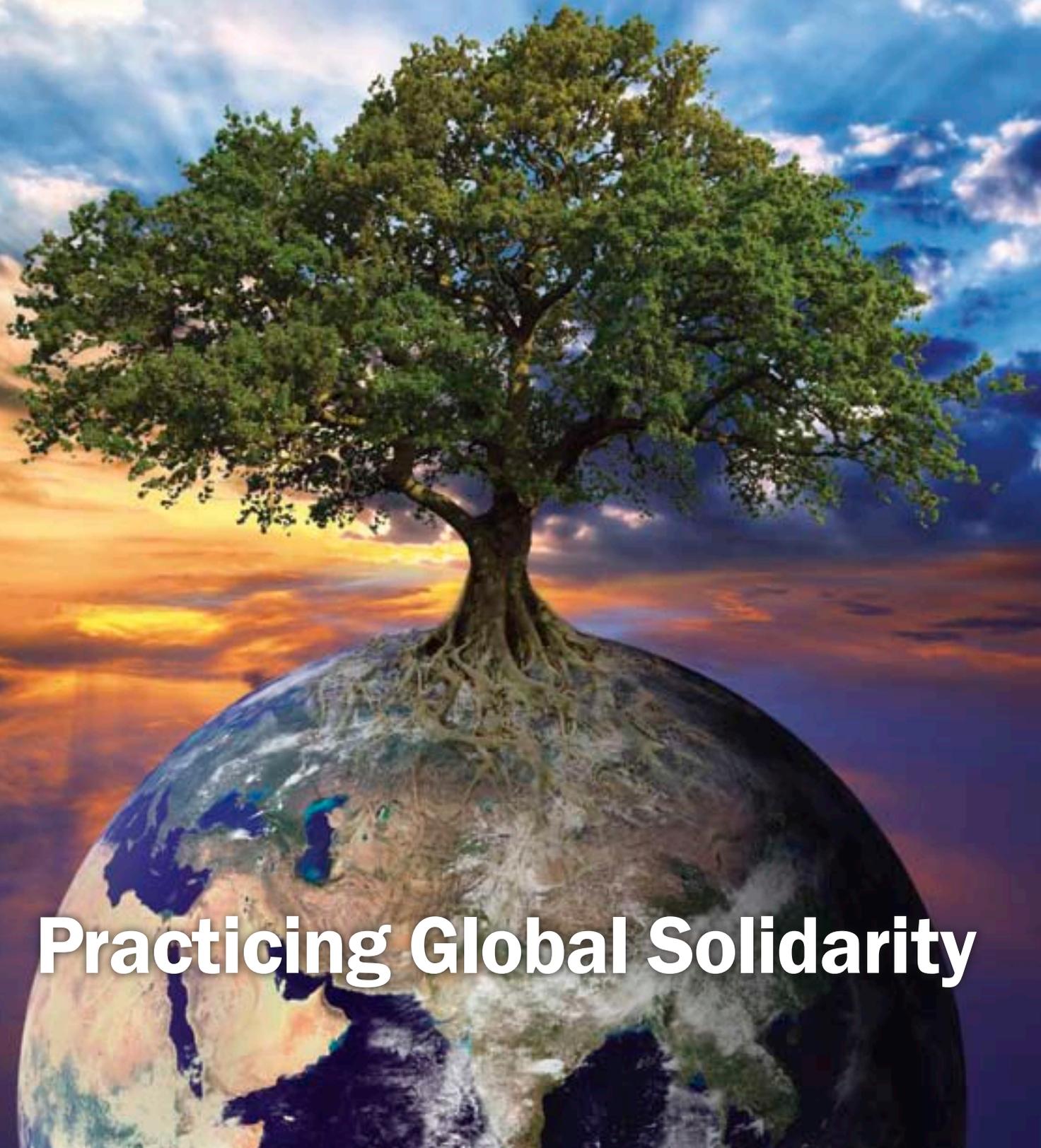


# NETWORK Connection

PEOPLE LOBBYING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • MAY/JUNE 2008



## Practicing Global Solidarity

dear members

We are delighted here in DC to have received so many thoughtful contributions to our Platform for the Common Good. You, our members and our friends, have done a great job in trying to create something new. We are humbled and grateful for the engagement in these challenging times.

In June, we will be sending out the first draft of the Platform. This will be an opportunity for you to respond to the draft as we move the vision forward.

As I speak around the country, I have seen that there is a great hunger for changing the direction of our country. We know that the needs are great and that new answers are required. Our collective efforts are making a difference. The needs of ordinary people are once again beginning to enter into the deliberations of policymakers.

We must keep up our efforts. The Platform and the July Convention offer us an opportunity to move our agenda forward. BUT, our work will only begin with these events and the election. Following the election, we must stay engaged and hold our elected officials accountable. "We the People" must reclaim our part in government. This is our only hope for change. Let us live in this springtime hope. We can create something new.

*Simone Campbell SSS*

## NETWORK Lobbyist Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, Honored

On May 18, Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, will receive an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from the College of Our Lady of the Elms in Chicopee, MA. "This degree recognizes your distinguished service as a citizen of the world. The achievements of your life serve as a most worthy inspiration to all of us, particularly the students who will graduate." She will also deliver the commencement address.



*We at NETWORK congratulate Catherine for this well-earned honor.*

### 3 envisioning The Shadow Side

Simone Campbell, SSS, reflects on the shadow aspects of globalization.



### 4 cover story How You Can Help Build a More Just and Sustainable World Economy

John Cavanagh and Sarah Anderson believe that each of us can help create global justice.



### 8 focus on the hill Packed Agenda to Address Economic Downturn

Congress hears constituents' demands to address economic woes.



### 10 toward a global community Cotton Farming in Côte d'Ivoire

Kanibonnon Etienne Tuo describes the effects of cotton farming on his family and on his nation.



### 12 highlighting people Journeys to Understanding

Jon Gromek learned from Mexicans and Salvadorans that our lives are intertwined.



### 13 spread the word Our Faith Calls Us to Global Justice-making

Copy and distribute this call to respond to global needs.



### 15 making a difference Global Security in 3D

Lisa Schirch and the military teach us about peacemaking.



Comments on this issue? Ideas for future issues of Connection? Let us hear from you! [connection@networklobby.org](mailto:connection@networklobby.org)



A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

**NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation.**

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# The Shadow Side

BY SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

Many of us have benefited from inexpensive international travel and seen parts of the world that those who lived 100 years ago only dreamed about. We have seen pictures of our planet from space and know we are a small blue orb in the vast cosmos. We in the United States are the beneficiaries of international commerce, able to purchase vast quantities of imported goods. The U.S. dollar is used in many other countries as their own currency. In Lebanon and El Salvador, for example, the U.S. dollar is legal tender. And people all over the world watch U.S. television programs that shape their opinion of our country. In short, we live globalization.

But in the current economic climate, we are beginning to experience the shadow side of globalization. The dollar is weakened because of our

domestic fiscal policy. The cost of oil is at its highest level ever. The planet is at (or some say past) the tipping point for global warming. Corporations continue to scramble for a quarterly profit without looking at long term consequences. We are beginning to experience the erosion of our infrastructure, the breakdown of our educational system, and the consequences of the lack of accountability of government or the private sector. In this context, I am beginning to think that our traditional answers to federal policy need to be rethought. Take one example: immigration.

Current global free market doctrine is based on two aspects: capital and labor. Working to change immigration policy in our country has taught me that we have many treaties that promote the free movement of capital around the world. We can draw money out of our U.S. bank accounts from ATMs in almost every country. Corporations and individuals can invest in almost any corner of our small blue planet. But we have no treaties or agreements to protect or regulate the free movement of labor.

Corporations have benefited from the lack of global migration treaties because they can pay lower wages to those who do not have clear residency status in the country where they are employed. Customers, it is argued, benefit from these low wages because they can pay lower prices. Immigration is also experienced locally as new residents rub shoulders with citizens. This causes us to continue to view immigration as a local issue, when in fact it is global. So I and you, our members, have advocated for changing the rules, creating space for those who are

working in our country, and forming international agreements that protect workers' movements. In other words, we have been working to improve the free-market system by allowing people to travel freely.

While this is needed for as long as this global free market obsession continues, I think we also need to create another response, another vision. We need to find new ways to care for people and our planet. We need to create a new form of an economy that supports families by creating local economies. Our work on peacebuilding in Iraq is one model that can be used globally—foster economic development in each local area by local people. By doing this, people will be able to eat and care for their families locally. This strategy can be good for the environment, good for relationships, and good for the economy.

We don't have the luxury of polarized thinking on this issue. We need to continue to engage the injustices in our current capitalist system, but we must start to step back toward the center of economic policies. We must start to support economic development that moves away from only the profit motive. We must find ways to help people stay home AND feed their families. We must not make cheap prices the center of our purchasing decisions. We must find a way to be responsible for our earth. In short, we need to find new answers to these intractable problems. I hope that both this issue of *Connection* and our July 11–13 **Convention for the Common Good** are contributions to that end.

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*Simone Campbell, SSS, is NETWORK's Executive Director.*

# How You Can Help Build a More Just and Sustainable World Economy

BY JOHN CAVANAGH AND SARAH ANDERSON

Home foreclosures. Global warming. Rampant child labor. An explosion of global billionaires. Daily, you are bombarded with signs of a world economy in big trouble. And it is normal to feel somewhat helpless.

But, contrary to what you might think, there are a lot of things you can do to help people in poverty and the planet have a better chance. Each of us is a consumer. Most of us are workers and small investors. And we are all citizens of local communities, of this country, and of the world. In each of these capacities, we can make choices that will build a better world, and we have a lot of allies in this country and around the world who can help us shift toward a greener, more just global economy.

To get the change right, we must first understand clearly the problems we are trying to solve. The problems out there are big, but they are all related to the same source, and they largely require the same solutions. If you solve one, you can solve them all.

## Naming the Problem: Market Fundamentalism

At the root of many of today's problems is a mindset that became pervasive in the early 1980s as the United States, Great Britain, and Germany all elected leaders who embraced the market as the solution to almost all of our problems. The elections of Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Helmut Kohl were all reactions to a difficult and confused period in the late 1970s when joblessness was rising, oil and other prices were skyrocketing, and governments were having trouble getting things right. Conservatives, going back to the famous University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman and Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater in the 1960s, had been saying that the problem was "too much government." Markets, they argued, should be allowed to operate more freely.

For those who didn't embrace this new philosophy, particularly in the poorer regions of Latin America, Africa and Asia, the richer governments imposed it. Starting with the Reagan administration in the 1980s, the U.S. government pressed other governments to shrink their traditional functions of regulation and stimulating the economy in favor of market responses. How did they do this? Well, in many poorer countries, non-democratic governments had been borrowing large sums of money in the 1960s and 1970s that wound up in the pockets of rulers or sunk into boondoggle projects with dubious benefits for

people in poverty. By the early 1980s, impoverished nations were having trouble servicing their external debts, and the richer nations came up with an unequal solution.

The Reagan, Thatcher, and Kohl governments gave new powers to the global financial institutions, particularly the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, to impose "austerity" measures on poor nations in exchange for renegotiating the debts. Countries were told to cut government workers, to sell off government enterprises such as municipal water systems, government banks, and electricity systems to private



CLIMATE  
CHAOS

E. KIM

FLOOD IN SOUTHERN FRANCE. JOHN ARMSTRONG-MILLER



corporations, and to plunder their natural resources to boost export earnings. Open your countries to global corporations, they were told, and they will put you on a path to prosperity.

This market-opening mania was accelerated in the 1990s as governments negotiated the World Trade Organization, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and other deals that further knocked down barriers to food, other goods, and corporate investments crossing borders, and gave corporations new rights. Billionaire philanthropist George Soros has correctly called these policies “market fundamentalism.”

Governments got downsized and global corporations got lucrative new markets, and yet the debt crisis never went away. And, in the process, five major problems emerged that we need to fix today if we are to have more just and sustainable societies. They are:

- **Climate Chaos:** The rampant overuse of the world’s water, forests, fisheries, and natural resources has the planet on the verge of ecological collapse and climate chaos. We must stop this madness, and we can.
- **Volatility:** Starting with President Reagan, the U.S. government and then the global institutions removed a lot of regulations and checks on hot money

running around the world seeking the highest return, no matter how risky the investment. In the name of short-term returns, finance markets were turned into casinos, but casinos without rules. We need new regulations on global financial markets

- **Obscene Inequality:** The gaps between rich and poor nations and rich and poor people within nations have been growing as corporations and billionaires reap enormous benefits from global trade and investment and the rest of us get the crumbs. The world’s 1,125 billionaires today have more combined wealth than that of the combined wealth of the poorest two-thirds of humanity. This is obscene. Again, there is a lot we can do to reverse these trends.
- **Excess Corporate Power:** The trade agreements of the 1990s included a terrible “investor-state” provision that allows corporations to sue governments when regulations threaten corporate profits. This needs to be undone. Likewise, rules that favor big agribusiness over small farmers must be fixed.
- **Workers Lose Everywhere:** Since corporations can now move anywhere in the world, they use this as leverage to bargain down wages and working conditions of workers in the United States and abroad.

All five crises are rooted in the same wrong-headed approach to the world’s problems that most nations have pursued. And all demand largely the same solution, namely rejecting the “free market” approach, and launching green economies that have strong global, national and local institutions to build healthy and more equitable societies. The good news is that a quarter century of failed market fundamentalism around the world has created a vibrant citizen backlash in each of these five areas.

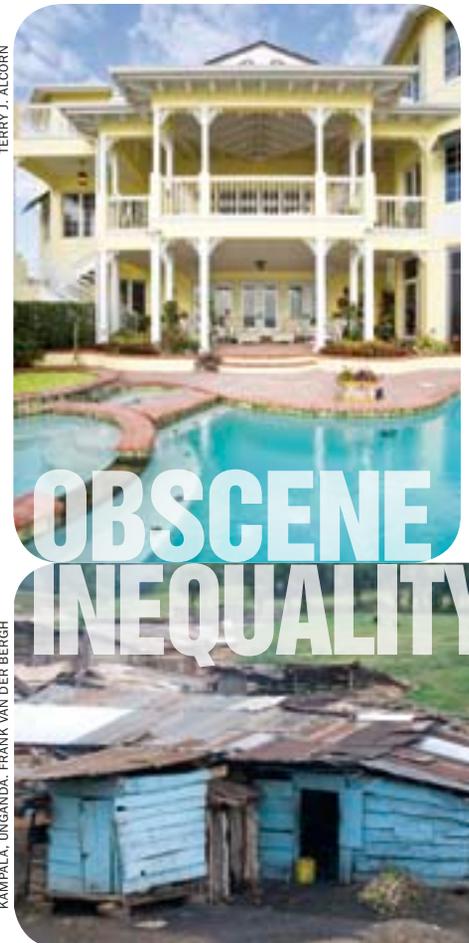
So, first a word on your allies in this fight, and then we’ll get into the agenda we are all fighting for. Crises almost always ignite human reaction. There is no exception here.

## Citizen Backlash

Of the five inter-related top crises, the one that has catalyzed the largest backlash in recent years is the climate

crisis. In the United States, the public has moved from denial to panic, joining the rest of the world in seeing this as a top priority. Alas, in the panic, too many are turning to false solutions such as biofuels (which are pushing up the price of food and use too much water), nuclear power (still too dangerous and expensive) and “clean coal” (it is still too dirty, especially for mining communities). Still, thousands of groups are coming together around the world to press for swift and effective solutions to the climate crisis (more on this later).

The rapid spread of the housing credit crisis to other financial markets has also engendered a passionate public cry for reform. The Bush Administration has largely responded by bailing out the big Wall Street investment houses. Citizen groups are clamoring for increased regulations on these firms and real relief for the victims of predatory lending. On inequality, worker rights, and excess corporate power, coalitions of labor, religious, and small business groups are coming together to press for change.



All of this reaction has led to an increasing rejection of market fundamentalism. This has been most pronounced in Latin America, where, to differing degrees, at least seven countries have elected candidates who promised a new direction: Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Uruguay, Argentina and Nicaragua.

Before we get into the new agenda, we should mention two developments that are quite unpredictable, both of which will have a big influence on the future. The first is that after two decades of extremely rapid growth, both China and India are increasingly shaping much of the direction of the global economy. Both have wisely chosen more of a hybrid approach to development, with governments steering economic growth

and selectively opening markets. Both, however, have also largely chosen the dirty fossil fuel route to growth, and both are becoming environmental disasters. China also continues to flagrantly violate basic human rights. How these two nations develop, with a third to two-fifths of the world's population between them, will have a huge impact on the future of the planet.

The second new development is that about a dozen governments, most of them in the developing world, have built up massive foreign exchange reserves (approaching \$3 trillion), mostly through exports of fossil fuels or manufactured goods to consumers in the United States and other richer countries. From Singapore to China to the United Arab Emirates, these governments now control huge funds, often called "sovereign wealth funds," that have started propping up ailing U.S. financial and other firms. Countries like China and Venezuela have also now become huge sources of financial aid to other developing nations. How this new economic power of formerly poor nations will affect the global landscape remains to be seen.

## The Vision

As the crisis of a quarter century of market fundamentalism grows, there are voices all over the globe calling for new restraints on global corporations and on markets. The most visionary voices in institutions like the International Forum on Globalization ([www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org)) are calling for fundamental change, including new models of development that put the environment first. After a quarter century of excess, of growth at any cost, of giving all the incentives to corporations, it is time to flip those priorities on their head. Building vibrant local economies should be at the center of what government does.

To save the planet and stimulate good green jobs, we should reorient economies so that we make as much locally as we can. Cities could be surrounded by organic green belts. Public transport could get the money that now goes to bloated militaries. In this world, there would be less trade and cross-border investment because more of what people need would be produced close to home,

where democratic control is also the strongest.

At the same time, we need to keep pressing for international protections for human rights and the environment everywhere. This is not only the right thing to do, it is also in the interest of average Americans since so many of the world's problems boomerang back to undermine workers and communities here. For the long-term, we should demand that the United Nations form the pillars of the global economy, with international trade and investment channeled to uphold the international rights and standards established by this multilateral body.

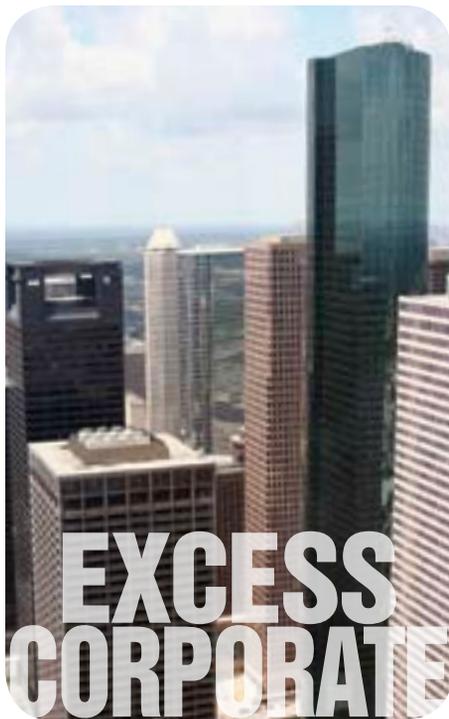
## Campaigns

In the short term, there are several vibrant campaigns that you can join to help us move toward the vision sketched out above.

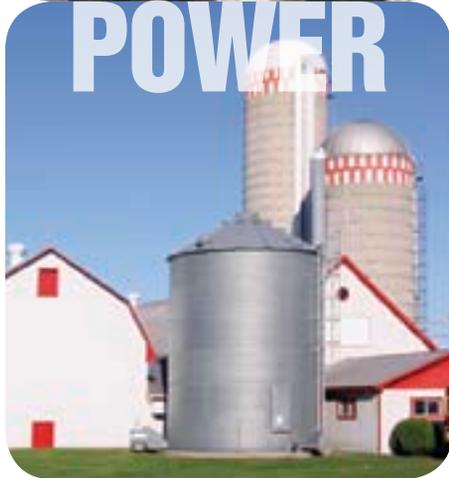
One of the most compelling and successful is one that many of you reading this piece have supported for years: the campaign for debt cancellation for the poorest nations. Under the banner of Jubilee, which draws from the biblical call to cancel debts on a periodic basis, millions of people around the world have pressed governments to cancel debts owed by impoverished countries. The call was joined a decade ago by Pope John Paul II and by rock stars like U-2's Bono, and governments began to respond. In 1996 and again in 2005, some countries were offered limited debt relief. In the United States, Jubilee campaigners have built strong momentum behind a Jubilee Act that would expand debt cancellation to more countries and remove onerous conditions (see [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)).

Another critical issue for the coming year was opened up by Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primary races of this year. Both critiqued the misplaced priorities of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and both pledged to renegotiate the deal if elected president. NETWORK members can join a vibrant coalition of labor, environmental, religious, family farm and other activists who have been calling for a new vision of North America where working people in Canada, the United States, and Mexico are offered a

HOUSTON, INCLUDING FORMER ENRON BUILDING. NITIN SANIL.



MARCEL PELLETIER





fair deal (see [www.art-us.org](http://www.art-us.org)). In addition to renegotiating NAFTA, it will be important to stop a proposed U.S.–Colombia Free Trade Agreement.

For this year and next, thousands of organizations around the world are focusing on the need for a new global framework to address what is arguably the most pressing crisis of our time: climate chaos. Last December, leaders of many of these groups converged on Bali, Indonesia, as government representatives met to discuss a new phase of the Kyoto Protocol to reduce emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases. Many of these citizen groups came together around the slogan: “Climate Justice NOW.” They are asserting that any viable new global climate rules must address the fact that the bulk of the problem rests in rich countries and among the richer populations in all countries, and hence these groupings should bear the brunt of adjustment costs. This campaign may be the one that best allows us to highlight the need for entirely different values to govern our societies, values that start with dignified work, healthy communities, and a clean environment. (For more on Climate Justice NOW, contact our IPS colleague Janet Redman: [janet@ips-dc.org](mailto:janet@ips-dc.org)).

All of these campaigns speak to the need for new global trade and finance organizations that are rooted in a greater sense of justice and sustainability. The outlines of such new institutions and rules have been put forward by a team

of researcher/activists from rich and poor countries under the auspices of the International Forum on Globalization (see John Cavanagh and Jerry Mander, eds., *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible* (Berret-Koehler, 2004)). As the effects of the U.S. mortgage crisis spread around the world, there are rising calls to create a much more rigorous and effective global financial architecture that protects borrowers as much as lenders.

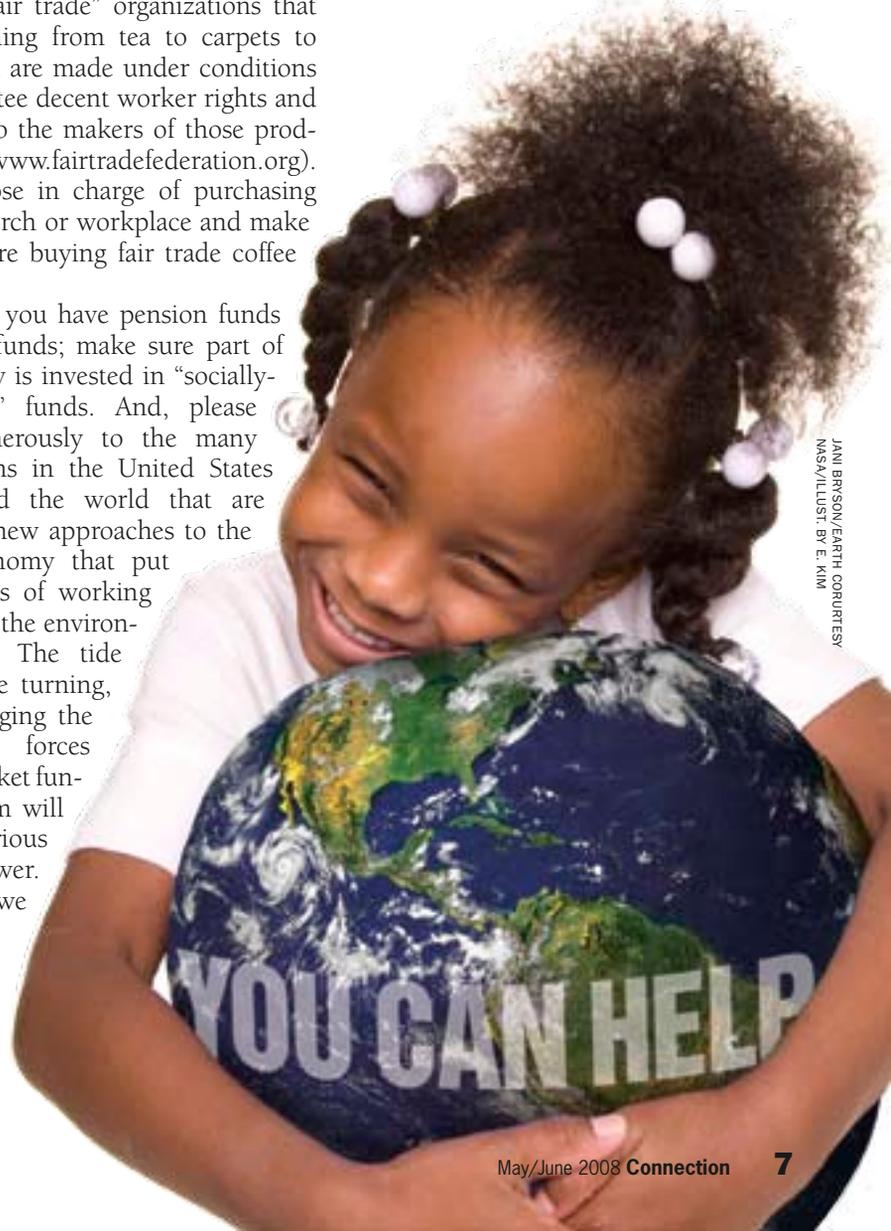
### What you can do: Local to Global

We urge you to engage in these campaigns as citizens. Today, we are all local, national and global citizens, and you have the choice to engage at any or all of these levels. There is also a lot you can do in your individual capacity. You are all consumers. Today, there is a vast range of “fair trade” organizations that sell everything from tea to carpets to t-shirts that are made under conditions that guarantee decent worker rights and standards to the makers of those products (see [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)). Talk to those in charge of purchasing in your church or workplace and make sure they are buying fair trade coffee and tea.

Many of you have pension funds or mutual funds; make sure part of your money is invested in “socially-responsible” funds. And, please donate generously to the many organizations in the United States and around the world that are advancing new approaches to the global economy that put the interests of working people and the environment first. The tide seems to be turning, but challenging the powerful forces behind market fundamentalism will require serious people power. Together, we can do it.



*John Cavanagh is the director of the Institute for Policy Studies, and Sarah Anderson directs the IPS Global Economy Project. Both are co-authors of Field Guide to the Global Economy (New Press, 2005), and Cavanagh is co-author (with Robin Broad) of the forthcoming Development Redefined: How the Market Met its Match (Paradigm Publishers, 2008). To order these books or to support IPS's work on the global economy, see: [www.ips-dc.org](http://www.ips-dc.org).*



JANI BRYSOV/EARTH COURTESY NASA/ILLUSTR. BY E. KIM

# Packed Agenda to Address Economic Downturn

BY MARGE CLARK, BVM, CATHERINE PINKERTON, CSJ, AND SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

As Members of Congress returned from Spring recess, they were again faced with a myriad of issues all competing for attention. In their districts, legislators had heard about the stark economic reality many families face, including increasing numbers of foreclosures and people experiencing unemployment. Knowing they had to do more to address the economic downturn, they also faced other major issues such as Iraq supplemental funding, the federal budget and the farm bill. As Congress takes up these many important issues, we need you to get back to work, advocating for just policies and right priorities.

## Colombia Free Trade Agreement

Many in Congress oppose the Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), knowing all too well Colombia's long history of violations of human and especially workers' rights. Since 1991, 2,283 trade unionists have been murdered, including 400 since 2002. Some proponents see labor provisions of the trade agreement as a vehicle for forcing Colombia to recognize the rights of workers to unionize, but

many, including the AFL-CIO, find them inadequate.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi implored the president not to send the Colombia FTA to Congress until Congress and the president met to discuss it. Despite her plea, the president sent the implementing language (H.R. 5742) to Congress on April 8, requiring a vote within 90 days, as mandated by the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) or "Fast Track." Speaker Pelosi responded by admonishing the president for his disregard of Congress and triggered a delay with an amendment to House rule (H. Res.1092), which temporarily halted consideration of Colombia FTA. The rules change was adopted by a largely party line vote of 224-195 on April 10.

NETWORK fully agrees that the Colombia FTA needs comprehensive rethinking.

NETWORK, in alliance with the Interfaith Working Group on International Trade and Investment, arranged meetings between Members of Congress and Elizabeth Garcia Carrillo, an Afro-Indigenous Colombian Lawyer. Ms. Carrillo vividly described to legislators how people who had farmed tracts of lands for hundreds of years were being forced to move as multinationals began occupation. Those who refused were subjected to abuse by Colombian paramilitary forces.

NETWORK will continue to oppose Colombia FTA when it comes to a vote, rejecting free trade in favor of fair trade.

## Farm Bill

As of mid-April, Congressional leaders and the Bush Administration had still not reached agreement on a House-Senate conference version of the farm bill (H.R. 2419). The administration is insisting that Congress not raise taxes to pay for additional farm bill spending. NETWORK and other advocates for fair food and farm policy are still looking for limits on subsidy payments and adequate funding for nutrition, conservation and rural development programs. Up-to-date information will appear on NETWORK's web site as things develop.

## Immigration

Debate continues on H.R. 4088, the SAVE Act, introduced by Representatives Health Schuler (D-NC) and Tom Tancredo (R-CO). The SAVE Act is a poorly constructed enforcement-only bill that would expand a faulty employer verification system, penalize humanitarian workers, detain innocent asylum seekers and immigrants, transform local police into immigration enforcement officers, and reduce federal revenue by \$17.3 billion while increase federal spending by nearly \$30 million. In November, a discharge petition was filed in an attempt to bypass the committee process and move the bill to a straight up-or-down floor vote. The petition has garnered 185 signatures, but remains short of the 218 needed to bring it to a vote. Speaker Pelosi has recently scheduled committee hearings in the House.

## Iraq

Congress is considering the "Iraq Supplemental" funding bill during the month of May. The bill includes funding for troops, but also for Iraqi development and services to displaced people. We at NETWORK are lobbying to ensure that

**Need up-to-date information about legislation in Congress? Check out NETWORK's Legislative Action Center at <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/bills/>. ★ To learn what happened to legislation you followed in the past, go to <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/votes/> and enter your zip code in the "Key Votes" field.**

*fore•clo•sure* (fôr-klôzhûr, fôr) *n.* The act of foreclosing, especially a legal proceeding by which a mortgage is foreclosed.  
*fore•court* (fôr-kôurt, fôr-kôurt) *n.* 1. A courtyard in front of a building.  
*fore•close* (fôr-klôz, fôr) *v. trans.* To foreclose.

true peacebuilding strategies are funded. We are seeking funding for: refugee services (including re-settlement in the United States); services to the internally displaced; extension of effective economic development programs; and national and regional peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives. Twenty-four hours of military expenditures could fund these programs for a year. Let's advocate for redirecting one day's worth of military spending to these programs.

**Housing**

In order to deal with the home foreclosure crisis, which many point to as an underlying cause of the economic downturn, the Senate passed H.R. 3221 by a vote of 84-12. It compensates builders, realtors, lenders and related businesses that lost money due to the burst of the housing bubble. Under their plan, tax incentives would be available to purchasers of foreclosed properties, producers of renewable energy, and some home owners. The House of Representatives continues work on a bill passed by the Ways and Means Committee, H.R. 5720, which would assist first-time home buyers and developers of housing for low-wage renters, and would place constraints on brokers. As the two chambers

conference to a single bill, legislators can build on their common allowance for tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds to support refinancing of some subprime loans.

NETWORK is disappointed that, in the bill, little attention is paid to the severe plight of low-income renters who are most susceptible to homelessness as multi-family dwellings face foreclosure. NETWORK and the National Low Income Housing Coalition continue to focus on advocating for the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NHTF), passed in October by the House, which still needs cosponsors in the Senate. This fund will provide for the construction and rehabilitation of properties for people with "extremely-low-income" (<30% of the area median income), the category of housing in which there is an absolute deficit. Passage of the NHTF would help low-income families and also provide work for builders, realtors and other businesses.

**Federal Budget FY 2009**

The House and the Senate have passed their respective budget resolutions. More time-critical economic issues have intervened to slow progress in the crafting of

a bicameral budget resolution. The Iraq Supplemental—perhaps to include domestic necessities and an "Economic Stimulus II"—demand attention before budget completion. Appropriations bills are unlikely to be presented before late May, although hearings are currently taking place.

**Economic Stimulus II**

NETWORK and coalition partners support a second stimulus package that includes initiatives previously proven to rapidly stimulate the economy. Such provisions would: extend and increase unemployment insurance (especially as joblessness increases); temporarily increase food stamp benefits (in addition to the long-term increase proposed through the farm bill); increase funding for nutrition programs such as WIC and emergency food (TEFAP) in response to rising food prices and rising need; help state and local governments with Medicaid and SCHIP expenditures; restore Child Support Enforcement funding to support single parents; increase LIHEAP funding to respond to the surge in home energy costs; and provide summer jobs for youth. These provisions put money directly into the hands of those who need it most, stimulating spending to jumpstart the economy rather than saving, which provides no stimulative effect. These measures also provide relief to those hit hardest by the economic downturn—low-income individuals and families—which helps them to live in dignity.

*Marge Clark, BVM, and Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, are NETWORK lobbyists. Simone Campbell, SSS, is NETWORK's Executive Director.*



Want timely information about key issues in Congress? NETWORK members can sign up for our weekly email legislative hotline. Send your name, zip code and email address to [jsammon@networklobby.org](mailto:jsammon@networklobby.org).

# COTTON FARMING IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

BY KANIBONNON ETIENNE TUO

I was born in 1979 in Korhogo, a town and department in the mountainous north-central region of Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast). Ninety percent of the people there are farmers, and the area produces and/or processes cotton, rice, millet, peanuts, corn, yams, sheep, goats and diamonds, with cotton as the most common crop. Korhogo is said to have been founded by Nangui, a 14th-century Senoufo patriarch, and is still the capital of the Senoufo people.

I have two sisters, one older (Mariam) and one younger (Assetou). We were a family of farmers, and I have owned a cotton farm myself. Our village was a very fun place. Growing up, I never experienced famine, never knew of it. My grandfather had a big farm where the whole family would spend the day working. It was fun despite the work. At the end of the year, we would have enough food not only for the current year, but also for the next year.

At that time, few people grew cotton. In truth, I didn't see how cotton could help someone make a living. My grandfather, one of the wealthier people in the village, made a good living from rice, yams, corn and peanuts. He was even able to sell enough to pay for my uncles' tuitions, which were relatively cheap.

Cotton, in the early 1970s, was sold to local weavers and the "Compagnie Ivoirienne de Développement des Textiles" (CIDT), which was run by the Ivorian government. The chemicals used to treat the cotton plants were provided by the government at no cost. I believe that was just a way to encourage more people toward cotton production. Cotton suddenly became the crop of choice of most farmers.

Cotton farmers were then seen as wealthy. It didn't require much work to grow one or two hectares of cotton, and farmers could make a \$2,000 profit each season, enough money for a household for a year. As most people became cotton farmers, they turned away from producing foods that Senoufo families traditionally ate (rice, yams, corn, and peanuts).

During the 1990s, some people had more than 20 hectares of cotton fields.



*Lotchanga Yeo cleans cotton so it can sell at a higher price, as babies delight in its softness.*

Those with more land could make a profit of approximately \$20,000 yearly.

From a certain perspective, the cotton farmers were very wealthy people, but I wouldn't see them as wealthy. This is because cultivating so much land requires a household of at least 10 people as all cultivation is done by hand or with cows. For example, my uncle had nine wives and each of them had at least six children. He cultivated over 20 hectares of cotton, but had to provide for his extremely large household with the profits from this single crop.

During the 1990s, very few people cared about growing rice, corn and other staple foods. For a while, the cotton farmers were doing well.

I remember that we called 2000 the year of new evolution and new mentalities. But in fact, cotton farmers started having problems before 2000. Some-

times they were forced to sell their cotton on credit, and then two or three months later the CIDT would pay them. Since the farmers devoted most of their land to cotton cultivation, it was difficult to feed their families when forced to wait several months for payment. There were many complaints.

The government promised that changes would be made in 2000. Nobody knew what they would be, but we were hopeful that they would be positive. Unfortunately, and surprisingly, the government privatized the cotton industry, and private investors started buying the cotton from the farmers. Ever since, the price of cotton has dropped dramatically (from approximately \$1 per kilogram to approximately \$.30 per kilogram) and has never been stable. In addition, products that are used to grow cotton (chemicals and fertilizers) became more expensive

so farmers couldn't afford to take good care of their farms. Obviously, production dropped.

This situation had a major impact on our lives. The biggest effect was on students whose parents were cotton farmers. Some had to miss school for months, or even leave a year or two and then return when they had the necessary funds. Fifty percent dropped out of school permanently.

In order to provide for their children's education, cotton farmers sometimes had only one option—they had to sell chemicals they had purchased to treat their fields. When pressed, a cotton producer would resell fertilizer purchased at the beginning of a season for a lower price later in the season.

During this same time, Côte d'Ivoire was undergoing political upheavals. In 1999, Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim northerner, announced he would challenge President Henri Konan Bedie, who had been elected in a flawed election. Before the election, Bedie was deposed in a coup by another southerner, General Robert Guei. Guei had Ouattara barred from the election, and this split the country into northern and southern factions along religious and ethnic lines. Guei then dismissed the elections and declared himself the winner. He was soon deposed in an uprising and replaced by Laurent Gbagbo. Under Gbagbo, northern Muslims felt increasingly discriminated against and excluded.

Political and economic tensions boiled over in 2002, and our country was thrown into civil war. I was buying and reselling fertilizers from cotton farmers when the war began and the school year was interrupted. I would buy fertilizers from farmers at \$10 a bag or less depending on how far they lived from the city. The next season, I resold these same fertilizers to the cotton-growers for a small profit, but always at a lower price than the cotton companies.

*Author (third from left) cultivates cotton in 2002 with nephew Sibirina Tuo (to his left), Magnigui and Donikan Yeo.*



In 2002, in the midst of the crisis, cotton companies lost millions of dollars of investments in future cotton crops. Farmers were forced to sell many tons of cotton in neighboring countries for cash, but for sub-market prices. They sold 218,000 tons in Mali and in Burkina Faso for approximately \$200 per ton. Farmers who sold their cotton to companies in Côte d'Ivoire were promised twice the price, but to date, many have still not received payment for the 2002 crop.

I believe one of the main factors that united northern inhabitants of my country in the rebellion was that cotton farmers were tired of lack of support from the government. I believe that at least 85% of the rebels were cotton farmers. I was lucky in that my now wife Brianna Fischer (from Minnesota) supported me, so I didn't have to be a rebel too. In 2002, when the war started in Côte d'Ivoire, being a rebel was seen as an admired profession. Many people who were tired of growing cotton and receiving late, low payments became rebels.

Currently, the same 20 hectares of cotton that produced a profit of \$20,000 in the 1990s produces less than \$9,000. This is due to several factors. Soil quality has decreased drastically because of over-cultivation, and cotton prices have fallen drastically since the cotton industry was privatized in early 2000. Political instability in Côte d'Ivoire since 2002 has also

negatively impacted the cotton market.



*Kanibonnon Etienne Tuo currently lives in Washington, DC, where he works for a bank. Photos by Brianna Fischer, 2002.*

*Author's cousin (Karime Silue, second from left) and nephew (Adama Tuo, third from left) work with Foughnigetenin and Pierguedenin Tuo in the cotton fields.*

### COTTON: A LOCAL CROP BUFFETED IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY

During French colonial rule of Côte d'Ivoire, the *Compagnie Française de Développement Textile* (CFDT) controlled all aspects of cotton production. When colonial rule ended, the CFDT was dissolved into national companies—including the *Compagnie Ivoirienne de Développement Textile* (CIDT)—and colonial policies encouraging cotton production were largely continued. Besides providing farmers with chemicals and seeds, the CIDT acted as the sole purchaser for all cotton, setting the prices farmers received. Under CIDT oversight, cotton exports rose from 7,000 tons in 1970 to a peak of 160,000 tons in 1999. This increase was concentrated in northern Côte d'Ivoire, as the south was suited for more profitable crops like cocoa and coffee.

In the early 1990s, the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) and World Bank encouraged the Ivorian government to liberalize its cotton market and reform CIDT's price setting to reflect global prices. In 1998, the CIDT began a two-year period of privatization and liberalization, dividing into three competing companies. During this period, the international price of cotton collapsed—decreasing 55% in real terms between 1999 and 2003 because of global overproduction, a shift toward synthetic alternatives, and high cotton supports in major producing countries.

# Journeys to Understanding

BY JON GROMEK

“Why would you want to go all the way to Mexico to help people?” exclaimed my cousin and activist compatriot, half incredulously and half in jest, as I packed for a service-learning trip to the small border town of Agua Prieta, Mexico. “We have plenty of Mexicans right here!” I laughed a little and then replied that I was going to listen and learn in order to raise awareness back home.

But deep down, I agreed at least a bit with her sentiment. Growing up in the Cleveland area, I knew that the city had its own share of injustice. Not enough people stayed to address these issues and work for solutions. I understood the responsibility to address the needs of those in your immediate community. While I wasn’t indifferent to my cousin’s perspective, I knew that something called me to travel to places that would, in the end, explain why I went.

At the U.S.—Mexico border, I witnessed two stark realities across an arbitrary line—the incongruity of a developed, economically vibrant, brightly lit U.S. side next to the rough road and darkness of the Mexican side. While in Mexico, my group visited the barrios and spoke with families who lived in shacks made of cardboard, corrugated metal sheets and plywood; with dirt floors and no plumbing or running water. I realized that these people needed basics, such as work, shelter, food and clothing, that we take for granted every day. An arbitrary

line was all that separated one country known for wealth and power and this other with such poverty. I looked at the giant fence that separated us from impoverished people of the barrios, and it seemed so extreme—barbed wire and armed guards—for two countries at peace.

One year later, I found myself crossing the border once more as I traveled to El Salvador. During our time there, my delegation and I met with community leaders, economists, nurses, doctors and politicians.

All the conversations were informative, but what affected me the most was the time I spent living with a family in the small, poor village of Copapayo. During many conversations with my Salvadoran mother, she told me of her daughter in the U.S., working hard to make money and send it back so their family could eek out a living. I asked where she was living and was amazed to find that she lived in Silver Spring, Maryland, not 10 miles from where I would be living in Washington, DC.

The experience became suddenly so much more real, as if the tugging at my heartstrings I felt as I witnessed the pain, joy, suffering, and laughter of the Salvadorans I met was following me back. (I also unknowingly ended up moving near a Salvadoran neighborhood in

Washington!) What I learned on those two trips was the simple lesson that in today’s ever-shrinking world, we cannot separate ourselves from those across an ocean or a border any more than we can from our neighbor across the street. The notion that we can wall ourselves off from the world fails to acknowledge the spiritual and human connection we all share. Our faith reminds us that both our divinity and freedom are inherently entwined; the struggle of others, our struggle. To care, to act, and to love is our only possible response.

Why would I want to go all the way to Mexico? Why would I continue to work for justice and peace both here and abroad? What other choice would I have? The struggle of our global brothers and sisters is our struggle, too.



ABOVE: Author with his Salvadoran family., BELOW: Fence between Agua Prieta, Mexico, and Douglas, Arizona.



Jon Gromek is NETWORK’s Field Associate. Photos courtesy of the author.

# Our Faith Calls Us to Global Justice-making

Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that “if you want peace, work for justice.” The Gospel calls us to be “peacemakers.” Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we be “sentinels of peace” in a world wounded by violence and conflict. —USCCB Administrative Committee, *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*, p. 15

## Think global...

There is no doubt that our current reality is global. From what we wear to what we eat, to whomever we elect in November—individual choices impact our global reality and the global reality shapes our individual lives.

The world is no longer a vast entity to wrap our minds around in daydreams of travel; our world is a single community.

“**Think global, act local**” is a notion referenced quite often in social justice work. It emphasizes the need to envision the world before we act as individuals. It also proposes that we can change the world through our individual choices and actions.

While not always easy, thinking globally is becoming increasingly vital in this interconnected world. Fortunately, there is an enormous array of resources available to help us—ranging from websites to movements. Below is a list of just a few—a good place to start:

- Institute for Policy Studies [www.ips-dc.org](http://www.ips-dc.org)
- Alliance for Responsible Trade [www.art-us.org](http://www.art-us.org)
- International Forum on Globalization [www.ifg.org](http://www.ifg.org)
- Jubilee USA Network [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)
- American Friends Service Committee [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)
- Office of International Justice and Peace,  
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
[www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/)
- Fair Trade Federation [www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)
- Greenpeace [www.greenpeace.org/usa](http://www.greenpeace.org/usa)
- Catholic Relief Services <http://crs.org>
- Center of Concern [www.coc.org](http://www.coc.org)
- ...and, of course, NETWORK [www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)

Written by NETWORK Lobby Associate Kate Byrne

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# Now Act!

There is so much that needs to be done if this is to be a world of justice. But, where to start? Here are just a few ideas that will help you deepen your and others' understanding of our world community and then to transform your knowledge into action. They are based, in part, on *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Better World Is Possible* (edited by John Cavanagh and Jerry Mander, Barrett-Koehler, 2004).

- Participate in international exchanges. Organizations like Global Exchange ([www.globalexchange.org](http://www.globalexchange.org)) and Witness for Peace ([www.witnessforpeace.org](http://www.witnessforpeace.org)) provide opportunities for you to travel to other parts of the world in order to better understand their economic and social realities.
- Organize forums to educate people about the World Bank ([www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org)), International Monetary Fund (IMF) ([www.imf.org](http://www.imf.org)) and World Trade Organization (WTO) ([www.wto.org](http://www.wto.org)) for a better understanding of how their policies affect the global community.
- Be an informed consumer. Co-op America ([www.coopamerica.org](http://www.coopamerica.org)) and The Green Guide ([www.thegreenguide.com](http://www.thegreenguide.com)) are two sources of information about “green,” justly manufactured products, while organizations such as the Fair Trade Federation ([www.fairtradefederation.org](http://www.fairtradefederation.org)) help promote a “just and fair economic system.” Encourage your church and workplace to support fair trade.
- Learn more about the tragedy of world hunger—and take action. Go to  
[www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org)  
[www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/February08/Features/RisingFood.htm](http://www.ers.usda.gov/AmberWaves/February08/Features/RisingFood.htm)  
[www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-346-W.pdf](http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/ID/ID-346-W.pdf)  
[www.worldhunger.org/index.html](http://www.worldhunger.org/index.html)
- Work to ensure that your pension funds or mutual funds are invested in socially-responsible ways.
- Become a citizen activist. Keep up with legislative activities by joining organizations like NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby ([www.networklobby.org](http://www.networklobby.org)), and lobbying your elected officials to act for justice. And inspire others to do the same!
- Research and join organizations working in other ways for social justice, human rights and ecological sustainability—or start your own!

Many political issues have important moral dimensions that must be considered. Practicing global solidarity addresses overcoming hunger and global poverty, reducing debt and promoting development, responding to the needs of immigrants and refugees, pursuing peace, and reducing regional conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world.

—United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Faithful Citizenship*

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# Global Security in 3D

BY JEAN SAMMON

The U.S. military is a fearsome power to most people in the world, but it can also be an ally to those of us who advocate for peace. Military people understand conflict even as they understand what it takes to win the peace. They understand this better than many Members of Congress.

This revelation came to me when I heard Lisa Schirch talk about security at this year's Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) conference in Washington. She is an expert on what it takes to prevent violence and build a more secure world. A professor of peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University and the Director of the 3D Security Initiative, she has worked with organizations and government leaders in Iraq, other Middle Eastern countries, and African nations. She also worked with U.S. leaders in Congress and the Departments of State and Defense.

The theme of the EAD conference was "Claiming a vision of true security." Lisa, the keynote speaker, showed us how to achieve true security by using a "3D" image, made up of:

**Development** of schools, healthcare facilities, wells for clean water, financing for small business, and training for community leaders—This is needed to build stable societies and give people hope.

**Diplomacy**, not just among political diplomats but also among business, religious and civil society leaders—This can prevent violence by giving people the respect and dignity that all want and deserve.

**Defense**—this is needed when insufficient attention has been paid to development and diplomacy to prevent wars and civil unrest. We need to re-imagine "defense" so that strategies include civil-military dialogue on stabilization, reconstruction, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and we must make sure that our military is trained in peacekeeping skills.

Recognizing that causes of violence are despair, hopelessness and humiliation, Lisa presented a peacebuilding

strategy that would address despair and hopelessness through economic and social programs (Development), while countering humiliation with respect (Diplomacy). Military force (Defense) would be a last resort.

My own revelation about how military members understand this 3D strategy came after Lisa suggested we look at the U.S. Army's Counterinsurgency Manual to see the evolution in thinking by some military leaders. I did, and found statements like, "Political, social, and economic programs are usually more valuable than conventional military operations in addressing the root causes of conflict and undermining an insurgency." (You can find this manual at [www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf](http://www.fas.org/irp/doddir/army/fm3-24.pdf).)



Lisa Schirch.

RICK REINHARD

## Visualizing True Security

Lisa presented the 3D image of security as a pyramid where development is the foundation and diplomacy builds on that foundation. Defense would ideally be the smallest part of the security structure since development and diplomacy are much more cost-effective ways of building security and peace.

If our U.S. federal budget priorities were aligned with this vision of security, we would be spending the majority of our security budget on development and diplomacy. But this is not the case. Our current national security budget, which includes the Departments of Defense, State and Homeland Security, allocates about 4% for diplomacy and development, about 6% for homeland security, and the other 90% to the Pentagon and nuclear weapons. What would it take to turn this around?

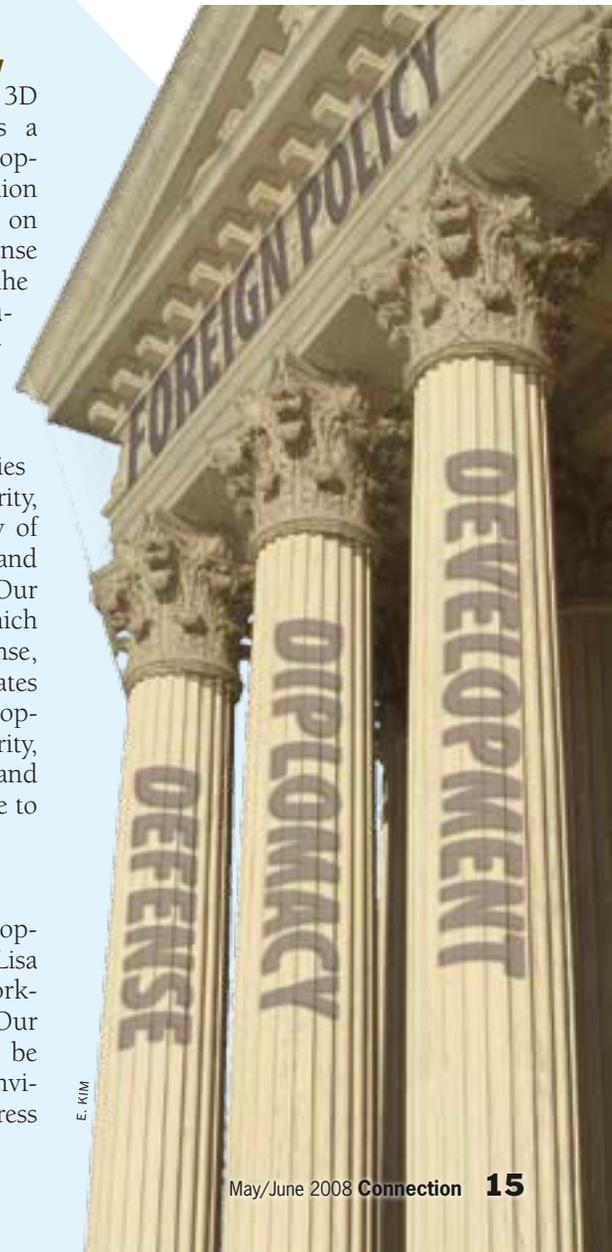
## It's Time to Act

"Security doesn't land in a helicopter; it is built from the ground up." Lisa learned this from Iraqis who are working to reconstruct their country. Our concept of national security must be expanded to include human and environmental security in order to address

global problems such as climate change, disease and immigration. This will challenge all of us to be diplomats, reaching out beyond the boundaries of our usual allies and learning to love our enemies. It will also challenge us to develop sustainable lifestyles, sharing what we have and working together to achieve genuine security for all life on our planet.

Let's get started. Learn more about 3D Security at [www.3Dsecurity.org](http://www.3Dsecurity.org). Join us as we create a new vision of security for our country during this critical election year, and as we challenge ourselves and our elected leaders to achieve that vision.

Jean Sammon is NETWORK's Field Coordinator.



E. KIM

Make Plans Now to Attend

# The Convention for the Common Good

July 11-13, 2008 Philadelphia



Location: Sheraton Philadelphia City Center Hotel, 17th and Race Streets, Philadelphia PA. Convention registration is \$175 *before June 10*, and \$225 thereafter. A limited number of low-income rates at \$50 are available. Hotel rooms available at the special convention rate of \$169 plus tax, double occupancy, per night.

**REGISTER ONLINE AT**  
[www.commongoodconvention.org](http://www.commongoodconvention.org)

or call 1-800-266-0866. Or complete and mail form below to address noted. Learn more at the website above, or contact Tom O'Neill: [toneill@catholicsinalliance.org](mailto:toneill@catholicsinalliance.org) or 202-429-9685.

### Registration Form

Prefix (ex., Ms., Dr., Sr., Fr., Mr.)

Name(s)

Name(s) to appear on name tag(s)

Address - Street

Address - City, State, Zip code

Phone number

Email address

Organization

Occupation:  Church  Government  Nonprofit  
 For-profit  Student  Education  Other

Number of people delegate represents\*:  
 0  1-5  6-10  10+

Have you attended a Platform Process discussion?\*

Yes  No  
 I/We want to register for the Convention  
*Registration fees described in top paragraph.*

Total payment

Check enclosed (Make check to Convention for the Common Good)

Credit Card information:  Visa  Mastercard  AmEx  
Card Number

Name on Card

Exp. Date      Signature

Security code (Last 3 numbers on back of credit card)

To make hotel reservations, call 1-800-266-0866  
Mail this form (with payment) to Nix & Associates, Inc.,  
7219 Manchester Rd., St. Louis, MO 63143  
Attn: NETWORK Registrar

\*For more information, see [www.commongoodconvention.org](http://www.commongoodconvention.org)

**OUR GOAL:** to move politics beyond selfishness and division to the common good.

### HOW?

By bringing people together to engage with elected officials, religious leaders, and each other to focus on how our government can best serve the needs of every member of society. We will ratify a **Platform for the Common Good** based on the real-world concerns of people around our nation, and present this to both parties for incorporation into their 2008 platforms and beyond.



Prior to the Convention, groups will meet around the country to discuss what should go into the Platform for the Common Good. Anyone can form a group—or join a local group already planning to meet—please see [www.commongoodconvention.org](http://www.commongoodconvention.org) to find out how to engage in this process.

After the Convention, we will ask the presidential candidates to sign on to our platform principles—and then make sure that our elected leaders follow through.

### Conveners:



Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good



NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

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