

PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC ADVOCACY

Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Introduction

The *Principles for Public Advocacy* of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches contains the underlying principles for the Council's advocacy ministry. Because the Council's advocacy efforts often extend beyond those directed solely at federal or state legislators, these principles reflect a broader view of our responsibility to be faithful advocates, recognizing the call for all Christians to engage in faithful witness in all aspects of public life.

This document has traditionally been produced on a biennial basis. In the past, it was a document that provided both principles and a list of policy positions supported by the Council. In the 2003-2004 biennium, for the first time both the principles and policy positions were organized around the Biblical concepts of justice (economic, social, civil, environmental, and criminal) and shalom (health, wholeness, and peacemaking), and the document also contained printed reference to the denominational positions of the 43 member bodies of the Council. This way of organizing has worked well, and it is where the writing team started in formulating this document.

In the course of discussing how to present these this document, the writing team noted that the principles themselves, because they are based on Biblical concepts supported by member denominational positions, are not likely to require substantial updates for every biennium/legislative session. It is the policy positions and legislative priorities that are in need of change biennially as new legislation and policies are proposed and enacted, or as conditions (the economy, for example) change at the local, state, federal, and global levels. To that end, the writing team has elected to produce this latest *Principles for Public Advocacy* as a more permanent document, open to revision as necessary, but not necessarily on a biennial basis. Policy statements/position papers and priority issues for the biennium will be presented separately, beginning with the 2005-2006 biennium.

The policy positions continue to be derived from the principles presented in this document. They are designed, along with the *Principles*, to inform the Council's advocacy efforts, but not to cast specific efforts in stone; issues and priorities do not remain static during the course of a legislative session, and neither should the Council's advocacy efforts. This new presentation of the *Principles* with separate policy statements and a biennial statement of priorities provides additional flexibility to respond as advocacy needs arise.

A writing team comprised of the following persons wrote the first draft of the *Principles*:

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- The Rev. Richard Guhl, Penn Northeast Conference, United Church of Christ
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- The Rev. Gary L. Harke, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Council of Churches
- The Rev. Sandra L. Strauss, Director of Public Advocacy, Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Several drafts of the document were read by the members of the Council's Public Advocacy Action Team and the Steering Committee prior to two readings by and final approval by the Council's Governing Board.

Purpose

It is the aim of the Governing Board and all who took part in crafting the *Principles* that they serve the following purposes:

- To provide principles that reflect the principles and policy positions of the member bodies of the Council, where those bodies are in agreement, and thus witness to those bodies' unity in Christ;
- To serve those member church bodies by providing a compilation of the Council's principles, with references indicating principles held in common;
- To provide the basis for the Council's policy positions and priorities for public advocacy; and
- To inform policy-makers concerning the principles that guide the Council's advocacy efforts.

Suggestions for use

For the 43 member bodies of the Council, here are some suggestions for use:

- Use this resource as the basis for adult classes.
- Place the document in the church or judicatory library for reference.
- Use the document at annual conferences as part of a workshop on ecumenical activity.
- Use the document as a guide for advocacy efforts by individuals, congregations, member church bodies, and other groups of concerned persons.
- Prepare groups of citizen advocates for legislative visits through study and analysis of particular topics.
- Review particular policy positions related to legislation and analyze the implications for action within the member church bodies.

Part I: Principles for Public Advocacy

Principles for Public Advocacy describes the values that the Pennsylvania Council of Churches' 43 member bodies believe should govern legislators' decisions. The *Principles* are organized around the Biblical concepts of justice and shalom, presented under the major categories of wholeness, health, reconciliation/peace, economic justice, social justice, civil justice, environmental justice, and criminal justice. Specific policy statements of the Council, along with priorities for legislative advocacy, are contained in separate documents that are revised on, at minimum, a biennial basis; the positions are derived from these deeply held principles. Together, the *Principles* and policy positions constitute the total current policy statements of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches. Part II of this document lists the church body and communion documents cited in the footnotes.

Preamble

The Pennsylvania Council of Churches envisions a Commonwealth characterized by a profound sense of justice and shalom in human relationships and social structures at all levels of society. Such justice is rooted in God's commandments to ancient Israel, in Jesus' teachings, and in the witness and life of the church throughout its history. Just as Scripture bears witness to a vision of justice on earth, so too Scripture shows us God's shalom, God's loving-kindness toward all Creation. This loving-kindness leads to a vision of wholeness, health, and reconciliation/peace in relationships and systems.¹

Life in a Commonwealth characterized by justice and shalom would be drastically different for most Pennsylvanians. While we acknowledge that it may not ever come to fruition, the Council supports a vision for a just Commonwealth that encompasses the principles contained in this document, presented as follows: All persons would receive respect, regardless of their place in society.

All would have a voice in government at all levels, and access would not be limited because of situational factors such as lack of wealth or distance, or demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, or religious affiliation. All would have everything they need—living wage jobs, and adequate health care, housing, food, and education. No one would be discriminated against because of the color or his or her skin, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or economic status. All who are unable to work or care for themselves for reasons of health, disability, or economic climate—whether permanent or temporary—would receive adequate care and support. All who have run afoul of societal rules

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8 (NRSV)

¹AME Econ., "Operating Principles"

AME Profile & Beliefs, section on "Beliefs of the Group," paragraph on teaching and preaching

Am. Bapts. Human Rights, "Biblical Basis," "Personal Rights and Social Rights," and the list of rights affirmed

NBCA "About," entire document

Prog. civil rights, entire document

CME barriers overcome, entire section

COB nonviolence, "Some Principles"

Epis. social policies, General topics under "Economic and Social Justice"

Friends policy, "Mission Statement"

ELCA church in society, I) Affirmations, part D, "The Church's Response in Society," paragraphs 1 & 2

ELCA economic, "The Church Confesses," paragraph 4

Mor. poverty, entire document

OCA affirmations, "Abuse in Family and Society," paragraphs 1 & 7 and "The Mystery of Marriage," paragraph 1 under affirmations & admonitions

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1954, PCUSA, on a prophetic function; and statement of 1966, PCUS, on the "Theological Basis for Christian Social Action"

UCC econ life, entire document

UM principles, #162, "The Social Community," paragraph 1

will be treated with dignity, with an eye toward rehabilitation and restoration. Governments, government institutions, businesses, and all other organizations and institutions would follow through on promises; government would protect civil liberties for all and take seriously its responsibility to work for the common good, and businesses and other organizations and institutions would treat employees fairly and contribute appropriately to our society. All would work to protect and sustain the environment, protecting the integrity of God's Creation.

This vision of justice and shalom for all Pennsylvanians, embodied in the *Principles*, is what provides the Pennsylvania Council of Churches with the impetus to engage in advocacy efforts on behalf of its member bodies and all Pennsylvanians. The Council believes that these principles will provide guidance for Council staff, member bodies, and individuals in establishing advocacy goals and priorities, and food for thought for those who represent citizens of the Commonwealth in each branch of government at both the state and federal levels—executive, legislative, and judicial.

There are eight particular areas of justice and shalom that the Council believes are crucial to the achievement of a just Commonwealth that reflects the loving-kindness God intends for creation: wholeness, health, reconciliation/peace, economic justice, social justice, civil justice, environmental justice, and criminal justice. Shalom, a Hebrew word typically defined as “peace,” actually represents a much broader meaning, encompassing well-being, health, prosperity, soundness, completeness, and wholeness. Theologian Cornelius Plantinga, Jr. defines sin as “the vandalism of shalom.” Justice reflects God's character—that which builds peace, pursues truth, shapes community, upholds right, and delivers the oppressed. Principles that apply within each of these areas are presented below, along with some examples of specific advocacy positions and efforts undertaken in the past.

Wholeness

Wholeness is achieved when persons know themselves to be worthy of respect simply because they are, each one, made in the image of God.

We experience wholeness in society when:

- the value of human beings is not based upon their monetary worth or power of position, upon their abilities or disabilities, upon their demographic characteristics, gender, culture, language, or sexual orientation, but rather upon their being part of the human family
- every child is nurtured and educated because each child is recognized as precious
- its most vulnerable citizens—the young, the old, the poor, the mentally or physically fragile are not penalized or made to suffer, but rather have access to all that helps create a decent life: adequate health care, housing, food, education, and nurture.²

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness”...So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26a, 27 (NRSV)

²*Am. Bapts. Power*, p. 2 or 3

Epis. social policies, GC 2003, resolution D040, Invest in housing for the poor

NBCA social justice, first paragraph of document

Discs. criminal justice, in the first 20 points, point 9 on “Teach the sanctity of life and sense of self worth.”

COB nonviolence, “Some principles,” p. 4

ELCA economic, Section “For all: especially those living in poverty,” pp. 2-5

UM principles, paragraph 161, “The Nurturing Family,” p. 9; paragraph 162, section III on “The Social Community,” p. 19

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Wholeness

The Council supports:

- legislation that ensures adequate housing, nutrition, and health care
- adequate income and provision of support services for persons with mental and/or physical challenges, regardless of cause of the disability.

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- opposition to legislation that reduces impediments for utilities to shut off customers, permitting shutoffs in winter months.

Health

Our understanding of health comes from our belief that Christ is the great physician, for he “came that we might have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10, NRSV).

Health means more than physical well-being. A Commonwealth that fosters healthy persons and communities exhibits high regard for those who are physically and mentally ill as well as those who are physically and mentally well. A healthy society does not promote activities that lead to addictions.

Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 (NRSV)

In a healthy society, the well-being of all is a priority. Healthy persons and communities grow and flourish when society creates an environment that ensures that all have what they need to sustain them throughout every age and stage of life. There is adequate education to prepare individuals to live healthy lives and contribute to the health of society. Wages are adequate to provide a reasonable means of subsistence, and those who are unable to work receive what they need to sustain a healthy life. Given the importance of healing in the Biblical tradition, we affirm that all persons must have access to adequate and affordable health care,³ and not be forced to choose between health care and other necessary goods and services, such as food, shelter, and transportation.⁴

³*Epis. social policies*, GC of 1991, about universal access; GC of 1995, about health care being a component of welfare reform

Friends policy, Part III, section 2, subsection on “Healthcare”

ELCA health, under Introduction, “The Church and the Health Care Crisis,” and under A Vision of Health Care and Healing as a Shared Endeavor, “Toward a Better System of Health Care Services,” Equitable Access to Health Care for All

OCA affirmations, subsection on “Sickness, suffering and death,” bullet point 3

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1988 PC(USA), pp. 524-525 and 529-530; statement of 1991 PC(USA), pp. 810-811

UCC health, entire document

⁴*Epis. social policies*, General topics under “health care coverage,” “universal coverage,” and “comprehensive medical care”; GC

2003, resolution C036, Spirituality of food production; GC 2003, resolution A02, Broadening HIV prevention methods

OCA affirmations, On efforts to heal the sick and on adequate health care, p. 23

Presbys. social witness, 1997 statement, PC(USA), p. 65

UCC briefings, Health Care Access Resolution, p. 51

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Health

The Council:

- affirms that government must ensure that all people have access to adequate health care
- encourages legislation that makes more treatment options available for addicts

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- opposition to changes in Medicaid that would drastically reduce availability of benefits to those who need it
- support and promotion of the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- opposition to gambling expansion

Reconciliation/Peace

Peace and reconciliation between persons and within the systems of society are both matters of faith and the result of human beings’ partnership with God in God’s work throughout the world. Scripture gives a vision of a world at peace in numerous places; brokenness and sinfulness are not the final words for humankind. God is constantly at work healing the brokenness that exists in individual lives, in families, communities, congregations, political processes and systems and in the environment around us.

Peacemaking is the appropriate human response to the divine gift of peace, wholeness and reconciliation.⁵ God calls us to reconciliation: between individuals, within families and communities, and among nations. When faced with conflict and brokenness, our first response is to seek a peaceful solution that ensures the health and safety of all involved.

He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 2:4 (NRSV)

There will never be peace on earth as long as there is injustice. Biblical witness affirms over and over that those who are committed to peace need to work for justice for all of God’s people. Peace and justice are integral to faithfulness.⁶

⁵*COB nonviolence*, “Peace with Justice,” p. 8 and “Closing Statement,” p. 11

Epis. social policy, GC 2003, resolution C031, Waging reconciliation

Friends polity, Part I, Section 1

ELCA peace, entire document

G.O. violence, section on “Reconciliation”

Mor. peace and justice, 1951 Provincial Synod statement, p. 3

Presbys. social witness, “On War, Peace and Conscience,” subsection on Peacemaking, pp. 137-151; 1983 Statement (PC(USA)), p. 438

UCC briefings, “Peacemaking,” section on “A Just Peace,” p. 25 ff

⁶*Friends policy*, Part I, section 1

ELCA peace, section 5, subsection B, “An Economy with Justice”

G.O. violence, section on “Embracing the Other”

Presbys. social witness, 1982 Statement, UPCUSA, p. 78

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Reconciliation/Peace

The Council:

- supports legislation that protects families from violence
- strives to make peace between hostile groups

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- endorsement of the SMART (Sensible Multilateral American Response to Terrorism) Security platform promoted by Physicians for Social Responsibility
- support of the governor's agenda to bring Pennsylvania into compliance with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA)

Economic Justice

Economic justice is rooted in our awareness of abundance—abundance visible in creation and testified to by scripture. Beginning with a presupposition of abundance frees us to live in generosity, recognizing that there is enough for all. God's riches are not to be stored up selfishly in barns of our own building, but are rather to be shared generously by all. Since we are freed from the fear that we need to accumulate, we are also freed to affirm "enough" is sufficient for our needs and best for healthy human life and society.⁷

**Look at the birds of the air;
they neither sow nor reap nor
gather into barns, and yet your
heavenly Father feeds them.
Are you not of more value than
they?**

Matthew 6:26 (NRSV)

The whole of society is strengthened as its members participate in and contribute to the common good.⁸ We affirm the need to eliminate poverty for it destroys and degrades human lives.⁹ All people should be educated

⁷*Am. Bapts Economic Justice*, entire document, especially part I on Christian Industry
CME "David," Bishop Reddick's sermon on I Samuel 30:21-24 re: the men who were too weak to go with the others still receiving a portion of the winnings of war
COB creation, part II, "Our Theological Understanding," part C, "The Brethren Understanding of Creation"
Epis. social policies, General Convention (GC) of 1994 on economic justice remaining a priority
Epis. proxy, entire document
ELCA creation, part IV, section C
ELCA policies & procedures, "Called to Witness in Society," page 2
ELCA economic, paragraph 1
Friends policy, Part III, section 1, first paragraph and section on Domestic Economic Life
G.O. desert & cities, paragraph quoting Abba Markos on casting off cares about ephemeral things and placing trust in God above all else
Mor. poverty, entire document
OCA affirmations, Introduction paragraphs 1 & 2
Presbys. social values, chapter 7 on Economic Issues; statement of 1963 UPCUSA, p. 315; *Presbys. 1967*, sections 9:17, 9:19, 9:25, 9:29, 9:32, 9:33, 9:43, 9:46
UCC econ. life, entire document
UM principles, Paragraph 163, part IV, introduction and subsection on poverty

⁸*AME profile & beliefs*, "Beliefs of the Group"
ELCA church in society, I, "Affirmations," section D, "The Church's Responsibility"
Presbys. 1967, section 9:35

⁹*AME Econ.*, "Mission Statement"
Am. Bapts. Welfare, affirmation #5
COB minimum wage, opening paragraph
Epis. social policies, "Advocacy for Poor and Powerless People"
Friends policy, Part III, section 1, first paragraph
G.O. Cyprian "Works & Alms," paragraph 4
ELCA economic, section titled "For all: especially those living in poverty," paragraphs 9 & 10
Mor. poverty, entire statement

and empowered, to the extent possible, so that they can enjoy the benefits of economic opportunity.¹⁰ It is the Commonwealth's responsibility to provide a thorough and efficient education to every child. The failure of a society to provide adequate educational opportunities for children and youth and opportunities for gainful employment condemns some people to poverty and weakens the fabric of community life.¹¹ When people have no hope for a better future, crime increases and society suffers.

We need to provide adequate funding and tools to sustain families as family members enter into the workforce, and not penalize families when members become employed.¹² This includes access to affordable housing, childcare, health care, transportation, and any other services that support families' and individuals' ability to be productive members of the Commonwealth's workforce.

We must also ensure that all persons are guaranteed income security when they reach retirement age or are no longer able to work for reasons of health or other disabilities. Federal and state governments have a responsibility to ensure that government and private programs that provide such security remain in place and are funded adequately, and businesses have a responsibility to protect and uphold programs such as health care coverage and pension plans that preserve workers' economic security. Citizens of the Commonwealth also need adequate safeguards to ensure that their income and assets are protected from abusive systems that threaten economic security, such as predatory lending practices.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 6:19-20 (NRSV)

Labor is not a commodity, but a means to benefit society and also a means to affirm the dignity and worth of workers.¹³ All workers, including those whose work has traditionally been under-valued, deserve a family-

Presbys. social witness, chapter 7, Economic Issues ACSWP introduction and 1965, UPCUSA statement p. 391, 1996 PC(USA) statement, pp. 524, 526-528

UCC econ. life, page 30, paragraph on TANF and an adequate legislative vehicle for reducing poverty

UM principles, paragraph 163, "The Economic Community," section E on poverty

¹⁰*AME Econ.*, "Mission Statement"

AME profile & beliefs, "Beliefs of the Group"

Am. Bapts. Economic Justice, section II, on Government; resolution on separation of church and state, paragraph 4

NBCA "About," mission statement paragraphs on social justice and economic development

Prog. civil rights, paragraphs about the struggle for Black persons' economic empowerment and equal educational opportunity

COB peace & social concern, paragraphs on working to achieve equality in employment, housing and education

Epis. social policies, GC 1988, supporting public school education

Mor. pub. ed., third paragraph re: equity and excellence in education

Presbys. social witness, chapter 10, 1957 statement PCUSA, pp. 93-109

UCC pub. schools, entire statement

UM principles, paragraph 163, IV, "The Economic Community," section E, "Poverty"; paragraph 164, V, "The Political Community," section D, "Education"

¹¹*Am. Bapts. Public Education*, entire document

Prog. civil rights, paragraphs about the struggle for Black persons' economic empowerment and equal educational opportunity

COB peace & social concern, paragraphs on working to achieve equality in employment, housing and education

Epis. social policies, GC 1988, supporting public school education

Friends policy, Part III, section 2, subsection on education

Presbys. social witness, chapter 10, 1957 statement, PCUSA, pp. 93-109

UCC pub. schools, entire statement

UM principles, paragraph 163, IV, "The Economic Community," section E, "Poverty"; paragraph 164, V, "The Political Community," section D, "Education"

¹²*Am. Bapts. Welfare*, paragraphs 4, 8, 9, 10, and 12

Epis. social policies, convention of November 1996, "Urge the President and Congress to reform welfare by providing resources to help recipients find jobs, including placement, training and education"

Friends policy, Part III, section 1, subsection on employment

ELCA economic, section on "Livelihood; vocation, work and human dignity" under "We call for..."

Presbys. social witness, chapter 7, 1956 statement PCUSA, p. 232; 1977 statement PCUS, p. 183; 1987 statement PC(USA), p. 582; 1984 statement PC(USA), p. 504

¹³*Am. Bapts. Economic Justice*, section 1 on "Christian Industry"

Am. Bapts. Tax Policy, entire document

sustaining wage.¹⁴ Public and private employees have a right to organize for collective bargaining freely and without intimidation, keeping in mind not only their own interest, but also the common good. Workers have a right to strike, and employers must not permanently replace striking workers.¹⁵

“It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?” says the Lord God of hosts.

Isaiah 3:14b-15 (NRSV)

Through taxation, society provides for the common good. Taxation is a shared responsibility of both businesses and individuals.¹⁶ Taxation in general should exclude income sufficient to keep reporting households above poverty guidelines. Poverty guidelines should be set so that households earning income to this level are self-sustaining. Progressive taxation (systems that are weighted toward those who have more—generally based on income) is preferable to

regressive systems (those that weigh more heavily on persons at lower income levels—such as property or sales taxes). Gambling is a particularly poor way to raise state revenues, as it weighs most heavily on the poor, the elderly, and those prone to addictions.¹⁷

Epis. social policy, GC 2003, resolution C033, Immigration and undocumented workers

Friends policy, Part III, section 1, opening paragraph

ELCA economic, section on “Livelihood: vocation, work & human dignity,” on work

Presbys. social witness, 1962 statement PCUS, p. 150; 1971 statement UPCUSA, p. 653

¹⁴ *COB minimum wage, entire document*

Epis. social policies, GC 1997 on Economic Justice, re: “actively promote the enactment of a living wage” and GC 2000 on A Just Wage, re: “reaffirming the action of the GC of 1997”; GC 2003, resolutions A130, Establish a living wage, and C130, Raise the Federal Minimum Wage

Friends policy, Part III, section 1, subsection on employment

ELCA economic, preamble

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1977, PCUS, p. 183

UCC min. wage, entire document

¹⁵ *Am. Bapts. Labor, entire document*

ELCA economic, section on “Livelihood: vocation, work & human dignity,” subsection under “Human dignity,” “We commit ourselves to...”

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1959 UPCUSA, p. 383; statement of 1980 PCUS, p. 229; statement of 1995 PC(USA), pp. 426-427

UM principles, paragraph 163, IV, section B, “Collective Bargaining”

¹⁶ *Am. Bapts. Gambling, entire document*

Friends policy, Part III, section 1, subsection on “The Federal Budget”

ELCA economic, section on “Sufficiency: enough but not too much,” paragraph 3 and under “We call for...”

Mor. gambling, the entire document

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1972 UPCUSA, p. 481; statement of 1977 UPCUSA, p. 243; statement of 1979 UPCUSA, p. 292

UM principles, paragraph 163, introduction

¹⁷ *Am. Bapts. Gambling and state revenue, p. 1*

Am. Bapts. Gambling, “Situational Analysis” and point 4 under “Therefore...”

Mor. gambling, entire document

Presbys. social witness, 1954 Statement, PCUSA, pp. 203-204; Statement of 1994 PC(USA), pp. 582-583

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Economic Justice

The Council:

- out of concern for the poor, rejects discrimination based on economic status
- affirms the need to eliminate poverty as a destructive and dehumanizing force in people's lives, and also affirms the goal of self-sufficiency for those caught in a cycle of poverty and welfare dependency

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- supporting the reauthorization of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) at a level that maintains adequate supports for eligible persons and families
- supporting legislation that would raise the minimum wage in Pennsylvania

Social Justice

Social justice is rooted in our awareness that God values all people without regard to any identifying characteristics. The Bible affirms that every person is made in the image of God. God values all people in their rich diversity, and therefore we support full civil rights for *all* persons.¹⁸ Actions that discriminate against people on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, or sexual orientation are sins and a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves as communities of faith to eliminate all forms of institutional discrimination.¹⁹

This vision is not reality and so we affirm the need to continue the legal struggle against discrimination and prejudice, personal or systemic. Legislation should take into account the historic suffering certain classes or groups of people have endured because of race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, and other dehumanizing manifestations of sin. Furthermore, legislation should consider the disparate impact seemingly neutral laws may have on such groups and classes and be modified accordingly. Programs of education, credit, housing, employment and income, health and banking should address historic injustices and wrongs.²⁰

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Acts 10:34-35 (NRSV)

We know that people may disagree about the meaning of given events, as different persons and groups have different experiences in our society. Because we believe it is possible for reasonable people to disagree about

¹⁸AME Profile & Beliefs, section called "White Discontent"

Am. Bapts. Human Rights, entire document

NBCA "About," newsletter article entitled "Meet the President," describing The Rev. Dr. E. Edward Jones, Sr.'s life

PNBC civil rights, section on "Civil Rights Advocacy & Activism"

Epis. social policies, GC of 2000 resolutions supporting hate crimes legislation at the local, state and national levels that include categories of political or religious creed, color, ethnic or national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age; GC 2003, resolutions A010, Continue Antiracism mandate, and D071, Oppose effort by government to discriminate against single parent households

Friends policy, Part II, section 2

ELCA race, section on "Doing Justice," subsection "A Time for Advocacy"

OCA affirmations, Introduction, paragraphs 2 & 4

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1965 PCUS, pp. 158-161; statement of 1982 UPCUSA, p. 425

UCC civil liberties, entire document

UM principles, paragraph 164, V, section A and paragraph 162, III, introduction and "Healing the Wounds of Racism," 1997-2000

Quadrannium, Eastern United Methodist Conference

¹⁹See notes in endnote 18

²⁰The legal struggle against discrimination and legislation should take into account: 1) class or group suffering; and 2) the disparate impact of seemingly neutral laws on different groups

Epis. social policies, GC 2003, resolutions D014, Redress of Japanese Americans, and D017, Post 9/11 Racial hatred and incarceration

the meaning of events, laws that would directly influence an affected group's life need to take into consideration the opinions of that affected group (e.g., cases of harassment, job discrimination or housing discrimination, and racial profiling). To the extent possible, the law must take into consideration pluralism of perspective—that is, that persons of good faith may have differing opinions.²¹

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Social Justice

The Council:

- supports full civil rights for all persons
- supports legislation that enables government to root out patterns of discrimination in employment, housing, credit, health, education and banking

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- support of legislation that prevents discrimination in hiring based on factors not dictated by the position (racial, ethnic, etc.)
- support of legislation to prevent redlining in mortgage decisions—using race or some other defining characteristic in the determination of mortgage awards based on area

Civil Justice

Scripture describes a good society as one in which those who act with sovereignty provide justice for all. In a democracy, representatives of the people act with sovereignty, and need to provide justice.

A just Commonwealth protects the rights of individuals and groups, and imposes corresponding responsibilities on the whole community that support and sustain the common good.²² A just Commonwealth ensures that all persons have a voice in government at all levels—including the right to vote—and that access is not limited because of situational factors such as economic disadvantages or distance, or demographic characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, disability, or sexual orientation. We affirm that all persons

**Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's
son. May he judge your people with
righteousness, and your poor with
justice.**

Psalm 72:1-2 (NRSV)

**...there shall be one law
for the native and for
the alien who resides
among you.**

Exodus 12:49 (NRSV)

convicted of felonies who have completed their jail sentences and have entered back into society should have the right to vote.

A just society welcomes the stranger—immigrants, the disabled, all who are marginalized or disenfranchised in any way—in our midst, and offers full civil rights for all persons and holds accountable those who infringe upon the civil rights of others. A just society does not seek to limit or eliminate civil liberties in the promotion or implementation of certain government policies.

²¹AME Profile & Beliefs, section called "White Discontent"

Am. Bapts. Civil Rights, entire document

²²NBCA Anointed, the biography of Dr. Jones

Epis. social policies, GC statements of 1995 (affirmation action), 1988 (about government and affirmative action), 1985 (affirmative action in the church), 1985 (affirmative action in dioceses), 2000 (hate crime laws provided by government) and 1991 (hate crimes and the church); GC 2003, resolution B008, Protection of children and youth from abuse

Friends policy, Part III, introduction

ELCA church in society, I Affirmations, D., "The Church's Response in Society," paragraphs 1 & 2

OCA affirmations, on "The Mystery of Marriage," paragraph 10, bullet points 1, 2 & 3

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1950 PCUSA, p. 236; statement of 1952 PCUSA, p. 205; statement of 1983 PC(USA), pp. 776-778

UM Principles, paragraph 164, sections A, B, C, D, and E

Society and the law should enhance human lives, promoting the dignity and worth of each human being. At the same time, a just society calls all persons to contribute to the common good by achieving their full potential.

We affirm the principle of separation of church and state; this principle assures an appropriate role of government, guaranteeing that in a just and religiously diverse society, each person has the right to practice his or her religion according to individual conscience.²³ We also maintain, however, that government also has a responsibility to ensure that particular religious views or positions are not involuntarily imposed on persons in public settings such as schools or in public meetings.

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Civil Justice

The Council:

- is in favor of campaign finance reform for the sake of integrity of government and the processes of governing
- supports the enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- support of campaign finance reform and lobbyist disclosure legislation to promote government accountability
- opposing legislation that would erode separation of church and state by permitting partisan activity in the local church

Environmental Justice

We believe creation belongs to God, and that we are called to act as stewards of creation on God's behalf. Our stewardship makes us stakeholders. We envision a Commonwealth that honors the integrity of God's good creation and acknowledges our dependence upon and solidarity with creation. Therefore, decisions that would affect creation require careful discussion among stakeholders.²⁴ We support government decisions related to the land and the environment that eliminate racial, sexual, economic, or any other discrimination that occurs when people have little or no voice in decisions affecting them.²⁵

**"The earth is the Lord's and
all that is in it, the world,
and those who live in it..."**

Psalm 24:1 (NRSV)

²³*Am. Bapts. Separation*, first paragraph of the introduction and the policy base affirming the historic principle in the section on "Freedom"

COB peace & social concern, point 3

Friends declaration, section on "Liberty of Conscience in its Relation to Civil Government"

Mor. ch. & state, the first "resolved" section

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1983 PC(USA), pp. 776-778; statement of 1988 PC(USA), p. 572

UCC separation, entire document

UM principles, paragraph 164, V, B

²⁴*Am. Bapts. Ecology*, entire document

Disc. ecology, "The Alverna Covenant"

COB creation, section on "Our Theological Understanding," parts E (The Renewal of Creation), F (The Worth of Creation in and of Itself), and G (Justice) and the section "Confession of Sin"

Epis. social policies, GC of 1997, "Call on the Church to practice environmentally sound practices and energy efficient living"; GC 2003, resolutions C026, Reduce use of toxic chemicals, D046, Stewardship of water, and D016, Protection of animals from cruel treatment

Friends sustainability, entire document

Friends policy, Part IV, introduction and Part IV, section 4

G.O. creation, entire document; *G.O. Easter*, entire document; *G.O. ecology*, entire document; *G.O. nature*, entire document

ELCA creation, part I, A, part II, B and part IV, A & B

OCA affirmations, section on "Sickness, Suffering & Death," bullet point 6

Within this context, we hold up the principle of sustainability, which suggests priorities that may include, but not be limited to: protection of species and their habitats; preservation of clean land, air and water; reduction of wastes; care of the land; and greater responsibility in the use of energy.²⁶

Dangerous outcomes result when short-term practices such as human population pressures, excessive consumption, and abuse of the global climate and the ozone layer continue unabated. Sustainability results when the quality of life for future generations is not compromised by current practices and when decisions affecting an immediate locale do not ignore the larger impact on the entire planet and its ecosystems.²⁷

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

Genesis 1:31a (NRSV)

We support economic growth achieved through implementing sustainable practices and not at the cost of environmental degradation.

Because sustainable environmental practices require committed, long-term involvement from everyone, we challenge both government policy-makers and persons within our congregations and church bodies to make personal and political decisions today that honor tomorrow.

Presbys. social witness, chapter 6, introduction; statement of 1951 PCUSA, p. 256; statement of 1954 PCUSA, p. 198; statement of 1971 UPCUSA, pp. 582-583; statement of 1990 PC(USA), p. 646

UCC briefings, section on “Environmental Stewardship & Justice”
UM principles, paragraph 160, introduction

²⁵*COB creation*, section on “Our Theological Understanding,” parts E (The Renewal of Creation), F (The Worth of Creation in and of Itself), and G (Justice) and the section on “Confession of Sin”

G.O. creation, entire document; *G.O. Easter*, entire document; *G.O. ecology*, entire document; *G.O. nature*, entire document
Presbys. social witness, statement of 1971 UPCUSA, p. 579; statement of 1990 PC(USA), p. 646

²⁶*COB creation*, entire document

Epis. social policies, GC of 1997 on “Environmentally Sound and Energy Efficient Living”

Friends policy, Part IV, section 1

G.O. creation, entire document; *G.O. Easter*, entire document; *G.O. ecology*, entire document; *G.O. nature*, entire document

ELCA creation, entire document

OCA ecology, entire document

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1981 UPCUSA, p. 254; statement of 1974 PC(USA), p. 349; statement of 1990 PC(USA) on water quality, p. 664, on wildlife and wild lands, p. 665, on reducing and managing our wastes, p. 666, on hazardous waste, p. 667, on overcoming atmospheric instability, p. 669, on ozone depletion, p. 670; statement of 1996 PC(USA), pp. 524, 526, 534-536

UCC briefings, pp. 63-66

UM principles, paragraph 160, introduction

²⁷*Disc. ecology*, “The Alverna Covenant”

COB creation, entire document

Epis. social policies, GC 2003, resolution D066, Declaration on sustainable development

Friends policy, Part IV, section 1

G.O. creation; *Easter*; *ecology*; *environmental intro*; *environmental examples*; *nature*; entire documents

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1990 PC(USA), p. 646

UCC briefings, pp. 63-66

UM principles, paragraph 160, section B

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Environmental Justice

The Council:

- supports all measures to reduce air, water, land, noise and thermal pollution
- supports conservation of energy

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- supporting legislation setting renewable portfolio standards for production of green energy
- supporting legislation that sets energy efficiency standards for equipment in homes, businesses, and for government purchases

Criminal Justice

Criminal justice requires a balance between the rights of victims, the good of society, and the rehabilitation of the perpetrators of crimes. We want a criminal justice system that is just for all involved.²⁸ We believe that all persons entering into the judicial system, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion or sexual orientation have a right to due process and equal protection before a representative, impartial, and independent judiciary, and that the role of courts is to provide full access to the legal system and to promote equal justice for all.

We recognize that prevention of crime is the best way to keep persons out of the criminal justice system. To that end, we encourage the Commonwealth to provide a good quality education for all children and economic opportunities for all adults.²⁹

**In that day the Lord of hosts
will be... a spirit of justice to
the one who sits in judgment.**

Isaiah 28:5-6 (NRSV)

We envision a Commonwealth whose criminal justice system provides:

- protection, so all may live in safe and secure communities;
- appropriate restoration to those who have been victimized by offenders; and
- opportunities for rehabilitation and redemption of those violating the Commonwealth's laws.³⁰

Consequently, we believe there is no room for vengeance and retribution in the Commonwealth's criminal justice system. Because we believe every soul is redeemable, we oppose capital punishment in any form because it denies opportunity for rehabilitation and restoration and is often racist and classist in its application.³¹ We urge greater discretion for judges in sentencing and fewer mandatory-sentencing laws, so

²⁸*Am. Bapts. Criminal Justice*, entire document

Am. Bapts. Restorative Justice, entire document

Disc. criminal justice, paper on 100 things congregations can do to address violence

Epis. social policies, GC of 2000, on exploring and studying restorative justice

Friends clemency, entire document

Friends policy, Part II, section 1 on subsection on criminal justice

ELCA death penalty, section on "Ministries of Reconciliation"

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1972 UPCUSA, pp. 426-431

UCC restorative justice, entire document

UM principles, paragraph 164, section F

²⁹*Friends policy*, Part II, section 1, subsection on criminal justice and Part III, section 2, subsection on education

UM principles, paragraph 164, section F

³⁰*Am. Bapts. Restorative Justice*, entire document

Am. Bapts. Criminal Justice, entire document

Friends policy, Part II, section 1, subsection on criminal justice

ELCA death penalty, section on "commitments of the church"

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1978 PCUS, pp. 194-204; statement of 1980 PCUS, p. 227

UM principles, paragraph 164, section F

³¹*Am. Bapts. Capital Punishment*, entire document

judges can look at the total picture of each case and person before the court.³² Sentencing convicted offenders to community service programs should be a regular practice. Incarceration should be limited to dangerous and/or repeat offenders who prey upon the community.

Rehabilitation and restoration of the offender to her/his community should be the first priority of the corrections system.³³ We urge educational projects aimed at basic literacy skills for all inmates, job or vocational training, expanding work-leave opportunities, and family-leave for qualified prisoners as a means of easing their reentry into society. Since the family is an integral part of any prisoner's rehabilitation, prisoners should be housed in facilities as close to home as possible to facilitate family visitation and support.

For some offenders, rehabilitation is difficult. These persons need to be housed in humane, secure settings, and prevented from further harming society for as long a time as necessary. It is essential, however, that attempts be made to rehabilitate even the most hardened offender.

I was in prison, and you visited me.

Matthew 25:36b (NRSV)

All inmates must be guaranteed the right of religious expression, including opportunity for communal and sacramental worship under the leadership of ordained or otherwise accredited clergy or religious leaders.³⁴ Inmates should not, however, be subject to forced practice of a specific form of religious expression.

Because bail requirements discriminate against the poor and others without access to money, we support releasing without bail those accused of non-felony crimes on their own recognizance and we oppose the use of bail to achieve what is commonly called preventative detention—that is, as a means to detain persons without due process rights.³⁵

COB death row, entire document

Epis. social policies, GC of 2000, reaffirming the resolution of AO 1982 stating opposition to the death penalty; also sections on "Death Penalty," "Doing Justice," "Executions in the U.S." and "Ministries of Restoration"

Friends policy, Part II, section 1, subsection on criminal justice

Mor. crim. justice & death penalty, entire document

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1966 PCUS, p. 89; statement of 1977 UPCUSA, p. 485; statement of 1985 PC(USA), p. 84

UCC briefings, section on "The Death Penalty"

UM principles, paragraph 164, section A

UM death penalty, entire document

³²*Am Bapts. Criminal Justice*, section on sanctions, point 2

Epis. social policies, GC 2003, resolutions A003, Repeal mandatory sentencing guidelines, and A126, Alternatives to sentencing for juveniles and separate prison facilities for juveniles

Friends policy, Part II, section 1, subsection on criminal justice

Mor. crim. justice & death penalty, entire document

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1984 PC(USA), p. 621

UM principles, paragraph 164, section F

³³*Am Bapts. Restorative Justice*, entire document

Friends policy, Part II, section 1, subsection on criminal justice

ELCA death penalty, section on "commitments of this church"

Presbys. social witness, statement of 1978 PCUS, pp. 194-204

UCC rehabilitation, entire document

UM principles, paragraph 164, section F

³⁴*Presbys. social witness*, statement of 1972 UPCUSA, pp. 426-431

³⁵*Am. Bapts. Criminal Justice*, section on sanctions, point 3

Example Policy Positions/Efforts—Criminal Justice

The Council:

- opposes the death penalty in any form
- believes rehabilitation should be the first priority of the corrections system

Specific advocacy efforts have included:

- supporting legislation that would impose a moratorium on or eliminate the death penalty in Pennsylvania
- supporting legislation or policy that promotes appropriate education for inmates

Summary

Principles for Public Advocacy offers the Pennsylvania Council of Churches' vision for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and society as a whole. The eight sections following the preamble present specific principles for each of the areas of shalom and justice described in the Preamble, along with the theological basis supported by scriptural references and denominational positions of the Council's member church bodies. This document provides the basis for development of comprehensive policy positions and setting of specific priorities for public advocacy.

Separate policy statements on broad areas of advocacy that include more specific positions in light of the *Principles* will be developed and modified as issues are raised and/or as they evolve. These policy statements will be available to all who have an interest in the Council's positions on issues of interest, including, but not limited to Council members, interested individuals and organizations, and legislators at both the state and federal levels. They will be made available at the Council's website at www.pachurches.org.

The Council also develops biennial statements of legislative priorities for each two-year legislative session. Legislative priorities statements are revised as necessary during each session in consultation with the Public Advocacy Action Team, and are rewritten in their entirety every two years as each new legislative session begins.

Complete references for the supporting documentation cited in the footnotes are contained in Part II of this document.

Part II: Selected Denominational References

The following documents from various member bodies of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and, in some cases, denominational statements, are referenced in this *Principles for Public Advocacy* document. A simple one or two-word abbreviation that will be used to refer to the documents in the footnotes for the *Principles* precedes information on each document. Where available, these references contain hotlinks to websites or documents cited.

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AME Econ.—African Methodist Episcopal Church, 5th District web page <http://ame-edf.org/StrategicPlans.asp>—“Economic Development Fund, Inc.” pages on Mission, Operating Principles, Objectives and Planning, 2004 web page.

AME Profile & Beliefs—African Methodist Episcopal Church web page <http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/ame.html>—Group Profile; Beliefs of the Group; Issues and Controversies; Links to AME Web Sites; Bibliography; and Other Information About the AME Church, July 17, 2001.

Baptist, American

All of the following documents can be found on the web page <http://www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/>

Am. Bapts. Affirmative Action—American Baptist Resolution in support of Affirmative Action, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/affirmact.htm, February 1986.

Am. Bapts. Capital Punishment—American Baptist Resolution on Capital Punishment, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/cappun.htm, March 1982.

Am. Bapts. Church & State—American Baptist Policy Statement on Church and State, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/chstate.htm, December 1986.

Am. Bapts. Civil Rights—American Baptist Resolution on Civil Rights, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/civrights.htm, March 1983.

Am. Bapts. Criminal Justice—American Baptist Policy Statement on Criminal Justice, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/crimjust.htm, December 1983.

Am. Bapts. Economic Justice—Historic American Baptist Resolution on Economic Justice, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/econjust.htm, March 1986.

Am. Bapts. Gambling & State Revenue—American Baptist National Ministries Resolution on Gambling and State Revenue, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/statgamb.htm, March 1978.

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Am. Bapts. Ecology—American Baptist Policy Statement on Ecology: An Ecological Situational Analysis, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/ecology.htm, December 1988.

Am. Bapts. Energy—American Baptist Policy Statement on Energy, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/energy.htm, June 1977.

Am. Bapts. Global Warming—American Baptist Resolution on Global Warming, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/globwarm.htm, June 1991.

Am. Bapts. Human Rights—American Baptist Policy Statement on Human Rights, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/humright.htm, December 1976.

Am. Bapts. Labor—American Baptist Resolution on Labor, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/labor.htm, March 1981.

Am. Bapts. Power—American Baptist Resolution on Power, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/power.htm, December 1976.

Am. Bapts. Public Education—American Baptist Educational Ministries Resolution on Declaration of Commitments on the Churches and Public Education, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/pubeduc.htm, March 2000.

Am. Bapts. Quality Education—American Baptist Resolution on Quality Education, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/quaeduc.htm, September 1983.

Am. Bapts. Racial Justice—American Baptist Policy Statement on Racial Justice, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/racejust.htm, March 1989.

Am. Bapts. Restorative Justice—American Baptist Resolution on Restorative Justice, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/restojust.htm, November 2001.

Am. Bapts. Separation—American Baptist Resolution on Separation of Church and State, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/chsep.htm, September 1983.

Am. Bapts. Tax Policy—American Baptist Resolution on Tax Policy, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/taxes.htm, March 1988.

Am. Bapts. Welfare—American Baptist Resolution on Welfare and Human Services, www.abc-usa.org/resources/resol/humserv.htm, June 1981.

Baptist, National

NOTE: As of July 2005, the website of the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., was being revised. The link below is no longer valid. A new site located at www.nbcamerica.net/about.htm was under construction and the statements cited below were not yet posted.

NBCA "About"—National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., “About the NBCA” on the web page <http://www.nbcamerica.org/about.php> July 2002.

NBCA Econ. Devel.—National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., “Million Dollar Effort Commission” on the same web page, July 2002.

NBCA Social Justice—National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., “Social Justice Commission” on the same web page, July 2002.

NBCA Anointed—National Baptist convention of America, Inc., “God’s Anointed Servant: Sure of Eternal Life” on the same web page, July 2002.

Baptist, Progressive

Prog. concept—Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc. on the web page <http://www.pnbc.org/Progressive.aspx> on “Progressive Concept,” by Thomas Kilgore, Jr., April 2005.

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Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Disc. ecology—Christian Church, “Web of Creation,” section 2 on “Ecology in Religious Education” on the web page <http://www.webofcreation.org/education/policystatements/disciples.htm> 1991.

Disc. criminal justice—Christian Church, web page for Department of Homeland Ministries at <http://www.homelandministries.org/SOCIALJUSTICE/legislative.htm> section on social justice, “Legislative/Criminal Justice Ministries,” 1994.

Christian Methodist Episcopal Church

CME barriers overcome—Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, General Conference News for April 2005—(<http://www.forministry.com/USGACMEPC2GCOT/GeneralConferenceNews.dsp>) Section on “Bishop Stewart and College say barriers must be overcome before moving to ‘renewal’ and ‘revival’,” written by Dr. Kenneth E. Jones, April 2005.

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Church of the Brethren

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COB warming—Church of the Brethren, from the Brethren Witness, resolution on Global Warming called “Care for Creation: Resolution on Global Warming/Climate Change” on the web page <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/GlobalWarming.htm>, 2001.

COB death row—Church of the Brethren, from the Brethren Witness, description of the Death Row Support Project on the web page <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/drsp.htm>, 2001.

COB nonviolence—Church of the Brethren, 1977 Annual Conference statement “Justice and Nonviolence,” www.brethren.org/ac/ac_statements/77Justice&Nonviolence.htm, 1977.

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COB peaceably—Church of the Brethren, “Live Peaceably with All: Four Bible Studies,” by John Huffaker, www.brethren.org/dov/LivePeaceablyWithAll.PDF.

COB peace & social concern—Church of the Brethren, from the Brethren Witness, paper on “The Brethren Heritage of Peace and Social Concern” by D.F. Durnbaugh on the web page <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/Peace/PeaceSocialConcern.htm> August 13, 2001.

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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

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