

WITNESS FOR JUSTICE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
JUSTICE AND WITNESS MINISTRIES

700 Prospect Ave.
Cleveland, OH 44115-1110
Phone: 216.736.3700
Fax: 216.736.3703



Karen Georgia Thompson
Minister for Racial Justice

Witness for Justice #509

January 3, 2011

“Lest We Forget”

Karen Georgia Thompson

Another year passed leaving me wondering, “Where did the time go?” I find myself in a reflective place pondering what went well as I focus on creating goals for another year. 2010 brought highs and lows. I am thankful for the successes of the year, but the places of challenge are a reminder that there is “yet more light and truth to break forth.” These are places and events I choose not to forget, since they are a reminder that the work for justice remains a priority.

The economy continues to falter. The housing market was rife with foreclosures. I listened as family and friends expressed their concerns about their mortgages. More jobs were lost and unemployment reached new highs. I find myself concerned for family and friends as many who thought their jobs secure are facing the challenge of making ends meet while job hunting in a market that is sluggish at best.

The year was also witness to global adversity. The earthquake in Haiti occurred on January 12, 2010, leaving two million homeless and three million in need of emergency aid. The earthquake was not the main problem in Haiti; instead the people of Haiti have suffered for years under an oppressive system of colonization and occupation by foreign entities creating crisis after crisis. Now almost a year after the tragedy, millions of women, men and children remain homeless. The outbreak of cholera is one of the latest setbacks due to months of living in unsanitary, unsafe conditions. This is taking its toll on the health of those who are already vulnerable.

U.S. policies affect the lives of millions of people whether here or abroad. There are times when I fail to remember the past and would rather tend to the present and forget the history that informs the issues we currently face. The current economic crisis did not begin last year or the year before that. The crisis was looming as decisions were made to provide sub-prime mortgages and

to outsource jobs. There is a forgotten history about our economy and about the situation in Haiti that has as much to do with oppression, racism and occupation as it does with the earthquake that brought to light the on-going problems for that island nation of people.

2011 dawns with hope and promise. I think of personal expectations and create resolutions that I hope will make a difference in my life, even as I do the same for those around me. I am committing my 2011 to continue naming the places where injustice lives. I want to remember the myriad of justice issues millions are facing around the world such as failing economies, crossing borders to find employment, pollution in their communities, racial discrimination and other forms of injustice.

I am committing my 2011 to working on behalf of justice and equality for all. I want to remember those to whom I can lend my voice and resources as others have done for me. I am committing my 2011 to joining with those who continue to raise awareness and speak out for justice in places like the United Church of Christ’s action network (www.ucc.org/justice/join-the-network/). I want to remember, believing that I can make a difference – one day at a time.

The United Church of Christ has more than 5,300 churches throughout the United States. Rooted in the Christian traditions of congregational governance and covenantal relationships, each UCC setting speaks only for itself and not on behalf of every UCC congregation. UCC members and churches are free to differ on important social issues, even as the UCC remains principally committed to unity in the midst of our diversity.