

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



M. Linda Jaramillo
Executive Minister

Witness for Justice #488

August 9, 2010

Weapons of Mass Destruction

M. Linda Jaramillo
Executive Minister

August 6 marks the day that United States dropped “Little Boy,” loaded with 9,700 pounds of uranium, through the skies on its way to Hiroshima a city of 300,000. Just three days later “Fat Man,” equipped with a plutonium core and loaded with 21 kilotons of TNT was dropped over Nagasaki. Over 200,000 people were killed and hundreds of thousands more were injured, most of them civilians.

Later, during the ‘cold war’ period, we spent a good deal of time and energy preparing for the possibility of such destruction by training school children to respond to air raids, encouraging citizens to build bomb shelters, and informing the masses about the probability and impact of such an attack. More recently, we’ve heard story after story about weapons of mass destruction alleged to be hidden by Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Fear of these weapons prompted an aggressive attack launching the war in Iraq as a measure of national security. Even more recently, discovery of dangerous weapons in North Korea has created understandable nervousness among neighboring nations. Hopefully, this will not prompt a build up of even more weapons to counter act.

Where will this stop? We now know much more about the impact of attacks like those on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We know that such a day of horror stretches out into months and years and decades. The physical and emotional injuries affect lives forever. We now know that the serious environmental hazards of storing plutonium waste; the injury to soil and water affects lives forever. Now that we know more, will it change our behavior so we don’t have to look back and remember another war?

I am encouraged by the talks between and among nations seeking ways to reduce the caché of bombs and missiles capable of destroying an entire region in one strike. During this year since President Obama’s speech in Prague last April, the call for a nuclear weapon-free world has spread broadly both in the international political arena and among the public across the world. Anti-nuclear peace movements all over the world are calling to start negotiations for totally banning nuclear weapons, collecting millions of petitions, and developing many activities for nuclear disarmament and elimination of nuclear weapons in their respective countries.

We now know about the personal, communal, and environmental devastation of weapons of mass destruction. Weapons of mass destruction, nuclear or otherwise, are not a deterrence to war nor are they a guarantee of national security. There are no winners in this battle for weapon superiority. Rather, there are millions of losers, usually the children of nations where wars are waged.

August 1945 was the real introduction of weapons of mass destruction, 65 years ago. The likes of “Little Boy” and “Fat Man” must never soar in the skies above the earth again. These weapons have no purpose but to destroy God’s entire creation; hopefully remembering their impact will keep us from repeating the tragedy.

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.