



COMBONI PRESS NETWORK

The News Service Of The Comboni Missionaries

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Comboni Press Network (CPN) newsletter provides access to information on global issues from church and mission-related sources. Our focus is on justice and peace issues, and the effect U.S. policies have on Third World countries. Please share your suggestions and ideas with us—we're only a fax or e-mail away!

January-February 2009

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS:

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From CPN ***A NEW PRESIDENT AND HIS COUNTRY LOOK TOWARDS A NEW AMERICA:***
As President Obama takes charge of the 111th Congress, he is ever-mindful that the revitalization of America will take time, and asks for the country's patience. He has ignited the people's spirit, and one way he's already harnessed their energy is through his ***Service Initiative*** in honor of Martin Luther King Day. President Obama urges everyone to "renew America together," and to be part of the solutions in their own communities. **Get involved** at www.USAService.org. Also, see **NETWORK's Agenda for the 111th Congress** at www.networklobby.org, and **Global Exchange's** priorities for green alternatives, economic justice and promotion of peace, at www.globalexchange.org.

From AFJN ***ADVANCING U.S. POLICY ON AFRICA: LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!*** The Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) encourages you to make the following points to President Obama.
Tell him: ♦ that ***AFRICOM*** is antithetical to his broader progressive agenda as it puts military might ahead of diplomatic talk, reinforces an ideological war against terrorism that can never be won by the Pentagon, and proves that the U.S. cares more about maintaining an open oil pipeline than it does about African peace and prosperity; ♦ that as long as Africa has vast, untapped reserves of oil and minerals, and as long as the U.S. economy depends so heavily on fossil fuels and electronics manufacturing for its mere survival, Africans will remain unstable; ♦ that Obama's ***Add Value to Agriculture Initiative***, a good-hearted attempt to boost Africa's food production, will fall flat if there is no fair trade implemented, climate change legislation, or insistence on good governance. **For more information on these points, visit** www.afjn.org.

From CW ***THE BLOODSHED IN THE CONGO IS ABOUT ALL OF US:*** With 5.4 million dead in the Congo, Africa's bloodiest war can be attributed to the ongoing global heist of its natural resources including gold, diamonds, coltan, and cassiterite. A U.N. investigation found this war, led by "armies of business," was all about the seizing of the precious metals that go into people's jewelry or fill cell phones. Most of us don't understand that the more we buy, the more they steal and slaughter. According to the *International Crisis Group*, the Congolese militia leader, Laurent Nkunda, is backed by Rwandan businessmen in order to retain control of the mines in North Kivu. It's time the world learns the truth. **Contact:** www.congoweek.org.

SPOTLIGHT: Bread for the World 2009 Offering of Letters: This year's ***Offering of Letters*** will press the new Congress and the new administration to fix U.S. foreign aid to make it more effective in reducing hunger and poverty. While U.S. assistance is making a difference in millions of lives, the delivery system could be greatly improved. Right now, U.S. global development policies and programs are scattered across 12 departments, 25 different agencies, and nearly 60 government offices. **Learn more** and order your *Offerings kit* at www.bread.org. The new ***2009 Bread for the World Institute Hunger Report*** is available online at www.hungerreport.org.

CONGRATULATIONS: On **Human Rights Day**, December 10, the ***2008 United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights*** was posthumously awarded to **Sr. Dorothy Stang, SND**. The President of the General Assembly cited Sr. Dorothy's work "defending the human rights of the poor, landless and indigenous populations of the Anapu region of Brazil for nearly 40 years, despite numerous death threats. She worked with farmers to help rebuild their livelihoods, cultivate their land and defend their rights from loggers and ranchers, becoming a symbol of the fight to preserve the rainforest, before being killed in 2005." A **special exhibit and celebration** will run from February 8-14, at the Dayton International Peace Museum, www.daytonpeacemuseum.org.

NOT-TO-BE-MISSED RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

√ ***Bad Money*** by Kevin Phillips, the author of *American Theocracy*, makes sense of our collapsing housing market, mounting debt and crumbling economic power, revealing how the financial sector has hijacked our economy and put America's future at risk. In bookstores.

√ ***Great Decisions Global Affairs Education Program 2009***, sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association, offers an opportunity to learn and discuss topics of major global interest. The annual briefing book is now available and used as the basis for discussion in classrooms, groups and book clubs. **2009 topics are:** *The U.S. and Rising Powers; Afghanistan and Pakistan; Energy and the Global Economy; The Arctic Age; Egypt in the 21st Century; The Global Food Supply; Cuba after Castro; and Universal Human Rights?* \$18, plus s & h. **Contact:** www.greatdecisions.org or, in Cincinnati, www.globalcincinnati.org.

√ ***The Limits of Power: The End of Exceptionalism***, by Andrew Bacevich, a retired army colonel, provides a stinging slap of reality in his dense, yet easy to read, critique of the growing American penchant for empire and sense of entitlement. He examines the citizenry's complicity in the current economic, political and military crises, while describing consumption as the greatest American preoccupation. In bookstores.

√ ***The Spy Who Tried to Stop a War: Katherine Gun and the Secret Plot to Sanction the Iraq Invasion***, by Marcia and Thomas Mitchell, tells the true story of the British intelligence officer who, at great personal risk, tried to avert the Iraq war by telling truths about a plot to influence the U.N.

NOTABLE BOOKMARKS:

◆ ***Echoing Green***, www.echoinggreen.org, provides seed funding and support to social entrepreneurs with bold ideas for social change in order to launch groundbreaking organizations around the world.

◆ ***KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives***, www.kairoscanada.org, is a dynamic church-based social justice movement across Canada that stresses the areas of Ecological Justice, Human Rights and Trade, and Solidarity of Canadians.

◆ www.catholicsandclimatechange.org is the Spring '09 initiative from the *Catholic Coalition on Climate Change*.

◆ On the **Middle East and the Gaza Crisis:** (1) ***Churches for Middle East Peace***: for background readings and alerts, www.cmep.org; (2) ***The Council on American-Islamic Relations***: for news and actions, www.cair.com; (3) ***The Israel Project*** for journalists and leaders, www.theisraelproject.org. (4) ***Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict***, by Dr. Mitchell Bard, a great resource on the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict. **Visit** the *American Israel Cooperative Enterprise* at www.israelcc.org/members/aice.htm.

FUTURE DATES FOR FUTURE THINKERS AND PLANNERS:

• **January 27-February 1, 2009: World Social Forum 2009** will occur in Belem, Para, Brazil. **Learn more** at <http://belemjaneiro2008.blogspot.com>. Preparations for a ***Comboni Forum*** are also underway. **See** www.combonianosbne.org/PgEcooos/fsm.html.

• **February 21, 2009: Teacher Training Workshop on the Genocide in Darfur, Sudan** runs from 9 am-12:30 pm at Xavier University's Schiff Family Conference Center as part of XU's larger ***Africa Week***. Those interested will learn about the history of the genocide, and the whys and hows in teaching students about it. Sponsored by *The Greater Cincinnati Advocates for Darfur*. **Contact:** (513) 487-3055.

• **February 22-25, 2009: 2009 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering: *Christ Our Hope: Healing a Broken World*** will take place at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. Speakers include Archbishop Francis Cardinal George, His Excellency Pietro Sambi, Archbishop Odama of Gulu, Uganda and *NewsHour* Commentator Mark Shield. Partner organizational meetings precede the gathering (February 19-21). **Visit** www.catholicsocialministrygathering.org.

• **March 13-16, 2009: 7th Annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice: *Enough for All Creation*** will gather 100s to explore ways to bring about a world with *Enough for All Creation*. Learn about the connections between climate change, migration and poverty. **Visit** www.advocacydays.org.

COMBONILINE: ◆ **Congratulations** to **Fr. David K. Glenday**, the new secretary general of the *Union of Superiors General (USG)* in Rome, beginning March 3, 2009. ◆ The provincial house of South Africa has new e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers. **Contact** Fr. John Converset at secrsa@iburst.co.za.