

Jubilee USA Network Media Kit

3. Sample Press Release. The more your press release looks and sounds like a story in the newspaper, the more likely it is to be used (some papers print press releases verbatim) or get a reporter's attention. It's best to send your press release by email and then follow up with a phone call. You can find contact information for reporters in your area for free through websites such as: <http://capwiz.com/nwlc/dbq/media/>.

For immediate release: January 11, 2007

Contact: Local Name at XXX-XXXX or Debayani Kar at 202-783-0215

[Insert Local Congregation Name] Joins Nationwide Observance of Jubilee Sunday

People of Faith Pray for End to Global Poverty and Take Action with Congress

(Town, City) On Sunday, January 21, 2007, [Local Congregation Name] will join with thousands of people of faith across the country in observing Jubilee Sunday. Jubilee Sunday is a time to pray, reflect and take action to end world poverty by canceling the debts of impoverished countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. As part of Jubilee Sunday celebrations, congregations will call on Congress to observe a Sabbath Year in 2007. Sabbath Year observance refers to a Biblical mandate that requires that debts be cancelled, helping to restore just relationships among peoples and nations every seven years.

“Around the world, one in five people live on less than one dollar a day – extreme poverty that is unimaginable to most Americans. The poor are part of our human family, and our faith requires us to care for them as we would our own parents, siblings, and children,” said Local Spokesperson.

[Local congregation Name] will be reading from Luke 4:14-21, a key Jubilee scripture in which Jesus declares a jubilee or “year of the Lord’s favor” by proclaiming God’s liberation for all oppressed and impoverished people. Parishioners will also write to their Congressmembers and Senators asking them to support new debt legislation in the Sabbath Year.

Jubilee Sunday participants will also call on the U.S. government to support immediate and full debt cancellation for Liberia, under the leadership of its new president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, the first democratically elected female head of state in Africa. Parishioners will send Valentines to the U.S. Treasury urging them to “Have a Heart, and Cancel Liberia’s Debt.” [Congregations can edit this depending on the action they plan to take.]

In the 1970s, developing nations borrowed money often with unfairly high interest rates and sometimes to the benefit of dictators rather than their people. An example of the

impact can be seen in Sub-Saharan Africa, the world's most impoverished region that carries \$201 billion in debt, despite repaying more than 90% of the \$294 billion received between 1970 and 2002. Today, the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa remain burdened by debt, paying \$14 billion annually in debt service.

The demands of powerful creditors force developing nations into a downward spiral of deepening poverty by forcing them to prioritize debt payments over clean water, adequate housing, AIDS prevention, basic health care, and schooling for their people. Many of these debts can be classified as odious and illegitimate because often these debts were contracted by undemocratic regimes such as the Duvaliers in Haiti, Samuel Doe and Charles Taylor in Liberia, Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Suharto in Indonesia.

This is why debt relief works. Three billion dollars in debt relief has enabled Tanzania to increase funding for poverty reduction by 130 percent over the last six years. Their investments in education enabled approximately 1.6 million children to return to school almost overnight. Debt relief has enabled Mozambique to make strides in combating HIV/AIDS. By 2002, 24 testing and counseling offices were opened; 50 offices will be operating by the end of this year.

“As people of faith, we are called to end the suffering of people who live in unimaginable poverty. We can start by asking our elected officials in Washington, D.C. to support bold new debt legislation that would provide full debt cancellation to many more countries that need it,” said Neil Watkins, National Coordinator of the Jubilee USA Network, an alliance of more than 75 religions denominations and human rights groups working to cancel the illegitimate debts of impoverished countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

For more information, please visit <http://www.jubileeusa.org/>

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