



**The United Church
of Canada
General Council**

Mending the World

True Document Date: April 8, 2009

This report, *Mending the World*, contains the distillation of a decade long conversation with the church on the subject of ecumenism. It includes the responses of literally hundreds of people to the study document. The process has laid bare the strong conviction among church members that God, who loves this world, works for its mending, and calls the church to make this work its first priority.

Prelude

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel used to tell the story that when God, the Holy One, gets up in the morning, God gathers the angels of heaven around and asks this simple question: "Where does my creation need mending today?" And then Rabbi Heschel would continue, "Theology consists of worrying about what God worries about when God gets up in the morning."

Margaret Atwood writes, "The facts of this world seen clearly are seen through tears; why tell me then there is something wrong with my eyes?"

"As [Jesus] came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, 'If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!' (Luke 19)

We hold the conviction that the world is at the centre of God's concern. In the words of the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it, the world and they who dwell therein." (24:1) The world is at risk because there are those who, refusing to see through tears, seek dominion and use the instruments of military, economic, political and cultural power to that end. God, who sees clearly through tears, is grieved by the estrangement of God's children from one another and from the created order. God works, at the beginning of the day as at the end, for the mending of creation.

Life in the "whole inhabited earth" (oikoumene) is life in relationship. We are bound up with one another and with the world of nature-not just our kinfolk, or our kind.

We are thus led to speak of "whole world ecumenism," naming the search for justice for God's creatures and healing for God's creation as the church's first priority, and joining with other persons of good will in the search for justice, wholeness and love.

Our passion for the transformation of the world is rooted in our relationship to God in Jesus Christ. God, who is absolute love, mercy and justice, yearns for mending of creation, calling us to see the world through God's tears, and to bend ourselves as church to the task of "worrying about what God worries about when God gets up in the morning."

Document Type: [Social Policy](#)

General Council: [GC43 or earlier](#)

Originating Body: [Other](#)