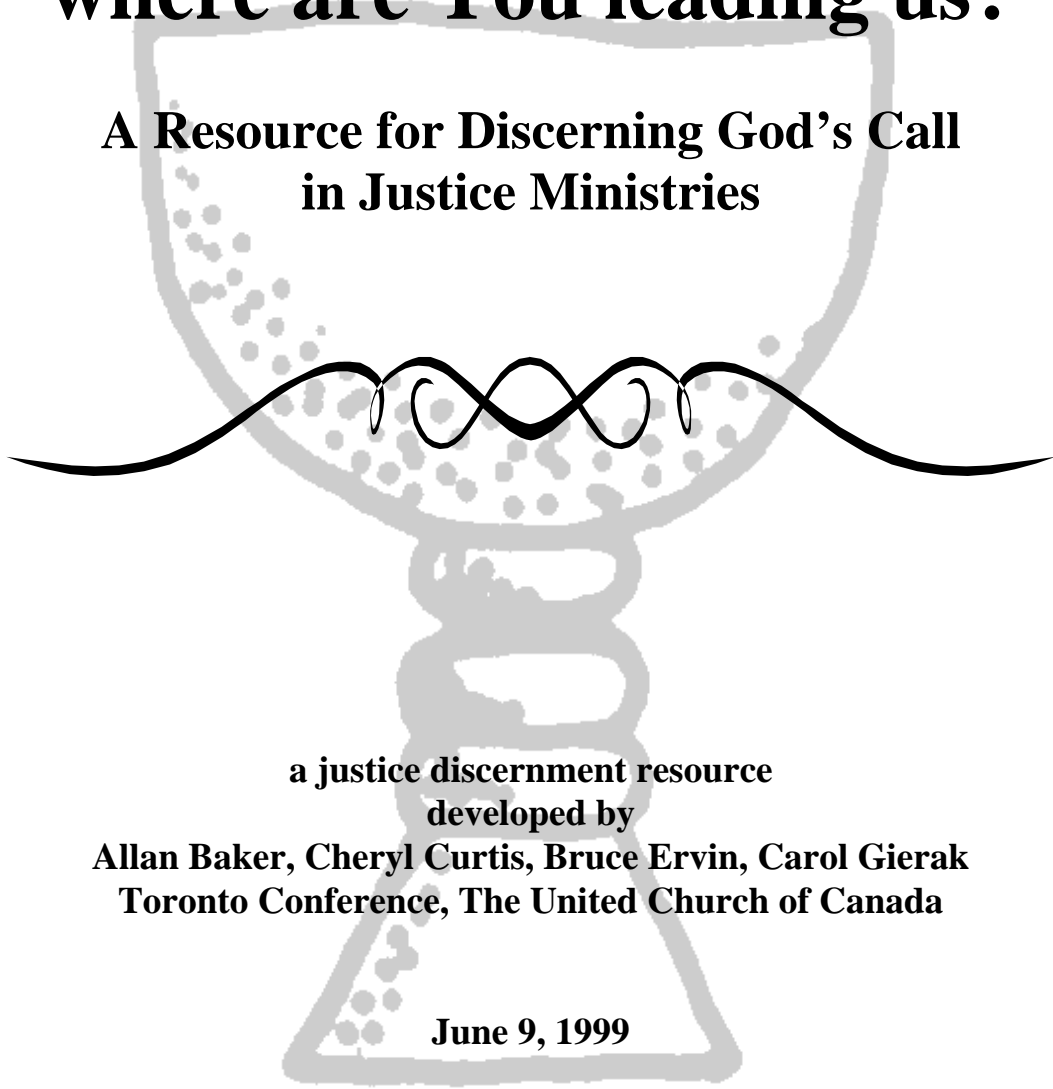


God, where are You leading us?

**A Resource for Discerning God's Call
in Justice Ministries**



**a justice discernment resource
developed by**

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GOD, WHERE ARE YOU LEADING US?

JUSTICE DISCERNMENT RESOURCE

This justice discernment resource is to assist groups identify a ministry through prayer, contemplation with scripture, and understanding our United Church tradition.

Many of us live in a part of the world where we have the good fortune to decide upon a variety of opportunities each day. There is an abundance of choice available, although we often cannot pursue all of the options because of limitations such as time, money, etc. For Christians who are concerned about issues of fairness and equity for all of God's children, regardless of the colour of skin, language, or relative wealth, there seem to be an increasing number of justice issues in which we can choose to be involved. There are people who feel overwhelmed by the injustices that are happening. Some examples are:

- the growing income disparity between "haves" and "have nots" in our communities,
- issues of fairness and equity and treating people with dignity,
- environmental degradation versus stewardship of creation.

How do we decide which issues we are called to address?

One faithful response in today's rush-rush world is to heed the words of caution written by the Psalmist. "Be still and know that I am God." Rather than quickly reacting to every event, we can take time to be centred and pray that our song will be in harmony with God's melody.

As a means to assist groups who struggle with broad mandates to address justice issues, and who experience limited resources, a series of questions have been designed to help discern what God may be calling us to do. These questions are intended to assist a group as it enters the priority setting process, and in its evaluation afterwards. They address four aspects of who we are as people of God: Faithfulness; Community; Gifts/Partners; and Hope.

We understand authority for discernment comes from Hebrew and Christian scripture, our United Church of Canada tradition (particularly as expressed in "A New Creed"), prayer and reason. We are also mindful that we live in a world where justice in the form of social transformation is needed, and yet acts of charity that attend to the basic needs for life such as food and shelter are also required.

May God enable you to discern God's will. We offer these questions in the hope that they will help your group focus, and that your picture of abundant life will not be blurred by a frenzy of possibilities.

JUSTICE DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS - for decision-making and evaluation

1. Faithfulness

In considering whether or not God is calling us to a certain ministry one source of guidance is our faith.

- a. The Bible records God acting in this world through the lives of people and events in their lives. Are there Biblical stories of people who were in similar situations? What actions did God lead people to undertake?
- b. If we were to undertake a similar action, is it consistent with the calling of the church, as expressed in the creed of The United Church of Canada?

2. Community

In our United Church of Canada, community is an essential aspect of our spirituality as a church.

- a. How would undertaking this ministry help build community in the wider world?
- b. How would this ministry help us become a more inter-connected community like the Body of Christ?
- c. In this ministry, how might we recognize and respect the face of Christ in all with whom we will be interacting?

3. Gifts / Partners

Our collective spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 11), talents, and the capacities of our neighbours comprise some of the resources that enable us to enter into ministry.

- a. Who else is working on this issue?
- b. Do we have anything of value to add?
- c. Do we have the gifts, imagination, courage, and will to be fully committed to this ministry?

4. Hope

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)

- a. What do we hope will become from this ministry?
- b. For our group, and for each of us personally, how will our participation nurture our spirituality and deepen our relationship with God?

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