

June 28, 2005

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McConnell:

As you begin working in earnest on the FY 2006 Foreign Operations appropriations bill, we as the leaders of five mainline Protestant denominations want to take this opportunity to share some reflections as well as specific areas of interest within the bill.

In the Christian tradition, we are called to reflect upon Jesus' teaching that economic justice – and the manner in which we treat “the least of these” among us – is at the heart of morality. This teaching proceeds fully from the Old Testament imperative, common to all the Abrahamic faiths, that it is not enough to merely address the *effects* of poverty, hunger, and inequity through works of mercy; we are required to pursue works of justice that make poverty, hunger, and inequity obsolete. “And what does the Lord require of you,” the prophet Micah asks, “but to do justice, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?” Micah's choice of verbs is instructive. We are not to *love* justice or *preach* justice, we are to *do* justice—to act, and, when necessary, to struggle.

Thus, the manner in which a nation uses its resources is one of the most concrete expressions of its shared moral values. Most Americans, regardless of their faith background, share a common set of values that should guide our federal spending. These values include compassion; service of the common good, particularly the weakest among us; and care for all God's people and God's creation, whether at home or abroad.

Our churches operate thousands of charities from the parochial to the international. Believe us when we tell you that neither we, nor our Evangelical brothers and sisters, nor our friends of other faiths have anywhere near the resources to turn back the rising tide of human need around the world. We know that programs, whether governmental or non-profit, can change people's lives for the better. We are doing our part, but government must share in that partnership.

It is our belief that federal spending should not ask the poor to pay for a prosperity in which they cannot share. Viewing the federal appropriations process through this lens, we ask you to consider the following priorities in the FY'06 Foreign Operations appropriations bill:

- **The Global War on HIV/AIDS:** Our Churches are deeply committed to our nation's leadership in the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria around the world both through bilateral programs like PEPFAR and through multilateral programs like The Global Fund. It is impossible to overstate the importance of a vigorous response to these pandemic diseases, not just from a moral perspective but also because they are destabilizing the developing world in a way that puts the future security of our nation and our world in great peril. The Global Fund is of particular importance, as it alone has the capacity to mobilize resources free from ideological restrictions, and is able to reach places like Asia where the pandemic is most on the rise but where PEPFAR does not yet reach. *Consistent with our nation's commitments to the world, Congress should commit at least \$1.5 billion to the Global Fund in FY'06.*
- **The Millennium Challenge Account:** President Bush's Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) has great potential to mobilize U.S. resources for development abroad if it is fully funded and if doing so does not deplete federal resources from other traditional-development

accounts. To date, 24 countries have qualified for MCA funding and yet resources have flowed to just one (Madagascar). It is imperative to give the Millennium Challenge Corporation the resources and the mandate to begin aggressively distributing funding to these countries, all of which demonstrated their commitment to democratic ideals, fighting corruption, and investing in the health and education of people. *Consistent with the vision laid out by the President*

*when he established the program, Congress should fund the MCA at \$5 billion this year.*

- **Other Development Accounts:** At the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, the U.S. made a bold commitment to significantly increase U.S. development assistance and President Bush created the MCA as a way of living out this commitment. As articulated above, we support full funding of the MCA, but we also urge you to boost traditional development-assistance programs which suffer either cuts or level-funding in the President's FY'06 budget. As is made clear by both the reports of both Prime Minister Tony Blair's Commission on Africa and the UN's Millennium Project – each released earlier this year – a significant increase in official development assistance (ODA) from the industrialized world is necessary to meet the targets for poverty reduction embraced by the world at the 2000 Millennium Summit. Currently, the United States – despite being the richest nation in the world, and the largest total donor – contributes the lowest ratio of ODA as a percentage of GNP of any industrialized nation. Prime Minister Blair's proposal to double aid to Africa represents a good starting point for putting the world back on track to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). *We urge you to work with President Bush to insure*

*significantly increased funding for ODA as a means to get all children in school, reduce poverty and hunger, halt the spread of deadly disease, and improve child and maternal survival.*

- **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA):** The UNFPA is the largest internationally funded source of population assistance to developing countries, providing essential services in addressing the health needs of women and families in the developing world. This work is vital in building sustainable communities, promoting maternal and child health, and fighting poverty. These are essential humanitarian steps and are crucial to addressing the root causes of terrorism in developing world. In 2002, President Bush eliminated U.S. funding for the UNFPA due to allegations that the Fund supports coercive population activities in China, a charge that has been disproved repeatedly by impartial investigators, including the administration's own fact-finding team that visited China in 2002. Despite the fact that Congress has included money for the UNFPA in its appropriations bills every year since then, the State Department has refused to allow the money's release. *We urge you to fund the*

*UNFPA at a minimum of \$35 million and to include language in the appropriations bill prohibiting the State Department from withholding the funds.*

We pray that these reflections are helpful to you as you undertake your vital work. Together, let us pledge ourselves to creating a nation in which economic policies are infused with the spirit of the man who began his public ministry almost 2,000 years ago by proclaiming that God had anointed him "to bring good news to the poor."

Please be assured that you are ever in our prayers as you seek to meet the challenges of public service.

Sincerely,

**The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold**  
Residing Bishop and Primate  
of the Episcopal Church, USA

**The Reverend Mark Hanson**  
Residing Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America and President of the Lutheran  
World Federation

**The Reverend Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick**  
State Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.)

**Mr. James Winkler**  
General Secretary, General Board of Church and  
Society  
United Methodist Church

**The Reverend John H. Thomas**  
General Minister and President  
United Church of Christ

Contact information:

**The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold**  
Residing Bishop and Primate  
of the Episcopal Church, USA  
815 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

**The Reverend Mark Hanson**  
President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and President of the Lutheran World  
Federation  
8765 W. Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631

**The Reverend Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick**  
Moderator of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.)  
100 Witherspoon Street  
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

**The Reverend John H. Thomas**  
General Minister and President  
United Church of Christ  
700 Prospect Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44115

**Mr. James Winkler**  
General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society  
United Methodist Church  
100 Maryland Avenue, NE  
Washington, D.C. 20002