



# A Policy Agenda for



# THE NEW ADMINISTRATION

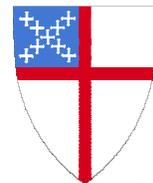
## From Communities of Faith



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**



**Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**  
IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA



**The Episcopal Church**



**Church of the Brethren Witness/**  
*Washington Office*



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.



**Presbyterian Church (USA)**  
*Washington Office*



**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**





*As U.S. Churches, church agencies and ecumenical organizations*, we represent a broad U.S. constituency. We also know first-hand the concerns and needs of millions of our partners throughout the world. We maintain vital fraternal relationships in every part of the world. These relationships, along with the theology that calls us to a ministry of reconciliation in the world, form the basis for our public policy advocacy and for the policy agenda that we offer for the new President on a U.S. response to poverty and conflict in the world.

We do so inspired by a theological tradition that places concern for the poor, the vulnerable and the oppressed squarely at the moral center of a just people's identity. Responding to poverty and human suffering is inscribed deeply in the humanitarian values of our faith, and is likewise imbedded in the shared values and traditions of the American people. As the Bible makes clear (Isaiah 58:6-12), God calls us to "offer our food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted." This command comes with a promise: "then your light shall rise in the darkness and break forth like the dawn."

## **FIGHTING DEADLY POVERTY AND DISEASE**

### **Better, More Effective Foreign Assistance**

In order to effectively address poverty around the world, our nation must not only increase and expand development assistance, but must take new steps to ensure that the money is used in effective and transparent ways that alleviate poverty and disease. *Such efforts are vital even in tight economic times, as they both serve the humanitarian objectives of our nation as well as contribute to the creation of stable, secure communities around the world.*

#### **We urge the next President to:**

- ✓ Continue to escalate our nation's response to HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.
- ✓ Invest in economically empowering women in the developing world, who are 66 percent of the workforce but earn less than five percent of income.
- ✓ Invest in the health and well-being of children, at least 200 million of whom have been orphaned as a result of AIDS or poverty.
- ✓ Support legislation to help achieve universal primary education for the 100 million children, 60% of whom are girls, who cannot afford to attend school.
- ✓ Create a foreign-policy emphasis, including new investments, on clean water and sanitation for all people.
- ✓ Ensure funding for impoverished communities to adapt to the effects of climate change.
- ✓ Renew our nation's commitment to refugees and internally displaced persons.
- ✓ Lead a review and reform of U.S. foreign aid to ensure effectiveness and accountability.

### **Debt Cancellation**

The effectiveness of foreign aid is undercut dramatically by the debt burdens of poor countries. Despite substantial increases in foreign aid over the past ten years, poor countries still lose more money in debt repayments each year than they receive in aid. These debts, often for decades-old loans made by rich countries or international lending institutions, critically hamper poor countries' ability to address the health and wellbeing of their people. Over the past decade, limited debt-cancellation programs have allowed a handful of poor countries to increase school enrollment dramatically, make strides against HIV/AIDS, and promote clean water and sanitation. **A**



*significant expansion of these successes should be a priority in the next President's strategy to fight poverty and disease abroad.*

**We urge the next President to:**

- ✓ Commit to developing a strategy with other international donors and lenders.
- ✓ Work to fully finance 100% debt cancellation, both multilateral and bilateral, for countries that need it to meet the Millennium Development Goals and can guarantee savings will be used for the health and well-being of citizens.
- ✓ Ensure that all future U.S. poverty-focused foreign assistance is made in the form of grants rather than new loans.

## **Fair Trade**

Unlike foreign aid and debt cancellation, which are temporary responses to poverty and suffering, international trade is one important way that developing countries can make economic progress and achieve long-term growth on their own steam. For this reason, the U.S. and developing countries alike need fair and just trade agreements that meet the goals of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. These policies must serve Americans' wellbeing at home while also promoting social and economic development that allows people in poor countries to live lives of dignity, sufficiency, and community participation. **Such agreements are good not just for the economic well-being of the United States and its global neighbors, but also for the stability and security of the world.**

**We urge the next President to support trade policies that:**

- ✓ Ensure full democratic accountability and citizen participation both in the U.S. and in other trade-partner nations.
- ✓ Strengthen the domestic markets of poor countries, expand their livelihoods, bolster their small-holder farmers, and promote local agriculture.
- ✓ Prioritize ecological sustainability and climate stability.
- ✓ Require (pre and post) country-impact evaluations to assess the effects of trade agreements on eco-systems, poverty eradication, job growth, and food security.
- ✓ Preserve the right of developing countries to retain control over their own development policies and not be forced to make trade concessions that negatively impact poverty alleviation.
- ✓ Reform trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, in order that U.S. commodity crops do not undermine local production in developing countries.
- ✓ Preserve the right and capacity of developing countries to provide affordable access to essential medicines and essential public services, such as water, health care and education, to their people.

## **PROMOTING PEACE WITH JUSTICE**

### **Iraq:**

Despite varied opinion about the controversial invasion of Iraq in 2003, it is clear that the stability of the Middle East region depends, in large part, on the ability of the current Iraqi Government to successfully facilitate internal stability through legitimate representative governance structures that



are inclusive of Iraqi sectarian and ethnic diversity, that establish the rule of law and promote human rights.

**We urge the next President to:**

- ✓ Seek to establish a relationship with Iraq that responsibly ends U.S. military operations and fully re-establishes Iraqi sovereignty.
- ✓ Encourage and aid long-term stability in the region.
- ✓ Include high-level diplomatic engagement with Iran and Syria in this effort.

## The Holy Land:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict not only destabilizes the Middle East and brings ongoing suffering to Israelis and Palestinians; it also threatens U.S. national security. The realization of a viable two-state solution where Israel and Palestine live side-by-side within secure and recognized borders, and a shared Jerusalem as capital of both, is critical to ending human suffering and promoting stability in the region.

**We urge the next President to:**

- ✓ Engage in robust diplomacy to make concrete progress toward a two-state agreement resulting in a secure Israel and a viable Palestinian state.
- ✓ Support economic development in the Palestinian territories.
- ✓ Promote pluralism in the Holy Land by ensuring the viability of the Palestinian Christian community.

## Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan:

**We urge the next President to:**

- ✓ Reject military action against Iran.
- ✓ Engage in sustained, direct, bilateral and comprehensive talks with Iran on the issues of Iran's nuclear program, Iraq and other issues of mutual concern.
- ✓ Support a U.S. commitment to help bring stability in Afghanistan and address political, economic and humanitarian challenges.
- ✓ Increase aid to Pakistan to include more economic and development assistance and support for democratic initiatives.
- ✓ Work to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation with the goal of normalizing Pakistan's borders.

## Africa:

The African continent, with its rich traditions, vast wealth and peoples struggling to overcome poverty and conflict, calls for a robust, wise and compassionate response from the United States.

**We urge the next President to:**

- ✓ In Sudan, work vigorously for full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) governing North-South relations and for sustainable political resolution of the ongoing conflict in Darfur.



- ✓ In Uganda, work with regional states and the United Nations to develop a credible containment strategy for the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and apprehension of its leaders, while demobilizing remaining rebels and supporting the immediate resettlement and economic development of communities in northern Uganda.
- ✓ In the Congo, implement diplomatic and economic help for the Congolese government and civil society to establish the rule of law and to end destabilization by armed groups in eastern Congo.

## Latin America and the Caribbean:

Resolving existing conflicts in this region and preventing new ones requires addressing root causes. More than half of Latin Americans live in poverty, with a huge gap in income between the rich and the poor.

### We urge the next President to:

- ✓ Work as a true partner in support of Latin American governmental and civil society efforts to implement broad-based development strategies that alleviate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals, with special emphasis on poverty reduction in marginalized communities including indigenous and Afro-descendants.
- ✓ Support negotiated, rather than military, resolutions of armed conflicts.
- ✓ Actively support the consolidation of democracy and respect for human rights.
- ✓ Provide assistance for improving the rule of law and public security.
- ✓ Lift the embargo on Cuba, or at a minimum, end the ban on travel to Cuba by U.S. citizens.

*If you share your bread with the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted...  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn. —Isaiah 58: 7-8*