



**Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice**  
**HCR 83 Box 881 Shade Gap PA 17255**  
**814-259-3372 grassroots1@pa.net**

November 6, 2008

Dear President Obama,

I'm a former MD Province Jesuit priest (1953-1970). Since I left the Jesuits, I've spent most of my life going to Catholic churches in the Northeast and Midwest, speaking at the Masses to urge parishioners to implement Catholic Social teaching.

We are now focusing on these metropolitan areas: Baltimore, Boston, Camden, Chicago, New York, Norwich CT, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. As additional resources appear, we shall include other parts of the country.

Our basic objective is to create a more just, compassionate and democratic society. Easy to say and very difficult to do, as you well know.

During all those years we have continued to reflect on what comes of our work and to search for the most effective approach.

Our basic process consists in reaching out to as many people as possible in order to persuade and assist them to get involved in the political process and in the economic process, and to use their power of the ballot and their power of the purse to reshape society in accordance with their deepest convictions and values.

We do not limit ourselves to churches and colleges. We seek to work through those people to get to the rest of society.

**I'm writing to ask if you would suggest a contact person in your Administration for us to keep in touch with over the coming months and years, in order to explore possible forms of collaboration, one of which would be to engineer support for your policies and programs.**

Thanks very much.

You came along just in time. Four more years of Republican rule would have been a great disaster for the American people.

Sincerely,

  
John Conner



29 November 2007

B2118

Dear John,

Thank you for your letter concerning your work for Climate Change, in particular with the issue being discussed and acted upon within the Catholic Church.

It is good of you to write and to let me have your succinct explanation of the problem and the solution that you propose.

Thank you for writing and with kind wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Archbishop of Westminster

Mr John Conner  
HCR 83  
Box 881  
Shade Gap PA  
17255  
U S A



*St. Matthew Church*  
5401 Loch Raven Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21239

November 18, 2002

Mr. John Connors  
Grassroots Coalition  
Box 369  
Libertytown, MD 21762

Dear John,

Thank you for your most recent gathering at St. Matthew. You have called together 10 people from several different countries and religious affiliations to begin the process of breaking the back of the multi-national clothing industry in the U.S.A. by making clothes that are not made in sweatshops.

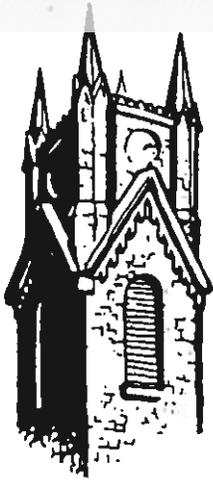
This process began at St. Matthew's about 5 years ago and through a slow, respectful, and steady process you have come to this point. You have spoken at our church services several times a year and parishioners have purchased clothing from you not made in sweatshops.

Your work and your attitude continues to bring hope to many young lives around the world. The work against sweatshops and the clothing industry is an awesome task, however, you have begun to make inroads through your work.

I recommend you and your work to other parishes and dioceses in the United States and support your efforts in this regard.

Sincerely,

Rev. Joseph L. Muth, Jr.  
Pastor



# Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church

Founded in 1857

85 South Oxford Street • Brooklyn, New York 11217

Church Telephone: (718) 625-7515

Fax: (718) 797-4556

The Rev. David W. Dyson  
Pastor

August 5, 1999

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to be able to write on behalf of the Grassroots Coalition for Environmental and Economic Justice and our good friends Iona and John Conner. Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church is proud to be a part of the coalition because we believe in the vision and the method.

Our church was skillfully recruited by the Conners because of our history of social justice work, in particular our involvement in child labor and sweatshop issues. They have made several trips to Brooklyn to educate our congregation and to establish a permanent "outpost" to market the sweat free/chemical free clothes.

The Conners work appealed to us because in a world of growing inequality, charity is not enough. Even in the U S, the gap between rich and poor is widening and money is becoming a more and more pernicious influence in political life. As the Conners say, there are a great number of social justice efforts which focus on direct service. What is needed, is work like theirs, work for systemic change. As we say at Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, will we spend our time holding the hands of the world's victims, or will we work to make sure there are fewer victims? Iona and John Conner have chosen the second path. What they are doing is innovative and creative, at considerable sacrifice to their personal lives.

We are now, working together, at the stage of creating markets for the clothing. The cooperatives come next. Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church will continue to work internally, and then eventually will join clusters of churches to increase our coordination and market.

We highly recommend this work to funders of any kind. What Iona and John are doing is building a foundation for a new market. People are tired of no choices except clothing made under oppressive conditions. This is an idea whose time has come. We must make sure the idea flourishes and grows.

Faithfully,

Rev. David W. Dyson  
Pastor



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

Office of the Archbishop



Post Office Box 1979  
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979

October 15, 1998

Mr. John Conner  
P.O. Box 369  
Libertytown, MD 21762

Dear John,

I received your September 15 letter in which you describe your efforts to promote social justice through economic transformation.

You propose a most ambitious plan. I commend your energy and enthusiasm. However, it seems that you face formidable odds. You mentioned that your resources are quite limited, and that you rely on borrowing from credit card companies to fund your work. I hope that this does not place you in personal financial peril.

I will keep you and your wife in my prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.  
Archbishop of Chicago



Building a Brighter  
Future

Rev. James F. Murphy, V.F., Pastor  
Rev. George J. Palick, Parochial Vicar

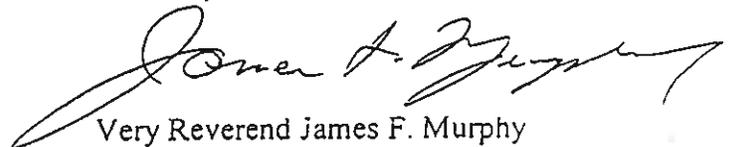
Dear Sister,

Economic justice is a large moral issue facing our world today. The Church has written and talked much about this issue and in some cases made concrete efforts to put their thinking into action. The most successful of these efforts have been accomplished not through money but by personal commitment. Many dedicated religious women and men have made a difference in economic justice throughout our world and since the beginning of the proclamation of the Word. Today's culture demands that this great effort become part and parcel of the laity's commitment to the Gospel.

I have struggled thought out the thirty years of my priesthood to involve the laity in economic justice issues. I have in large part failed until I encountered John Conner and his Grassroots Coalition work. John invited the people of my parish to become involved in the work of "assisting people to understand the economic, financial and political workings of society that produce the grave injustices that afflict all of us." (The Mission of the Grassroots coalition) To my great surprise this middle and upper-middle class parish responded with enthusiasm.

This response of the people put in my spiritual care leads me to recommend John and his work very highly. If the Grassroots Coalition can affect enough of the middle and upper-middle class Christian people to get involved in this work of Christian faith development, I think a great step will be taken to bring Jesus' work and words to life in a particularly deaf and dead part of our Christian history.

Sincerely,



Very Reverend James F. Murphy