

January 27, 2009

The Honorable Timothy Geithner  
Secretary of the Treasury  
US Department of Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC, 20220

Dear Secretary Geithner:

Congratulations on your appointment. You are in our prayers as you take on this challenging new role at a critical point in our nation's history.

**We are writing to request a meeting with you during the week of February 9 to share our thoughts on the importance of protecting the world's poor in the context of the current financial crisis.**

As religious leaders, the thousands of people in our congregations and communities who have lost their homes or their jobs due to the current economic crisis are very much on our minds and in our hearts at this time. We know that their situation must weigh heavily on you as well as you lead our country's response to this crisis.

Our faith traditions compel us to prioritize the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, whether in our own country or internationally. We fear that the global financial crisis will impact the world's impoverished countries the hardest. Hard times affect us all, but the greatest burden is borne by the poor. For many of those already living on the margins, the current economic crisis is literally a life and death emergency.

Take Haiti for example. On top of last year's hurricanes, volatility in food and energy prices brought on by the global economic crisis created massive food insecurity among the poorest sectors of the population and threatens large-scale starvation in the upcoming months. Haiti will be severely and negatively affected by a downturn in the United States economy. Not only are exports to the US a significant percentage of Haiti's GDP, Haiti is also heavily dependent on remittances from Haitians living in the US.

In addition to leading our nation's economic recovery, you are charged with shaping our country's global economic policies. We would like to meet with you to share our thoughts on the importance of protecting the world's poor in the context of the current financial crisis and to deliver thousands of letters to you from people of faith and conscience across the United States outlining some of the key issues. As members and partners of the Jubilee USA Network, we are particularly interested in discussing international debt cancellation and responsible international finance as effective tools to alleviate the impact of the economic crisis in the world's poorest countries.

We recognize the many demands on your time and can schedule a meeting at your convenience. If possible we request a meeting at some point during the week of February 9th. **Please respond to Kristin Sundell, Deputy Director of the Jubilee USA Network, who will be coordinating the meeting. She can be reached at 202-783-0215 or [kristin@jubileeusa.org](mailto:kristin@jubileeusa.org).** We hope and trust that this initial meeting will be the beginning of a strong and productive relationship between the Treasury Department, the Jubilee USA Network and the faith community.

Thank you and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

David Beckmann, President  
Bread for the World

Dr. Stephen Colecchi  
Director, International Justice and Peace  
US Conference of Catholic Bishops

Inelda Gonzalez, President  
United Methodist Women

Marie Lucey, Associate Director for Social  
Mission  
Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Ruth Messinger, President  
American Jewish World Service

Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk  
Office of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator  
218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, President  
National Hispanic Christian Leadership  
Conference

Bishop Peter Rogness, Chair,  
International Policy Committee  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Bishop Floyd M. Schoenhals  
Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori,  
Presiding Bishop and Primate  
The Episcopal Church

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director and Counsel  
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Ronald J. Sider, President  
Evangelicals for Social Action

Brian Swarts, National Coordinator  
Micah Challenge USA

Rev. John H. Thomas, General Minister and  
President  
United Church of Christ

Rev. Jim Wallis, Founder and CEO  
Sojourners

Neil Watkins, Executive Director  
Jubilee USA Network

Jim Winkler, General Secretary  
General Board of Church and Society  
United Methodist Church