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Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
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Chairman Graham, Ranking Member Leahy, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for inviting me to testify before your distinguished Committee that oversees such far-reaching responsibilities around the world. I want to begin by saying that I have so much respect and admiration for each of you and your leadership in this subcommittee, and it is an honor to call many of you friends. What you are doing matters to our nation, it matters to our world, and it is literally a matter of life and death for many people around the world. I commend this subcommittee for being a model of bipartisan leadership and problem solving on so many critical issues including global health.

My name is Rick Warren and in addition to being the founding pastor of Saddleback Church in California and author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, I lead the Purpose Driven Network of Churches, which has trained over 400,000 pastors, priests, and ministers of congregations in 164 countries. I am also the founder of the Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan which has sent teams to serve in 197 countries. P.E.A.C.E. is an acronym for *Promote reconciliation, Equip ethical leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, and Educate the next generation*. In the past 12 years, I've sent 24,869 of my church members to serve in 197 countries (That's 57 more countries that the Peace Corps has served).

Before I address the issue of global health and development, I want to first commend you and thank you for your previous hearing on *Protecting Religious Freedom Abroad*. If America doesn't take the leadership on that issue, no one will. It is not by accident that religious liberty is called America's "**first freedom**." It's what made our nation unique. Religious liberty and the freedom of conscience is the *first* phrase, of the *first* sentence, of the *first* amendment in our Bill of Rights. Freedom of religion comes before freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to assemble, the right to bear arms, and every other freedom. That's because it is the cornerstone of all our freedoms. If we don't have the freedom to believe and practice our beliefs, then we don't need freedom of speech or the freedom of the press or the freedom to assemble. All the other freedoms flow out of our first freedom. We must preserve this in America at all costs. No other country was founded on this freedom, and we must champion religious liberty and freedom of conscience around the world.

I'd also like to thank and congratulate Senator Blunt for his successful sponsorship of the

Near East Religious Freedom Act. Last year, King Abdullah of Jordan asked me to convene a 2 day conference in Amman, Jordan on “Violence against Arab Christians” in light of church bombings and beheadings in Egypt, Syria, and other Arab nations. I brought the top Arab Christian leaders from all 22 Arab nations including Coptic, Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and other Christian leaders. Those Middle Eastern leaders asked me to thank you.

Now to the issue of global health. As you know, from your hearing on development with my friends Bill Gates & Scott Ford, we have made enormous progress toward ending pandemics like HIV, malaria and TB. Now is the time – *while the momentum is headed in the right direction*- to step up our efforts and *eradicate* these preventable diseases in this generation. How will that be possible?

It will take 3 catalytic factors:

1. **We must form a NEW PERSPECTIVE on foreign assistance.**
2. **We must forge NEW PARTNERSHIPS in distribution.**
3. **We must fund a NEW PRIORITY in the budget.**

I’d like to spend most of my time talking about the second factor- *new partnerships in distribution*- but let me first explain what I mean by a new perspective.

WE MUST FORM A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON ASSISTANCE

There are voices today who sincerely believe that in an age of budget restraints, America should eliminate most, or even all, of our foreign assistance. This idea resonates with many voters for two reasons: First, most Americans are completely unaware that foreign assistance is less than 1% of our national budget. Second, few realize the *strategic* value of foreign assistance. They’ve never considered that the right kind of foreign assistance - especially for health, education, and development - ***may be our most effective and cost-efficient strategy for security against the next generation of terrorism.*** This is what I mean by “a new perspective.”

Proverbs 3:27 tells us it is morally wrong to withhold assistance from those who need it when we have the power to help them. But there are also strategic reasons why it would be shortsighted and unwise to cut back our assistance in global health.

First, when America saves the lives of people dying from preventable diseases, we make friends for our nation. Around the world I have been often told, “Please thank Americans for PEPFAR. It saved my husband’s life and kept our family from economic disaster. We will always be grateful to America, and we pray for you.”

When we make friends by saving lives, potential enemies are turned in to grateful allies. If someone saves your life you have zero desire to terrorize them. In my travels I’ve observed that when poor countries are overwhelmed by pandemics, stuck in poverty, and have no capital to create opportunities, they become resentful of nations with abundant resources that ignore their plight. This resentment makes them ripe for angry ideologies of revenge and retaliation.

It's far more cost-effective and cheaper for America to send medicines to make friends now, than to send troops to fight enemies later. Medicines cost less than tanks. The resources that we budget for humanitarian relief, health programs, economic development, education, and training can save us from spending far more to send soldiers when the resentment boils over.

Second, the rest of the world looks to America for its model of generosity. When we are generous, it unleashes other funds around the world. If we reduce our commitment to the sick and the unfortunate, we can be certain that other nations and entities will cut back too. We do not want to be the model for self-centeredness.

Now I realize this is not the appropriate committee for my next comment, but I'd like to get it on record that if we want Americans to be personally generous with the needy, we need a tax code that incentivizes generosity, rather than capping it. But that's another hearing.

The second catalytic factor to eradicating preventable diseases is:

WE MUST FORGE NEW PARTNERSHIPS IN DISTRIBUTION

The reason we must do this is because even if we had enough medicines and resources to eradicate all preventable diseases, there would still be the problem of distribution to the farthest corners of the earth.

Sometimes a football player is so huge that the opposing team has to gang up and "team tackle" that player. He won't be brought down by one player. It takes a partnership of multiple players to defeat him. The same is true of the globe's greatest problems: extreme poverty, pandemic diseases, illiteracy and education, conflict and corruption. No government can solve all these problems by itself and neither can any business or NGO.

I've been invited to speak several times at the Davos World Economic Forum and every time I go I hear the common refrain "We must have public and private partnerships" to solve the world's biggest problems. While I agree that is certainly important, my reply is always the same; "You're close to the solution, but you're missing the third leg of the stool! You are implying that there are only two sectors of society when there are actually three, and you are leaving out the largest sector by far: the faith sector.

A one-legged stool, or even a two-legged stool, will fall over. For balance and stability you must have three legs. In addressing global problems we need a three-legged stool. We must engage the public sector (government), the private sector (businesses/NGOs) and the faith sector (local houses of worship). Each sector brings unique strengths to the table and each is incomplete without the others.

Governments set national priorities and agendas. Their role is to protect the people, preserve freedom, provide opportunity, and promote prosperity. Businesses and the private sector also have a vital function in attacking global problems. They provide capital investments, expertise, technology, and management skills.

But the faith sector brings several critical missing elements to the table that no government nor NGO nor business will ever have. One of these elements is universal distribution. Many people will be surprised to learn that the largest international network is not Walmart or McDonalds, but the Christian church. The church is a network that links people in *every* country, *every* social or ethnic group, and *every* economic strata together. It includes one out of every 3 people on the planet, and has literally millions and millions of local outposts around the globe.

The Church –in all its expressions – Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, Protestant, and many others - is unequivocally the largest and most widespread network in the world. Nothing else is even a close second. With 2.3 billion members of local congregations, the Church is larger than China and India combined. The Christian church speaks more languages than the United Nations, and is represented in thousands of subgroups of people you've never heard of.

The Church was global hundreds of years before anyone thought of globalization.

I could take you to millions of villages around the world where the only civil institution that exists there is a local church. They have no school, no clinic, no post office, no store – but they have a church! In many nations, outside of the capital, the only service organization you can find anywhere is a church. In most of the world, you cannot talk about community development without including the church, because in most villages, the church *is* the community!

Local churches also offer the largest pool of motivated voluntary manpower, long-term grassroots commitment, a motivation to help others, and built-in credibility with local residents.

Governments are limited by geography and the sovereign rights of other nations. Businesses, even multinationals, must deal with the barriers of local customs and languages. But indigenous congregations face none of these barriers. We must partner with churches for distribution of health care and other services. Saddleback church has been doing this around the world for 12 years and the results have been stunning. It's cheaper and faster than any NGO.

Finally, the 3rd catalytic factor needed to eradicate preventable diseases is:

WE MUST FUND A NEW PRIORITY IN THE BUDGET

While there are many expenditures in our national budget that could be reduced, I

believe we need to increase our foreign assistance for global health, for the reason that I stated earlier. From what I've witnessed around the world, America is getting a great return on investment from your appropriations. The benefits, both to our country and other nations, are many times greater than the fraction of our budget that goes to foreign assistance.

Through the P.E.A.C.E. plan in 197 nations, I've become friends with many presidents and national leaders. I am including in this paper a list of suggestions that I've heard over the years:

WHAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE IS MOST HELPFUL?

1. Without targeting economic development to fight poverty, aid can never be sustainable.

2. Funding should reflect true accountability in which both parties are held accountable

This helps to improve country ownership of the management, measurement, monitoring and planning.

3. "Smart" aid supports alignment with national plans that are committed to development and fighting poverty, leaving no one out from benefitting.

(A good example of this is Rwanda's national health sector's strategy that is synergistic with their economic development and poverty reduction strategy (EDPRS).

4. Aid should respect the culture and the history of the country it aims to support, recognizing that the best options are always informed by the needs of the people intended to benefit from them expressed by themselves.

5. Countries are hungry for data collection systems, and information and communication technologies (ICT) that can be used for improved evidence-based policymaking in all sectors. This would help assure not just improved accessibility to services but also the quality of the services provided.

6. The most helpful assistance focuses on sustainable human development at the grassroots level. The most universal grassroots organization of earth is the local house of worship. Churches are the only social structure in millions of villages around the world.

7. Funding must target both the upstream causes of ill-health (i.e. socioeconomic determinants) and the symptoms of poverty (i.e. disease and disability.)

CONCLUSION:

Ten years ago, on October 20, 2005 the Associated Press quoted Senator Majority Leader Bill Frist as saying, *"The American people expect and deserve a United States Senate that is purpose driven, and gets results. We are called upon to govern with meaningful solutions."* I believe that is still true today, and I'm certain that you believe that too. Thank you Mr. Chairman, Senator Leahy, and thank you Committee

Members for your time. I look forward to working with any of you in forming a new perspective on assistance, forging new partnerships in distribution, and funding a new priority in the budget. May God bless you all.

Addendum 1: Overview of HIV initiative of the P.E.A.C.E. plan Six Ways Any C.H.U.R.C.H. Can Serve Those With HIV

Care for and support the sick Churches are commanded to care. It is their calling. Love leaves no choice! Local congregations are the only caring organization found in almost every community around the world. Members can offer physical and emotional care in homes

Handle testing and counseling Churches are the most trusted organizations in communities, so people may be more willing to be tested and counseled there. Just being tested has proven to promote healthier behavior. Members can be trained to give medical, emotional and family counsel to those receiving results from their testing.

Unleash a volunteer labor force Churches have the largest volunteer labor force on the planet representing more than 2 billion members. What if half of those could be mobilized? There aren't enough professionals in the world to teach prevention, administer treatment and offer care to those who need it. There is an enormous pool of untapped talent and energy sitting unused in churches waiting to be mobilized.

Remove the stigma Churches must embrace infected individuals, remove abuse and alienation and replace rejection with mercy. They can provide faith, hope, love, forgiveness and grace – spiritual support, which neither business nor government are able to offer.

Champion healthy behavior HIV/AIDS is complex and yet preventable. Churches have the moral authority to promote healthy behavior and to offer moral imperatives for the family and teach the moral motivation for abstinence and faithfulness. To resist peer pressure and relapse, faithfulness requires faith

Help with nutrition and medical adherence. For treatment to become universal, we must develop a church-supported treatment model with peer treatment coaches. Organizations come and go, but churches are permanent community fixtures. Members can be trained to distribute HIV/AIDS medications and support essential nutrition. The church can offer pre-treatment preparation, treatment education, adherence support, direct observation therapy (DOT) and treatment coaching to the entire family..

Addendum 2: Western Rwanda Healthcare Initiative of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan