

THE REV. CHARLES S. CURRIE, JR.

A MINISTER IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

January 4, 2010

SENT VIA E-MAIL

The Honorable Barack Obama
c/o Joshua DuBois
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Please accept my best New Year Wishes.

It was a great honor for me to be invited to the White House this year to attend one of the holiday parties you and the First Lady hosted. Joshua DuBois and Paul Monteiro were exceedingly gracious to me during my short visit to Washington and I will remember being at the White House for a lifetime.

As you are well aware, the State of the Union Address will occur sometime in the next several weeks.

I am writing to ask that you include in your address a reaffirmation of the promise you made during the campaign to reduce poverty in America by 50% over the next 10 years. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has provided a critical boost to programs working to help people lift themselves out of poverty but the systemic problems go much deeper than the Recovery Act can address.

Your 2008 campaign adopted many of the same goals outlined by the Center for American Progress in their paper "From Poverty to Prosperity: A National Strategy to Cut Poverty in Half."

Lifting up the needs of the historic numbers of Americans now living in poverty and offering concrete solutions for how our nation can address this deeply moral crisis would provide hope for millions of Americans. We need churches, businesses and volunteers to be involved in this effort, of course, but will also need the power of the federal government to lead the way.

I know that the best anti-poverty effort one could undertake is the course you are now engaged in: working to fix the economic crisis inherited by your administration and attempting to spur employment.

The needs of those living in deep poverty, however, deserve the attention of the president. You could use the State of the Union as a call to arms and shine a light on a problem many Americans are unaware of.

Scriptures tell us: "...if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday... you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in (Isaiah 58 NRSV)."

Please consider making the cause of fighting poverty a central message in your State of the Union Address.

Your brother in Christ,



The Rev. Chuck Currie



CC: Paul Monteiro, The White House
The Rev. Michael Kinnamon, General Secretary, National Council of Churches
The Rev. Jim Wallis, Editor, Sojourners
The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President,
Christian Church (DOC)
Mr. Harry Know, Human Rights Campaign
The Rev. Geoffrey Black, General Minister and President, United Church of
Christ