



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

March 31, 2009

To the Members of the United States Congress:

As CEO of Church World Service, the global humanitarian agency of 35 Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican communions in the United States, I write to urge you to co-sponsor legislation that would end the ban on travel to Cuba (S. 428 / H.R. 874).

For our member communions with sister churches in Cuba, the travel ban has meant a significant reduction – and in some cases cessation – in the ability to send religious delegations to Cuba and to accompany and support Cuban church partners.

The travel restrictions diminish the ability of the churches to carry out their core Christian mission. Relationship and fellowship are at the core of the churches' understanding of their life and mission. To hinder this activity is to strike at the heart of the churches' religious identity and freedom.

The decades-long U.S. policy toward Cuba has not brought about change in the Cuban government, while limiting the relationships between people of faith in the United States and those in Cuba, disrupting the close historical bonds between our churches. I cannot emphasize too strongly how important this matter is to major U.S. national church bodies.

For these reason, I request that Congress end the ban on travel to Cuba, which will restore an important freedom to U.S. citizens, assist the churches in their work and benefit all Americans.

Thank you for giving urgent consideration to this concern.

Sincerely,

Reverend John L. McCullough
Executive Director & CEO
Church World Service

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 700 New York, NY 10115 tel (212) 870-2061 fax (212) 870-3523 www.churchworldservice.org
28606 Phillips Street P.O. Box 968 Elkhart, IN 46515 tel (800) 297-1516 fax (219) 262-0966 info@churchworldservice.org

Participating Denominations and Communions: African Methodist Episcopal Church African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church Alliance of Baptists American Baptist Churches USA The Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
Armenian Church of America (including Diocese of California) Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) Christian Methodist Episcopal Church Church of the Brethren The Coptic Orthodox Church in North America The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Friends United Meeting Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Hungarian Reformed Church in America International Council of Community Churches Korean Presbyterian Church in America
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church Mar Thoma Church Moravian Church in America National Baptist Convention of America National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc. National Missionary Baptist Convention of America Orthodox Church in America
Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Polish National Catholic Church of America Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.
Reformed Church in America Serbian Orthodox Church in the U.S.A. and Canada The Swedenborgian Church Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America United Church of Christ The United Methodist Church