

## Poverty/Federal Budget

### Theological/Ethical Reflection

- Treatment of the poor is a consistent Biblical measure of governmental justice.
- Government responsibility for the common good includes a just sharing of resources and protecting the most vulnerable.
- Budgets are moral documents. They should reflect values of equality, opportunity and justice.

### Background

The disparity between rich and poor continues to grow. Jobs pay too little to lift people out of poverty. Growing percentages of those using church food programs are the working poor. When taxes are reduced for the wealthiest Americans, it reduces the federal government's capacity to provide services for our most vulnerable citizens.

### Current Situation:

- Foreclosures, growing unemployment and recession have created increased demand for government services.
- Inflation, driven particularly by rising fuel prices, places burdens on vulnerable populations and programs.

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- The proposed budget would result in vital housing, home energy, nutrition, health, education, and other services unable to keep up with existing use, much less rising need.
- Since FY2005 human needs appropriations show serious erosions in funding

What Will Help:

- Include the highest possible domestic discretionary funding.
- Include reserve funds that contribute to health and well-being as well as economic growth.
- Combat the recession by increasing food stamps and unemployment insurance.
- Include the Senate's \$35 billion economic stimulus initiative.
- Vigorously oppose any new tax cuts or making current tax cuts permanent.
- Begin to restore progressive tax system and domestic programs.

(4/08)

**Member Denominations in New York**

American Baptist Churches, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, Religious Society of Friends, United Church of Christ, The United Methodist Church

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