



ADVOCATE!

OP-ED / LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." Proverbs 31:8-9

Advocating on behalf of others in need is an important part of CCIH's mission. To help you submit a letter or opinion piece to a publication, CCIH has prepared two samples: one addresses support for global health programs in general and one addresses family planning and the importance of support from men in the health of women and children.

How to Find a Publication:

You can share your support by sending a Letter to the Editor or an Op-Ed to a publication in your area or to your denominational publication. To identify a publication in the area you live or the area where you grew up, visit www.usnpl.com. *Publications in less populated areas may be more likely to publish your letter.* Contact Kathy Erb at CCIH at kathy.erb@ccih.org for help finding a denominational publication for your faith.

Sample 1 – Help Debunk the Myth: Share Your Support for Global Health Programs

Sharing our support for strong global health programs helps members of the public and U.S. legislators know these programs are important, and that Christians care about the health and well-being of people around the world. While the U.S. spends less than 1 percent of its budget on foreign assistance, surveys show most Americans believe it to be much higher. To get a better idea how widespread this misperception is, take a look at the video produced by the ONE Campaign as it toured the U.S. interviewing Americans about foreign assistance. <http://www.interaction.org/video/what-americans-think-about-foreign-aid-south>

Sample Language for Letter or Opinion Piece (*remember, this is just an example – we encourage you to personalize this with your own experiences*):

As Members of Congress try to address budget challenges, it is understandable that legislators are seeking to decrease spending. We often hear about the money the U.S. spends helping other nations as a prime target for cuts and calls for keeping those resources here at home.

As a Christian and a professional/student working in/studying global health, I want to share my reasons for supporting foreign assistance, especially global health programs. First, helping others in need is a spiritual calling for me, with many examples from scripture of the moral imperative for believers to serve others. Secondly, financial support of global health programs is a smart investment for the U.S. Healthy communities where mothers survive childbirth and live healthy and productive lives and children can expect to reach their fifth birthdays are more likely to contribute to the global economy and support U.S. exports. Many people do not realize the U.S. spends less than 1 percent of its federal budget on foreign assistance. When you consider lives saved and communities enriched, it is easy to see the powerful return on this small investment.

As a member of [Christian Connections for International Health](#) (CCIH), I attended the CCIH Annual Conference this month, where I saw many examples of Christians and Christian organizations working in global health. While our community's commitment is strong and our organizations are efficient, we can accomplish much more, saving many more lives and strengthening communities, with our government's support. Foreign assistance is not a handout, but the answer to our spiritual calling to serve others in need and a smart investment in our global economy.

Sincerely, Name, Address, Email/Phone

Sample 2 – Share the Importance of Men in Family Health

The involvement and support of men in the lives of women and children is critical to family health and well-being. You can share this idea with others and encourage men to fulfill their responsibilities in ensuring their families receive the health care they need and make wise choices that will protect their health.

Unfortunately, many men and women see family planning as solely a woman's issue and are not aware of the connection between healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy and maternal and child survival, especially in developing nations. According to the World Health Organization, a child in a low-income nation is at greater risk of dying if he or she has siblings close in age, and health experts recommend women wait two years after the birth of a child to become pregnant again. Sharing this message can save lives.

Sample Language for Letter or Opinion Piece (*remember, this is just an example – we encourage you to personalize this with your own experiences*):

Not Just a Women's Issue

Women's health and family planning are often treated as women's issues. While women are most visibly affected by a lack of reproductive health care and poorly timed pregnancies, the negative effects can be felt by the entire family. Men often know very little about the health benefits of planning and spacing pregnancies for mothers and children alike. Unfortunately without accurate information on the benefits of family planning, they may resist supporting it because of misunderstanding of family planning or misplaced stigma surrounding women who use family planning.

As a Christian and a *professional/student working in/studying global health*, I want to share my reasons for encouraging men to become informed on the health benefits of family planning. According to the World Health Organization, nearly 8 million children under the age of 5 died in 2010 worldwide. A child in a low-income nation is at even greater risk of dying if he or she has siblings close in age. Fathers have an important role to play in ensuring their children are healthy, and that includes being informed and active participants in achieving healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies through family planning. Supporting actions that improve child survival is a moral imperative for me as a Christian. In addition, when mothers survive childbirth and thrive and children can expect to reach their fifth birthdays, it creates stronger, more productive countries.

As a member of [Christian Connections for International Health](#) (CCIH), I attended the CCIH Annual Conference this month, where I saw many examples of Christians and Christian organizations that work across the globe helping families grow at a rate that is healthy and that they can afford. It is time to recognize family planning as a family issue that requires the active support of men, and not as solely a women's issue.

Sincerely, Name, Address, Email/Phone