

Rick Warren: The Government Is Scared of the Church

The faith community finds the U.S. government more difficult to work with than most other world governments, Pastor Rick Warren told Congress Wednesday.

Speaking before a Senate appropriations subcommittee on funding global health initiatives, he said most governments welcome assistance from faith-based groups.

"They're not nearly as afraid of the Church as the American government is. I mean, we work with governments, literally, all around the world and they're very friendly. They realize we're not trying to do their work," Warren told the panel.

"Everybody has a different role to play and the Church's role is not government, and the government's role is not church. But on health issues, and on education issues and on development issues, you can team tackle. As I said, I found it easier to work with governments overseas," he continued.

Warren also said it's best to work with local churches because they are part of the fabric of the community.

"In Africa, they say the pastor sleeps in the same blankets as the community. You know, when—I keep going back to Rwanda because I've had 1,200 people in Rwanda," Warren said.

"When the genocide hit in 1994, every single NGO left the country. It was unsafe. Who stayed? The Church because the Church is the country. It is the country. And in most of the world you can't talk about community development without talking about the Church," he said.

Also on the panel was pop star Sir Elton John, testifying about the need for the United States to end AIDS in Africa.

Warren's Saddleback Church supports a global initiative to end HIV-AIDS and fights other diseases through its peace program.