

## Our Story

- Read (as a family, as a community) Psalm 72 – a prayer on behalf of the king of the nation. The ruler was responsible to maintain God’s justice. The nations are encouraged to honor the king because he “rescues the needy.” Discuss:
  - The characteristics of God’s justice.
  - What poor people, higher income people and governments can do to establish justice today.
- Make an appointment and take your family or group to a local church-based charity, food bank or soup kitchen.
- Check out the Web site of your national church or [www.hungernomore.org](http://www.hungernomore.org). Look up social statements on hunger, poverty, women and children to see where your church stands.
- Invite someone from a government agency, hunger or poverty group, especially church-related, to speak at your church.
- Pray as a family, as a community, together three times: “O God, give us – all of us – this day our daily bread.”



Uniquely cooperative effort by African Methodist Episcopal Women’s Missionary Society, American Baptist Churches USA, America’s Second Harvest, Bread for the World Institute, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church, Church World Service, Community of Christ, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, The Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America World Hunger Program, Franciscan Friars, Good Ground Press/Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Heifer International, Maryland Province of the Jesuits, MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., Presbyterian Hunger Program, Reformed Church in America, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Committee on Relief, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



# Defend the Cause of the Poor

## God’s Story

*Give the king your justice, O God,  
and your righteousness to a king’s son.  
May the ruler judge your people with righteousness,  
and your poor with justice.  
May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,  
and the hills, in righteousness.  
May the ruler **defend the cause of the poor** of the people,  
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor....  
For the ruler delivers the needy when they call,  
the poor and those who have no helper.  
The ruler has compassion on the weak and the needy,  
and saves the lives of the needy.  
From oppression and violence redeems their life;  
and precious is their blood in his sight.*

- Psalm 72: 1-4, 12-14 NRSV adapted



## Personal Stories

### A Voice from Latvia

Poverty is humiliation, the sense of being dependent on them, and of being forced to accept rudeness, insults, and indifference when we seek help. <[www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)>

### A New York City Homeless Mother Speaks

It's not fair to make us wait so late to take us [into the shelter] and get us up so early. My kids don't want to get up after five or six hours of sleep. If they go to school, they'd be sleeping. My eight year-old asks me, "When are we going to go home Mommy?" <[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)> citing the Association to Benefit Children

### A Voice from Ghana

Take the death of this small boy this morning, for example. The boy died of measles. We all know he could have been cured at the hospital. But the parents had no money and so the boy died a slow and painful death, not of measles, but of poverty. <[www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)>

### A Young Man from Zambia speaks

When food was in abundance, relatives used to share it. These days of hunger, however, not even relatives would help you by giving you some food. <[www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)>

### Ethiopian Voices

We are left tied like straw.  
Our life is empty; we are empty-handed.  
What is life when there is no friend or food.  
We are above the dead and below the living.  
Hunger is a hyena.  
The poor is falling, the rich is growing.  
We simply watch those who eat.  
It is [like] sitting and dying alive.  
We have become empty, like a hive.

<[www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices](http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/voices)>



## Stories of Poverty and Wealth<sup>1</sup>

each number is a human story

- In 2001, nearly 33 million (12 percent) of the 277 million people in the United States lived in poverty (\$14,269 a year for an adult and two children). <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>
- The majority of people in the United States who live in poverty are White, but the poverty rates of African-Americans (23 percent) and Hispanics (21 percent) are twice as high as the poverty rate for Whites (10 percent) or Asians and Pacific Islanders (10 percent). <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>
- The share of U.S. national household income going to the top 5 percent of the population reached its highest level on record in 2001, while the shares going to the bottom, the next-to-bottom and the middle fifths of the population fell to all-time lows. <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>
- Almost 43 million people in the United States lack health coverage. Ten million are children. <[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)>
- World poverty fell from 44 percent of the global population in 1980 to 13 percent in 2000, the fastest decline in history. <[www.iie.com](http://www.iie.com)>
- The cost to the public sector of enabling a poor small farmer's family in Africa to make the investments required to attain an adequate level of food security is about \$500. — New Partnership for Africa's Development with the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, "Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, May, 2002, p. 61
- Millennium Development Goal #5: Reduce maternal mortality by three-quarters. In the developing world, the risk of dying in childbirth is one in 48, but virtually all countries now have begun to develop safe motherhood programs.<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Additional facts, updates, web links, stories and educational materials can be found at [www.hungermore.org](http://www.hungermore.org).

<sup>2</sup> Millennium Development Goal targets for 2015, set by the world's leaders in September 2000.