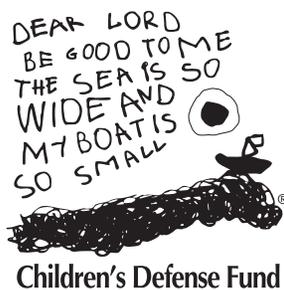


Learn More and Raise Awareness: Read CDF's report, *Ending Child Poverty Now*, and gather others to read, discuss, and act on it. You can download the report and a study session outline at www.childrensdefense.org/childrenssabbaths.

Speak Up: Ask your members of Congress to help us end child poverty now. Go to www.childrensdefense.org/EndChildPovertyNow to send a message to your Members.

Ours is the task and now is the time to help bend the arc toward God's vision of justice for children, uniting with places of worship all across the nation through the Children's Sabbath and in the year to come, to hear the cries of our children and respond through service, and action to end child poverty.



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2015 NATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF CHILDREN'S SABBATHS

“How Long Must I Cry for Help?”
*Bending the Arc Toward
God's Vision of Justice for Children*

Fifty years ago, on March 21st 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and thousands of fellow citizens marched from Selma, AL, to the steps of the state's capitol in Montgomery. Selma was the site of a courageous voting rights campaign by Black citizens which was met by brutal Southern Jim Crow law enforcement and citizen violence. The nation was shocked two weeks earlier when John Lewis and Reverend Hosea Williams set out on a nonviolent march with a group of 600 people toward Montgomery to demand their right to vote and were brutally attacked by lawless state and local law enforcement officials at the Edmund Pettus Bridge. When they at last reached the state capitol, Dr. King addressed the courageous but weary crowd of children, women and men spanning race, religion, age and geography who had united to complete the march from Selma to Montgomery. He said:

“I know you are asking today, ‘How long will it take?’ Somebody's asking ‘How long will prejudice blind the visions of men?’ I come to say to you this afternoon however difficult the moment, however frustrating the hour, it will not be long, because truth pressed to earth will rise again. How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever. How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow.... How long? Not long. Because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice.... Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer [God]. Be jubilant, my feet. Our God is marching on.”

Fifty years after President Johnson’s war on poverty, some of us are asking “How long will it take? How long will it take until we end the child poverty that traps one in five children — one in two Black babies and one in three Hispanic babies? It is a national moral disgrace that there are 15.5 million poor children and 6.8 million extremely poor children in the United States of America — the world’s largest economy. It is also unnecessary, costly and the greatest threat to our future nation and our economic and military security. And soul.

Our cry “How long” echoes the cry of the Hebrew prophet Habakkuk who asked God in anguish:

“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you “Violence!” and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrong-doing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails. The wicked surround the righteous — therefore judgment comes forth perverted.”

The answer the prophet received?

“Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.”

So ours is the task, now is the time, to write the vision and make it plain: every child matters and no child deserves to live in poverty.

We can and must end child poverty now.

Not only does child poverty cost far more than eliminating it would, we have so many better choices that reflect more just values as well as economic savings. We believe that food, shelter, quality early childhood investments to get every child ready for school, and an equitable education for all children should take precedence over massive welfare for the rich and blatantly excessive spending for military weapons that do not work. We cannot let our leaders spend \$246 billion, without offsets, to repeal the estate tax, which benefits only the wealthier 0.2 percent of Americans with estates worth over \$5.4 million for an individual. How can we then say we cannot afford to ensure every child is housed and fed?

CDF’s recent report, *Ending Child Poverty Now* (www.endingchildpovertynow.org), outlines steps that we can take to make a huge down payment on ending preventable, costly, and immoral child poverty in our wealthy nation. By investing an additional 2 percent of the federal budget into existing programs and policies that increase employment, make work pay, and ensure children’s basic needs are met, our nation could reduce child poverty by 60 percent and Black child poverty by 72 percent lifting 6.6 million children out of poverty immediately.

What Can You Do to Help Bend the Arc toward God’s Vision of Justice for Children and End Child Poverty Now?

Pray: For the compassion, courage, persistence, passion, outrage, and urgency to end child poverty.

Listen to the voices of those who are most directly affected by poverty to learn how best to help. Download CDF’s Family Supporters Guide (www.childrensdefense.org/FamilySupporters) for help to create a community listening process to learn from those with first-hand experience.