

**Interfaith Service for Justice for Children and the Poor
at the Washington National Cathedral
October 28, 2005**

*Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands at a distance; For truth stumbles in the public square...The Lord saw it, and it displeased him that there was no justice.
(Isaiah 59)*

We are so grateful that you have joined us for this national Interfaith Service for Justice for Children and the Poor to answer God's call for justice and to affirm America's deepest values of freedom and justice for all – especially the most vulnerable among us.

We are living at an incredible moral moment. What people of faith stand for now – and encourage our political leaders to stand for in this nation defining election year – will shape our nation's and children's futures for decades to come.

The test of the morality of a society is how it treats its children. America is failing that test when it permits a child to be neglected or abused every 35 seconds; a child to be born into poverty every 40 seconds and *children to be the poorest age group in America*; a child to be born without health insurance every 51 seconds; a child to die from gun violence every 3 hours; and millions of children to suffer hunger, homelessness and illiteracy in the richest nation on earth.

These facts are not acts of God. They are our moral and political choices as a people. We *can* and *must* change them by building together a mighty and unified faith witness and movement for more just choices in our nation – choices that protect and place our children first. It's time to reset our nation's moral compass.

If you believe it is time to close the growing gap between rich and poor and stop increasing child poverty, and if you believe it is wrong to give more and more tax cuts to millionaires and impose more and more budget cuts and freezes on children and the poor, then join your voice to a mighty chorus crying out and acting for justice.

This nonpartisan service for people of all faiths is not the end but a vital part of our on-going efforts to build a movement to end child poverty in the richest nation on earth. God is not a Republican, Democrat, liberal, moderate, or conservative. We are delighted leaders and people across the religious and political spectrum have joined us to heed the words of the prophet Isaiah who told us “to loose the bonds of injustice” and to “share your bread with the hungry.” The Qur'an says, “Allah has instructed you...concerning the children who are weak and oppressed; that you stand firm for justice to orphans.” And Jesus Christ said, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name, welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me, for the least among all of you is the greatest.”

Children can't vote, but you and I can and must. Let us together urge every person of faith in every congregation and community in America to follow God's call to be the voice and hands and votes for those who cannot speak and act and vote for themselves.

In faith, hope, and peace,

The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane
Episcopal Bishop of Washington
Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C.

Marian Wright Edelman
President
The Children's Defense Fund

PRELUDE

The Covenant Singers Division of the Trenton Children's Chorus, Trenton and Princeton, N.J.
Victor Shen, Artistic Director – – Chia-Shan Cheng, Accompanist

Bist du bei mir

J.S. Bach

Since Thou art near I fear no darkness, my heart is glad since I trust in Thee, whatever awaits, I trust in Thee. Ah, blessing if at my dying thy gentle touch, thy hand close my eyelids.

The Duke Ellington School of the Arts Concert Choir, Washington, D.C.
Samuel Bonds, Director –

OPENING PROCESSION OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND CHILDREN

PROCESSIONAL: God of Justice, God of Mercy

[print music in the bulletin]

LIGHTING THE CANDLE OF UNITY AND HOPE: Yusuf Albarzinji, Ananda Ewing-Boyd, Danielle Lawrence-Cohen, and Micah Daley-Harris.

WELCOME: The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane, Bishop of Washington, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C.

CALL TO WORSHIP: The Rev. Robert Edgar, General Secretary, The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

Leader: How shall we worship God this day and every day?

People: By doing justice for children and the poor!

Leader: How shall we worship God this day and every day?

People: By loving kindness and caring for children and the poor!

Leader: How shall we worship God this day and every day?

People: By walking with God in faith and truly leaving no child behind.

Leader: Let us ask what God requires of us in protecting the least, last, and left behind of our brothers and sisters.

And let us worship God this day and every day in justice, kindness, and faith!

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN: Let Justice Flow Like Streams

Words by Jane Parker Huber

[need to print music]

Let justice flow like streams of sparkling water pure,
Enabling growth, refreshing life, abundant, cleansing, sure.

Let righteousness roll on as others' cares we heed,
An everflowing stream of faith translated into deed.

So may God's plumb line, straight, define our measure true,
And justice, right, and peace pervade this world our whole life through.

CALL TO DO JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AND THE POOR: The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Senior Pastor, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Cleveland, Oh.

LITANY: IS THIS JUST OR KIND OR FAITHFUL?

Bishop Susan Murch Morrison In our nation today, almost 13 million children are living in poverty, an increase of more than one million since 2000. More than five and a half million children endure extreme poverty. Is this just or kind or faithful?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

Dr. Siva Subramanian: In our nation today, 9 million children don't have health insurance, although 90 percent of them have parents who work. Is this just or kind or faithful?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

Dr. Rajwant Singh: In our nation, infant mortality has increased for the first time in 44 years, and America now lags behind 22 other countries in keeping babies alive in their first year of life. Is this just or kind or faithful?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory: Although children's brains develop most rapidly in the first three years of life, only 1 in 3 eligible children is enrolled in Head Start which some of our nation's leaders are proposing to dismantle. Millions more children lack quality child care and preschool education experiences and begin school not ready to learn. Is this just or kind or faithful?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

Rev. William Gipson: In our nation, millions of children attend public schools that do not teach them to read, write, compute, and think and are underfunded and unable to provide them a quality, equal education. Six million children come home after school and in idle summer months to empty houses, at risk of crime, violence, drug use, and other risky behaviors. Is this just or kind to leave our young people uneducated and unprepared for the future and unsupervised by caring adults while parents work?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

Rev. Frederick Streets: In our nation, a child is abused or neglected every 35 seconds, and infants and toddlers are the most likely to be harmed, and 4 out of 10 abused and neglected children get no help at all. Is this just or kind or faithful?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

Ms Judith Siaba: In our nation today, 8 million people are unemployed, with one million jobs disappearing over the past three years. Millions of people are working hard every day at minimum wage jobs that don't lift them from poverty. Is this just or kind or faithful when people can't earn a living wage?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our poor, hard-working, and struggling neighbors.

Dr. Gordon Cosby: In our nation, last year the richest one percent of Americans reaped 54 percent of the total from two tax cuts while the middle-class got far less, the poor got none. The gap between rich and poor has grown to the widest point ever. Yet our leaders proposed to freeze, cut or dismantle numerous child investments. Is this just or kind or faithful in the richest nation on earth?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to children.

Rev. Mayra Castenada: In our rich nation where \$1,000 may buy you a seat at a politician's fund-raising banquet, more than half a million children are hungry and 13 million don't know when their next meal will be or if they will get enough to eat, while many thousands of children are homeless. Is this a just or kind or faithful nation?

People: We will pray, vote, and work faithfully to make our nation more just and kind to our children.

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN: *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*

Dr. Michael Charles

[print music]

I'm gonna live so God can use me, anywhere Lord, anytime.

I'm gonna pray so...

I'm gonna vote so...

I'm gonna speak so...

I'm gonna work so...

READING FROM PSALM 146

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, O my soul!
I will praise the Lord as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.
When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,
Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;
Who keeps faith forever;
Who executes justice for the oppressed;
Who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.
The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the Lord!

REFLECTION ON JUDAISM'S CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AND THE POOR

Rabbi Jack Moline, Co-Chair, Social Action Committee, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

CHORAL ANTHEMS

The Covenant Singers Division of the Trenton Children's Chorus

Al Shlosha d'Varim

Allan E. Naplan

The world is sustained by three things: by truth, by justice, and by peace.
from Pirkei Avot

Cantate Domino

Michael Bedford

Refrain: Cantate Domino canticum novum (Sing to God a new song.)
Sing to the Lord a new song, for God has done marvelous things, Shout with joy to the Lord, you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice and sing. (Refrain) Sing to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song. With the trumpet and sound of horn, oh, shout with joy before the Lord. (Refrain.)

READING FROM THE QUR'AN

Zaki Albarzinji

O ye who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is next to piety: and fear Allah. For Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. (5:8)

REFLECTION ON ISLAM'S CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AND THE POOR: Afeefa Syeed, Director, Al-Fatih Academy and Muslim Education Resource Council

CHORAL ANTHEMS

The Duke Ellington School for the Arts Concert Choir

READING FROM LUKE 18:1-8

Mrs. Jamesina Evans, President, Women's Missionary Society, African Methodist Episcopal Church

REFLECTION ON CHRISTIANITY'S CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AND THE POOR: The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Senior Minister, The Riverside Church and the leader of Mobilization 2004

CONGREGATIONAL HYMN: Here I Am, Lord
[print music]

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Ed Bacon: Let us now pray to God, Lover of Justice, Protector of the Poor, for the needs of our whole human family.

For the faithful, that we rightly worship God by doing justice for the poor, loving kindness and caring tenderly for the children, and walking humbly with God, let us pray to the Eternal,

People: Lover of Justice, hear our prayer.

Mrs. Angela Ewing-Boyd: For all peoples of the world in which disease knows no boundary, suffering is a shared language, and poverty is a common pain, that we come together to work so that no one suffers injustice or oppression, let us pray to the Eternal:

People: Protector of the Poor, hear our prayer.

Mr. Joe Volk: For our nation, especially our elected leaders and those who would serve, that we uphold peace with justice, unite instead of divide, and demonstrate greatness by serving the last, the least, the lost, and the left behind, let us pray to the Eternal:

People: Lover of Justice, hear our prayer.

Rev. Susan Minasian: For ourselves and our community, that we work passionately for justice with our voices and our votes, that we reach out with tender kindness and care for children in need, and that our hearts faithfully seek to do God's will for the children and the poor, let us pray to the Eternal:

People: Protector of the Poor, hear our prayer.

Sister Carole Shinnick: For all children, especially those who long for justice or kindness or someone to believe in, that we and our leaders and our nation hear their cries, meet their needs, and help them to know that they are beloved by God, let us pray to the Eternal:

People: Lover of Justice, hear our prayer.

Dr. Carolyn Landers: We offer these prayers in confidence that God hears our prayers before they even reach our lips, and that God charges us to make our lives a living prayer for justice. Amen.

ANSWERING GOD'S CALL TO DO JUSTICE: Marian Wright Edelman, President, The Children's Defense Fund

CALL TO GO FORTH: Father Walter Burghardt, S.J.

BLESSING: The Rev. Jim Wallis, Editor-in-Chief, Sojourners and Call to Renewal, Washington, D.C., and te Rev. Jamal-Harrison Bryant, Senior Pastor, The Empowerment Temple, Baltimore, Md.

May God bless you with **discomfort**
At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships
So that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with **anger**...
At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people,
So that you may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with **tears**...
To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war
So that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough **foolishness**...
To believe that you can make a difference in the world,
So that you can do what others claim cannot be done
To bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. Amen.

A Franciscan Benediction

CONGREGATIONAL RECESSIONAL: Guide My Feet
[print music]

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This service is an example of the Children's Sabbath services that take place across our nation on the third weekend of each October. Plan now to join with thousands of congregations of all faiths in the fourteenth annual National Observance of Children's Sabbaths, October 14-16, 2005. A 2005 Children Sabbath interfaith resource manual will be available in the spring. To order or for more information, call (202) 628-8787, visit CDF's Web site at www.childrensdefense.org, or write Children's Sabbath, The Children's Defense Fund, 25 E Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.

We also invite you to participate in the Children's Defense Fund's annual Samuel DeWitt Proctor Child Advocacy Ministry and Great Preachers Institute July 18-22, 2005 at our Haley Farm Freedom School in Tennessee. For more information, visit www.childrensdefense.org.

The Children's Defense Fund thanks Yusuf and Zaki Albarzinji, Ananda Ewing-Boyd, Micah Daley-Harris, and Danielle Lawrence-Cohen for their leadership in this service. Honoring, protecting, and cherishing the gift of children such as these is what inspires and motivates us in our work.

The Children's Defense Fund extends its deep appreciation to the following religious leaders for their participation in tonight's service. We are grateful to them and to all of the religious leaders who processed for the ways that they stand for children every day.
(Participants' names appear in the order in which they will speak in the service.)

The Right Reverend John Bryson Chane, Bishop of Washington, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, Washington, D.C.

The Rev. Dr. Robert W. Edgar, General Secretary, The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., New York, N.Y.

The Rev. Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Senior Pastor, Olivet Institutional Baptist Church, Cleveland, Ohio

Litany -

Bishop Susan Murch Morrison, Albany Episcopal Area, The United Methodist Church, Albany, N.Y.

Dr. Siva Subramanian, Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, Lanham, Maryland

Dr. Rajwant Singh, Chair, Sikh Council on Religion and Education; Executive Director, Guru Gobind Singh Foundation, Rockville, Maryland

The Reverend Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Washington Office, Washington, D.C.

The Rev. William Gipson, University Chaplain, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The Rev. Dr. Frederick Streets, Chaplain, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

Ms. Judith Siaba, Vice-President, The Women's Division of the United Methodist Church, New York, N.Y.

The Rev. Dr. Gordon Cosby, Founder, Church of the Savior Ministries, Washington, D.C.

The Reverend Mayra Castaneda, National Christian Education Coordinator, American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., Valley Forge, Pennsylvania

Rabbi Jack Moline, Social Action Committee Co-Chair, The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Zaki Albarzinji

Ms. Afeefa Syeed, Director, Al-Fatih Academy and the Muslim Education Resource Council, Herndon, Virginia.

Mrs. Jamesina Evans, President, Women's Missionary Society, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C.

The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister, The Riverside Church, New York, N.Y.

Prayers of the People -

The Reverend Ed Bacon, Rector, All Saints Church, Pasadena, California

Mrs. Angela Ewing-Boyd, The Washington, D.C. Baha'i Community, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Joe Volk, Executive Secretary, Friends National Committee on Legislation, Washington, D.C.

The Rev. Susan A. Minasian, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Sr. Carole Shinnick, SSND, Executive Director, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Silver Spring, Maryland

The Rev. Dr. Carolyn Landers, Minister for Children and Families, The United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio

Father Walter J. Burghardt, S.J., Theologian, author, and preacher, Baltimore, Maryland

The Reverend Jamal Bryant, Senior Pastor, Empowerment Temple, Baltimore, Maryland

The Rev. Jim Wallis, Editor-in-Chief, Sojourners and Call to Renewal, Washington, D.C.

We offer our deep thanks to the following for their gifts of music in this service.

Dr. Michael Charles, Director of Music, St. James United Methodist Church, Kansas City, Missouri

The Duke Ellington School for the Arts Concert Choir, Washington, D.C. Samuel Bonds, Director

The Covenant Singers, Trenton and Princeton, N.J.

Victor Shen and Sue Ellen Page, Co-Directors – Chia-Shan Cheng, Accompanist

A division of the Trenton Children's Chorus, the Covenant Singers is a multicultural choir made up of children in grades 4-8 who sing with the Intermediate Choir of the Trenton Children's Chorus, Trenton, NJ or The Choirs for Children and Youth at Nassau Presbyterian Church, Princeton, NJ. The only requirements for participation are good attitude, willingness to attend a second weekly rehearsal, and the ability to match pitch.

At the heart of the ensemble is a single goal: the deepening of relationships between people from a wide variety of backgrounds, through choral excellence.

Melshay Austell

Karr Andrews

Justin Bejjani

Raamiah Bethea

Canaan Bethea

Alyssa Bull

Sadrea Coffie

Virginia Farrell

Cameron Giles

Lucas Hamren

Natiya Hood

Mathaniel James

CeeJay Johnson

Joy Johnson

Elizabeth Katen-Narvell

Keneshia Lewis

Devon Light-Wills

Deanna McBride

Jessica McCray

Sarah Parker

Maria Rivas

Courtney Sargeant

James Shure

Kiana Simpson

Dashawn Smith

Alex Toradze

David Toradze

Sydney Williams

Gabriela Wyatt

The Children's Defense Fund is especially grateful to the staff and volunteers of the Washington National Cathedral for giving so generously of their time and expertise in the preparations for this service. Our deep thanks to Stephen M. Lott, Steve Percy, Bill Peterson, Greg Rixon, Susie Spalding, Stanley Utterback, Carol Wade, and the many others whose efforts went into making this "House of Prayer for All People" so welcoming. Kim Sanders and Cheryl Daves Wilburn in the Office of Bishop John Bryson Chane also graciously supported our partnership on this service.

The following staff and friends of the Children's Defense Fund were involved in this service, which reflects their hard work and commitment to the cause of children. Shannon Daley-Harris wrote and coordinated the liturgy. The Field mobilization team, headed by Donna Lawrence, included Sandy Trujillo, Taj Brown, Richelle Friedman, Bethany Little, Jim Jones, Wylie Chen, David Gardner, Jon Vaupel, Jooyeun Chang, J.R. Fitzpatrick, Lauren Goodman, Lauren Hansen, Margie Peralta, Mildred Otero, Olga Gonzalez, Samiyyah Blanford, Sarah Barclay, Sean McDonald, Isai Baltezar, Liz De Nola, Myron Lany, Woojin Jung, MaryLee Allen, Susan Gates, Gregg Haifley, Della Hoffman, Liz Pham, Kelli Tucker, and many volunteers who all worked long days, nights, and weekends to spread the word and gather us here. Janet Simons, Paul Smith, and Colleen Sonosky provided research and policy help. Michele Smith and Martha Espinosa provided support in the Office of the President. Avram Goldstein, Toby Chaudhuri, and Andrea Miller managed communications.

PERMISSION INFORMATION

God of Justice, God of Mercy – Words Jane Parker Huber, Music Hyfrydol, Rowland Hugh Prichard, (1855).

Let Justice Flow Like Streams – Words Jane Parker Huber, Music St. Thomas, Arron Williams (1731-1776)

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me – African-American spiritual; arr. Wendell Whalum (1932-1987)

Here I Am, Lord – Text and music Daniel L. Schutte, 1981.

Guide My Feet, Lord – African-American spiritual, arr. Carl Harris, Jr. (b. 1935). From *Wonder, Love, and Praise* c Church Pension Fund, used by Permission.

Endorsers of the Interfaith Service for Justice for Children and the Poor

October 28, 2004 Interfaith Service for Justice for the Children and the Poor List of Endorsers as of 10/25/04

National Denominations and Religious Organizations

A. Roy Medley, General Secretary, American Baptist Churches in the USA
Bishop Nathaniel Jarrett, Jr., President, Board of Bishops, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Bishop Roy I. Sano, Executive Secretary of the Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church
Bishop George Walker, Presiding Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
Bishop Gabino Zavala, Bishop President, Pax Christi USA
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Church Women United
Columban Justice and Peace Office
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
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Mrs. Elenora Hamb, President, Women's Missionary Council, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Mrs. Barbara Shaw, President, Home and Overseas Women's Missionary Society, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
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Patricia Chapman, Associate for Child Advocacy, Presbyterian Church USA
Rabbi Pamela Frydman Baugh, President, Ohalah: Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal
Rabbi Janet Marder, Central Conference of American Rabbis
Rabbi Jack Moline, Co-Chair Social Action Committee, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

Rabbi David Saperstein, Director, Religious Action Center
Rabbi Daniel Siegel, Director of Spiritual Resources, Aleph: Alliance for Jewish Renewal
Reverend Dave Brown, Staff-Committee on Public Education, National Council of Churches
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The Reverend Elenora Giddings Ivory, Director, Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office
Reverend Dr. Carolyn Landers Pettigrew, Minister for Children and Families, United Church of Christ,
Cleveland, Ohio
Reverend Dr. Albert Pennybacker, Clergy Leadership Network
Reverend Dr. Bernice Powell-Jackson, Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio
Reverend Leslie Tune, Communication, National Council of Churches USA
Robert E. Turner, Associate, Higher Education and Students' Ministries, Presbyterian Church USA
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Sister Marie Chin, RSM, President
The Alban Institute, Inc.
Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church

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Albany Regional Community of the Sisters of Mercy
Augustinians, California Province, Rev. Steven M. Ochoa, Provincial
Benedictine Monks of Weston Priory, Brother Richard Iaquinto, O.S.B., Prior
Benedictine Sisters of Mt. Angel, OR, Sister Dorothy Jean Beyer, OSB, Prioress
Bishop Richard Allen Chappelle, 12th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church
Bishop Jane Allen Middleton, The United Methodist Church (Harrisburg Episcopal Area)
Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, Resident Bishop, Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference, The United Methodist
Church
Bishop Warren M. Brown, Presiding Bishop, Mid-Atlantic II Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Zion
Church
Bishop John Bryant, Presiding Bishop African Methodist Episcopal Church
Bishop John Bryson Chane, 8th Episcopal Diocese of Washington and Dean, Washington National Cathedral
Bishop Minerva Carcaño, The United Methodist Church (Phoenix, Arizona Area)
Bishop Joseph Fiorenza, Catholic Diocese of Galveston/Houston, TX
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Bishop Marshall Gilmore, Senior Bishop, Eighth Episcopal District, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
Bishop Scott Jameson Jones, United Methodist Church (Kansas Area)
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Bishop Vashti McKenzie, 13th Episcopal District African Methodist Episcopal Church
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Bishop Bruce R. Ough, West Conference, The United Methodist Church
Bishop John R. Schol, The United Methodist Church
Bishop Mary Virginia Taylor, Office of the Resident Bishop, The United Methodist Church
Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry, Presiding Prelate, 16th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church
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Dominican Sisters of Great Bend, KS, Gemma Doll, O.P, Prioress
Dominican Sisters of Houston, Marygrace Peters, O.P. Prioress
Dr. Shirley Hopkins Davis, Episcopal Women's Missionary President, African Methodist Episcopal Church, MS
Franciscan Handmaids of Mary, Sister Maria Goretti Mannix, FHM, Congregation Minister, New York, NY
Franciscan Sisters of Peace, Sister Regina Holtz, FSP, Haverstraw, NY
Holy Cross International Justice Office
Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Rev. Clyde Phillips, M.M., U.S. Regional Superior
Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Sister Annie Claes, icm, District Leader

Monastery of St. Gertrude, Sister Jean Lalande, OSB, Prioress, Cottonwood, ID
 Mrs. Yvonne Parks, Supervisor, 8th Episcopal District, African Methodist Episcopal Church
 Order of Friar Servants of Mary, Father Anthony O'Connell, OSM, Prior Provincial
 Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters, Melanie Persche, OLVN, President, Huntington, IN
 Reverend Jeffrey Haggray, Executive Minister, DC Baptist Convention
 Reverend Jack O'Malley, Labor Chaplain, AFL-CIO Pennsylvania, PA Association of Priests
 Reverend Dr. Velma Smith, Chairperson, Washington DC Chapter National Black Evangelical Association
 Reverend Mamie A. Williams, Annapolis District Superintendent, Baltimore-Washington Conference, United
 Methodist Church
 Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary, Leadership Team, Tarrytown, NY
 School Sisters of Notre Dame, Mankato Province, Sister Jeanne Wingenter, Coordinator, Office of Justice, Peace,
 and Integrity of Creation
 Shirley Seibert, Director, ECLA Lutheran Office of Public Policy, DE
 Sister Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Janet Ryan, IHM, Mission Councilor Monroe, MI
 Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, KS
 Sisters of Good Shepherd, Leadership Team, NY Province
 Sisters of Loretto – Loretto Community, Englewood, CO
 Sisters of Mercy, Brooklyn Region, Sister Mary Waters, RSM, President
 Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Detroit, Regional Leadership Team
 Sisters of Mercy, Regional Community of Erie, Bernadette Bell, RSM, President
 Sisters of Saint Joseph of NW PA, Leadership Team
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Prayers for Strength in the Struggle for Justice

O God, Forgive and Transform Our Rich Nation

- O God, forgive and transform our rich nation where small babies
die of cold quite legally
- O God, forgive and transform our rich nation where small children
suffer from hunger quite legally.
- O God, forgive and transform our rich nation where toddlers and
school children die from guns sold quite legally.
- O God, forgive and transform our rich nation that lets children
be the poorest age group quite legally.
- O God, forgive and transform our rich nation that lets the rich
continue to get more at the expense of the poor quite legally.
- O God, forgive and transform our rich and powerful nation which thinks security
rests in missiles and bombs rather than in mothers and in babies.
- O God, forgive and transform our rich nation for not giving You
sufficient thanks by giving to others their daily bread.
- O God, help us never to confuse what is quite legal with
what is just and right in Your sight.
- Help us to build a mighty movement to make America
just and right and safe for all Your children.

I Care and Am Willing To Serve, Advocate, and Vote for Justice for Children

Lord I cannot preach like Martin Luther King, Jr. or turn a poetic phrase like Maya Angelou
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to vote for justice for our children and the poor.

I do not have Harriet Tubman's courage or Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt's political skills
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to vote for good schools and preschools for all our children.

I cannot sing like Fannie Lou Hamer or organize like Ella Baker and Bayard Rustin
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to vote for health care for our children and all Americans.

I am not holy like Archbishop Tutu, or forgiving like President Mandela, or disciplined like Mahatma Gandhi
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to vote for after-school programs for children.

I am not brilliant like Dr. Du Bois or Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or as eloquent as Sojourner Truth and Booker T. Washington
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to vote for jobs with decent wages so parents can support their children.

I don't have Mother Teresa's saintliness, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Dorothy Day's love or Cesar Chavez's gentle tough spirit
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to vote for clean air and water so our children can breathe and live.

God, it is not as easy as the 60's to frame an issue and forge a solution to meet all urgent needs of our children
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to stand up with others to build a movement to protect children.

My mind and body are not so swift as in youth, and my energy comes in spurts
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to get everyone I know to vote for children and for my grandchildren's futures.

I'm so young, nobody will listen, and I'm not sure what to say or do
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to use my vote that so many struggled for and even died to exercise.

I can't see or hear well, speak good English, stutter sometimes, and get real scared standing up before others,
but I care and am willing to serve, advocate, and to join my voice with others for justice for children and families who don't speak good English and need special help.

Lord, use me as Thou will to save Thy children today and tomorrow and to build a nation and world where no child is left behind and every child and everyone feels welcome.

Adapted from prayers in *Hold My Hand: Prayers for Building a Movement to Leave No Child Behind*® Copyright © 2001 by Marian Wright Edelman

America's Children Cry Out for Justice

Each day in America

1	mother dies in childbirth
4	children are killed by abuse or neglect
5	children or teens commit suicide
8	children or teens are killed by firearms
76	babies die before their first birthday
182	children are arrested for violent crimes
366	children are arrested for drug abuse
390	babies are born to mothers who received late or no prenatal care
860	babies are born at low birthweight
1,186	babies are born to teen mothers
1,707	babies are born without health insurance
1,887	public school students are corporally punished
2,171	babies are born into poverty
2,341	babies are born to mothers who are not high school graduates
2,455	children are confirmed as abused or neglected
2,539	high school students drop out
4,440	children are arrested

An Agenda for Urgent Action for Children

America can and must change these facts. The only thing our rich and powerful nation will guarantee every child is a detention or jail cell after the child gets into trouble while refusing to ensure all children the health care, preschool, education, after-school, nutrition, and housing investments needed to help them reach successful adulthood. States spend on average three times more per prisoner than per public school pupil.

Every person in America must demand that our leaders invest in children early in order to save lives and taxpayer money. The choice is whether to invest relative pennies early in preventing child problems or to pay many pounds later to punish and try to make up for earlier preventable neglect.

Our political leaders must be urged to take **six** immediate steps to protect children in 2005:

1. Set a goal of eliminating child poverty in the richest nation on earth within 10 years and reducing child poverty by half by 2008.
2. Immediately ensure health coverage for every child and their parents.
3. Make sure every child is ready to learn by ensuring quality early education for all preschool children through fully funded quality Head Start, child care, and universal pre-kindergarten programs.

4. Ensure every child a quality and equitably funded public education and high quality after school and summer programs.
5. Eliminate racial disparities among poor and minority children which push them into a cradle to prison pipeline must be closed.
6. Strengthen our overburdened child welfare system and provide preventive and early intervention supports to keep families together, prevent teen pregnancy, and ensure child and family permanence through adoption and kinship care supports.
7. The seventh step is ours as parents, faith, community and private sector leaders: building a massive movement to hold all our leaders accountable for protecting in word and deed every one of God's children. Surely the richest and most powerful nation on earth can give all of its children a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities. How could a nation that is so blessed not be a blessing to children at home and around our world?

To join CDF's movement to Leave No Child Behind, call 1-866-274-9654 or visit <http://www.childrensdefense.org>