

A Litany for Children in Poverty

Come, you that are blessed by God, claim the inheritance prepared for you from the foundation of the world;

Inheritance? Me?

I was hungry and you gave me food,

I don't remember this.

I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink,

Are you sure?

I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

It must have been someone else.

I was naked and you gave me clothing,

That, I would have remembered!

I was sick and you took care of me,

No, that was my neighbor.

I was in prison and you visited me.

When, Lord?

When you did it for anyone in need.



Children
in Poverty

American Baptist Churches USA

Children in Poverty Initiative



And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor. — Luke 2:52, NSRV

Perhaps remembering his own eagerness to learn when a child, Jesus rebuked his disciples for preventing children from reaching him. (Mark 10:13ff.) We need that same spirit, because we want every child to reach the God-given potential within.

Educating every child produces citizens who understand democracy and workers who contribute to the good of society. But public education is under siege today. This is unworthy of a great nation which seeks to live out the ideals of our beginnings. Children living in poverty lack the advantages of educated parents, role models in the community and early introduction to reading. Who better than the followers of Christ to reclaim our commitment to every child? Who better to advocate for strong public education that brings every child into the mainstream? Who better to participate in seeing each child increase in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor?

Excerpts from

A Declaration of Importance for American Baptists on the Issue of Children in Poverty

In its most recent report on poverty trends in August of 2004, the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that for the third year in a row both the percentage and actual number of people in America living below the poverty level increased. Of the 35.9 million people living in poverty in this wealthy nation, 12.9 million are children, an increase from 12.1 million in 2002.

American Baptists believe that God has called us to minister in love to children. We have shown it in our mission through the decades. Today, if we still believe that, then we must also speak urgently in advocacy for children and their families.

We call upon the American Baptist Churches USA and its constituent partners to make the issue of Children in Poverty a priority of prayer, advocacy, ministry and stewardship. Let it occupy us in our sanctuaries, our fellowship halls, our communities, and especially the halls of power. To this end, we commit ourselves to learn from one another in churches and regional missions as well as from other organizations, such as the Children's Defense Fund and the National Center for Children in Poverty. We will learn about and celebrate current mission. We will seek direction for new mission and how we may accomplish it.


Approved by ABC General Board – June 2005

For the full text of the Declaration, visit www.nationalministries.org, Children in Poverty.


Facts about dropping out of school

 *Every nine seconds in America, a student drops out of school.*


- Richard J. Coley, director of the Policy Information Center at Educational Testing Service

 *The term epidemic seems appropriate. It [dropping out of school] is happening around the country.*

- Joan Benso, president of Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, an advocacy group in Harrisburg, Pa.

 *Dropout prevention begins in preschool.*

- Paul Vallas, chief executive of Philadelphia schools

 *Dropping out rarely has a sudden onset; it is a chronic condition that intensifies gradually.*

- Johns Hopkins University study (reported March 3, 2006, in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*)



Children in Poverty is a caring ministry of NEW LIFE 2010.

For more information about the Children in Poverty Initiative, visit www.nationalministries.org.