



Pennsylvania Council of Churches

Resources on Poverty

November 2009

“The Bible contains some 2,000 verses on poverty. To ignore those leaves ‘a Bible full of holes.’”

Jim Wallis, Christian Churches Together Gathering, January 2009

This document contains a sampling of resources on poverty. While lengthy, it is by no means a complete guide to all resources. We invite you to submit other resources that you have found to be helpful in your congregations to s.strauss@pachurches.org. Many other links to sites that provide information on poverty and related issues are available at http://www.pachurchesadvocacy.org/index_files/Page560.htm.

The **Poverty and Justice Bible** highlights poverty and justice verses and features a 56-page guide for personal and group study. To learn more or to order a copy, go to <http://justicebible.americanbible.org/>. It is also available at Amazon.com and Sojourners.

Bread for the World: <http://www.bread.org/>

Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging our nation’s decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. By changing policies, programs and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, Bread provides help and opportunity far beyond the communities in which we live. There are numerous materials and resources available to congregations and leaders at <http://www.bread.org/get-involved/at-church/>.

Christian Churches Together: www.christianchurchestogether.org

CCT, out of its commitment to help denominations grow closer together in Christ, offers a significant and credible voice in speaking to contemporary culture on issues of life, social justice and peace. They have adopted a “Domestic Poverty Initiative” and their website contains detailed information regarding this initiative. Listed below are additional resources particularly helpful on the issues of poverty and hunger. They were gathered by G. Cook (Bread for the World) and A. Taylor (Sojourners).

Resources available through websites

- Various resources regarding poverty and hunger from the Bread for the World Institute at <http://www.bread.org/BFW-Institute/>.
- Poverty Sunday Tool Kit from Sojourners at http://www.sojo.net/action/alerts/VOP_poverty-sunday-toolkit.pdf.
- A Responsibility to Care (http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0809&article=a-responsibility-to-care&cookies_enabled=false)—Mike Huckabee talks about children, poverty, and the role of government.
- A Right Thing to Do (http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0809&article=the-right-thing-to-do&cookies_enabled=false)—John Edwards explains why poverty is an issue we can do something about.
- At Sojourners “Preaching the Word”

- **The Poverty of Enough**
(http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj8309&article=830920&mode=sermon_prep&week=C_Proper_26)—Reflections on moral obligation by Michael Foley.
- **For the Common Good**
(http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0704&article=070415&mode=sermon_prep&week=A_Advent_2#PTWAdvent2A)—A biblical perspective on the role of government by Ronald J. Sider.
- **God and Mammon**
(http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj7802&article=780211&mode=sermon_prep&week=A_Epiphany#PTWEpiphanyA)—The Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus by Peter H. Davids.
- **Articles**
 - **Picket-Fence Poverty**
(http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0707&article=070720a&cookies_enabled=false)—by Valerie Weaver-Zercher in *Sojourners*.
 - **Time to End Poverty**
(http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=magazine.article&issue=soj0509&article=050941a&cookies_enabled=false)—“You can tell a lot about people by how they treat their neighbors in need,” commentary by John Edwards.
 - **A Covenant for a New America** (http://www.sojo.net/action/alerts/C4NA_full.pdf)—*Sojourners* document on building faith dialogue and action around preventing poverty.
 - **Spotlight on Poverty** (<http://www.spotlightonpoverty.org/>)—A bipartisan website, sponsored by a number of foundations, which provides regularly updated information and “big tent” ideas and solutions for reducing poverty and increasing economic opportunity. Subscription is free at www.spotlightonpoverty.org.

Books

- *Living God’s Politics: A Guide to Putting Your Faith into Action* by Jim Wallis, Harper Collins, 2006. Available at http://store.sojo.net/product_p/bk_lgp.htm.
- *Hope for Children in Poverty* (available at Judson Press; http://judsonpress.com/product.cfm?product_id=11679), which is linked to the **Children in Poverty Initiative, National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA** (<http://www.nationalministries.org/CIP>). The book gives models and suggestions for church-based ministries with children in poverty. Edited by Ron Sider and Heidi Unruh.
- *Just Generosity: A New Vision for Overcoming Poverty in America* by Ronald J. Sider (2nd ed, 2007). Available from **Baker Books** (<http://www.bakerbooks.com/ME2/Audiences/dirmod.asp?sid=0477683E4046471488BD7BAC8DCF B004&nm=&type=PubCom&mod=PubComProductCatalog&mid=BF1316AF9E334B7BA1C33CB61C F48A4E&tier=3&id=6B3B9462FA0940D5B265AD9FA89EBB3D>).

Other Resources

- “Hungry for Justice: A six week guide for praying daily, building community, and changing the world” (http://store.sojo.net/product_p/sg_hfj.htm). From the editors of *Sojourners* magazine. Suggested as a resource for small group discussion.
- “Who Is My Neighbor? Economics As If Values Matter” (http://store.sojo.net/product_p/sg_wmn.htm). A *Sojourners* study guide that examines economic issues and the extent to which money separates and divides us.

- **“Hunger no More”** (<http://www.hungernomore.org/>). A six session guide developed cooperatively by 23 churches and organizations through the Bread for The World Institute and available for free download.
- **“A Place at the Table”** (<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/placeatthetable/index.shtml>). This is a statement from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, with related resources developed its Committees on Domestic and International Policy.
- **“Poverty in America: A Threat to the Common Good”** (<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1158>). Catholic Charities USA, 2006 Policy Paper and related resources.
- **“Just Neighbors Tool Kit”** (<http://www.familypromise.org/just-neighbors-faith-based-toolkit>) is an excellent resource for helping church groups to understand the nature and impact of poverty. It offers nine sessions, but each can also be used as “stand-alone.” The final session includes ideas for action.

Church World Service: www.churchworldservice.org

Church World Service is a cooperative ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations with a mission to eradicate hunger and poverty and to promote peace and justice around the world. They seek to embody the love of Jesus Christ while respecting all faiths and traditions. They work in partnership with others in their work with the most vulnerable promoting the dignity and rights of all people and advocating an order based on peace and justice.

The following are resources available to congregations and organization to use in education, advocacy, promotion or worship. They can all be found under the heading of “Resources” on the website. Most all are available in PDF form.

- **Build a Better World children's curriculum** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=resource_betterworld): Learn about children from other parts of the world and their struggles to build a better life.
- **Educational and advocacy resources** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=resource_education): Facts and resources on climate change, HIV/AIDS, hunger and Water for All .
- **Immigration and refugee resources** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=action_what_assist_resources_main): Materials to support congregations with refugee resettlement and advocacy.
- **Emergency Response resources** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=action_what_emerg_resources): Materials on current emergency appeals and resources for disaster recovery.
- **CROP Hunger Walk resources** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=crop_resources_main): Resources for CROP Hunger Walk organizers and participants.
- **Blankets+ resources** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=blankets_kit_main): Materials to help with your Blankets+ event.
- **Worship resources** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=resource_worship): Includes hymns and songs for worship.
- **Photo galleries** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=news_photos_gallery): Photo slideshows of CWS work around the world

- **Videos** (http://www.churchworldservice.org/site/PageServer?pagename=resource_video): Subscribe to the CWS YouTube page or borrow a video from the CWS Film & Video Library.

Economic Policy Institute: www.epi.org

The Economic Policy Institute is a nonprofit think tank created to broaden the discussion about economic policy to include the interests of low- and middle-income workers. The site contains a wealth of information, research and statistics on American workers, specifically those in the low and middle income. Included under the EPI is the **Agenda for Shared Prosperity** (<http://www.sharedprosperity.org/>); a poverty amelioration section is available at <http://www.sharedprosperity.org/topics-poverty.html>) and **State of Working America** (<http://www.stateofworkingamerica.org/>).

Faithful America: www.faithfulamerica.org

Faithful America is an online community of tens of thousands of citizens motivated by faith to take action on the pressing moral issues of our time. Their unifying commitment: to restore community and uphold the common good in America and across the globe. One of their stated core commitments is to end poverty and promote economic security for all. **Faith in Public Life** (FPL, at <http://www.faithinpubliclife.org/>) is a communications and organizing resource center dedicated to helping faith leaders reclaim the values debate in America for justice, compassion, and the common good. FPL increases the strength and visibility and faith movements with cutting-edge media and infrastructure-building strategies. FPL is a valuable resource to activists, faith leaders and journalists, with an active blog and daily news clips from media outlets around the country.

Faith Voices for the Common Good: www.faithvoices.org/

Faith Voices work is based on uses of innovative technology, work in theological education, and scholarship in religion. Faith Voices is structured to serve nonprofit organizations, whether agencies, religious judicatories, theological schools, public policy and public interest groups, councils of churches, and individual congregations who seek to use its educational technologies and other educational programs. Among their core principles is a respect for the dignity of every human being and justice for all, especially the underprivileged and disenfranchised. Members enjoy access to Synanim social software and other technologies, as well as to joint projects with other member organizations.

Jubilee USA Network: www.jubileeusa.org

Jubilee USA Network is an alliance of more than 80 religious denominations and faith communities, human rights, environmental, labor, and community groups working for the definitive cancellation of crushing debts to fight poverty and injustice in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The site contains resources and publications videos and other multimedia to assist in the education and/or support of debt cancellation at <http://www.jubileeusa.org/resources>. There is also a Jubilee guide for congregations titled “**Putting Faith into Practice**” (<http://www.jubileeusa.org/?id=117>) which is filled with information and worship resources to help put faith into action and how to become a Jubilee Congregation.

The National Council of Churches: www.ncccusa.org

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA is the leading force for ecumenical cooperation among Christians in the United States. The member denominations work cooperatively in numerous joint programs of education, advocacy and service that address critically important needs and that witness to our common faith in

Jesus Christ. Through these ecumenical commissions, the NCC works for peace and justice in the United States, addressing issues ranging from poverty and racism, to the environment, family ministries, and much more.

The site includes a block designated for poverty issues that can be downloaded or ordered (scroll down home page—"Reducing Poverty" is near the bottom in the left hand column). Of particular interest is a new study guide, "**Eradicating Global Poverty, A Christian Study Guide on the Millennium Development Goals**" (<http://www.nccusa.org/news/060201eradicatingpoverty.html>), which is available for \$7.95. There are also **bulletin inserts** (<http://www.nccusa.org/resources/churchbulletininserts.html>) for use by congregations. The NCC also developed a number of resources for "Poverty March 2002," including "**The Bible Speaks About Poverty**" (<http://www.nccusa.org/poverty/biblespeaks.html>), "**Preaching About Poverty**" (<http://www.nccusa.org/poverty/preaching.html>) and "**Theological Reflection on Poverty**" (<http://www.nccusa.org/poverty/theological-reflection.html>).

One: www.one.org

ONE is a grassroots campaign and advocacy organization backed by more than 2 million people from around the world and every walk of life who are committed to the fight against extreme poverty and preventable disease, particularly in Africa. ONE's blog, <http://www.one.org/blog/category/faith/>, is a forum for discussing activities of congregations and organizations and their efforts to educate members about ONE and the biblical demands highlighting our responsibility to care for neighbor.

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children: www.papartnerships.org

Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children is a strong, effective and trusted voice to improve the health, education and well-being of children and youth in the Commonwealth. There are links to join the Pennsylvania Children's Advocacy Network and the site also contains numerous resources exploring the issues surrounding the advocacy of children.

Poverty Initiative: www.povertyinitiative.org

The Poverty Initiative at Union Theological Seminary's mission is to raise up generations of religious and community leaders dedicated to building a social movement to end poverty, led by the poor. **Resources** (<http://www.povertyinitiative.org/worship>) include Bible studies, a liturgy, and sermons.

Poverty USA—Catholic Campaign for Human Development: www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) invests in community-based solutions—that know no racial or religious boundaries, supporting self-sufficiency and self-determination as the best strategies for change—projects that break the cycle of poverty for good. The site provides links to resources for education for both children and adults at <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/edcenter/index.shtml>.

Sojourners: www.sojo.net

Sojourners mission is to articulate the biblical call to social justice, inspiring hope and building a movement to transform individuals, communities, the church, and the world. They publish *Sojourners* magazine, SojoMail and other resources that address issues of faith, politics, and culture from a biblical perspective. This website is a treasure grove of information for social justice issues and materials with numerous links.

Membership in “Faith and Justice Churches”

(http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=network.learn_more; \$119.95/year) provides access to resources for congregations including sermon preparation materials and downloadable discussion and study guides. Find materials on poverty available for purchase at http://store.sojo.net/category_s/136.htm.

World Vision: www.worldvision.org

World Vision is an international partnership of Christians whose mission is to follow Christ in working with the poor and oppressed to promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the good news of the Kingdom of God.

“What’s Your World Vision?” (http://www.worldvision.org/content.nsf/getinvolved/church-faith?OpenDocument&lpos=top_drp_GetInvolved_ChurchesFaith) provides information on how your church can engage people living in poverty in the United States and around the world, including toolkits, travel, and activities. These resources can be used for education, advocacy, promotion or worship. A **resources page** (http://www.worldvisionresources.com/?lpos=ctr_txt_wvresources) lists a number of educational resources for both children and adults.

Denominational/Ecumenical Resources

Episcopal Relief and Development

Raise Awareness About Poverty, Hunger and Disease (<http://www.er-d.org/RaiseAwareness/>) provides a number of ideas on how congregations can learn and engage in the work of this agency.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The ELCA provides a list of print resources on poverty at <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Poverty-Ministries/Poverty-Ministries-Networking/Print-Resources.aspx>. Learn more about Poverty Ministries at <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Justice/Poverty-Ministries.aspx>.

Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ/Disciples of Christ

A list of resources that includes materials for worship and children’s activities is available at <http://www.globalministries.org/resources/>.

God’s Mission in the World: An Ecumenical Christian Study Guide on Global Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (learn more about the goals at <http://archive.elca.org/advocacy/one/05-06-23-mdg.html>)

This study guide, prepared by the Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Washington Office, offers a six-session study of the Millennium Development Goals. You can order a copy at <http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/item.jsp?clsid=186539&productgroupid=0&isbn=6000217498> or download it for free at <http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-World-Hunger/Resources/For-Congregations/Generational-Materials/Adults.aspx> (scroll down to reference).

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Resolution on Africa: A Guide to Study and Reflection is available at <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/africa-guide-copy2005.pdf>.

Presbyterian Women lists a couple of Bible studies that address poverty at <http://www.pcusa.org/pw/resources/horizons.htm#bible>.

United Church of Christ

Doing Justice: A Bible Study and Reflection Guide is available at <http://www.ucc.org/nin/resources/2001-doing-justice.pdf>.

Imagine Another World is Possible (<http://www.ucc.org/nin/resources/nin-2007-bible-study-2007new.pdf>) is a Bible study concerning jubilee.

United Methodist Church

See “Children and Poverty,” The Bishop’s Initiative page at <http://archives.umc.org/initiative/booklist.htm> for a list of books and a link to a study guide. See <http://archives.umc.org/initiative/cfagc/checklist.html> for a checklist of issues concerning children, including poverty.

You should check with your denomination to find out if additional resources are available.