

Episcopal Life THIS WEEK

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people?

We are called to be Christ to the entire human family

We can imagine and work for change

Second in a 10-part series

By Abigail Nelson

Imagine waking up one morning. You roll over and feel yourself lying on a grass mat placed on a hard dirt floor. You look across a dusty dim interior where the early morning light is trickling through the front door, and can barely see your three small children on their own mat, starting to stir. A wooden table — your husband made it with his own hands as a wedding present — is propped up against the mud wall. On it, you can just make out the shadows of a can of sesame oil and a bowl of dried rice. This is all you have to eat. The baby starts to cry. The others open clouded eyes and show little energy. It is a new day.

Every morning millions of people look across their shelters as day dawns and wonder how they might feed their families. Unfortunately, every night, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, more than 800 million people go to bed hungry, having successfully sold, grown, traded, or made less than \$1 of income that day.

Every single one of these people is a member of our human family, and calls to us to be the hands and feet of Christ's solidarity, Christ's love, and Christ's grace for them.

The hope of the first of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is that together we might eradicate extreme poverty by 2015.

Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) is one agency at the forefront of engagement with the MDGs. Working in more than 40 countries, together with the churches and communities of the Anglican Communion, ERD assesses the local context and helps create effective lasting sustainable change. Together we reach the isolated and marginalized with critical training and information to increase those crop yields, or help that bicycle repair shop finally turn a profit.

Credit, buffalo, drought-resistant seeds, hoes, market information, fair prices, training. For many of us, these may be words and concepts that contribute tangentially to our lives. For others, they represent an essential bridge to increased income and decreased hunger.

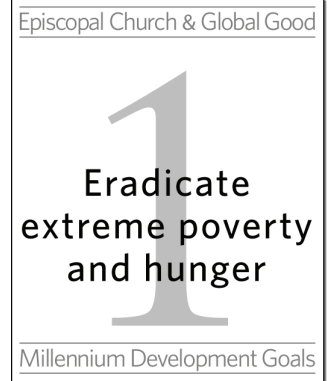
Let us pray that the cries of the poor, hungry, and neglected all over the world for daily bread may inspire works of compassion and mercy among those to whom much has been given.

- Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations

With credit for small-business improvements and buffalo to pull plows and provide milk; with seeds that hold up in scarce rainfall or hoes that help farmers extend their territory of cultivation; with clear information about the price of goods at the market and the capacity to transport those goods directly instead of through a profiteering middle merchant; with skills training, mutual support and organization, individuals and communities engaged by ERD through the Anglican Communion are able to stand up one by one, and move that \$1 a day to \$2 to \$3 to \$10.

And so, tomorrow, that mother might roll over on a clean mattress and see a pitcher of milk next to that can of sesame oil, and know a basket of fresh eggs is waiting just outside in the henhouse. Around the year 2015, she will watch her youngest child graduate from secondary school, having had all the necessary nutritional supports to develop cognitive and analytical skills.

Let us all be God's hands and feet in this struggle. And pray that this, His Body, will never again know extreme poverty and malnutrition. ■



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- **ONE Episcopalian**
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- **Educational resources from Episcopal Relief and Development**
http://er-d.org/programs_36756_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Resources from Episcopal News Service**
http://www.episcopalchurch.org/3577_77743_ENG_HTML.htm
- **Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation**
<http://e4gr.org>
- **United Nations Millennium Development Goals**
www.un.org/millenniumgoals/
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