

# LIFE, PEACE & JUSTICE MINISTRIES

“Love One Another”

*“In today’s world, which increasingly faces the challenges of social injustice, division and conflict that hinders the realization of the common good, Dr. King’s dream of harmony and equality for all people, attained through nonviolent and peaceful means, remains ever timely.” - Pope Francis 2021*

## Dr. King’s Poor People’s Campaign



Today we honor Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King as a champion of civil rights. However, many people don’t know that in the final months of his life, Dr. King had begun a new campaign for equality in America: The Poor People’s Campaign. At that time, 19% of the US population lived in poverty. Dr. King was convinced that marginalized people would never achieve full citizenship until economic justice had also been won. Planning began in November 1967. The campaign would work through nonviolent direct action to press the government for jobs, unemployment insurance, and a fair minimum wage.

Dr King described the effort as “the beginning of a new co-operation, understanding, and a determination by poor people of all colors and backgrounds to assert and win their right to a decent life and respect for their culture and dignity.” He saw this as an opportunity for America to bridge the gulf between its haves and its have-nots. However he expressed deep concern about our country’s willingness to do so — to invest in its poor on par with expenditures made to fight foreign wars and explore outer space.

On March 31, 1968, Dr. King preached a sermon in which he said, “How can one avoid being depressed when he sees with his own eyes evidence of millions of people going to bed hungry at night? How can one avoid being depressed when he sees with his own eyes God’s children sleeping on the sidewalks at night?”

Four days later, Dr. King was dead. He was slain while responding to the Memphis sanitation workers’ strike which was a microcosm of the poverty campaign — abysmal working conditions which had caused the horrific death of two people, inhumane treatment, racism, and low pay. He was assassinated days before the Campaign was to launch in Washington DC.

As we honor Dr. King today, let us challenge ourselves to learn something new about the injustices he sought to right and prayerfully consider how we too will advocate for justice, truth, and peace.



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### Wisdom from Pope Francis

“Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue... Only by striving daily to put this vision into practice can we work together to create a community built upon justice and fraternal love.”

-Martin Luther King Day, 2021



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## LISTEN



In Episode 20 of the World House Podcast, Drs. Mira Foster and Clayborne Carson share **rare insights and audio on Poor People’s Campaign.**

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## READ



This **1968 America Magazine** article entitled **“Will This Prophet Be Heard”** remains as relevant today as it was when originally published.” The question still stands.

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## WATCH



In this brief NBC News interview, **Dr. King** succinctly **explains the disproportionate number of African Americans living in poverty.**

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