

The calling of the church with regard to poverty in society



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Poverty is a reality in Africa




What is poverty?



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What is poverty?

- Lack of money?
- Lack of food?
- Lack of skills?



Poverty is the lack of resources and skills to live with dignity in God's creation.

What does God say?

- His creation is important.
- Life is important to him.
- Our bodies are important.
- Human dignity is important.



Old Testament (Torah)

- Work is important (Gen. 1:26-31)!
- Socio and economic laws were given so that everyone in society can live with dignity.
- Those who were vulnerable were protected, i.e. slaves, poor, widows, orphans and aliens
- Ex. 23:6-9; Deut. 15:7,8; Deut. 23:15,16; Lev. 19:33,34; Deut. 24:14,15, etc.

Old Testament (Nebiim)

- Israel's problem was that they kept all the ceremonies, feasts and offerings, but they didn't serve God in their daily life.
- God uses the prophets to rebuke Israel because of their oppression of the vulnerable (Is. 1:12-17; Jer. 7:4-6; Amos 4:1-5).

Old Testament (Ketoebim)

- In the Old Testament it was the responsibility of the King to look after the weak and vulnerable (Ps. 72:1-4).
- One of the purposes of nearest redeemer was to help those in need (Lev. 25:24; 47-49).
- The wisdom literature emphasize the importance of justice to the poor and the needy (Prov. 29:7).

New Testament (Gospels)

- In the Gospels we see Jesus' concern for people's needs and those who are rejected (Matt. 14:13-21; Mark. 6:30-44; Luk. 8:1-3; Joh. 6:1-4).
- Jesus taught us who is our neighbour (Luk. 10:30-37; Luk. 16:19-31)
- Jesus taught us how to love (Matt. 22:37-39; Luk. 6:35-36; Matt. 5:38-48).
- In Matt. 25:31-46 we learn the importance of deeds of mercy.

New Testament (Acts)

- The Jerusalem Congregation looked after each other's needs (Acts. 2:42-47).
- In Acts 20:35 Pauls says that he set an example of helping the poor.

Other writings of the New Testament

- A righteous man is concerned about the rights of the poor (James 2:4-17)
- Pauls makes a collection for the needs of the believers in Jerusalem (2 Kor. 8:13).
- Rom. 13:9,10 emphasizes the importance of love.

The calling of the church

- The church's relationship with God is very important. Christ is the Redeemer and Head of his church (Col. 1:18).
- The unity between believers is important (Rom. 12:13; 2 Cor. 5:18-20).
- The church must witness (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20).
- The church must serve (1 John. 3:18).

Summary: The calling of the church

- Worship
- Exemplary community
- Witness
- Service



Keeping in mind what the task of the church is, what is the calling of the church with regard to poverty?

