

Poverty

Apart from “poverty” being the state of having little or no money and few or no material possessions.

To best understand “poverty” in general, let us illustrate the term with a pendulum, which is a weight, suspended from a pivot so that it can swing freely from a point of equilibrium to either side. Let us call “normal” the middle point and call poverty and wealth either side accordingly. Let us call “poverty” the left and “wealth” the right. Then the closer we are to the left end, the poorer we are, and the closer to the right end, the wealthier we are.

Let us use another similar illustration of the health in the body temperature. The normal and healthy reading is 97°F or 37°C. Then, the farther away from the middle the body either gets fever or cold. Poverty can only be understood by comparison with a point of reference taken as the ideal equilibrium accepted as “principle” by all parties.

The ideas of justice and health, beauty and ugly, fat and skinny, big and small are judged by an agreed principle free from passion. Before we get lost on the “Laws of Relativity of Common Sense” and get caught in the cobweb of our reasoning, let us refer to the ancient boundaries of the bedrock of Genesis. There is a Sovereign and personal God who has created all things. He rules His creation by laws.

For our discussion, let us state “God has put the law of ‘equilibrium’ according to His will in all His creation whereby harmony is the result of being in alignment and agreement with Him.” This means that He is the sustainer of all things and the seemingly power of our freedom is only equivalent to the freedom of a passenger in a cruise liner or a jumbo jet.

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For that matter the freedom of the pendulum that only swings dependent of outside forces but ultimately the weight of the pendulum will bring it to the point of alignment from the source from where it depends. God has put “equilibrium” in the work of His hand.

“I have been young and now I am old, I have never seen the righteous forsaken or His children begging for bread.” (Psalm 37:25)

No one country is totally poor or totally rich. What we have in our country others do not have in their country, and what they have in their country we do not have in our country, such as comfort and modernity versus natural beauty, resources or climate.

Not everyone in the world is a rich man neither every one is a Lazarus. Death will take rich and poor, healthy and sick to the point from where “equilibrium” rests.

We do not pursue “Communism” on this earth; this is God’s world. His son Jesus said, “The poor, you will always have them.” Jesus did not say this to perpetuate the present order, but the poor is there like the blind man in Jesus’ time – for God’s glory.

For us to be tested in our innermost and make mental transactions and resist or get in alignment with God and become His reaching arm or His mouthpiece. The poor as the rich are both creations of God for a reason. Just like the fool is created for the back of the rebellious. Just like Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus are instruments of God to bring His people into alignment with His will.

Poverty from the hand of God, like in Lazarus’ life, should be so desired at the light of their final end. In the same way selfish and careless wealth without God should be despised and shunned as evil.

“Poverty and Wealth”

It is not so much what we do for the poor or what we do with our wealth that counts before God. What counts is our predisposition toward the poor and toward wealth. This religion of ours is a matter of the heart, and what counts is the heart attitude.

Our Lord Jesus said, “The poor you will always have.” Because it is through the poor before us that we have the opportunity to testify about Jesus. The life of God through Jesus and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is revealed through my attitude toward the poor. So whatsoever I think or do is the displayed showcase of the Omnipotent God dwelling in me for the Glory of God. Whatever we give to the poor from our surplus is nothing if the heart attitude of the widow’s mite is not present.

An investment on the poor without the right heart attitude is like a puff of smoke in the face of the poor. Let us remember that Jesus is present in disguise in the poor, the sick, the hungry, the thirsty, the lonely, and the prisoner. You will want to treat Jesus with a dignity due Him. “He who gives to the poor lends to the Lord.” God pays back! It is mine in the retribution. “I will repay,” says the Lord. (Hebrews 10:30-31)

Someone said, “Real poverty is just to have money and nothing else.” Even Jesus commented, “Make friends through wealth” ... even using it illegally.

Philanthropy is not so much good works but investment. It is to make treasures in Heaven where the eminent financial collapse will not affect at all. Investment on the poor in this world may be like a waste of money, but according to God’s economy, it is the only investment on your retirement, which is out of this world. If you are giving to the

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poor, good, and give more, but above all, give yourself for others. Let the poverty of the poor never distract you from the real poverty of their soul. After all, rich or poor, we all will be food for the worms. Invest the Visible to gain in the Invisible. Invest the Temporal to gain in the Eternal. Invest in the Body to gain the Soul.

True poverty will come, as an Indian proverb said, “When every tree is dead and every blade of grass is gone, man will find out that you cannot eat money.” Poverty is the evidence of the world being in a state of fallen situation. I stand on the matter of poverty in the same spot as John Stott stood: “I weep for the lost, but I need to weep more for the poor.” But those who weep for the poor need to weep also for the Lost, until then, they are not credible to me. If it is a matter of preference, I would rather put a new man inside a poorly dressed man than to buy new clothing for the poor man, and in the same day I would share half of my plate for his hunger.

I would like to add a Chinese proverb: “A full stomach is an empty head.” The contrary is also true; a man in need is a resourceful man. Many rich people were spurred to excellence by their needs and poverty and become rich. On the other hand, those who get rich by inheritance, afterward become poor for failure to thrive. We all work better under pressure.

The poverty of the world is too great for us to make a significant difference to the point of equilibrium. Unless we bring the Faith factor, which is taking Jesus at His Word, we will end up making fools of ourselves. But in childlike faith, we bring our “brown bag” or our “lunchbox” to put in the hands of Jesus and live to see again the supernatural in the most natural way.

If a word of testimony is fitting, let me share what I have seen around the world: I do not like to travel nor am I a tourist, but I walk around the great and small cities of the world and try to see the countryside

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and the marketplaces. What I have seen in the light of the population explosion is that there is no way we are or can feed the world with what the land is producing.

So I go to the market where food is abundant, good, fresh, and cheaper. The amount of produce from the countryside in the market does not reflect what I have seen. I strongly and firmly believe that something is happening between the farms and the marketplace. (A miracle). I believe we need to pray that the Lord may open our eyes to see His hand Sovereignly taking care of His creatures.

So if we want to make an impact among the poor, we must first and above all believe in the intercessory prayer of Jesus and go once again to make people sit down in groups of fifty and a hundred to see how the Lord feeds the thousands through our giving. We must go in the authority and power of Jesus' Word and obey by faith. "If you want to test a man's character, give him power."

Prayer and faith is where power resides. But it can only be effectual if we first believe by taking Jesus at His Word. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." (Hebrews 11:6)

But if we are going to do only what the secular world is already doing in the way there are doing it, it is better for us to just add our means to Caesar's purse. But if we surrender our "lunchbox" to Jesus, we may discover what the little boy who gave his lunch to Jesus "the Supernatural in action" that will lead us to make out of lives what the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand did to this little boy.

According to Frank Barker, "This little boy made a lifetime commitment to get up early in the morning to fish after asking his mother to bake a few barley loaves of bread, and as soon as he got some fish, he ran to Jesus, pulled on His garment, and offered saying, "Here is more fish, Jesus – Would you like to feed more people?" The

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little boy discovered that truly giving is more blessed than receiving. Perhaps that is why Jesus did the other miracle of feeding the four thousand.

If you take away the Faith and Prayer factor from the equation, we will be doing the ministry without power or authority, and people will not obey to sit down at the feet of Jesus. We will have thrown away the banana, and we will be holding dear the banana peel. We will be embarrassed as people ask: "Where is the beef?"

So many a Christian enterprise is being done in the strength of the flesh with very little or no impact. That is "real poverty" in our service. Let us believe first and expect others to do the same. Let us put the mask on our faces first and inhale then help others to take a breath.

"Know Faith, know Power" - "No Faith, No Power".

Jesus is our Leader and example. If we don't follow Jesus, we run the risk of ending up like those who talk too much about prayer and pray so little. Let us believe and pray more and doubt and talk less.

"Go ye and do likewise." (Luke 10:37)

Gerry Gutierrez.

Dear Chris,

I thank you so much for the honor of asking my views on "poverty".

I received your letter last night and immediately decided to answer you since I am still feeling delinquent for not sending my application

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for the on going support from McLean PCA for the work budget of my ministry.

As I mention to you in our telephone conversation, I have never applied for a job in the past because I have been only recruited. Now as a Retired Missionary I live out of my pension since August 31, 2014. I left Mission to the World with their blessing and kind generous recognitions and appreciations of our work with them for over thirty years.

My vision for the balance of my life is to literally work myself to death with great pleasure. I want to work free from the organizational policies without embarrassing anyone but myself by doing the work that God called me from childhood. It is what everyone calls "working by faith alone or tent making" even though the term does not do justice to what I want to say.

Since McLean church has been the First Church that prayed for me even before my conversion as well as it has been the First Church that I have ever spoken as a believer with an interpreter back in 1972; I feel a sense of belonging to that body. I would like to invite you, if the Lord is leading you, to continue to facilitate my work and protect your investment on our ministry. This can be in a closer manner and in any way you may judge convenient and fare.

I expect to continue with the Radio ministry, and evangelism and discipleship via Internet and finish my lifetime project of launching the "Manifesto of the Followers of Jesus" as soon as I am able to get help in writing my manuscripts and ordering and editing my thought again and again.

I will informally or otherwise keep myself "accountable to one and all who believes in me and supports me in prayer above all. My needs are greater than money alone can solve. There is no substitute for

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your intercessory prayers. To make it easy to understand me, let me assure you that I have come to understand in a fresh way the meaning of the "will of God" and I love it and I consider that "My advantage".

Please call me if you have any questions. My phone number is: 858 335 8870 and also correct my Email address to gerardogutierrez46@gmail.com

You may also want to visit my website for more info by just typing in the search engine "Gerry and Julie Gutierrez".

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Gerry Gutierrez.