

Cause 3: Injustice



- “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no concern.”
- Prov 29:7
- “A poor man’s field may produce abundant food, but injustice sweeps it away.”
- Prov 12:23
- “..(the wicked) do not plead the cause of the orphan, they do not defend the rights of the poor.”
- Jer 5:28
- Examples of lack of Justice:
 - Corruption – over 2/3 of 120 poorest countries have a big corruption problem (Transparency Intl)

Cause 4: Self

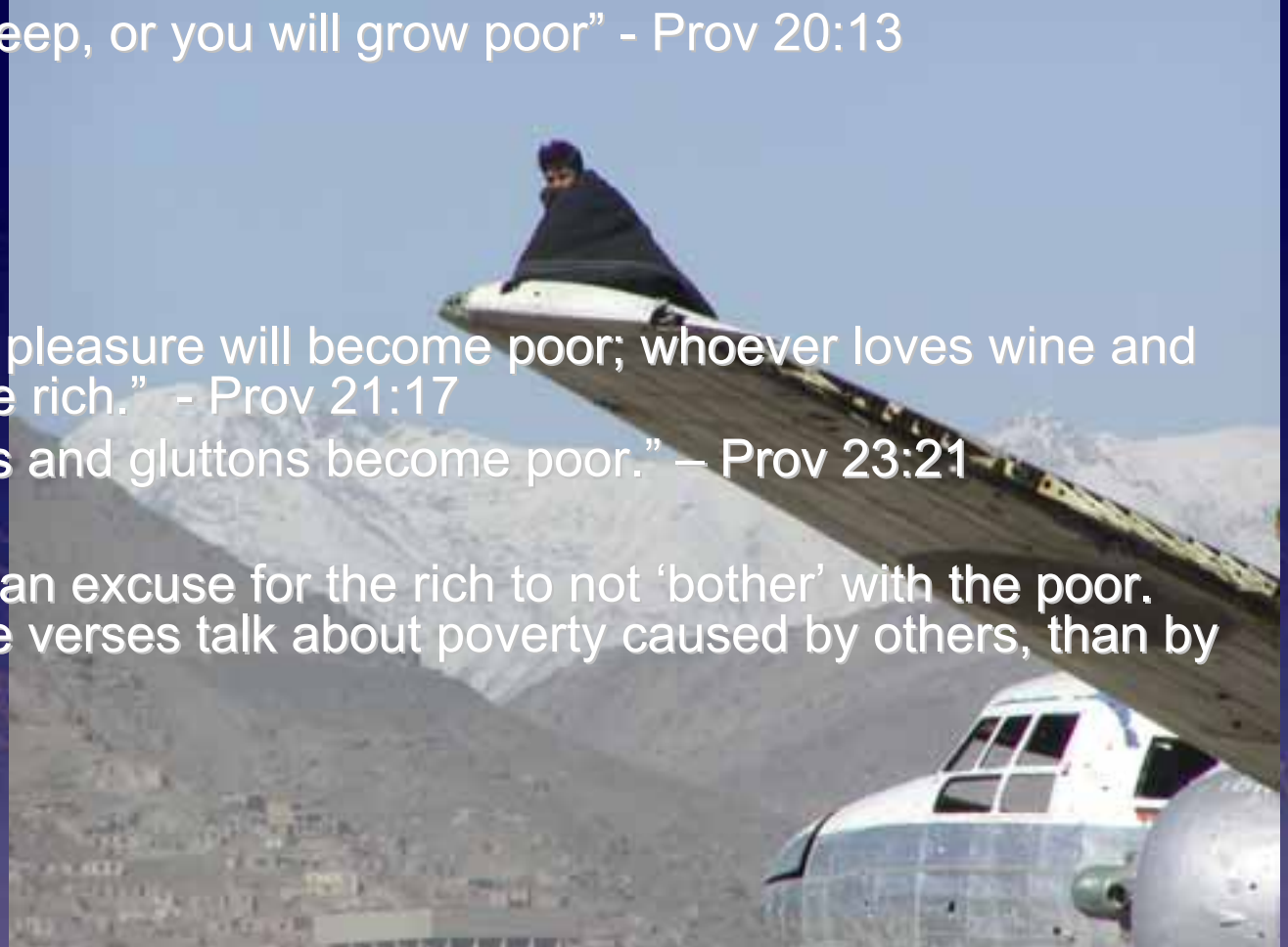
Laziness

- “Lazy Hands make a man poor.” - Prov 10:4
- “Do not love sleep, or you will grow poor” - Prov 20:13

Love Pleasure

- “He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.” - Prov 21:17
- “..for drunkards and gluttons become poor.” – Prov 23:21

This is frequently an excuse for the rich to not ‘bother’ with the poor. But many more verses talk about poverty caused by others, than by oneself.



Cause 5: Institutionalized Evil / Man's Pride



- Cain builds the first city in Gen 4:17
- Man builds Babylon to make a name for himself and not be scattered in Gen 11:4
- Cities concentrate mans sin. Sin is so prevalent it becomes an accepted institution in a culture, even though it fundamentally hurts people.
- During year of Jubilee all land and homes go back to original owners, except houses in city (Lev 25:30)
- Examples of Institutionalized Evil:
 - Religion – Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism
 - Flawed Economic/Governmental theories
Communism – China (under Mao), Cuba
 - Sinful Savors – Haiti, post-colonial Africa
 - All of these ignore or minimalize man's sin



III. God's Response to the Poor

Listens, Encourages & Defends

- “You hear O Lord, the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, in order that man, who is of the earth, may terrify no more.” – Ps 10:17-18

Raises up

- “He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people.” – Ps 113:7-8

Provides for

- “From your bounty, oh God, you provided for the poor.” – Ps 68:10

Secures Justice

- “I know the Lord secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy – Ps 140:12



III. Does God really do all this?

I can believe that He listens to, encourages, and raises up the poor.

- That work He does is all in their hearts

But does God physically provide for them, defend them, secure Justice for them?

- I don't see this happening around the world
- The poor are starved, beaten, abused, taken advantage of, stolen from, and killed – Darfur, Ethiopia, Bhopal, Haiti, Bangladesh,
- Is God a liar? Is the Bible not true?
- How does God want to rescue the weak, feed the hungry, bring justice to the oppressed?

God wants to help the poor - Through Us

- “They do not need to go away, you give them something to eat.”
– Mt 14:16
- We are to be Christ's body - God's eyes, ears, hands, feet, mouth here.
- His representatives for Him to work through to rescue the world.
- “He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor, will also cry himself and not be answered.” - Prov 21:13



IV. How does God want Us to Respond to the Poor ??



Response 1: Rescue

(instead of Oppress)



Don't Oppress (passive)

- “You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns”. – Dt 24:12-14
- “Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts to not think evil of one another” – Zech 7:10

Rescue (active)

- “Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked” – Ps 82:4
- “True religion is this to look after widows and orphans in their distress” – James 1:27



Response 2: Help Escape Debt & Give (instead of Usury & Greed)

Help Escape Debt

- “Do not take interest of any kind from (the poor)...or sell him food at a profit” – Lev 25: 36-37 *
- Sabbath Year - Cancel debt of fellow Israelites every 7 years – Deut 15:1-6
- Year of Jubilee – every 50 years any sold land goes back to original owner for those that who have lost the means to be productive to get it back– Lev 25:8-31

God doesn't want people to be trapped in poverty –
He set up ways for those who are in it to escape.

Give to the Poor

- “Give generously to (poor) and do so without a grudging heart.” – Dt 15:10
- “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets” – Matt 6:2

Examples:

- Jubilee campaign to forgive 3rd world debt
- Grameen bank & micro-finance loans



Response 3: Maintain Rights (instead of injustice)

- “Speak for these who cannot speak for themselves” – Prov 31:8
- “Do not crush the needy in court” – Prov 22:22
- “Do not deny justice to the poor in their lawsuits” – Ex 23:6

Examples:

- EMI’s work in Guatemala resettlement camp
- “Like many hardworking Africans, I have a bone to pick with the G8. Even if they cancel the debt, even if they give our governments aid money, ordinary Africans will not benefit. That money will only make the corrupt people richer and Africans international beggars for decades to come.” – Peter Kanans, Kenyan as quoted in Washington Post before 2005 G8 summit.



Response 4: Work Hard & be Disciplined

(instead of laziness & gluttony)

- "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." - II Thes 3:10
- "Put your money to work. Don't bury it." - Matt 25:14-23
- "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and work with your hands." - I Thes 4:11-12
- "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat" – Prov 23:20
- "Let us be alert and self-controlled." – I Th 5:6



Response 5: Look to God, not Earth, for Heaven

(instead of institutionalized evil)

- “We are looking for the city that is to come.” - Heb 13:14
- “Don’t shut ears to cries of the poor.” Prov 21:13

Examples:

- Examine yourself – invite God to show you sin in your habits that lead to oppression of others – apathy, indifference.
 - Figure out what is wrong. Be thoughtful.
 - Be willing to Act – to do something. Change “the way it is done”
- Jeffery Sachs / Bono



designing a world of hope

V. Relief & Development

Should our focus be to help the poor, or
to share the gospel with them?

- this has been a heated debate in the body of Christ.
- E. Stanley Jones, British missionary, captured it best...

“The Individual Gospel without the Social Gospel
is like a soul without a body;

The Social Gospel without the Individual Gospel
is like a body without a soul.

One is a corpse,
and the other a ghost.”



Relief vs. Development

Relief – around a Single Event

- crisis intervention immediately after a disaster
- doing something for people because they can't do it themselves: food, water, shelter, medicine.
- Example: Tsunami food distribution
- Relief should be short term
- Giving a man a fish to eat



Relief vs. Development

Development — process of helping people help themselves

- Ongoing enablement of people to take control of their lives
- More difficult & takes longer than relief, but longer, deeper, better impact
- Is a long term process
- Not giving a man a fish, and not just teaching a man how to fish, but teaching him Why to fish.
- Biblical Basis – Garden of Eden
 - Gen 1 & 2 – fill earth & rule over it.
 - Man given world and work to care for it.
 - Fall – curse on the ground. Man has to toil



Bad Development - Haiti Village Road

- Dev Org wanted to help poor rural Haitian farmers be more prosperous
- All the farmers' crops profit went to middle man
- Idea: lets make road, so easier for farmers to get crops to market
- Raised money and Built Road.
- But farmers didn't know to use it.
- Middle Man made more money
- Road brought in prostitution, drugs
- Actually lowered standard of living



Good Development - Nicaragua Drip Irrigation

- World Relief field agents working with rural Nicaraguan families over years
 - to improve agricultural production, and family health
- Hurricane Mitch flooding wipes out crops. No savings
- WR Agents ask: how can we help?
 - Problem isn't the flooding, but dry season keeps farmers poor
 - How can they produce crops during dry season?
 - Toss around ideas: Water tanks, different crops, use water better
 - WR introduces idea of drip irrigation to use water more efficiently
- WR secured \$200k USAID grant for 100 systems
- WR contact EMI to design.
- Challenge: Keep it simple in spite of varied water sources, crops, plots and terrain.
- Solution: Fixed zone size based on flow rate.
- EMI trains WR agents on how to design & construct systems
- WR chose 10 progressive farmers to pilot program
- WR sold systems to farmers. Farmers pay it back over 5 years.
- WR helped form farmers co-op to bring crops to market
- Became so productive, other farmers wanted it.
- Payback money allowed WR to buy more materials so technology propagated



Keys to Good Development

1. Compassion
 - To help them, not direct them
2. Mutual Discovery
 - Real Listening and Questioning. Rabbinic dialogue
 - Brainstorm together. Relationship.
 - Offer new ideas IF people are asking for them
3. Small Financial Assistance
 - Too much creates welfare mentality and/or corruption opportunity
 - Revolving credit payback ensures ownership
4. Some Training / Supervision
 - People like to learn, grow
5. Keep it Simple
 - for adoption & propagation



Conclusion

“Blessed is the man who **fears the Lord**,
who finds great delight in his commands...

Wealth and riches are in his house,
and his righteousness endures forever...

Good will come to him who is **generous**
and **lends freely**,
who conducts his affairs with **justice**...

He has **scattered abroad his gifts to the poor**,
his righteousness endures forever;
his horn will be lifted high in honor.”

- Psalm 112: 1,3,5,9

