

Take a stand against crime in order to eradicate poverty

There is an issue I find it difficult to understand. I always ask myself why do we have so many poor people in our country?

According to my assessment the majority of our people should have be out of poverty line by now. But, the suffering of our people is growing each and every day.

Why is that the case?

My perplexity comes from the fact that we have so many people and organisations that are fighting for the poor.

Even the government and religious formations take the condition of the poor as their priority.

The government, NGOs, political parties and religious formations are not only supporting the fight for the poor in rhetoric, they raise billions if not trillions of rand every year.

This money is raised in the name of the poor, to better the lives of the poor. How much money really gets to do what it has been raised for?

It would seem that most of the money raised for the poor in fact gets to enrich those who are speaking on behalf of the poor, and not the poor themselves.

We know many political leaders got rich by using the poor to get into power and get access to money.

It is not only political leaders who are enriching themselves at the expense of the poor. We have religious and NGO leaders who have become rich through exploiting the poor.

But, the poor must also take some responsibility for their situation. Some are using their poverty to justify acts of criminality.

Crime is destroying the lives of those people trying to set up the small businesses that create jobs. It has become a norm to attack the very people bringing services to the poor.

Education volunteers and others are attacked in our townships, as are many others while working hard to uplift and bring development to the poor.

Crime has become an obstacle in breaking the cycle of poverty. The acts of criminality in our communities makes it impossible to know who is our enemy and thus opens us up to exploitation.

The second contributing factor is that the poor choose and support self-serving politicians and criminals.

How then can we change the circumstances of the poor?

I would imagine that, the point of departure in addressing poverty, is to pay special attention to literacy and education.

Educated people are more likely to be aware of their dignity and rights.

Education should lead the poor in taking responsibility for changing society. Education and the eradication of poverty go hand in glove.

It is the responsibility of the church to preach the Good News – but not only from the pulpit on a Sunday.

That would be a limited understanding of the Good News.

In Luke 4:18, “The spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free”.

On the basis of this text from Luke, I believe that it is the responsibility of the Church to lead a peaceful revolution that is directed at changing the lives of the poor.

Revolution doesn't mean violence.

The church is called to bring awareness and enlightenment to the people.

It should educate the people about their rights.

The church is called to be prophetic, and it should be on the side of the poor at all times.

It should expose at all times the injustices that are done to our people. It should be on the side of truth. The church is called to proclaim the good news by denouncing sin and announcing the hope of salvation, protesting about what is wrong and supporting what is right.

The church is called to defend the poor from exploitation

Perhaps we can learn from the philosophy of Black Consciousness: "Express group pride and the determination by the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self. At the heart of this kind of thinking is the realisation by the blacks that that the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed".

As long we protest in support of corrupt leaders, we shall fail in eradicating poverty.

As long we let our oppressor play with our minds we can forget about transformation of the lives of the poor.

Let us liberate our minds from being exploited by politicians and other leaders, who use us to defend their evil ways.

Let us reflect on the words of Thomas Sankara: "understand that we need to create programmes and systems that will empower us. Economically, spiritually, and mentally. We need courage and action".

The poor of our country need courage and to take action against the lies they are fed with every day.

The power is in the hands of the poor to transform their state of life.

It is about what they stand for and support. The Church should help the poor of our country to wake up before it is too late.

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