

THE ROOT CAUSE OF POVERTY

Written by Calvin Fox

Tuesday, 12 February 2013 18:50 -

The Main reason for Poverty/Destitution: Oppression

Evangelicals typically overlook what the Bible teaches number one reason for true poverty or destitution: oppression, rooted in idolatry; yes, oppression rooted in idolatry. Oppression is primarily at the hands of invading enemy armies or at the hands of rich and powerful people. The latter exploit those who can no longer work their land- (widows, fatherless children) and the sick or disabled or farmers who have had bad crops due to disasters of some kind and must borrow to keep going. Loans lead to indentured servitude and forfeiture of the family farm. In some cases, land is simply stolen by the powerful. All of this is injustice. It violates the law of God and the rights of these poor land owners. This type of oppression is the cause given for most of the poverty in the Bible. Not all who are called Poor are oppressed, but the oppressed are truly poor.

Many Bible texts tell us that God is very concerned for these victims of oppression. He wants them to have justice. God is not on the side of the poor as such. God is on the side of Justice. All people have a right to work, to engage in the economic processes. They have the right to enjoy the fruit from their labor, to make a profit, to have private property, to own land. God is for all of these things. To deny any of these rights to anyone is injustice and God is against that. God is against anyone being denied the right to work, to make a profit, to have property.

The Primary Cause of Oppression: Idolatry

The Bible makes it clear that the primary cause of oppression (and therefore a major cause of poverty) is not greed, but idolatry. As rich and powerful people reject God & His Law to follow idols, they substitute the ungodly values and behavior dictated by those idols. This leads them to oppress the weak into grinding poverty. This is not to say that all people who are rich and powerful do this! Many do not and the Poor are often beneficiaries of very generous help from moral and compassionate people who are rich and powerful and use their wealth and power to accomplish much good in the world.

Long range Biblical Solution for Poverty begins with the Removal of Oppression

Poverty which is caused by oppression will not be solved by anything less than removal of that oppression. The oppressive behavior mentioned in Scripture is illegal in America. Justice [an

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end to oppression] must be found primarily through the Courts. Such action goes to the root of the problem. If the oppression is systemic and institutionalized, those systems and institutions must be confronted. This is particularly true if the oppression is some form of discrimination or racism. This calls for brave action from individuals, churches and the community at large.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE ON THIS WEBSITE UNDER THE CATEGORY OF JUSTICE