

## POVERTY ALLEVIATION

(Mar 14:7 KJV) For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

This reference is also found in the gospel of Matthew and also in the gospel of John. In many instances I have read or heard it being said that we should break the curse of poverty by prayer. To my mind this contradicts the fact that Jesus says that we will always have the poor in society and in the church. Jesus has however instructed us to feed the hungry and clothe the poor. So if we want to “break” the “curse” of poverty then the only way we can do that is by actually providing those people with food and clothing.

It is interesting to also note that in Matthew 25 Jesus uses feeding the hungry clothing the hungry and visiting those in prison as part of the criteria for acceptance by the Master (Matt. 25:34-42).

During the last few months we have been confronted with a global economic meltdown. People are losing their jobs, homes and other possessions. End time prophecy states that the rich will become richer and the poor will become poorer.

Pastor Patrick Manikan in the Berea Full Gospel Church in Chatsworth has been given a novel idea to help the poor. Every Sunday after the morning service he has a group of committed members who process all the poor folk who came to the church service and based on their particular circumstances are allocated a certain number of points.

The people are then allowed to go into a “shop” where they are able to “purchase” groceries up to the amount of points that they have been given. To my mind this project not only helps the poor, but it also serves as a way for people to determine what is a priority and “buy” it.

Too often we are guilty of giving people help and encouraging a dependency syndrome. This is dangerous as we should encourage people to depend on God and not trust in the arm of flesh. Even the State has encouraged organizations like the Church to help people become self supporting. So if you have started a feeding scheme you have just taken the first step of taking people out of poverty. After that we need to get them equipped with skills and get them jobs.

As I see it, a church that is prepared to help people out of the gutter of life and supports them to the point where the people are able to look after themselves has addressed the issue of poverty successfully. Maybe if all churches had to have feeding schemes and clothe the people then we would go a long way to reducing poverty that has come as a result of the greed of others.

Are you willing to take on this challenge and make a difference in the lives of others for the glory of God?