



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE POOR PEOPLE

Elder Oscar Mata

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE POOR PEOPLE

This October 17, 2008 is the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. At a time like this, it is important that we consider the role of the Christians before this scourge that affects the whole world.

Let's see some data on poverty in the world: More than 1000 million people live in extreme poverty, of whom 70% are women; more than 1800 million people lack access to safe drinking water; 1000 million are homeless; 840 million are malnourished; 2000 million suffer from anemia due to lack of iron in their food; 880 million have not access to basic health services; 2000 million lack of essential drugs.¹ These data reveal a world that needs help urgently. What as Christians are we doing about it?

The Word of God teaches us that Christ announced the Gospel to the poor: *“And answering, Jesus said to them, Go and tell John what you have seen and heard; that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is proclaimed to the poor”* (Luke 7:22). Jesus directed His message to everyone but the poor people were responding to his teachings with less obstacles or objections, because they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. The poor were chosen by God: *“Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him?”* (James 2:5).

However, at present, many religious leaders introduce a Christ looking for that all His followers were rich and prosperous in this present life, that He wants to see His people as princes, wearing fine clothes and living in luxury and opulence. But Jesus said: *“Truly I say to you that a rich man will with great difficulty enter into the kingdom of Heaven”* (Matthew 19:23). Not that it is impossible that the rich people receive the riches of the grace, but it is difficult. This allows us to understand better so that *“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money”* (Luke 16:13 NVI).

To enter at this Kingdom, we must be prepared to put the interests of Christ rather than the personal ones. Note that there is a wide gap between a rich poor person and poor rich one, because there are some people who even without the economic resources have planted their hopes in the Author and Finisher of our faith, while others are rich in material goods but have not to God. Even so *“For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”* (Mark 8:36), and *“Better is the poor who walks in his uprightness than he who is perverse in his ways, though he is rich”* (Proverbs 28:6).

¹ Source: Wikipedia, La Enciclopedia Libre, article “Pobreza”, translated by Oscar Mata

Jesus gave us a great example: *“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, for your sakes He became poor, in order that you might be made rich through His poverty”* (2 Corinthians 8:9). Believers in Jesus Christ, faithful to His call, they possess the greatest wealth that man can never overcome.

Knowing our wealth, what are we doing to the poor of this world? We can read in Romans 15:26: *“For it has pleased those of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints in Jerusalem.”* This shows us that as Christians we must have the commitment to contribute to help the poor.

But God’s calling is not so we remember only to our brothers of the Church, because the Word of God teaches us that the mercy has not limits: *“He who despises his neighbor sins, but he who has mercy on the poor, happy is he”* (Proverbs 14:21).

But we must not only provide relief for others to prove that we are good Christians or with the goal that God bless us more, but everything must be done with love. Paul wrote: *“And though I give out all my goods to feed the poor, and though I deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am profited nothing”* (1 Corinthians 13:3).

Dear friend and brother, it is important that we as Christians become aware that the poor people need us. In our congregations and communities, we must do programs to help at the needy people. We must remember to others and help without any discrimination.

No doubt to participate in programs of our congregations and other institutions that nonprofit fundraising to help at the disadvantaged, because the love to the neighbor has not borders of any kind.

But do not forget to remain faithful to the Lord and to seek God’s Kingdom and His righteousness, as Jesus said: *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you”* (Matthew 6:33).

No doubt practice the righteousness, but remember what David said: *“I have been young, and am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread”* (Psalm 37:25).

Of course, we should not consider the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty as the only one to remember at the poor, but every day we must think about our love role to help the neighbor.

It is not important how much you do not have; always remember that there are others who have nothing.