

A New Testament Approach to Poverty Alleviation as a Social Centered Model for Evangelism

Tim Black, MA Student Cape Town Baptist Seminary, Godfrey Harold, Research Associate University of Pretoria.

1. Introduction

Endemic and widespread poverty continues to disfigure the face of our country. It will always be impossible for us to say that we have fully restored the dignity of all our people as long as this situation persists. For this reason the struggle to eradicate poverty has been and will continue to be a cornerstone of the national effort to build the new South Africa (Thabo Mbeki 2006).

We seem to have retreated into religion as private practice rather than infusing political action with spiritual understanding (Ramphele 2008:20)

The Book of Acts chronicles the emergence of a movement of mainly un-schooled, ordinary people that were convinced that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Romans had crucified, had returned from the dead. They were so thoroughly convinced of this that they testified to it with power and boldness, so much so that they were arrested by the ‘astonished’ religious leaders who had ‘recognized that they had been with Jesus’ (Acts 4:13b ESV). The Movement continued to spread as community developed amongst those new believers who were ‘of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common’ (Acts 4:32b ESV). ‘There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need’ (4:34-35 ESV).

This was a lifestyle that caught the attention of the societies in which they lived. Aristedes, a Christian philosopher writing around 125 A.D., paints the following picture of economic sharing in the church:

“They walk in all humility and kindness, and falsehood is not found among them, and they love one another. They despise not the widow and grieve not the orphan. He that hath distributeth liberally to him that hath not. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof, and rejoice over him, as it were their own brother: for they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh, but after the spirit and in God; but when one of their poor passes away from the world, and any of them see him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability; and if they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy, and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with their necessary food” (Quoted in Hengel, *Property and Riches in the Early Church*, 42-43 from Sider 2005:85).

This is evangelism in its truest sense: living a lifestyle of Christ-likeness that captures the attention of the watching community. This was not an add-on process or procedure that was part of discipleship. This was living as disciples, display-

ing the glory of God through a love for each other that met physical and spiritual needs. This lifestyle-evangelism was so powerful and captivating that it brought thousands of people to faith in Christ.

2. Declaration vs. Deed

Christian praxis has had a long struggle with the dichotomy that has developed between those that have insisted that the declaratory element in the Church's mission—the direct preaching of the gospel—must be first priority and those that insist that the first priority must be acts that challenge injustice, discrimination and all forms of oppression while proactively seeking to bring about healing and peace. Jesus did not seem to struggle with this dichotomy. A reading of the Gospels portrays ‘. . . an indissoluble nexus between deeds and words’ (Newbigin 2002:131).

Much of what is written in the first three Gospels focuses upon the acts of Jesus—his acts of healing, of exorcism, and feeding the hungry. Although much of the fourth Gospel contains a greater proportion of teaching, ‘. . . most of this explains the acts that Jesus has done: the healing of a paralytic, the feeding of a multitude, the giving of sight to a blind man, and the raising of a man from death’ (Newbigin 2002:132).

There is an intimate link between acts and words that is made clear in the mission charge to the disciples given in Matthew 10:1 ‘And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction’. Nothing is mentioned here about preaching until verse 7, where Jesus says, ‘Preach as you go, saying ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’’ The activities that arise from this new authority given to the disciples are defined by the preaching. The miraculous events do not clearly explain themselves and could be misinterpreted, which was the case with Jesus' enemies attributing his power to Satan. Preaching makes the call for a radical decision requiring repentance and faith. ‘Healings, even the most wonderful, do not call this present world radically into question; the gospel does, and this has to be made explicit’ (Newbigin 2002:132). There can be no separation between believing and following, or faith and obedience. “The prayer ‘Thy will be done’ is in vain if it is not made visible in action for the doing of that will. Consequently, missions have never been able to separate the preaching of the gospel from action for God's justice” (Newbigin 1995:91).

3. Jesus' Mission

Christians believe that God revealed himself most completely in Jesus of Nazareth, so to more fully understand God's activity in the world and to know what true Christian praxis and commitment demands, it is important to understand how Jesus defined his mission. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus identifies his mission by quoting the prophet Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour”(Luke 4:18-19). After reading these words,

Jesus informed his audience that he was the fulfilment of this Scripture,¹ portraying the past and present human situation in realistic terms. (Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]). The words of Jesus are analysed more closely in the following section.

3.1 The poor

Jesus' priority in his mission was to turn his attention to the poor, who literally dominated the Palestinian population at that time.² He was poor himself as is described in the following ways:

born in a stable;

came from a poor family;³

was a refugee;⁴

was an immigrant in the land of Galilee;⁵

humbly submitted Himself to John the Baptist's baptism;⁶

warned a potential disciple of the type of lifestyle to expect by saying that He had no home.⁷

All of this provides evidence that when Jesus addressed the poor he did so from a position of equality, not superiority. Jesus was familiar with poverty, suffering, hunger, mourning and ostracism. The apostle Paul summarises Jesus incarnation as follows: 'For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich' (2 Corinthians 8:9).

3.2 The captives

In 1st century Palestine, as is the case in many third world countries today, the poor and oppressed were trapped with no way of improving their situation. Therefore, many 'prisoners' were not murderers, rapists or other violent criminals as they would have been executed for their crimes. In 1st century Palestine, most prisoners were imprisoned because they could not afford to pay back their debtors⁸ (Westermann in Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]: 53 footnote). The implication, then, is that when Jesus was referring to the 'captives and prisoners' he was not referring to two separate groups but one: the poor, imprisoned because of their debt and poverty (Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]:53).

3.3 The blind

For Jesus to include 'the blind' in the same categories as the poor and the captives suggests that he thought of them as part of the same needy group. It is interesting that poverty appears in the context as a related circumstance in six of the seven instances that Luke mentions the blind.⁹

3.4 The oppressed

Jesus described the poverty stricken as oppressed. As has been previously mentioned, it seems that oppression and injustice are the main causes of poverty in the Bible. Old Testament Hebrew uses twenty verbal roots that show up more than five hundred times describing oppression' (Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]:53). In the face of this, Jesus offers Himself as the solution to the suffering and disillusionment of those in poverty. He did this in the following ways:

3.5 The bringer of 'good news'

Jesus went about proclaiming the 'good news.' This was a radical message, one that had a revolutionary impact upon society. 'The actual "good news" which he came to proclaim was that the Kingdom of God had arrived, which he ushered in through his ministry by announcement and demonstration, and through his death and resurrection. It is important to note that it was aimed at the poor' (Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]:54).

3.6 The proclamation of freedom

Part of the coming of the Kingdom of God was Jesus' proclamation of liberating the oppressed: 'He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed' (Lk 4:18). According to Hanks,

"[t]he church has often fallen into the trap of legitimizing the oppression that the established order maintains. Many Christians wish to preach a gospel of socio-political freedom to the poor, whereas others want to offer forgiveness of sins to the rich. Jesus, however, did not offer us the alternative of spreading two gospels. His gospel is one of freedom for the poor, which is bad news for the rich unless they genuinely repent, identify with the poor and share their goods with them" (Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]: 54).

3.7 Recovery of sight to the blind

Jesus' mission statement also included providing 'recovery of sight to the blind' (Luke 4:18). John the Baptizer tested Jesus' authenticity as the Messiah by sending his disciples to Jesus. Jesus responded to their questions by saying:

"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (Lk 7:22).

Jesus' response has to do with what is being accomplished through his work, which identifies him as the Messiah. Things are happening through him that go way beyond the claim to a title.

3.8 Proclamation of the year of the Lord's favour

This may be the most dramatic part of Jesus' mission statement, referring to the year of jubilee (Lev 25). The jubilee was implemented to prevent undesirable class distinctions between the rich and the poor and, had Israel followed this law, it would have solved many of the extremes of wealth and poverty that occurred in Jewish society.

According to Hanks (in Howitt & Morpew [s.a.]), Jesus taught his disciples to practice jubilee in the following ways:

- 3.8.1 Not by sowing, reaping or harvesting, but by living by faith, always trusting that God will provide for one's needs. (Matthew 6:25-26, 31-33; Luke 12:29-31).
- 3.8.2 By remitting all debts (Matthew 5:40-42; Luke 6:33; Luke 12:30-33, 16: 1-15).

- 3.8.3 By redistributing wealth (Luke 11:42; Luke 12:30-33; Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37).

4. Early Church Ministry

Radical, positive economic relationships established in the new community of believers were endorsements of the Old Testament teaching concerning care for the poor. There was wide-scale sharing in the earliest Christian church:

“Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was of his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 4:32).

There is abundant evidence that the early church continued the pattern of economic sharing practiced by Jesus (Acts 2:43-47; 4:32-37; 5:1-11; 6:1-7). The Gospel writer Luke records (Acts 2:44), immediately after noting the conversion at Pentecost of three thousand, that ‘all who believed were together and had all things in common.’ Physical needs were met by sharing, which included personal property being freely sold to aid the needy within the fellowship (Acts 4:36-37; 5:3-4).

God’s promise that the obedience of Israel would eliminate poverty (Deuteronomy 15:4) only reached fulfillment in the early church community. They ate meals together with ‘glad and generous hearts’ (Acts 2:46b) and experienced unity, being of ‘one heart and soul’ (Acts 4:32). This was a new community defined by the visible transformation of their lives, including personal possessions (Sider 2005). The impact of this transformation was striking: their number was growing dramatically (Acts 2:47b) and ‘with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus ...’ (Acts 4:33).

They organised systems to ensure that economic needs were met justly. It appears that the Jerusalem church included a significant minority of Hellenists—Greek speaking Jews or possibly Greeks that had converted to Judaism. Somehow, the Hebrew-speaking majority had overlooked the needs of the Hellenist widows. When this injustice was brought to the attention of the apostles, they responded by choosing seven men to look after the Hellenist widows with all seven being members of the minority group that had been discriminated against. Actions like this (Acts 6:7) resulted in ‘the number of disciples (multiplying) greatly in Jerusalem’ (Sider 2005).

The early NT church did not insist on economic equality or abolish private property. Peter attests to this when he reminds Ananias that he was under no obligation to either sell his property or donate the proceeds from the sale to the church (Acts 5:4). Sharing was not compulsory, but voluntary. It seems that genuine love and care for others in the community was the motivation for donating personal possessions. Some, in fact, did not donate everything. John Mark’s mother, among others, retained her own house (Acts 12:12) and additional passages indicate that others retained property as well.

But the essence of the economic relationships in the early Christian community indicates a deep level of caring for one another. Their sharing was not superficial since regularly and repeatedly, ‘... they sold their possessions and goods and

distributed them to all, as any had need' (Acts 2:45). If the need was greater than what was available, they simply sold property. The needs of fellow members of the faith community became the deciding factors, not legal property rights or personal financial security. "For the earliest Christians, oneness in Christ meant sweeping liability for and availability to the other members of Christ's body" (Sider 2005:79).

But followers of Christ must not let their generosity end with fellow Christians. Jesus' teaching not only permits, but requires his followers to extend care for the poor and oppressed outside of the faith. The story of the Good Samaritan teaches that anybody who is in need is one's neighbour (Luke 10:29-37). Matthew 5:43-45 is even more specific:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust".

Jesus forbids his followers to be concerned only for their neighbours who would normally be members of their own ethnic or religious group. Instead, he commands his followers to imitate God, who does good for everyone (Sider 2005).

But the command actually goes much deeper. In Matthew 22:35-40, a lawyer asked Jesus a question to test him. He asks, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?' The reply of Jesus is stunning, particularly if serious consideration is given to its ramifications:

"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets'" (Matthew 22:37-40).

It is correctly understood that the Great Commandment tells mankind to love God. This injunction of Jesus would not surprise his first century hearers, nor those of the 21st century. What is startling, however, is the level of care that is expected toward 'our neighbours.' Jesus tells this lawyer that he must love his neighbour in the same way that he loves himself. It is normal to expect one to love oneself, which is what Jesus assumes. But what he adds here is that as one wishes to be loved, one must also love one's neighbour, meaning that as a man naturally wants what is best for himself, so he must equally desire the best for his neighbour. John Piper describes it this way:

"He (Jesus) commands, 'As you love yourself, so love your neighbour.' Which means: As you long for food when you are hungry, so long to feed your neighbour when he is hungry. As you long for nice clothes for yourself, so long for nice clothes for your neighbour. As you desire to have a comfortable place to live, so desire a comfortable place to live for your neighbour. As you seek to be safe and secure from calamity and violence, so seek safety and security for your neighbour" (1996:283).

The ramifications are quite radical. ‘In other words, make the measure of your self-seeking the measure of your self-giving’ (Piper 1996:283).

Paul associates the Old Testament obligation for justice with Christian responsibility for the poor (2 Corinthians 9:9-10). This obligation to do justice makes followers of Jesus responsible for the conduct of society in a comprehensive way. Mott elaborates on this, affirming that “[w]herever there is basic human need, we (Christians) are (obligated) to help to the extent of our ability and opportunity” (1982:77). “Do not hold back good from those who are entitled to it, when you possess the power to do it” (Proverbs 3:27), sums up this teaching and indicates how to relate it to varying circumstances, including “not only our personal resources but also our class position and political opportunities” (Mott 1982:77).

5. Modern Church Responsibility

According to Sider (2005), Scripture offers two crucial clues about the nature of the economic justice that God demands from his people. First, God desires that all people have the opportunity to earn a modest income and live as dignified members of the community. Old Testament laws regarding the year of Jubilee, the year of Sabbatical and other protective laws regarding tithing and gleaning help to illustrate that God’s desire was to protect people from permanent poverty (see Black 2010:113 for further discussion). Additionally, Jesus’ mission involved “bringing good news to the poor”. Undoubtedly, the Early Church understood that this mission required them to take an active role providing for those in poverty by extending generosity toward the needy within their communities. It was the responsibility of the church then—and now—to help form a society so that all those able to work would have access to the resources needed to earn a decent living in the general economy.

Second, God desires that those who cannot work are provided for out of the generosity of those who can. The remarkable growth of the early Christian community is testimony to the power of such practical ministry.

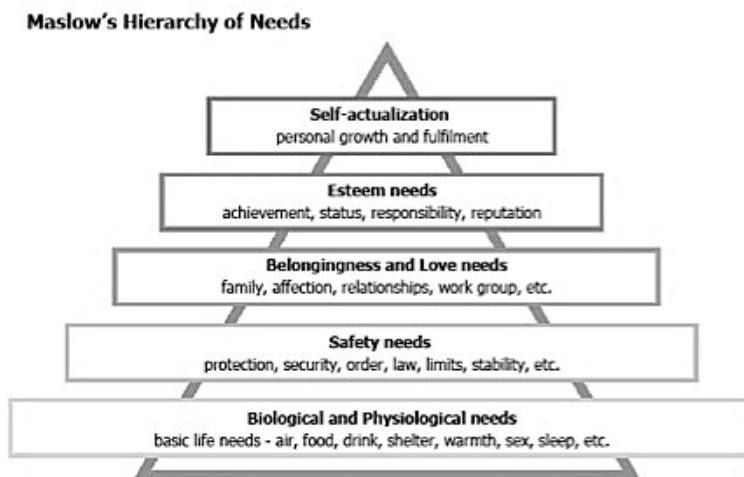
The biblical record of teaching and practice that relates to the community of faith’s responsibility to those in need is striking. The Bible clearly details God’s desire for transformed economic relationships among his people. To be obedient, it is necessary for the church to implement the Scriptural principles that it claims are its mandate in the communities where it exists. Poverty alleviation is not just providing the necessary income to bring people out of poverty. Short-term poverty relief fits this concept and is a worthwhile and necessary endeavour. But it should have a specific application.¹⁰ Projects focused simply on relief can create an unhealthy dependency. By contrast, longer-term poverty alleviation is an approach that seeks to bring people to a sense of wholeness with inherent dignity. This fits broader usage of this definition in common with the United Nations Development Reports [UNDR] that view poverty as the “denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others” (Statistics South Africa 2000:54). This is a multi-dimensional

perspective that sees the lack of sufficient income as only one element in the total picture defining poverty.

Defining poverty in terms of its long-term alleviation also aims to reduce the impact of poverty on the lives of poor people in a way that has a more sustained and permanent result. Programmes of poverty alleviation tend to have longer-term goals and seek to be developmental in their function (Studies in Poverty and Inequality 2007). If poverty is more than just a lack of sufficient income to properly sustain life, which is the assumption of this research and seems to be indicated by generally accepted definition, then holistically-focused community development is essential to any poverty alleviation programme if it is to be truly successful. The church has a significant role to play here.

But the reality that Jesus has ushered in a new kingdom must be demonstrated through action. Jesus calls us to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19) and to be most effective in this mission it is important that followers of Jesus consider the process of disciple-making from an unbeliever’s context. Extensive research has indicated that “people will not listen to the gospel message and respond unless it speaks to felt needs” (Aldrich 1981:89). Felt needs become the starting point for communication and it is from this basis that evangelism moves to sharing Christ as the solution to one’s greatest need, that of a restored relationship with the Creator. But it is in meeting felt needs that one finds the key that opens the opportunity to share Christ. “Effective evangelism begins where people are, not where we would like them to be” (Aldrich 1981:89).

Evangelism’s ultimate purpose is to help someone solve a problem, a problem that is literally a matter of life and death. Christians must understand what the gospel means to a searching heart. Jesus offers abundant life (John 10:10), a promise that meets needs on every level.



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6. Basic Human Needs

Abraham Maslow identified a hierarchy of human needs that remains a simple yet generally accepted model for basic human needs assessment. The needs Maslow identified are indicated in the following chart:

Maslow believed that although all of the needs are intrinsic to all humans, they are not all of equal importance at the same time. What one desires is generally related to one's basic needs as defined in the following categories.

Man's most basic needs, according to Maslow, are physiological and Maslow's hierarchy begins at this level and moves upward. Food, water, shelter, clothing and warmth are examples of physiological needs that must be met. If a person is starving, his consuming focus is food. Although it is true that "man does not live by bread alone . . ." (Matthew 4:4), without food or water life ceases in a matter of days. "The first "'good news' for a starving man is bread which will hopefully lead him to the Bread of Life" (Aldrich 1981:92).

Once physiological needs are met, a person will seek ways to meet needs for safety. In a South African context, many people feel unsafe and insecure, leading to feelings of fear and deep seated feelings of anxiety. A person with issues around security finds in the gospel an eternal security that relieves all fears and where one rests in the arms of a loving and accepting Father.

When security needs are met, one seeks to satisfy the need for love and affection from meaningful relationships with others. Sin has broken all relationships, moving them toward separation and individuality, even though people have a desperate need to belong in community. People search for a place where they can find love and acceptance for who they are. The woman caught in adultery was seeking love and acceptance, receiving instead only humiliation and pain (John 7:53-8:11). Jesus entered into her tragedy and gave her love and acceptance instead of the severe judgment that she expected. Many find themselves in the same situation without realising their need for Christ.

One also has the need for feelings of personal significance, fulfilling the desire for self-esteem. People desire to be treated as individuals with inherent value. Yet the most important discovery is that one is important to God. He is intimately familiar with us and loves us, news that is precious to those who feel unloved and worthless.

The highest level, self-actualisation, is the need to realise one's potential by fully developing to become who one was meant to be. This need is never fully satisfied outside of Christ. "Hoping to fill a God-shaped vacuum with personal achievement doesn't work. Thousands of 'successful' people suffer from destination sickness. They've arrived. . . empty" (Aldrich 1981:93). People need a purpose beyond themselves, knowing that it is possible to leave behind something that will somehow make a difference.

People are more inclined to respond positively to the gospel when they understand how following Christ will meet their needs. But there are refinements suggested by George Hunter (Aldrich 1981:95) to this chart which provide insight into the South African context. He writes that, relatively speaking, those near the

top of the hierarchy of needs are the stronger, more adequate people and can be more easily reached for Christ by involving them in a worthy cause. Those at the bottom are the weaker, more vulnerable ones and are most often evangelised through personal care that considers their physical well-being. Therefore, dealing with poverty and the issues around poverty can prove as effective tools for leading people to Christ. Such efforts meet physiological needs that are most basic, relating to everyone living in poverty. Followers of Jesus have a role in finding, “people where they now are on the hierarchy of motives and to engage them at the appropriate level” (Aldrich 1981:96). For those in poverty, addressing issues around poverty alleviation that will bring relief and hope to those suffering without the means or ability to provide for themselves will be a powerful witness for the love of Christ through his people.

7. Conclusion

God has always had the poor on his heart. Society is dangerously divided between the haves and the have-nots. If followers of Jesus would begin in earnest applying principles around effective poverty alleviation, the world would be a different place. Ron Sider (2005:87) writes that “few other steps would have such a powerful evangelistic impact today”.

The way forward is challenging. Poverty and the issues that surround it are often intractable, without a clear solution. But the Church, above any institution, should be involved in making a difference. That means that the paradigms of church leaders and congregations must be challenged. The role of the church must be examined in light of the directives of Scripture. Activities should then be focused upon determining the role that each congregation could play in developing sustainable interventions that address poverty and other poverty-related justice issues. Traditionally, this has meant providing services based upon meeting people’s immediate needs for survival, something which the church has often done well.

But strategies must be developed that will begin to implement community transformation. Developmental projects can be designed that will enable people to become self-reliant, although the church will need to prepare for the long term commitment necessary to bring about desired change. Partnerships could also be established among churches that would strategically pool resources toward a common purpose, thereby strengthening the singular efforts of many congregations as they work together toward a concerted goal.

The church has always indicated a desire to bring about spiritual transformation, finding this mandate as a response to the Great Commission voiced by Jesus as he returned to his Father: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...” (Matthew 28:19a). It is possible that the spiritual transformation so desired by the Church will only come in the measure that the Church responds to the clear Biblical mandate to engage with the desperate needs of the poor.

8. Notes

- 1 By the time that Jesus finished in the synagogue, this audience had turned into an angry mob that tried to throw him off a cliff. (Luke 4:29)

- 2 'A very similar case scenario resides in Africa today' (Howitt & Morphew [sa]:51).
- 3 The offering that was presented for purification after the birth of Jesus showed that his parents were a poor couple. They could not afford a lamb, so they brought a pair of doves or pigeons (Luke 2:22-24). This sacrifice was according to the Law of Moses found in Leviticus 12:8.
- 4 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I called my son.' (Matthew 2:13-15).
- 5 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.' And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: 'He shall be called a Nazarene' (Matthew 2:19-23).
- 6 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he consented' (Matthew 3:13-15).
John was a prophet who challenged the rich to show sincere repentance by sharing what they had with the poor.
And the crowds asked him (John), 'What then shall we do?' And he answered them, 'Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise' (Luke 3:10-11).
- 7 And a scribe came up and said to him, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head' (Matthew 8:19-20).
- 8 See Matthew 5:25-26; 18:30; Luke 12:57-59.
- 9 See Luke 4:18; 7:21-22; 14:13, 21; 18:35. Also see the year of jubilee provision (Leviticus 25:35; Isaiah 58:7) for providing shelter for the poor and homeless mentioned in Luke 14:13,21 (Hanks in Howitt & Morphew [s.a.]:53 note).
- 10 Poverty relief refers to interventions that seek to give short-term assistance to people living in poverty, usually in response to an external emergency situation that pushes people into a state of increased vulnerability (Studies in Poverty and Inequality 2007).

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godfrey@ctbs.org.za