

The alleviation of poverty in Mozambique - A Christian ethical perspective

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ABSTRACT

It is not difficult to prove the extent of poverty in Mozambique, because it does not only affect this country, but the issue of poverty is debated worldwide in political, scientific, social, religious and academic circles. Therefore the issue of poverty became a large interest in human existence attracting much attention.

In Mozambique, poverty is seen as a problem debated by various factions of the society, provoking the political and religious leaders to concentrate their efforts on this concern (MPF, 2000:30). The politicians make their influence known through their electoral manifests, including their political speeches in the campaigns. That is what led the government of this country to recently declare a struggle against poverty as the priority project for the next five years. Poverty in itself results in an increase of corruption and the lowering of ethical standards in all fields of life (ANFP, 2006:24).

In the religious sphere, especially in the church, the influence on poverty is evident through preaching, missions and the decision making of the believers. The connection between poverty and corruption is important to the religious since it is related to human behaviour. The question on how Christians face this matter, posed a subject of research for the researcher. Thus, in order to contribute to the actions of alleviating poverty in Mozambique, this research had to examine aspects in understanding poverty, the real origin of poverty in Mozambique, and also how to deal with problem.

The history and the causation of poverty in Mozambique are connected. It cannot be seen as judgment from God, but it could be seen as the result of the sin of people, inside as well as outside the church. To change the situation, the paradigm and consequently also the ethical standards that drive human life must be altered.

PREFACE

Mozambique is one of the countries in the world seriously affected by poverty that has many programs to alleviate it. Poverty affects all the people; including the Christians form the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the church is also involved in the projects of the alleviation of poverty in this country. Unfortunately, these programs are affected by grand corruption, making it difficult to improve the lives of the poor.

As a preacher of the Word in the Tete Province, particularly in the Assemblies of God at the provincial headquarters, the researcher saw the need of enhancing the ethical standards in the church so as to inform the present and future decision makers to evaluate and develop ethical standards to improve the plan of action, reform the public sector and reduce corruption in the poverty alleviation program. It will also be a blessing to the churches if they could assist the government in developing a good morality in the Mozambican community.

As a starting point, the history of poverty in Mozambique, and that of other African countries was studied to add to the information about the lack of morality that brings about the corrupt behaviour in governmental institutions. The researcher also blames the church for this lack of morality because it is not using its prophetic voice to change the *status quo*. Something can be done by the present and future generations if they have empathy with their neighbour, as Christ did.

The suggested remedies to poverty alleviation in Mozambique are the involvement of the church in these programs and to get rid of the prejudice of denominationalism and exclusivism that divide the body of Christ. Christians in positions of power could teach and influence their colleagues through their example by avoiding any kind of corruption.