

Poverty + Privilege.

James 2 vs. 1-13

Induction Dr.

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N.E. KA. Sta

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James 2 vs 5

This an almost unique congregation: consisting mainly of women of whom the majority will be working mothers spread over the central part of the city with at the present moment very little likelihood of sustaining the congregation financially. Their worship services ~~are~~ <sup>will be</sup> ~~held~~ <sup>at</sup> the present moment be held in a chapel with an outstanding history of preaching & teaching including the opposition of this Kilnerton College against the injustice of apartheid.

This is a congregation of the poor, part of a church of mainly poor people.

The recent survey on poverty & unemployment undertaken by the N.E. KA. has shown that <sup>of 5-6</sup> nearly 60% of all NEKA households have less than R500 pm. income, compared to 51% nationally. Of the 479 congregations at least 120 will never be able to support a minister of their own. The present survey

drought in the country which will affect 1m (2  
Black farm workers will include thousands of  
members of the N.E. K.A. in the Matland. Add to  
that the growing<sup>nat</sup> unemployment (Alex 60-65%)  
and 7m. Black homeless people and you have  
all the elements of a Time-bomb which may  
explode in our faces. What is God wanting  
to say to all of us through these facts -  
and esp. to the poor?

### Scripture & Poverty:

- 1) An analysis & close reading of all the  
pronouncements made in Scripture regarding poverty  
& marginalised people reflect the astoundingly  
large number of references to the poor,  
the widow, the hungry, the foreigner and  
what is demanded of us in this regard
- 2) The overall conclusion of God's demand  
to us as his followers is to stand in solidarity  
with the poor
- 3) God gives a very special promise to the  
poor: "to be rich in faith and to possess  
the Kingdom which he promised to those  
who love him." But God equally passes  
a harsh judgment against the rich too

James 2:5

NB

oppress the poor

13

This leads us as Xtians, and esp. as members of a poor church like the N.E.K.A. to reflect very carefully about our responsibility towards one another and towards the community of which we form a part:

- 1) Poverty and injustice normally go together. They are not synonymous, but many times they are like twin horses pulling the cart of the affluent and the privileged.
- 2) Scripture does not provide a specific econ. system for solving the issue of poverty but it does judge and calls upon the church to judge all econ. systems in measuring them against the Bibl. demands of justice, love and mercy for all his creatures
- 3) As far as S.A. is concerned the policy of apartheid has been one of the main causes of the econ. injustice which over many decades has been inflicted on millions esp. of the black (African) community. God therefore

demands that all those Christians who <sup>(4)</sup> have been involved and have approved in principle and practice, the injustice of apartheid should admit their wrong in this regard and prove their sincerity by some form of restitution. (Betsabab's Trust - 20 communities wishing to return to land which rightfully has been stolen: taken away by forced removal! Many of them are members of the N.G.K.A. - what will our reaction be?)

4) This congregation will be a crucial test to the N.G.K.A. <sup>and the N.G.S.K.</sup> as well as to the N.G.K. of what God demands of all ~~both~~ of us in a New South Africa. He will judge <sup>all these</sup> ~~both~~ these churches ~~by~~ not only by our words & resolutions but esp. by our deeds and actions.

3) It is also possible that God may use this congregation as a test and a stimulus to prove the need, <sup>and the viability</sup> for a united Reformed family where love, justice and mercy may be the hall-marks of the ministry of those who are inducted here to-day!