

# The Poor and Poverty: What Can We Do and Say?

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## Abstrak:

Kemiskinan dan orang miskin ada di sekitar kita. Ada banyak cara yang dipakai untuk menjelaskan fakta itu. Ada yang mengacu kepada nasib yang tidak terelakkan selain harus diterima dengan pasrah. Ada yang menjelaskan fakta itu sebagai akibat dari sistem dan struktur yang tidak adil dan opresif. Baik paham predestinasi maupun paham struktural, tidak mudah diatasi dan dilawan, karena ada banyak cara yang dipakai kelompok manusia yang berkepentingan untuk mempertahankan dan melestarikan *status quo*. Menurut penulis, walau dalam pandangan Kristiani kemiskinan itu mempunyai nilai rohani tersendiri, tetapi orang tidak boleh membiarkan kemiskinan merusak martabat manusia. Kemiskinan adalah masalah kemanusiaan. Nasib manusialah yang terseret di dalamnya. Jika kemiskinan tidak diatasi, maka akan timbul krisis kemanusiaan. Karena itu orang harus menggali pelbagai wacana filosofis, teologis, religius untuk mengatasinya. Tulisan ini adalah sekelumit upaya untuk mengangkat beberapa wacana tadi dalam rangka mengatasi masalah kemiskinan di sekitar kita.

**Kata-kata Kunci:** *Poverty, Structural Problem, the Other poor, feminization of poverty, violence against woman, liberative discourse, liberation theology, pauperization, the power of money, life-giving economy.*

## 1. Introduction

There is no single explanation why people or a group of people are poor. One way to explain it is to see it as a structural problem. The issue of poverty is not easy to solve because it is a structural problem. Sometimes the state creates the poverty and its perpetuation. Political, social and economical aspects contribute to the structure that creates and perpetuates poverty. Culture also creates the environment of poverty and its perpetuation. That is why people talk not so much of the poor but of the perpetuation of poverty, of marginalization of people. There are people who are marginalized and impoverished. Some

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data give us a fact that the poor is the majority of the human population of the world. The wealthy are only minority. But this minority occupies the majority of natural resources. They have a greatest access to the world natural resources. The majority only occupies a very small portion of it. There is an imbalance and injustice in access to resources. Upper class enjoys the biggest portion of wine, while lower class only sees the wine from the lower part of the cup (Duchrow 1995:15).

But what is the reason? There are a lot of factors. Some people talk about the destiny. Poverty and becoming poor is something that has been pre-destined by the divine. I do not believe that poverty is a destiny. Poverty is political, social, cultural, economical construction. The reason for poverty is a tendency to impoverish others. There are people who are greedy at the cost of others. There are people who become poor because other people become so rich. Poverty is related to the issue of justice. The issue of justice is related to the problem of peace. There is no peace without justice.

Is there any solution to this problem of humanity? Is there still any reason to hope for a better future for human community and universal brotherhood? Is there still any hope to solve this human crisis? If these questions are answered affirmatively, then the next question is what and where is this solution? Can we develop a system in which there will be no one marginalized? Is there any system that will not perpetuate the poverty and the process of pauperization? How religions and its sacred texts develop a discourse to solve the problem? What the sacred text says about the poverty and the poor? How people interpret their sacred text? How political and sociological discourses can be relied on to solve human problem like this? The problem of poverty is human problem. There will be still a wound in humanity if there is a tragic poverty among the majority of our brothers and sisters. Poverty is a human crisis. We cannot ignore human suffering because of poverty. We have to concentrate all the best we have to overcome this human crisis.

## 2. A Structural Problem

Poverty can be seen as predestination. There is a religious belief that human's destiny have been determined by divine being. This is a religious-theological view. It is difficult to change it because it's theological and religious background. Poverty can also be seen as a personal choice. In this matter, religion plays an important role in positioning the structure and people's choice. The role of religious people is important in trying to understand poverty. Religion is form of power. The power can be used to eradicate poverty or to

perpetuate it. In each case, religion can be used and misused to justify and legitimate poverty.

As an alternative to this view, there is a structural view. Here poverty is seen as a structure where people are following the discourse, the history and the practice of poverty. Here we can be sure that people living in the poor environment have to make a double/triple struggle to overcome poverty. This is not easy. There are still other ways of interpretation of poverty. First is the interpretation of functionalist. According to it, poverty has something to do with economical backwardness and low income per capita. In order to overcome it, they try to raise the income per capita through external aids (technology, capital, trade). Second is the dialectic or historic-structural interpretation. Here poverty is a form of dependence and historical process (Gutierrez 1977:84-87). Backwardness means absolute poverty and the growing gap between the rich and poor. To overcome it they put forward the idea of eradicating absolute poverty and liberating the poor and the oppressed from external domination through participatory society.

### **3. The Coming of the Other Poor**

We are now living in the era of globalization. In it we encounter with so many people in a way which is different from the previous condition. The wide world, thanks to the grace of modern technology, becomes like a small village, in which people are easy to encounter each other, because the village is so small and people are so closed to each other. Modern sociologist talks of "*global-village*". We live in a global village. In it, people are closed to each other, thanks to the grace of internet, cell phone, and means of transportation. It is for the first time, the Other comes very close to our door, knocking at our door, and waiting us to respond to them. So modern globalization makes the face of the Other comes close to us, to the point that they ethically challenge us. The Other that comes close to us makes us think seriously of them. We cannot keep silent in front of their presence. We cannot neglect them. We have to make something to respond to them.

Who is the other? The Other is the "religious-Other." The Other is "the poor Other." Because they poor they are called "the suffering Other." The Other that comes close to our door are the people from the margin of society, the poor, the marginalized, people coming from the undercurrents of history. In front of the coming, the existence, and the presence of "the poor Other" we are confronted to emancipate them because of the command of Love: Love your neighbor, and because whatsoever you did to my small ones, you did it to

me (Mt.25:40). According to Levinas (2006:31,34) we are confronted to act ethically, in front of the suffering Other because of their poverty. As a human being we cannot neglect their existence and presence. We must give our hand and heart to them (Barnes 2002:65-96).

#### 4. The Feminization of Poverty

Woman Studies have become a central issue. There are a lot of movement aims at the promotion of woman issues. Some woman thinkers say that the problem of woman is the problem of humanity. As long as the woman problem is not properly overcome then there is still a crisis for humanity. International bodies in UNO try to promote woman issues. Governments everywhere have signed the international ratification of woman's right. Religious institutions also try to use their spiritual authority to promote human issues. But what is the substance of woman issues?

Saskia Wierenga wrote a "*Feminization of Poverty*" that shows the tragedy of woman as a tragedy of human. Various social theory and liberation theology have stated that poverty is something socially and structurally constructed. There are a lot of victims throughout the world because of such systematic dan structural poverty. Its victims are women and children; usually they are the ones that being subordinated in all religion and society. Wierenga mentions ten issues in which women are victimized socially, culturally, structurally, and religiously (1990).

She mentions the damage to environment. Modern industry and technology bring about ecological disaster. The land drastically reduced in its fertile top soils. Rain forests are destructed because of logging. There emerges the crisis of land water. Wierenga believes that this factors will affect "...*women who will have to walk for hours every day to fetch water and wood*" (1990:53). She describes the definition of feminization of poverty in the following way:

Women, particularly women with young children and women belonging to oppressed races or ethnic groups, make up the constantly growing lower stratum of the poor masses, a process known as the feminization of poverty (1990:54).

She acknowledges that woman problem is not easy to overcome because of those two following reasons: the tragic condition of the oppression itself, also the fact that most women have internalized the dominance of male values and standards. Wierenga expresses the truth when she says that

Even worse women themselves think it natural that the best jobs, the best food, the major share of property should go to men, that men dominate public life,

politics, the main religion and the executives floors of multinationals and trade unions (1990:56).

To borrow the words of Geraldine Terry, this is a form of systematic and structural "*violence against women*" also (Terry 2004). She tries to describe some political movements arranged by women to promote their interest. They try to establish unions, to organize themselves into organizations to struggle for their rights (political, economical, and religious; 1990:56-58).

## 5. The Power of Discourse

It is believed that there is a relation between poverty and language game and power (Jorgensen, M., & Ph.Louise 2002). The problem of poverty is not only a physical problem. It is also a structural problem. That is why here I elaborate the discourse analysis. Here in Indonesia we have many political parties. All of them struggle to reach highest position. There is lot of element play in that struggle: *money* and the *power of discourse*. Every member of a party has to struggle for power. The more resources you have, the more powerful you are. The more fluent you are in your discourse and knowledge, the more powerful you are. Political parties in the parliament play with their own *strategies* and *hidden agendas* to influence public political discourse. All of these are constitutive part of the play of power through discourses. Those who have no possibilities to get into the play of political parties have their own agenda extra parliamentary and governmental institutions. Common people are struggling in their daily life, not for power, but for their *daily bread*.

I am wondering whether there is a real transformative effect of the struggle to power on the part of the political parties and the real daily struggle of common people at the grass-root. I answer negatively, because common people only existed for the people in power in the time for election. After the election the common people are forgotten in their banalities.

Discourse is a constitutive part of human relations. There are a lot of discourses in human interactions. Now emerge new discipline in the field of language: *Discourse Analysis*. Discourse is a particular way of talking about and understanding the world. There are four important points: Language and discourse, discourse and orders of discourse, class and power in capitalist society, dialectic of structures and practices. I will focus on the third and fourth. It is interesting that orders of discourse are ideologically shaped by power relations in social institutions and in society as a whole.

I try to investigate how social structures determine discourse. We know that order of discourse is shaped by power relations. This process is condi-

tioned ideologically and for the sake of ideology. Ideology is used to get power in capitalist society. Ideology is expressed in discourse. The most tangible social institutions in which we can see this power struggle is in political party and in the dynamic relationship between the elements in the modern democratic states institutions.

Discourse has effects upon social structures. Maybe we think that discourse is only sets of words without power to change. But discourse has effects upon social structures, upon the play among them for power. The more a group has the power to manipulate discourse, the more they are able to change and direct social structures. It depends on their ability to dominate the public discourse via mass media.

The influence is also coming from the social structures. It is not only those discourses determine the social structures, but the social structures also determine the discourse. When a group in society gets into power through the domination via public political discourse, then once in power they will control the discourse in such a way that they will safe.

Here the discourse is used to reach powerful position, but when you are in a power then your position will be used for the sake of your establishment. Discourse is the tool in the hand of the powerful to control and manipulate, also to dumb, and in that case contributes to social continuity. In other words, social continuity is possible through the use of discourse. The use of discourse can be negative or positive, or constructive to establish social welfare for all, and not just for the benefit of a group. The use and misuse of discourse has a contribution to a social change. Constructive use will sustain the social structure. Destructive use will undermine the social structure and order by the competing power. Both will bring an effect for social change, including the power change, the power sharing.

## 6. The Power of Money

It is believed also that money is an integrated part of the problem of poverty. What money can buy? It can buy house but not home. It can buy sex but not love. It can buy pleasure but not happiness. Money can only buy trivial but not important things. The message is clear: money is not everything. But money is allegorized as a superpower. There is an allegory of the super power of money using the ancient Greek myth (Korten 1999: 65-84), but it could be overcome. Money has a deadly hypnotic superpower, but it can be avoided. Actually in this world we are not only listening to the magic songs of money because there are also competing voices but it is not heard. The magic power

of money then brings the money economy and the philosophy of materialism. The keywords are mercantilism with its doctrine of *bullionism*, the idea that the prosperity of a nation is determined by the quantity of gold and silver contained in its borders. This doctrine was the central idea of mercantilist theory (Korten 1999:29). With the rise of money economy comes also the phenomenon of colonization of popular culture.

What is wrong with money? We cannot deny that money is important. But money is only the result of human agreement to put some amount of numbers on a paper with a special design. It is human product. But now it becomes human destroyer. Money is so powerful that it is able to change the pattern of relationship of human being with him-herself, with his/her fellow human being, with nature and the rest of creations, and the transcendent.

In the name of *mammon* I can be workaholic up to the point that I can stake my health. In the name of *mammon* I destroy my emotional and spiritual life and concentrate on the level of economic life. In the name of *mammon*, I destroy my relationship with my fellow human in many ways: do not care about their presence beside me, or becomes my competitor in the market which I must eliminate. In the name of capital I destroy natural life, the voice of nature. I exploit the natural mineral resources because of money. I exploit the forest and rivers because of money. I do not care the life of small birds and insects and the fertile top soils. Money changes the four dimensions of human relationship and other aspects of that relationship: with time and space, with history (past, present, future). Because of money I do not provide a time to reflect on and listen to my past. Because of money I tend to hold the vision of life as *carpe diem*.

Money creates global Capitalism. Is there any alternative to it? According to Duchrow there is a possibility to find an alternative (1995). The author talks about the present situation where the strong reality was *the pauperization* of the most of world population (Duchrow 1995:19-20). This condition is connected to the dominance of finance, the strong power of money economy. This situation is bad for humanity. This is the world of injustice.

To change it, we must find alternatives. Some people talk about Confucian Capitalism as opposed to Protestant Capitalism proposed by Weber. Some people, especially in Indonesia talk about *sharia* economy.

Duchrow wants to search for alternative to a different direction. He wants to drink from the Bible. This is the main purpose of the second part of his book (1995:121-210). Here he tries to put forward some of his preliminary considerations on biblical recollection of the future of life. He has a strong reason to do

this argumentation because it is the Bible that succeeded in creating modern Europe and modern world via its contribution to the production of modern science and technology. He believes that Christian Bible will be able to provide an alternative to the world to come. After describing the biblical insight to transform the world, Duchrow tries to put forward the *life-giving* economic alternatives in today's world (1995:211-229).

The present economic life is *death-giving* economic. In this part he took much of his source for inspiration from biblical and ecclesial tradition. This is the new contribution of the church to the establishment of the new world order.

Duchrow elaborated three points. First he tried to describe the birth of the *market-economy*, its structures and development (1995:20-56). Second he tried to describe that those systems have their own victims (1995:57-68). Third he tried to describe the current situation in the neo-Liberal capitalist global system (1995:69-120).

He mentions five factors: 1) Trans-nationalization of markets and market actors, 2) the domination of global finance and its effects in the South, the East and the West. In the South he mentions the debt crisis. When he mentions the East, he means Eastern Europe; there is also a similar crisis, what he called the identical debt traps of industrialization and de-industrialization. He mentions the crisis in the North (West): he mentions the casino capitalism, which is the condition of growth but without jobs, the gulf between rich and poor, and the powerlessness of the nation-state. Here he mentions the destruction of the basis of life for this and future generations by the money-accumulation economy.

The third factor is the international institutions involved in global domination of finance. He mentions Bretton Woods system and its metamorphoses in IMF, WB, GATT, G7, and WES (1995:95-120). He also mentions, as the fourth factor, the role of the military in ensuring the global dominance of finance. The fifth factor is the media's role in spreading the ideology of the global dominance of finance.

## 7. Liberative Christian Religious Discourses

Before the Fall, Adam-Eve enjoyed a rich free life. There is no hunger, no need for clothes and shelter. No pain, no death, no lacks in anything. Humanity was enjoying the goodness and abundance of God. Then human disobey and rebel to God's command. Mankind sinned by rejecting God, the source of material and spiritual prosperity. As a consequence there is punishment; they lost the richness of environmental, material and spiritual prosperity. They are cast

out of Paradise, to face hard work, hunger, physical pain and death (Gen 3:1-24). So poverty is a state where human lacked the necessary needs to live joyfully, peacefully, and collectively the material, environmental, physical and spiritual blessings (prosperity) given by God. Poverty is depicted in their nakedness, lack of shelter by hiding in the bush, hunger which they had to work harder to satisfy, marginalization as they were cast out of paradise. There appears sin, greed, blame, murder, jealousy, competition and separation (Gen 4:1-6:1-21). Poverty is the opposite of prosperity, an evil phenomenon; it is a result of lawlessness. Poverty is the condition of lacking material, bodily, spiritual and environmental richness. Some people think of poverty as a curse. After this fall, God promised and initiate his work of Salvation.

How the Biblical responses to poverty? From Old Testament (OT) we know that through Moses God formulated guidelines under the Law to help the poor (Ex. 22: & 23:10-12), widow, orphan, strangers. There is systems of preserving the left over's to prevent starvation and malnourishment among the poor. We also know God's special love and protection for the poor. For example: laws of provisions for needy (Deut.15:11), gleaning rule (Lev.19:9-10), impartial injustice towards poor and rich alike (Lev.19:15), open ended and freely lend, also provide security for property (Deut.15:7-8), against oppression of the poor. God desires happiness, prosperity for mankind. Mankind destroyed that free gift allowing poverty to take root. God promised and begins caring, defending, protecting and favoring the poor (Deut.10:18, Psalm 10:16-18, 10:17, 68:5, Jer.22:16, Psalm 12:5 etc).

From New Testament we know that through Jesus who became poor we might be rich; he does not condemn poverty but embraces it and encourages people to pursue it. Although Jesus is against the egoistic attitude of greed and injustice in acquiring riches, he preached the value of being poor (Mt.5:1-12). He was born poor, lived a life of poverty; he took form of a slave (Phil 2:6-8). He becomes poor that believers might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9). He spends his ministry helping the poor. Ministry was holistic, the whole person; healing, preaching, teaching, main target, the poor (Lk.4:18). He stooped low to raise lepers, cripples, blind, deaf, prostitutes, tax collectors, women and children. He shocked the Scribes and Pharisees regarding the meaning of poverty, prosperity and blessing.

The norm was material well-being associated with God's blessing. A poor and sick man was seen as one under God's curse. The OT records wealthy and godly people like Abraham, Lot, Solomon, Job, etc. Jesus did not condemn riches or prosperity. He honored and welcomed wealthy people like Zacchaeus, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea. However Jesus clearly taught in the

Beatitudes (Mt 5, Lk 6:20, 21): Blessed are you, who are poor, yours is the kingdom of God. If you are rich and want heaven, sell what you have and give the money to the poor (Lk.12:32; Mt.19: 21). The lust of money is the root of evil. Poverty is a reality. As such it should be eliminated. We must not neglecting but sharing with the poor. We have to change economical systems to accommodate the poor. But we should aware that there is a great value to living poor.

The liberative religious discourse should also be found the theological traditions. Here I take inspirations from G.Gutierrez and A.Pieris who develop Liberation Theology (LT) in their respective contexts. In pursuing a liberative theological discourses LT has the image of Jesus Christ the Liberator. In the context of Latin America's history of oppression, the most appropriate title is Jesus Christ the Liberator (Gutierrez 1977:175-188; Brennan 1998:252-272).

This naming has a long historical background, the history of colonization of Latin America by the Spaniards and Portuguese. The result of this history is the story of suffering and of the poor. During 450 years of colonization there are a lot of stories of horrible atrocities of the poor. The colonial time ends at the end of nineteenth century but the story of suffering and of atrocities did not stop with it. True emancipation and the condition of emancipated man still must be strived for, because there are still a lot of oppressions until the eighties in twentieth century. Even after the end of colonial era there are still a lot suffering people in Latin America; there is still a lot of dire poverty until present day. It takes many forms: the inadequate medical care for people, the great gap between the rich and the poor, dire poverty, unemployment, bombings, and the disappearing people. There was a total terror to society. The colonial government was changed by the dictatorship; usually they are more cruel then colonial government.

Because most of the people in Latin America were Christian so the image of Jesus is important for their faith. There are three dominant images of Jesus in those oppressive cultures. The first is Jesus in the image of a heavenly Monarch. But this theological title was misused by the powerful to justify their power and their cruelty. This image was also misused by monarchs and the wealthy to justify their "God-given" right to pillage the native people and destroy anyone who challenges their power. This is the image of Jesus of the wealthy and the powerful. But this is not Jesus from the gospels. Second is the image of Jesus for the poor, the image of Jesus as it is believed by the poor.

In Latin America, most of the poor see Jesus as described in these images: Christ the prisoner of his enemy, the one who suffer at the hands of cruel persecutors, a defenseless innocent who was humiliated and killed by the power-

ful and the leaders (political and religious). Or Jesus in the image of a young person cut off before he had a chance to live out his life. This image is, however, a passive image, the image of a non-resistant Jesus. This is not Jesus that we know from and proclaimed in NT.

There is an alternative image of Jesus. This is not the creation of Latin Americans. For example: the image of Jesus as a just and compassionate person, indignant over oppression, and injustice, or Jesus who dares to confront the religious and political power of his time. Or to use the terms of radical liberation theologians, this is the image of Jesus as a revolutionary figure. This image emerges in the Basic Christian Communities. For them Jesus is a person who identifies himself with the outcast and who stands with a strong conviction and (super) power and authority against those who oppress them. This is Jesus the liberator. The emergence of this liberating image of Jesus creates a new kind of theology. This new kind of theology refuses to accept the "status quo" of oppressive social structures. Rather, this new kind of theology takes the prophetic stance that point out the injustices that are incompatible with Jesus' teachings. This new theology proposes imitation of Jesus in his vigorous action on behalf of the persecuted.

The result of these theological developments was the emergence of a new theology, liberation theology. Its first academic formulation can be found in G.Gutierrez' *A Theology of Liberation* (1979). Liberation theology is a theology "from below", a theology from the lived experience of the Gospel poor. Liberation theology is committed to action against oppression and injustice. The substance of this theology is an action rather than reflection (1977:ix).

At first stage liberation theology concentrated on criticize traditional approaches to Christian theology. It points out the urgency for connecting the gospel with action on behalf of social justice (1977:6-11). Little attention was given to where the person of Jesus fit into the liberation perspective.

Later there are more theologians who pay attention to the Christology of liberation. They have a strong concern for historical Jesus. The historical Jesus is Jesus who was against the social structures of injustice and oppression. They emphasize on a listening theology (in contrast to teaching theology). They pay attention to political impact of Jesus' movement (1977:168-174). They attempt to be in the prophetic tradition, the tradition of promotion of justice and peace and the integrity of creation. They agree on the preferential option for the poor. It is easy to be on the side of the wealthy and the powerful. It is not easy to stand besides the poor, to be the voice of the voiceless. The church is challenged ethically to be on the side of the poor because they are easily become the victim in the society. They agree on putting emphasis on biblical

message: blessed are the poor. They agree on the attempt to make a ministering with the poor (not only for the poor).

LT emerges also in Asia. In Asia, the poor and oppressed are turning to the teachings of Jesus to gain freedom. In the following part I will focus on the theology of A.Pieris (1988). He developed the theological-biblical idea of Kingdom of God. He developed two kinds of questions in his theology. First, who is the main addressee of the message of the Kingdom of God? Second, what is the way that the message of Kingdom of God could be accepted by the heart of Asian?

In answering the first question, Pieris said that there are two groups that can be the address of the gospel message. They are the religious poor and the poor religious. The message of the Kingdom of God must be delivered not only to the economically poor people but also to the people who are poor but still have a religious life (Pieris 1988:124-126).

In answering the second question on its how, Pieris said that there is only one pre-condition that the message of the gospel to be landed into the heart of the Asian people. The pre-condition is that the message of the gospel must address the basic character of Asian life and awareness, meaning that it must touch the religiosity of the poor people and the poor people who live a religious life. Here Pieris took other images from the gospel. In reading the Bible he discovered that there are two poles that characterize the public ministry of Jesus. The first pole is the baptism in Jordan and the second is his “baptism” (death) in Calvary. Jesus had experience a double baptism: at Jordan and Calvary. In Asian Christians must proclaim Jesus who was and is baptized doubly first in the “river” of poverty of the Asians and then in the “river” of suffering of the Asians. Only then, Pieris claimed that Jesus will be really accepted and rooted in the heart of Asians (1988:45-50).

## 8. Conclusion

After a very long history of so many religious traditions with its respective liberative religious discourses on the poor and the poverty, it is interesting that the poor and poverty are still here. It seems that the existence and the presence of those great religious traditions do not bring a change to the poor. This fact pushes me to ask: what are the main purpose of the existence and the presence of the poor beside us?

Some people give the following answer: The poor are always with us in order that the rich can practice the virtue of love, of charity. The presence of

the poor is the opportunity to give alms, and charity. If there are no poor then there is no opportunity to perform charity.

This view is dangerous, because if the virtue of charity is only for the sake of giving alms, then the command of love is not perpetual, because once we are able to give charity to the poor as an expression of our religious and faith life and you did it, then you are okay with your life. The consequence is fundamental: it is only a temporary command. If it is only so, why should we be endorsed to do charity? For Christians love is the greatest of virtues. It will last forever (I Cor 13:13). Love is still there even if there is no poor to perform the obligation to love. If the existence and the presence of the poor are only for the sake of the rich, then the existence of the poor means nothing in itself. But they have the right to exist in and for themselves.

We have to realize that the first agent of liberation is people themselves organized in a movement of emancipation. The poor and the oppressed are not object of struggle. They are the main and first agent of change. The participation of the poor and the oppressed through organized movements is decisive. The poor and the oppressed are sovereign subject of history; they are not object of the development that usually victimized them (Gutierrez 1977:287-298).

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