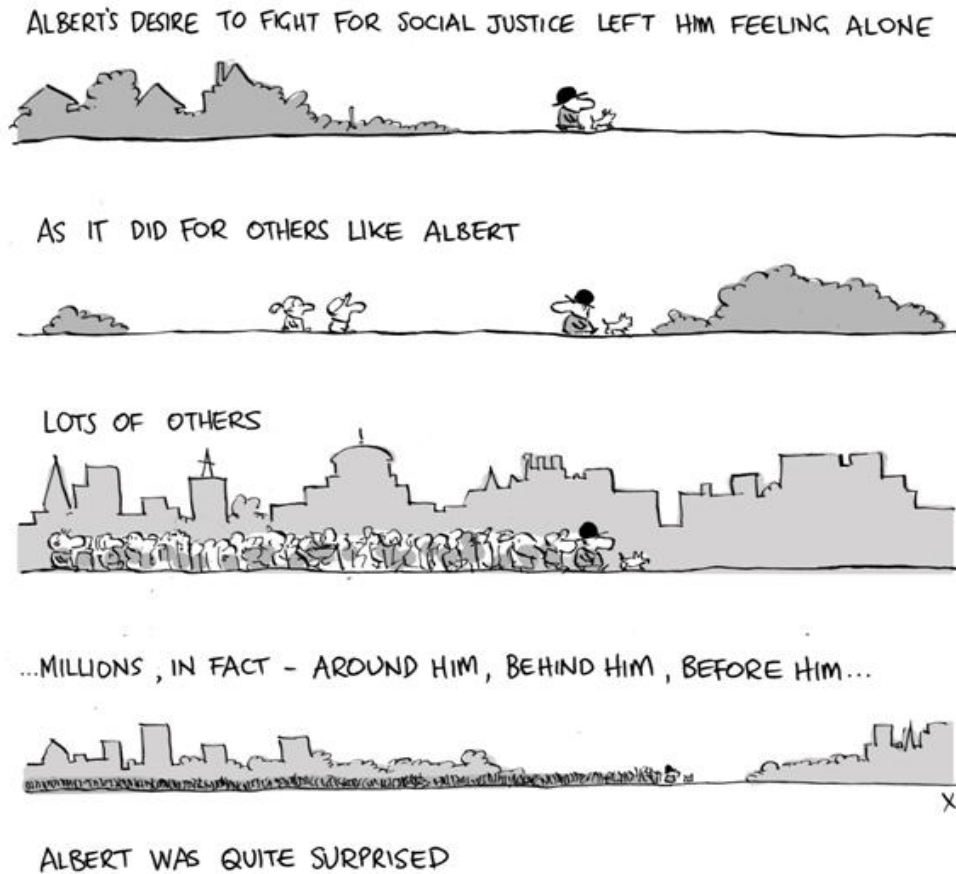


Religion poisons everything?



©Chris Morgan www.cxmedia.com

Q1. In the DVD, John Dickson said: "It seems that the Christians were motivated in their social justice and poverty programs by at least three ideas:

One was a different vision of the human being; Christians inherited the Jewish idea that human beings are made in the image of God.

The second idea is a different view of God. That is, God actually is loving.

The third idea that you can detect in these early Christian texts has to do with the Christians believing that the Kingdom of God was coming ... They believed that a kingdom was coming into the world that would bring justice. That would bring the relief of the poor and the end of suffering. And the Christians said, 'OK, that kingdom's coming, let's live like it's here already. Let's anticipate the kingdom by living lives of justice and care and relieving the poor'."

- How are these three ideas important for responding to global poverty and injustice?
- What are some ways that God's people can "anticipate the kingdom" and "live like it's here already"?

Q2. In the DVD, Ruth Padilla DeBorst said: *'The Gospel does have to do with issues of power and money and how we live in society. So, it's doing it, but not out of an ideological agenda, but rather out of a Gospel agenda, out of a vision of the Kingdom of God, out of a God who says, 'We want full life for all people.'*

- Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full". (John 10:10). What does "life in all its fullness" mean?

Q3. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth (southern Greece), he told them about a group of Christians in Macedonia (northern Greece) who had raised money for the Christians in modern Israel / Palestine.

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 below:

"We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints – and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. Now as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you – so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking. I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich."

- What does Paul tell them (and us) about the Christians in Macedonia?
- What strikes you as unusual or strange about these Macedonians?
- Why are they so enthusiastic to be generous when they are living in extreme poverty?
- What are some of the things that discourage and encourage people from being generous and concerned for justice?

Positive encouragements	Negative discouragements

- How can we share something of their joy and generosity?