

Shame vs. Guilt

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A problem in the Church: Shame versus Guilt.

Definitions:

- “Guilt” is my failure before God
- “Shame” is what I feel as my failure before others
- Unquestionably, the Church, through its message of salvation for all, is the greatest “guilt-erasing” institution on earth.
- However, could it be that the Church, at the same time, may be the greatest “shame-inducing” institution?

Culture of Poverty (COP)

1. Not equal to being poor
2. The poor have upward mobility
3. The poor have mainstream values
4. Those of the “Culture of Poverty” have different values
5. Those values are based on “survival” needs
6. Those in the COP realize that they cannot obtain success through normal means
7. Yet those in the COP have their own coherency of values
8. Indications of those in the COP:

cash transactions	transience
high unemployment	distrust of institutions
lack of community involvement	fractured families
absence of childhood	early initiation into sex
non-legal marriages	family abandonment
female-centered families	present-time oriented
fatalistic	sense of inferiority
strong feelings of marginality	helplessness
dependence	
9. By age 6 or 7, children are acculturated into COP

Some Positives to the culture of poverty:

1. Develop capacity for spontaneity, adventure and sensitivity
2. Enjoy the reality of the moment
3. Suffer less from repression
4. Find multiple outlets for hostility
5. Less frustrated, because of lowered expectations

What to do with Shame:

1. Don't overwhelm with kindness: “smother-love”
2. Don't use kindness to manipulate
3. Don't set up unrealistic expectations
4. Find neutral space and free time to build relationships

5. Remember your own past
6. Enhance the positives
7. Allow for exchange of “gifts”
8. Experience “suffering” together
9. Don't be a “servant”, be a “friend” John 15:13-15

(John McKnight: “Why Servanthood is Bad!”)

What was Jesus' connection to the Culture of Poverty?

- no steady job?
- no regular housing?
- no “family” commitments?
- gave “no thought for the morrow”?