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# The problem with 'abundance' theologies

Carol Meyer | Dec. 29, 2010 Eco Catholic

Recently, a friend said, ?We need to have a mindset of abundance. God is infinite and there is no lack in God.? I?m decidedly uncomfortable with this sentiment and similar popular ideas, all about material wealth with a spiritual spin to it.

I am amazed at how clever we?ve been at using the Bible and theology to justify our positions. And we are still at it, justifying our extreme wealth in the face of global poverty with platitudes about abundance.

First of all, let?s be clear. There may be no limitations in God or the spiritual realm, but there certainly are in the physical! There?s only so much water, topsoil, natural resources, ozone layer, etc. It?s foolish and selfish of us consuming, earth-destroying, affluent Americans to think science or some abundant God is going to magically create ?more.?
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I?ve heard people say, ?My being poor isn?t going to help the world?s poor.? How ridiculous! Of course it will, if we live simply and give the rest away to the disadvantaged. It?s real money and resources diverted from us and channeled to those in desperate need of them. And it?s time we got away from a mentality of entitlement: ?I worked hard all my life and I deserve my money and to live well.? What about the majority of the world?s poor who work much harder than we do? Don?t they deserve the same, or even to survive or have their basic needs be met?
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The bottom line is that we have vastly more than our fair share of the world?s wealth. And it?s not because God has blessed us because we are such a great nation and therefore we ought to keep it. There may be some natural reasons for the inequity (and much of it because of exploitation), but however it came about, it is time to rectify it. In conscience and before God, we can?t consume and buy to such excess, when it is at the expense of our brothers and sisters who suffer and die as a result.

I was in a mattress store the other day, and was struck at how thick and plush many mattresses are today. Just how far do we have to go to pamper ourselves when many don?t even have a straw mat to sleep on? The TVs, the houses, the boats ? they all keep getting bigger, more elaborate and more expensive. As author Wayne Dyer says, ?Where is the peace in more is better??
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Abundance theology is fine if we are talking about spiritual abundance. If we truly had God in abundance, we would see little lure in material things, but have unlimited energy, as Jesus did, to side with the poor and marginalized. And there we would find meaning that no material possessions can ever give.
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Actress Rachel Weisz, filming in Kenya said, ?The conditions in which the Kenyans live is a tragedy, but their spiritual wealth is so much more powerful than the poverty. In the end, one wonders who should feel sorry for whom.? Indeed.

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