

Addressing Extremes of Poverty and Wealth: A Spiritual Challenge

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ABSTRACT The world today is characterised by a wide divide between the rich and the poor. On the one hand about half the world's population (three billion people) live on less than \$2.50 a day, with one billion people living on less than \$1.00 per day. Worldwide about eight hundred million people suffer from malnutrition and over twenty one thousand children die of hunger each day. On the other hand the wealth of a very few billionaires is equal to the total wealth of two and a half billion of the world poorest people. Oxfam predicts that by 2016, if no changes are made to stop the divide, the total wealth of 1 percent of the world's population will be equal to the aggregate wealth of the remaining 99 percent. The figures are staggering and emphasise the suffering of the masses and the global tragedy that humanity is facing. This theoretical paper examines the ideologies responsible for the widening and deepening gap between rich and poor and the creation of 'extremist culture'. It also identifies the need for reassessment of old values and a 'Paradigm Lift'. It proposes a 'Oneness Paradigm' model based on the principles of spirituality, justice, equality, and education. It recommends a new outlook on money and prosperity to counter the present day extremist mind-set.