

they have valuable skills to offer (they have their own story to tell). This strategy impacts not only the outsiders, but the hosts as well. They become the owners of the process of self-improvement rather than become dependent on the outsider. The "holistic" practitioners (153-57) will become good neighbors—patient, reflecting a Christian character, and exhibiting a commitment to learning. Myers shows here the importance of being transformed before becoming a transformer: "Ultimately, the effectiveness of transformational development comes down, not to theory, principles or tools, but to people. Transformation is about transforming relationships, and relationships are transformed by people" (150).

Without question, Myers provides the best analysis of a Christian's involvement in the work of the poor and needy in this world. He approaches the task of transforming people and communities according to biblical principles. Myers also sees our human limitations of personal biases against the poor, presuppositions, and distorted worldviews. He realizes that our human story will be meaningful only if it corresponds to the story of God as presented in his Word. What a challenge for Christian churches and community-developing organizations to focus their activities through a constant dialogue with biblical principles!

This is an incredible book and an important contribution to evangelical Christian thinking on wholistic ministries.

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Myers, Bryant L. *Working with the Poor: New Insights and Learnings from Development Practitioners*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999. 288 pp. Paper, \$22.00.

One of the main purposes of the book is to bring together development practitioners who are concerned "to find an authentically holistic practice of transformational development" (xii). The book is a compilation of various essays and reports written by a number of World Vision development practitioners who had a desire to improve the definition of holistic development. Bryant Myers, one of the vice presidents at World Vision International, is the editor. *Working with the Poor* is a practical supplement to Myers's previous book *Walking with the Poor* (Orbis Books, 1999).

Although the writers are all concerned with the central theme of holistic and transformational development, their various backgrounds and expertise provide a variety of solutions to the current situation of poverty and the poor. The book starts with a definition of poverty from a holistic viewpoint (as already developed in *Walking with the Poor*), followed by three essays on how development works. The third part of the book (chaps. 5, 6) deals with practical development experiences. The next two chapters, under the section entitled "Frontiers," have to do with issues of "peace building" and the need to build "bridges to the world of economic corporations." The final chapter sums up the preceding eight.

Due to the format of this book, I will highlight some of the contributions from each of the authors. In the first chapter (forming part 1—"Framework"), Jayakumar Christian clearly describes poverty as caused not only by material needs, but also by a lack of spirituality. He sees poverty as disempowerment. The poor are surrounded by oppressive relationships that push them to the bottom of society. In order to keep

people in oppression, those in society that benefit from this relationship are interested in maintaining this status quo. The solution for the poor is to empower them, by helping them to understand that they are created in the image of God. In this context development must include proclamation regarding God, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and fasting. Our "years of work among the poor has [sic] taught us that limiting our investment among the poor just to money makes the poor beggars, and limiting our investments to programs makes the poor glorified beggars" (23). In the total context, solving the problem of poverty should be viewed as transforming lives, which can be done only through a spiritual process that starts first in our own lives.

Chapters 2-5 form the "Methods" section of the book. Chapters 2-3 discuss Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and Appreciative Inquiry (AI), two important tools in transformational development. The authors distinguish between three approaches in education and development: the emptiness or banking approach (in which the poor are only objects and are thought to be in total need of help), the weakness or problem-solving approach (in which the poor become weak partners and the community needs assistance), and the strength-based or Appreciative Inquiry approach (in which the poor are partners with capacity and the community builds on what is already successful). Through PLA, communities are allowed to describe what they already know and to analyze what is working and what is not. People are empowered to feel that they are main stakeholders in the development process. In AI, their contributions are valued. The theory behind this approach is: "If people can see where they have succeeded in the past and understand why, and if they can build on this to plan for a better future, they may be able to attain greater success" (41). This is a very humbling approach for the development worker because suddenly he is no longer the manager, but a listener and learner. This testifies to the poor that they have dignity and shows them that they are created in the image of God.

In the fourth chapter, the authors deal with the role of the Bible in holistic transformational development. Because Scripture deals with all spheres of life, reading the Bible should be considered a part of the process of development. Two key aspects incorporate Scripture in development. One called "Scripture Search" has successfully been used in the Philippines. In this methodology, people are taught how to discover passages of Scripture relevant to issues with which they are wrestling (64). The second approach, called "Seven Steps," comes from Latin America and the Caribbean (73). People are invited to read Scripture, think over the text, contemplate their experiences with God, and pray. Both of these tools have been shown to facilitate empowerment by changing attitudes.

The third part of the book (chaps. 5, 6) shifts from methodology to more practical approaches in holistic development. Chapter 5 talks about economic development. The author proposes that churches become involved in microenterprise development programs. The authors explain that a church can use, for example, community banking "as a bridge or channel to the neighborhood" (82). This might be a successful tool in areas where people are hostile to mission work and this could be the only way to introduce the gospel. The sixth chapter provides case studies in community organizations. Youth and literacy groups, which have been used frequently around the world by faith-based organizations,

have contributed to an increased sense of community.

Part 4, "Frontiers," deals with new areas of mission and development work. "Peace-building" is a natural outgrowth of many transformational development programs. Programs of reconciliation and peace-building are designed to bring deliverance from internal wars and conflicts. Such internal conflicts have been multiplying over the last few decades, and so have the number of people suffering as the result of them. If development wants to be holistic, it cannot avoid getting involved in political and economic interactions. The final report in the book (chap. 8) suggests that Nongovernment Organizations (NGOs) need to build bridges and create closer working relationships with business organizations, which can provide not only financial, but also human resources.

This book is a collection of essays, and as such it has a number of inherent advantages and weaknesses. On the positive side, it brings together the experiences of a wide variety of practitioners in the field of holistic development ministries. The variety of approaches and even styles of writing is refreshing. The writers present their topics in an honest fashion. They are willing to admit that many of their theories are still new and have not yet been fully tested and evaluated. Often they offer their own critiques to the approaches and methods within their reports. Understandably, they are cautiously optimistic.

The fact that each individual essay is shaped by the individual personality (and experiences) of the author has contributed to a lack of central focus. Although the contributors have written on a central topic, differences between their emphases and outlooks make the book less than easy to follow. The book would probably be hard for a newcomer to the field of holistic ministry to appreciate, but it is a good complement to Bryant L. Myers's book *Walking with the Poor* (Orbis, 1999).

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Oestreich, Bernard, Horst Rolly, and Wolfgang Kabus, Hrsg. *Glaube und Zukunftsgestaltung: Festschrift zum hundertjährigen Bestehen der Theologischen Hochschule Friedensau, Aufsätze zu Theologie, Sozialwissenschaften und Musik*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999. 435 pp. Hardcover, \$67.95.

This volume served as a Festschrift for the one-hundredth anniversary of the Theologische Hochschule Friedensau. The three editors are on the faculty there. The Festschrift consists of three major parts, as already indicated by the title, namely theology, social sciences, and music. After an introduction dealing with the history of the institution, there are thirteen chapters on theology, seven on social sciences, and four on music. The articles of R. McIver, G. Oosterwal, and R. Pöhler are the only English contributions to the volume. Most of the authors are teaching at Friedensau, some of them as guest lecturers. Six are professors of state universities in Germany.

In spite of the three sections of the book, all the articles more or less relate to religion. Articles of the social scientific section deal with a group of *bene Israel* in India and the preservation of their cultural identity (H. Rolly), the church and its social responsibility (M. Dauenhauer), a model of a social network within a local church (W. Noack), youth and violence (M. Dietrich), therapy and prevention of