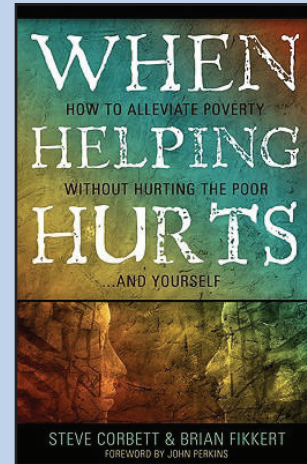




Dr. Al Tizon in discussion with Artis and Juanita Palmer

Recommended Reading



When Helping Hurts

by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert
Moody Publishers, 2009

"Have you ever done anything to hurt poor people?" asks Dr. John Perkins in the foreword to the timely book

When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor...and Yourself.

Evangelical America is awash in books calling for greater engagement in ministry to the poor via direct help and social justice advocacy. Much of the material in these books is introductory, focusing on the theological case for holistic gospel engagement and then providing starting points for ministry. But not many approach the topic with a narrative thread that constantly returns to the core premise that not all help is helpful.

How can help not help? Here's how: In the introduction, co-author Brian Fikkert tells of "helping" a suffering woman in Kampala, Uganda, by ponying up \$8 so she could purchase penicillin. The penicillin was needed--long story short--to fight an infection she had developed after asking her neighbor (who complied) to treat her tonsillitis by cutting out her tonsils with a kitchen knife.

Fikkert felt great about it at the time, but the realization eventually dawned on him that his help had undermined the local believers with whom the woman related. The purpose of this book is to explain how his help (and similar efforts) didn't--in the long run--help. But I'll give you a little spoiler here. Fikkert writes that he "failed to consider the local assets that already existed in this slum, assets that included small amounts of money, a church, a pastor, and the social bonds of the 100 refugees attending the small-business class" that he had journeyed to Uganda to teach

Practicing the Kingdom of God: Living the Good News in Word and Deed

by Nana Kwakye Dolce

What a title! I believe that it captures the very heart of the Christian life, as followers of Jesus strive to advance the kingdom of God in both word and deed. It is the hope of Clifton Park Baptist Church (CPBC) that its members would be faithful disciples, saying and doing that which reflects and pleases the heart of our Master. It was this hefty theme that we sought to take on for the 36th Annual All Church Family Retreat this past October.

Gathered at the Black Rock Retreat Center in Quarryville, PA, few of us appeared to anticipate a weekend of heavy discussion despite the depth of the theme. After all, we had a plethora of other "All Church Family Retreats" under our belt and were comfortable with the general routine of these events. As such, we approached the weekend with expectations of lighthearted fellowship, good-humored fun, and agreeable teaching. Not many of us expected the moments of jolting and the essential conversations that followed.

CPBC leaders decided to focus our discussions around the "word and deed" nature of evangelism. This decision led us to choose our weekend speaker, Dr. Al Tizon—missionary, professor, and director of the Evangelicals for Social Action's Word & Deed Network. Perhaps it was the combination of the theme and Dr. Tizon himself that made for a positively jolting and unique experience!

Dr. Tizon took on the theme "controversially," generating respectful, but nonetheless sharp disagreement amongst us. He challenged us with new ways to think about evangelism rather than simply maintain consensus. He began an extensive review of the biblical story and its clear expression of the kingdom of God. He also shared his own highs and lows in the practice of evangelism. As a whole, CPBC was instructed, inspired, and encouraged. But the weekend was not without its jarring moments, as new ideas stretched our paradigms, triggered many questions, and ultimately opened the door to some frank conversations beyond the retreat.

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Practicing the Kingdom of God: Living the Good News in Word and Deed

Rev. Essentino Lewis, Jr., Pastor of Clifton Park Baptist Church at the 36th Annual All Church Family Retreat



We were especially challenged by the idea of relational evangelism. While the general premise of sharing faith within the context of sincere relationships was not new to the group, the notion of intentionally pursuing friendships with non-Christians without the targeted goal of securing their conversion was new. After all, to be a Christian is to understand the eternal consequence of life without Christ. We celebrate the Good News of our salvation and rejoice when others find the invaluable treasure of life with Christ. As such, many Christians carry a determined desire to see the salvation of the non-believers that they encounter.

Without attempting to discourage this desire, Dr. Tizon gave careful thought to the pressure we often feel to “close the deal” with every non-Christian we meet. This pressure can make our interactions appear insincere and formulaic, ultimately closing the door on relationships that might have otherwise allowed the display of genuine Christian love. While CPBC agreed with the concept of abandoning formulas for authentic relationships, it was important for the group to fully understand the balance between earnestly loving our non-Christian friends while also speaking honestly with them about their condition without compromise. The exchange transformed our expected lighthearted discussion into a more candid and honest experience,

as we considered the complexities of the practice of evangelism as well as our own experiences with it.

Our 36th Annual All Church Family Retreat was like none other that we have had. It compelled us to speak openly about the practice of evangelism, and the issues raised at the retreat have stirred many of us into action today. For a simple example, a cohort of CPBC members committed to a new practice during this past holiday season (and hopefully for every season!)—namely, for each of them to intentionally reach out to at least one neighborhood family

whom the cohort members would not have normally reached out to, beginning with preparing some kind of treat as a gift for the family. These treats were given with a card expressing appreciation to them. Our prayer was (and is) that the Lord would smile upon this small gesture and open the door for sincere, genuine relationships amongst our neighbors. This is one small, yet intentional, step on the road to “practicing the kingdom of God and living the Good News in word and deed.”



Nana Kwakye Dolce is the Community Outreach Coordinator at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland. Nana

was born in Ghana, West Africa, and was raised by a Christian aunt who led her to the Lord as a young girl. From those early beginnings to present, her earnest desire has been to live in the faithful service of the King.

For more information about CPBC go to www.cliftonparkbaptistchurch.org

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BURDEN TODAY, SO THEY
CAN STAND TALL
TOMORROW.**



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When Helping Hurts

By Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert

over a two-week period. "The truth is that there was more than enough time to walk back to the church... and ask people there to help. While the refugees were extremely poor, they could have mustered the eight cents per person to pay for the penicillin," thus deepening a bond of relationship among people who would continue to live together long after he left the scene.

Applying long-term solutions in times of short-term crisis--that's the challenge for believers who desire to be used effectively by God. From this starting point, Fikkert and co-author Steve Corbett provide background, theology, and practical experience that will help churches, small groups, and

individuals to grasp concepts that appear basic but are difficult to implement in practice.

Their definition of poverty as broken relationships in four spheres (with God, to self, with others, to creation) will help readers assess the effectiveness of their own ministries and outreach efforts. Asset-based development, do's and don'ts of short-term missions, and overviews of current practices in wealth generation and poverty alleviation are right on target.

The practical experience of the authors is bedrock to this approach. I've been in the poverty-fighting trenches for decades. Some things you understand only as you do them. This book will not replace experience. But inasmuch as concepts for effective poverty alleviation can be taught didactically, When Helping

Hurts does the trick. In the words of Dr. Amy Sherman, "While accessible to beginners, [this book] is rich with insights for veterans, too." I concur. – Rodolpho Carrasco



Rodolpho Carrasco is a contributing editor to PRISM, an associate director at Partners Worldwide in Grand Rapids, Mich., and a board member of TechMission.

He served for 19 years at Harambee Christian Family Center in Pasadena, Calif., an urban ministry providing programs for African American and Latino young people.

Word & Deed Network on the Move, Please Pray



◆ WDN is amidst a church and community ministry directory project in the township of Upper Darby, just west of Philadelphia. If this doesn't sound very exciting, imagine 75 churches in an extremely diverse and increasingly needy community working together to serve people in Jesus' name. While the directory is not the whole solution, it promises to be an effective tool for churches working together for community transformation.



◆ WDN is becoming more involved in efforts to prevent gun violence in the city of Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Baltimore. Heeding God's Call is a grassroots organization that seeks to educate communities of faith regarding the problem of street violence and to mobilize them to action.

◆ WDN is also part of an effort to revitalize INFEMIT, the International Fellowship of Mission as Transformation, a network of mission theologians concerned about the development of holistic, contextualized mission throughout the world. A global summit is in the works to be convened in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2011.

◆ WDN is moving toward a working partnership with LIGHT Ministries in the Philippines in order to equip churches for holistic ministry in extremely poor areas in Olongapo City and Zambales province.



◆ WDN is at the tail end of a book project on missional preaching that can help church leaders preach and teach their people concerning the holistic ministry to which they are called.

These are just some of the activities in which WDN is currently engaged. We mention them not only to tell you what's going on, but also to solicit your prayers and support. Advanced thanks!

To learn more about the Word & Deed Network please visit our website at www.EvangelicalsforSocialAction.org/WordandDeed

It's Personal

You may not know this, but Word & Deed Network is a ministry of a larger organization called the Evangelicals for Social Action (ESA). Founded by Dr. Ron Sider almost 40 years ago, ESA has been on the cutting edge of holistic mission since its inception, focusing its energy in the arenas of church, politics and culture. Word & Deed Network is ESA's

way of working in and through local churches to engage their communities in holistic ministries.

From the very beginning, ESA has been committed to helping local churches ground ministry practice in solid theological and biblical reflection. The creation of the Sider Center on Ministry and Public Policy, housed at Palmer Theological Seminary of Eastern

University in 2003, has made this integration of action and reflection official (praxis!).

We are always gratified when a graduate of Palmer Theological Seminary works for good in the world, especially when he/she is

an alumnus of the Sider Center. And when we say "good," we mean engaging in holistic ministry on some level. Nana Kwakye Dolce, the Community Outreach Coordinator at Clifton Park Baptist Church in Silver Springs, MD (and author of our feature article), is such a person. A 2008 graduate, Nana makes us proud as she coordinates the direction of her church in evangelism, compassion and justice.

The Sider Center (where ESA/WDN and Palmer Seminary intersect) hopes and strives for more "Nanas"—practitioners who think and thinkers who practice!—to participate in God's holistic mission in the world.



Al Tizon, Director

Nana Dolce (left) with CPBC member, Jannie Harrell.



Please consider supporting Word & Deed Network. Your gift allows us to develop holistic ministry throughout the nation, equipping churches with guest speakers, training, workshops, and resources. Donate online and create a free user account that provides you with access to new online resources and member benefits.

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" Col. 3:17

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