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Ralph D. Winter



Dear Reader,

In this issue we speak of the profoundly helpful role of music in the rescue of human souls. We speak of “proximate sending” in missions. We present an update on the massive P.E.A.C.E. Plan. Finally, we speak of the dread cancer of “dependency”—the fascinating and urgent factors that don’t meet the eye in the superficial uses of money in missions. Don’t skip this last item (pages 26-28), and the special offer on page 27.

The author, Glenn Schwartz, was first a missionary, later a key man in the Fuller School of World Mission in its early days. Then he founded World Mission Associates and has traveled throughout Africa for the last 20 years. Very few have his credentials with which to address the urgent question of “dependency.”

What is “dependency in missions”?

A simple case of dependency is where missionaries start a church, a school or a hospital without figuring out how those things can be run by the local people. These projects may run just fine as long as a missionary (they don’t have to pay) is there to help, or as long as monthly infusions of subsidy keep coming from abroad.

By contrast, all over the world are broken-down school buildings and even moldering church buildings that have been left behind by fast-growing church movements that have learned how to grow without depending on outside help.



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Self-reliance is the opposite of dependency. Self-reliance emerges when people discover ways to do things with self-respect and in ways that employ what is within the range of their control. Growth becomes spontaneous. They do not “depend” on help that is beyond their control, as “Saul’s Armor and David’s Sling” (pages 17-22) makes clear.

About Glenn Schwartz’ new book

This is an exciting book wherever you open it. It begins with the author’s own story, which is wrenching, surprising and richly insightful. Almost every page in this 400-page book sparkles with anecdotes of personal experiences, which graphically frame the urgent thesis of the book – how “helping” can sometimes hinder.

The incredible complexities of helping out around the world – bringing people to Christ, to health, and to increased security – can be daunting. It is easier to say it can’t be done and then to fold our hands, or (more likely), to ease back in our giving and going.

In our last issue I commented on the poisonous effect of pessimism and hopelessness. However, this book not only includes tales of how things can go wrong but also bursts with an equal number of accounts of marvelous examples of self-reliance. Its anecdotes can fuel dozens of sermons!

It must be considered “diabolic deception” how often good will is perverted by erroneous insights and decisions. This book is an absolute must for every mission-minded pastor, every member of every church mission committee, and, indeed, everyone who gives to missions. I can hardly think of any book in recent years which is as crucially important!

An amazing offer of an unusual book

Given this praise, it will be no surprise that we are promoting so unusual a project as that described in the announcement on page 27. Do you realize that when you normally buy a book, at least 80% of the price goes toward the costs of storage, order processing, packing, and shipping? We persuaded the author to make this book available at up to 80% off the retail price of \$19.99 for bulk orders. Obviously at that price there are minimum-order requirements. If you order enough copies at one time, the price comes down to \$4.00 each.

Details on how to order in bulk are in the announcement on page 27. At this price, many local churches will want to get a box for their mission committee and mission-concerned members. Many mission agencies may want to order a number of boxes.

Why will churches and standard mission agencies benefit from this book? Because it raises serious questions about 1) the idea of sending money instead of missionaries, 2) the idea of local congregations not sending their missionaries under established mission agencies, and 3) some short-term practices. All these things are siphoning off millions of dollars from more serious and effective mission work.

Once people discover how important Christian missions are, and how successful they have been, then they begin to get serious about giving. When they get serious about giving, instead of merely giving to clear their consciences, they want to ask some hard questions. This is a book for those who are willing to reflect on some hard questions and on issues that do not readily meet the eye.

Just how urgent and complex are global problems?

In our last bulletin I referred to a serious summary of global health (found in *Foreign Affairs*, January 2007) – and how hopeless that summary made things out to be. Why hopeless? Not because 50 times as much transnational financial aid is now floating around the world these days, but because of *the lack of honest people of good will* – the very people who are the product of Christian mission, people who are often overlooked by the

major secular aid programs. Missions produce transformed people. They are absolutely essential for any serious solution. But aid agencies have not caught up with that fact!

However, even in the world of selfless Christian missions, money is not always the answer. How is a wretchedly poor, dispossessed family in Darfur similar to a comparatively wealthy, retired believer in the USA? In both cases they need a good reason to live. Their primary bond is not the need for food, or money, or security. The wealthy, retired person may think that with enough food and shelter he can get along. But retired people die prematurely if they do not have a reason to live. Native Americans rolling in money from casinos and with no need to work are worse off than they were before.

The poorest people on this planet often don't receive the food sent to them. We have previously mentioned the case in Eritrea, where 100,000 tons of food were held back by one tribe from

another, starving tribe because the two tribes have long been enemies.

Redistribute wealth?

Worse still is the problem remaining even if every hungry person in the world were to be reliably and regularly given enough to eat. Eating donated food is only a temporary solution. People need to be able to *earn* a living. Self-reliance, not dependency, is the answer. *If all the world's wealth were redistributed* there would still be two kinds of people: 1) those who would use it and replace it because they could *earn* the replacement, and 2) those who would use it and then be just as poor as ever.

In other words, what if no jobs are available? Millions of jobs are disappearing due to globalization, in which huge, complex and more efficient ways of doing things are now washing over the globe. Navajo tribal women can produce a rug in two months, but that rug can be produced in China much more quickly and almost identically for \$50. Half of all of the handwork

previously sold by Navajos is now made in China by more efficient methods. Those Navajo women need to be able to do something that will more effectively link them into the global economy.

Thousands of congregations around the world face the same basic problem. Missionaries today cannot avoid this dimension of life. Born-again souls need to be able to earn enough to meet their family's needs. Handing out money and food is not a long-term solution.

Three of the articles in this issue speak to the issue of helping people help themselves rather than relying on outsiders' solutions that not only require resources they don't have but would not work even if they were available! Yes, Christian mission is a complex challenge.

Finally, don't miss the reference on page 28 to John Rowell's sadly misinformed and harmful book, *To Give or Not to Give?* The title of that book is *not* the primary question we face. 🌐



Stephen K. Bailey
Director of Alliance
Graduate School
of Mission

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