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Global Neighbors: Lessons in Abiding

Dwight W Jackson



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In a world of constant change the Followers of Jesus will engage the world using a menu of strategies. Global Neighbors identifies several issues for developing effective strategies in what has historically been "missions" and "ministry to the poor." I draw upon more than 30 years of first-hand engagement in Africa and in urban ministry to apply biblical principles, sociological theory, and community development practice to the task of being a neighbor. The lessons contained in these pages speak to those searching for effective living. This book does not lay out a plan of action. My intention is to present the concepts that have challenged me and contribute to a discussion of the issues facing Christian community and ministry. You will quickly discover my assumption that the concept of 'neighbor' is essential for our self-understanding as followers of Jesus. I suggest a framework that is foundational for understanding change within the societies where we should be neighbors, but often aren't. This framework describes component elements of social systems and then offers a model for their integration which can serve you as you try to make sense of your communities and the process of change taking place within them. This framework combines insights from the book of Deuteronomy on what it means to be the People of God, as well as others from the field of sociology. It is not the only perspective you could use, but it does provide a means for us to understand and to contribute to the growth of knowledge of community change. The goal is more than understanding—it is action.

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