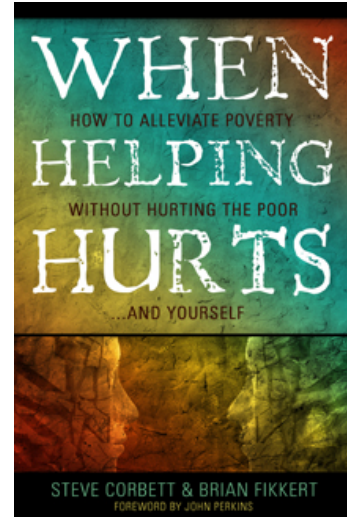


“Empower Haiti to Help Itself,” Experts Caution Well-Meaning Churches, Individuals

LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GA — The authors of a paradigm-shifting book on the causes of and solutions to the problem of poverty will host a special three-part webinar designed to help churches, relief agencies and individuals respond to the crisis in Haiti ... by helping the Haitian people to take ownership of the rebuilding process.



Scheduled for February 17, February 24 and March 3, from 1 to 2 p.m. EST, these hour-long webinars will be facilitated by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert of the Chalmers Center for Economic Development at Covenant College, which seeks to “help churches help the poor to help themselves.” Corbett and Fikkert’s book, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself*, is already in its fifth printing since it was published in July (www.whenhelpinghurts.org).

It is estimated that as many as 200,000 people died in the January 12 earthquake that devastated Haiti. A massive wave of aid has been directed at survivors, but Corbett and Fikkert say it must be the right kind of aid to make a difference.

“It is wonderful to see individuals awakening to the needs of the poor and wanting to help Haiti. Unfortunately, good intentions are not always enough,” they explain.

The authors add that good-hearted people sometimes have faulty assumptions about the causes of poverty and, because of this, they often do not realize that their efforts to help the poor can actually do more harm to the poor than good.

“When it comes to helping the poor, the natural reaction is to do for them rather than empowering them to do it for themselves,” Corbett and Fikkert say. “In the past, relief beneficiaries were often seen as passive patients and victims who are totally dependent on external experts for help. The best relief programs engage and build upon the local knowledge, labor, networks, and all types of productive resources from the first day. Furthermore, the Haiti work will quickly shift to rehabilitation and development work, which demands even less ‘doing for’ the Haitian people.”

Bernie Alimonti
The Chalmers Center
Covenant College
14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA, 30750
T 706-419-1808
Bernie.Alimonti@covenant.edu
www.whenhelpinghurts.org
www.chalmers.org



The Chalmers Center has equipped agencies, churches and individuals across the U.S. and in more than 100 countries around the world to use economic development strategies to minister to poor people—including microfinance and microenterprise development, and programs centered around savings and asset accumulation, financial literacy and job training.

Following the tsunami of 2004, a Christian relief and development organization working in Indonesia asked the Chalmers Center for help in designing a small-business recovery program. The results?

“The overall success was significant,” the authors explain. “Hundreds of businesses received assistance, local institutions were strengthened, and the midterm project evaluations indicated improvements in people’s relationships with God, self and others. A major international humanitarian organization even requested a grant proposal for funding to scale up the program.”

A must for churches, christian relief and development agencies, NGOs and individuals seeking to alleviate poverty, the webinars will help participants: 1) Gain an understanding of the harm that can come from an improper understanding of the nature of poverty and its alleviation; 2) Identify the basic principles and tools needed to develop relationships with low-income individuals, and; 3) Be able to implement biblically-based economic development ministry programs.

Corbett and Fikkert conclude, “The principles we teach, which are outlined in *When Helping Hurts*, are not a magic formula for success. But they are powerful, and they have been used by God in even extremely difficult settings.”

To register for the webinars, go to <http://chalmers.org/when-helping-hurts/webinar/haiti-02-2010.php>. There is no charge to participate.

For information, contact Bernie Alimonti at 706-419-1808 or Bernie.Alimonti@covenant.edu.

Bernie Alimonti
The Chalmers Center
Covenant College
14049 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mountain, GA, 30750
T 706-419-1808
Bernie.Alimonti@covenant.edu
www.whenhelpinghurts.org
www.chalmers.org