

HAVE WE GOT IT ALL WRONG?

BRIGHT HOPE NEWS



Many of the team at Bright Hope World are currently reading the book *'Becoming Whole: Why the Opposite of Poverty Isn't the American Dream'* by Brian Fikkert and Kelly Kapic. Like its predecessor – and seminal Bright Hope World guidebook – *'When Helping Hurts'*, it is a wonderful book and an incredibly uncomfortable read.

The book looks at the many and sustained efforts at trying to fight poverty that we in the West have embarked upon. We tend to see economic empowerment and microloans as a good starting point, and so we go about the work of helping people in the Majority World to become like us. We tack some individualism, capitalism and materialism onto pre-existing world views and hope for the best.

But, says the book's authors, this is not working out that well for us, is it? Our societies are increasingly disenchanted, disconnected, and unhappier than they have ever been. Our churches are shrinking, and we believers are becoming more and more like the culture around us, and yet we're trying to export our worldview and way of doing things to those living in poverty around the world in the hope that mimicking us will solve their problems?!

Have we got it all wrong?

It's a very good question, and a reminder that we must, above all, do no harm as we try to help the poorest of the poor. We must be humble and show a deep self-awareness as we step across cultural divides. Are we able to look at ourselves and see our flaws with clarity so that we don't export them? If not, we might just need to slow down and reflect.

Enabling people to participate in the economy and supporting economic development are usually good things. Yet, we need to grapple with some of the hooks in this approach. More consumption is not the path to flourishing and happiness. It hasn't worked for us, and it probably won't work for them. We need to pursue something much deeper than that.

We must also bear in mind that the Gospel fully integrates the human experience here and now, and the security of eternity. We need to make sure we don't pursue one at the expense of the other. Our goal is not to simply make people physically comfortable nor to just enable them to 'get to heaven'. Our role is to be agents of radical transformation in all aspects of life, and to declare His glory in all its many facets.

Ultimately, this book and these ideas are about humility, perhaps the most important prerequisite to getting involved in poverty alleviation. We want to offer what we have without overselling ourselves and our world view. We also want to be humble learners that see how God is working in other places and that marvel at the ways in which other cultures have figured out aspects of Him that we are still a little blind to.

Fraser Scott

Executive Director

Another year has kicked off at Bright Hope World, and that means another opportunity for our team to come together and hang out at our annual Gathering in Nelson in January.

This year we talked through all our partnerships and focused on praying for each of them.

There is considerable concern among the team about the rising costs that so many of our partners are facing around the world. Nowhere seems to be immune to this, but the situation in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Lebanon appear to be particularly bad. We also have concerns about food security and energy security generally, particularly as the war in Ukraine continues with no end in sight.

This is a key reason why Foundations for Farming will be a strategic focus for us in 2023, as we do everything we can to build resilience into rural communities by helping people to grow crops more effectively. We are so delighted to have several new team members joining us to help with this task.

We will also be focusing increasingly on prayer this year. The battle we fight is a spiritual one, so please do join us in praying for our partners around the world.



Bright Hope World's partner in Youhanabad in Lahore, EGM Pakistan, works with very poor women to help them upskill by teaching sewing and gifting them their own sewing machine at the end of the course.

The following are two recent stories from graduates of the sewing course.

MW is a widow and was working in houses as a maid, washing clothes and doing other housework for a Muslim family. They paid her less than US\$50 a month so it was very difficult for her to manage her household needs, as she had to pay rent for the house, utility bills, school fees for three children, and groceries. During Covid-19 she was fired from her job and received food relief a few times from EGM Pakistan.

Now she has been helped to gain sewing skills and has secured employment in a garment factory earning more than \$150 a month. She is so thankful to Bright Hope World and to EGM Pakistan for supporting her.

HJ is another woman involved in the sewing programme. HJ's husband was working in a motor workshop but was severely injured in a road accident and his right arm was broken, making it difficult for him to continue to work in the workshop. HJ completed the sewing and cutting course at the Youhanabad Sewing Centre and has now started a small home-based business sewing clothes. She earns money for her family and is very thankful for this wonderful training.

Over the many years that Bright Hope World has been supporting sewing classes in a number of countries we have seen the hugely positive impact they have in the women participating, and on their families.

Read more at <https://www.brighthopeworld.com/partnerships.asp?pid=443>.

1. Pray that we would continue to seek God as we pursue economic development and poverty elimination with humility, and continually learn from our partners.
2. Pray for MW, HJ and all the other women being empowered by the sewing training course in Youhanabad
3. In January the wife of one of our partners in Uganda was traveling back from the village when she was robbed. Documents, clothes, and food were stolen. Shortly thereafter her husband was also robbed and all his valuables, his laptop and his documents, were stolen. This was a big loss to them as a family and ministry. Please pray with them for peace during this difficult time, and that God will make a way to replace what has been stolen.
4. Please pray for Peru as it faces violence and soaring price increases, especially for food and fuel.

