

Good Works: Hospitality and Faithful Discipleship, by Keith Wasserman and Christine D. Pohl. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021 viii + 180 pp. \$16.99.

Keith Wasserman is the founder and executive director of Good Works Inc. His co-author, Christine D. Pohl, is professor emeritus of church and society at Asbury Theological Seminary.

Wasserman chronicles the founding, development, and current operation of Good Works Inc., a ministry serving the group commonly referred to as “the homeless.” But Wasserman believes that this term stigmatizes the people so labeled. By contrast, the book describes them as the “vulnerable,” or “people without a home” to encourage those to whom it ministers to participate in its services. Although the ministry sees its goal as to help find homes for those who do not have one, it offers far more than placement.

Wasserman does not change the definition of home but rather refines it. Because a home offers safe space in a community, hospitality [read: making a home-like environment] centers this ministry in the local church. “Woundedness” and “transformation” are terms the book uses to describe the state of homelessness as well as the process leading out of it, a strong discipleship focus. The home-finding ministry of Good Works Inc. is an entire system entailing its own culture centering on local church participation.

The book is a documentary of a unique ministry as it grew through the personal spiritual growth of its founder. When observers refer to the ministry as an agency, Wasserman responds, “We do not view ourselves as a social service agency, but instead, as a ministry whose primary mission is to love God and love people” (15). On balance, the author says, “our task as worshippers is not to ‘fix’ people but to love them” (17). But this takes time. He explains: “Much of ministry is accompaniment, walking *with* a person through difficult circumstances. And that is rarely efficient. It is slow and can be painful” (53). But staff do not see this labor-intensive ministry as a one-way street that drains them. Instead, they say, “I go also to learn—learn to grow in love for my neighbor and create structures and opportunities for others to do the same” (63).

Good Works Inc. targets people with disabilities, among others, who have no home. A recent Housing and Urban Development survey revealed that 49% of those living in homeless shelters had mental health or intellectual disability diagnoses. For this and other reasons, Good Works Inc. serves as a model for disability ministry where home is the focal point of care.

The book offers insight into the road to homelessness. How do some people end up homeless? One path follows a slow but predictable decline. “Privacy is a resource available for purchase by those who have money. The less money you have, the less privacy you can obtain. We need privacy, however, to maintain our mental health.... When this low-level stress combines with physical sickness or some form of disability, it can make a person behave strangely. No wonder people living on

the street sometimes appear to be mentally ill” (70–71).

This scenario helps us see that a path to homelessness is not a sudden turn to the streets. It is a slow and painful descent into confusion and darkness. Substance abuse is often not the direct cause of homelessness but instead an attempt by people with homes to self-medicate for their mental health. Patterns of incarceration and recidivism often follow. Rarely does a person desire to live on the street. It is a consequence. Committed Christians who once faithfully attended church can find themselves homeless. How does Good Works Inc. help such people?

In brief, the ministry offers individuals experiencing homelessness a house, a home, and a family. A house offers personal privacy and protection from danger. A home is a familiar place to find rest and stability that supports spiritual growth in a local church as well as to seek personal success, often an unfamiliar sensation, through vocation in a community. Family is the seedbed of all personal relationships, a place to find people who will walk with you through the blessings and the challenges of life. Famously, “Family is a haven in a heartless world” (Christopher Lasch). What does this ministry aim to accomplish for those without a home? “The end goal is when they become participating members of a local community of believers where they can receive nurture, care, and accountability, and where they can identify and use the gifts that God has given them” (110). This statement captures the heart of Good Works Inc.

This reviewer highly recommends the book for anyone, any church, or any Christian organization that wants to address needs pertaining to homelessness. As already noted, many of the people Wasserman aims to help have disability or a mental health diagnosis. This book offers an effective framework for disability work in the local church and its community.

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Technically Connected: Navigating Distance on Virtual Teams, by Warren J. Janzen. Victoria, Canada: Friesen Press, 2020. xv + 167 pp. \$17.99.

The author, having served as International Director of the mission agency SEND International, has extensive experience working cross-culturally, and developing and leading teams through face-to-face and technology engagement. In more recent years, he has done the complex and often challenging task of transforming his organization into a virtual culture.

As a research method for this study, Janzen conducted in-depth surveys with over twenty non-profit and for-profit organizational leaders, some of whom have also wrestled with the transition to virtual teams. The book presents a synthesis of these findings. Janzen targets those