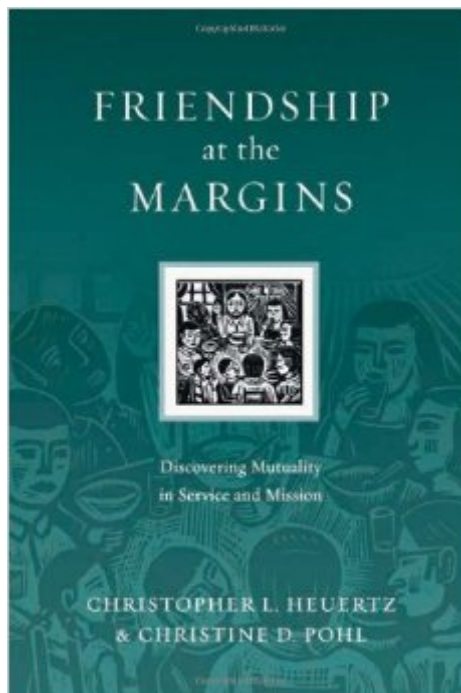


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Friendship At The Margins: Discovering Mutuality In Service And Mission (Resources For Reconciliation)



Synopsis

In our anonymous and dehumanized world, the simple practice of friendship is radically countercultural. But sometimes Christians inadvertently marginalize and objectify the very ones they most want to serve. Chris Heuertz, international director of Word Made Flesh, and theologian and ethicist Christine Pohl show how friendship is a Christian vocation that can bring reconciliation and healing to our broken world. They contend that unlikely friendships are at the center of an alternative paradigm for mission, where people are not objectified as potential converts but encountered in a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity. When we befriend those on the margins of society by practicing hospitality and welcome, we create communities where righteousness and justice can be lived out. Heuertz and Pohl's reflections offer fresh insight into Christian mission and what it means to be the church in the world today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Being a good friend can sometimes be hard. Being a good friend to those who are living on society's margins can be even harder. Those of us who grew up in relatively secure surroundings face difficult questions as we befriend our neighbors who live in poverty or have otherwise been marginalized by society. Close, mutual relationships with those who are homeless, have been the victims of exploitation, or are addicted to drugs and/or starting to exploit others themselves can force us to ask really difficult questions about what it means to be Christ-like in today's society. But

one thing is clear. Christ made friendships with marginalized people a focus of his life on Earth, and we can't say we are his disciples if we are not following in his footsteps. Pohl and Heuertz both have wrestled with these questions for years, and have the theological and practical experience to begin offering wisdom. What does real friendship and mutual service mean between someone who has all their needs met and someone who is struggling to survive? If we are volunteering for a church or working for an agency, how do we befriend those we work with in Christ, rather than treat them like "projects" to fulfill our organization's mission? How do we react when we begin realizing that some of the people we meet are both the victims of exploitation and the exploiters of others? How do we interact with wealthy donors and friends who may want to "help the poor" as well, but don't yet understand them as real people who are equally made in the image of God? And how do we think about or measure "success" when creating honest relationships with real people?

Christopher Heuertz, is the international director of Word Made Flesh. He joins Christine Pohl in reflections on how to befriend those on the margins by practicing hospitality and welcome. This book calls us to a radical reorientation from thinking of "causes" to thinking of people and a mirror to reflect on. This book is not about short term ministry to the poor and then walking away. It rather redefines ministry as the gift of friendship and the building the bridge of hospitality by living among the poor and marginalized and with them. Very personal examples fill this small book. One of the most moving examples for me was the illustration on Isaiah 3:14-15 "The plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor" Sujana, in Indian has earned less than \$1 day to stitch the red button down shirt from the Gap store which our author purchased for \$40. Sujana was overjoyed to see Christine wearing her product, but when she asked Christine how much it cost in the US, Christine was so moved she set up a Personal Retail Equality Tax, where she taxed herself 12 % of the price of an item and put it in the bank and at the end of the year she delivers it to Sujana's family. This is just one example of way we as Americans must rethink our very strong desire for possessions and the use of our money. Other chapters dealt with rethinking those trapped in prostitution.

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