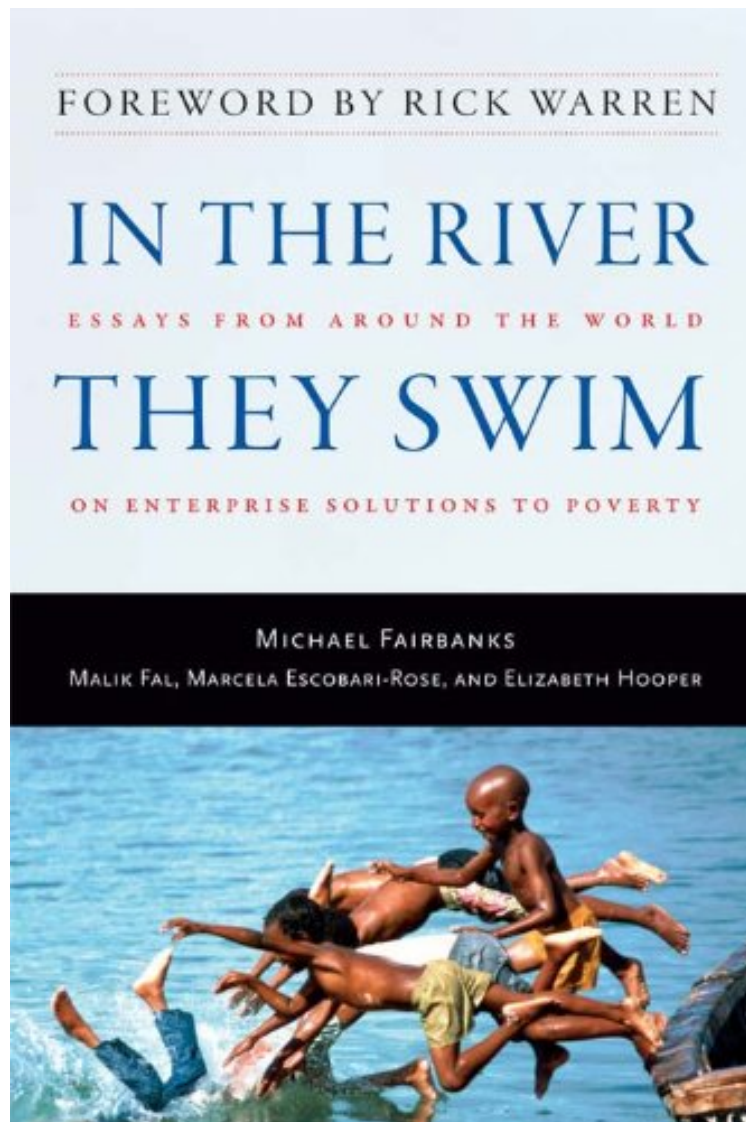


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In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty

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From Templeton Press : In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In the River They Swim: Essays from Around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great BookBy HeleneI loved this book. All the essays are so well written and with a great viewpoint. They are very informative and shed some great ideas in eradicating poverty. I recommend people to read it.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Light Feel Good Reading on a Not

Light or Feel Good Topic
By Elizabeth I picked this book because I am interested in development - how NGOs, governments, communities and individuals can address the grinding misery of poverty in our world. This book has some interesting thoughts about poverty, development, capitalism and the role faith can or does play in this, and it might be of interest to a casual observer who just wants to know a few things here or there or get a few ideas. But it isn't a well-collected group of essays. There isn't much of a theme, there is no sense that these essays all come together for a purpose other than "they have some good ideas" about how people might address poverty or they want to share reflections about poverty and development. And it is very pro-capitalism and pro-business without necessarily taking seriously the challenge that these paradigms pose to addressing poverty - and without taking seriously enough the ways that these paradigms have contributed to poverty and inequality. There are LOTS of ideas out there and lots of personal stories. What is needed is a compelling theme about how the zillions of ideas might be combed over and somehow actualized into an approach a decent track record. I guess this is a great book for people who want to read various hopeful or interesting stories about development and poverty and change. It is not so much a book for people who are in the field or really interested in doing something themselves or taking meaningful action toward addressing the ways that the lifestyles and approaches of the "developed" world to the "developing world" have caused and continue to worsen the problem. In short, a good book for light reading, for those who already agree with the tenets of the book or who don't know enough about the field to disagree with them.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. In River They (We) Swim, A Baptism In Being Human, A Critical Review
By Andre Lawrence "According to my analysis," an American economic advisor said, "many hotels on the island have closed in recent years because their labor costs are too high. Local hotel workers make too much money for the tourist markets you're currently targeting." Molly, a union leader who worked as a hotel maid for twenty years, slowly flipped through the spreadsheet pages and declared, "To me, this is nothing but numbers on a page. It does not relate what we go through, nor does it see how hotel owners exploits us!"

In The River, They Swim is a collection of essays from persons in various fields of government and the private sector; concerned individuals to a representative from The Vatican, a reporter from Ecuador to a French executive now residing in Rwanda. These essays are both intriguing and invigorating statements about, fundamentally, the power of hope. Hope in the belief that Poverty can be alleviated to manageable levels; a belief in the power of the individual to overcome both socio-economic factors and psychological barriers. This is, inherently, a transformational discussion on ways to address the issues and the factors that create disparity. This topic is very near and dear to me. And, one I've attempted to deal with locally in my personal and professional life. My work with the Red Cross and adult literacy, Kiva, One Laptop Per Child and a few others have given me a perspective, but not a full comprehension of something so pervasive and yet intellectually incomprehensible. So, does In The River... provide The Solution? No. But, that's part of the discoveries that each essayist has. The book is sectioned off into three sections: "The Journey" (self-discovery on the part of the essayists), "Strategies For Prosperity, and "Globalization." In reading these essays, there isn't (in my opinion) any clear difference in content between the sections. There are threads, or common conclusions, that each has come to. Here are some that I kept running into while reading:

- *There is no one-solution to poverty.
- *Government is not wholly the problem, nor is government, in and of itself, the solution.
- *Recipients are not looking for handouts, but for a stable way to meet their daily needs.
- *There's a positive outlook on capitalism and therefore entrepreneurship is seen as the ideal for the individual as well as for the governing body.
- *The best business plans require an ethical observance in order to be successful.
- *There has to be a psychological shift in the individual that encourages a belief in unending, and sometimes, diverse opportunities.

There were quite a few essays that emphasized this last dimension, a psychological shift, more heavily than agricultural and marketing plans. For instance, in his first essay, "A Mind For The Poor," Andreas Widmer, speaks of a graduate-level course in theology, taught by "Father John." The course focused on counseling but he soon discovered the universal applicability of the message. According to Father John, there are four counseling traps: employing crisis intervention instead of counseling, having sympathy rather than empathy, being a codependent, and playing the redeemer. "Crisis intervention is a short-term intervention, focused on dealing with and overcoming a traumatic experience as opposed to regular counseling, which is concerned with accompanying someone over a longer period of time as the person figures out patterns in his or her life. The former serves to deal with immediate threats to human life and unique situations but does not facilitate emotional and spiritual growth necessary to deal with common lifestyle issues. Economic development, usually occurring after crisis intervention, is more like long-term counseling. It assists the local community to take stock of and identify patterns in its economic system. It encourages individuals to find solutions independent of aid agencies, nongovernmental organizations and development experts."

"I always thought that caring for the other person meant 'fixing' his or her problems." "Sympathy occurs when we make someone else's problem our problem. It is useful only in the case of crises, when the person needing help is momentarily incapable of acting for him- or herself. Sympathy leads one to manage the other person's situation. I do not let a man with the intent of committing suicide make the next decision himself. I intervene at once. Empathy is the ability to look at a situation from another's perspective, to turn in to his or her feelings, or to be present with that person as he or she goes through the present experience. This approach works more slowly and does not "take over:" it forms the cornerstone of effective long-term counseling." The sympathetic counselor takes the decisions away from the other person and makes

the choice for that person. He brings his own experiences to bear. He does not want the same thing to happen to this woman whom he is counseling, so he makes the decision for her. This demeans the woman by paternalizing her and hampering her free will."The empathetic counselor relates to the other person by listening to, acknowledging the feelings and accompanying her through the experiences with advice and encouragement, but not be prescriptive and not make decisions for her. The primary goal is not to have the person buy or not to buy the house; the focus is to help the person to find out how to go about making a decision."A co-dependent is someone who exhibits too much, often inappropriate caring for persons who depend on him or her. The co-dependent exhibits behavior that controls, makes excuses for, pities, and perpetuates the needy party's condition. If the aid is used to feed our own good feelings, then we lose sight of the aided person's progress."The Redeemer Trap is an ethical disposition on display by those offering help. It says that those offering help see themselves as saviors to the poor, bringing justice and prosperity to all: an external (foreign) moral authority instituting change."In conclusion, *In The River They Swim*, is as much an evaluation of the circumstances as it is a meditation of drawing conclusions from critical self-analysis. This is a book that should be owned, read and discussed in every home, if for no other reason than "there, but by the grace of God, go I."

The sociologist Thomas Sowell writes, "We need to confront the most blatant fact that has persisted across centuries of social history—vast differences in productivity among peoples, and the economic and other consequences of such differences." Poverty demeans dignity, shrinks the soul, wastes potential, and inflicts suffering on three billion people on our planet. We must also acknowledge that, during the past fifty years, the record in international assistance to the least developed countries has been disappointing; the economics-based abstractions developed in the think tanks of Europe and North America are insufficient. *In The River They Swim* is the antithesis to that search for solutions the next big theory of global poverty. From the fresh perspective of advisors on the frontlines of development to the insight of leaders like President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Pastor Rick Warren, it tells the story of change in the microcosms of emerging businesses, industries, and governments. These essays display a personal nature to their work that rigorous analysis alone cannot explain. We learn that a Sufi master can teach us about the different levels of knowledge, the "different ways to know a river." These practitioners could have written about its length, its source, its depth, its width, the power of its current, and the life it contains. They could have invested time and money to travel to that river so that they could sit on its shores and look at it, feel the sand that borders it, and watch the birds at play over it. Instead, they dove in to swim in the river, felt its current along their bodies, and tasted something of it. They wondered, briefly, if they had the strength to swim its length, and now they share the answer. If human development is a river, the authors in this volume, and perhaps some readers, will no longer be satisfied to stand along its banks.