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Meditations on the Beatitudes: Lessons from the Margins

Donald R. Clymer

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What does it mean to be meek? To hunger and thirst after righteousness? The author draws on stories from years of experience in Latin America to invite readers to glean insights regarding the Beatitudes' meaning. Writing in the Foreword, Leanne Eshleman Benner, who works at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community as a Resident Services Manager, says that "I'm always taken aback when something like Don Clymer's book jolts me into realizing just how enmeshed I have become in a culture which barely needs the Beatitudes. Our pockets and our minds are full to overflowing. Reading the Beatitudes then becomes a sort of academic exercise and/or a checklist for making us feel better about ourselves. Clymer vividly defines the Beatitudes in a way that opens a new circuit of thought. Because of the way he interweaves other cultures into the picture, he helps us recognize our cultural blinders and encourages us to take them off." Dorothy Jean Weaver, Professor of New Testament, Eastern Mennonite Seminary, observes that "Don Clymer's Meditations are creative, thoughtful, and substantive. Clymer does a beautiful job of setting up a personal story for each meditation and then reflecting on the beatitude in question and the conflicting cultural value associated with it. This is excellent material for study groups." And Orval Gingerich, Assistant Vice President, International Programs; and Director, Center for Global Education, Augsburg College, thinks that "Each meditation brings life to the words of Jesus by confronting the comfortable assumptions middle-class North Americans hold about life, happiness, and the gospel."

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