



God's Advice to the Nations of the World: How to Overcome Depression; How to Be a Good Parent; How to Deal with Pollution

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Combining inspiration and self-help, God's Advice to the Nations of the World addresses topics including parenting and the environment.

Michael Walker's reflections in *God's Advice to the Nations of the World* cover depression, parenting, and environmental concerns.

Made up of three parts, the book considers its points from a biblical perspective. The first section is on depression and suggests that prayer, studying the Bible, and positive thinking can help alleviate symptoms, and it focuses on the biblical story of Job. The second section contains parenting advice, which is couched in traditional conservative understandings of men's and women's roles in the home; it draws from the psalms. Understandings in the first two sections are traditional, and not many new proposals are made; the final section is more progressive, encouraging care for the earth and proposing ways to address climate change, particularly on the local level in England.

Functioning like a self help work, the book is designed and formatted to give its audience direction for each topic. Problems are clearly defined, as are suggested biblical solutions, with chapter conclusions that include specific steps to take. The book makes good use of subheadings, lists, and quotations to highlight its material.

Relying on the tradition of the prophets, notably Jeremiah, the text suggests that the world has forgotten the lessons of the past, which it needs to consider when approaching modern problems. Its most compelling work comes in the final section, where it is the most specific and concrete in its application of biblical principles. Reflecting on problems facing London, the text makes suggestions for addressing the neglect of the environment, such as that the UK government burn the majority of municipal waste. Some of its conclusions are debatable, but its deviation from conservative circles, which have tended to regard climate change as not real or not to be concerned about, is striking. Parochial issues like speed bumps are not in keeping with its scope, though.

The tone is nostalgic, and the book expresses a desire to return to traditional solutions and simpler times. Some of today's realities are ignored as a result, such as that many families look different from traditional families or are without a mother or father. Help for such families is absent, and some suggestions seem out of touch.

The style is consistent throughout all three arguments. Each reads like a short sermon or spiritual reflection, referencing scriptural passages and theological themes. Language is matter-of-fact and clear—standard sermon fare filled with rhetorical questions, occasional inclusive comments, and life examples. Their considerations of the issues are brief, and they do not entirely satisfy their topics.

Combining inspiration and self-help, *God's Advice to the Nations of the World* breaks some new ground in its consideration of environmental issues but favors traditional answers in parenting and mental health.

JEREMIAH ROOD (November 5, 2018)

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