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LIFTING UP THE POOR

A Dialogue on Religion, Poverty & Welfare Reform

Mary Jo Bane & Lawrence M. Mead

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Two of the nation's foremost scholars and policy advocates break the mold in this lively volume, the first to be published in the new *Pew Forum Dialogues on Religion and Public Life*. The authors bring their faith traditions, policy experience, academic expertise, and political commitments together in this moving, pointed, and informed discussion of poverty, one of our most vexing public issues.

Mary Jo Bane writes of her experiences running social service agencies, work that has been informed by "Catholic social teaching, and a Catholic sensibility that is shaped every day by prayer and worship." Drawing from various Christian traditions, Lawrence Mead's essay discusses the role of nurturing Christian virtues and personal responsibility as a means of transforming a "defeatist culture" and combating poverty.

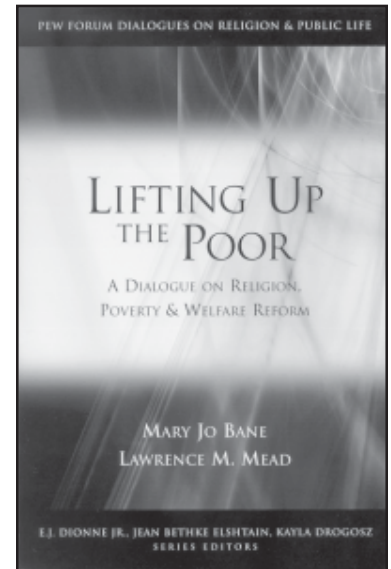
Bane emphasizes the social justice claims of her tradition, and Mead challenges the view of many who see economic poverty as a biblical priority that deserves "preference ahead of other social concerns." But both assert that an engagement with religious traditions is indispensable to an honest and searching debate about poverty, policy choices, and the public purposes of religion.

MARY JO BANE is professor of public policy and management at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. She served as cochair of President Clinton's Working Group on Welfare Reform and assistant secretary for children and families at the Department of Health and Human Services.

LAWRENCE M. MEAD is a professor of politics at New York University and was a visiting fellow at the Hoover Institute. He was deputy director of research, Republican National Committee; policy scientist, the Urban Institute; and policy analyst, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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