



To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City

Mark R. Gornik (Author) , Miroslav Volf (Foreword by) , LaVerne S. Stokes (Preface by)

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Foreword by Miroslav Volf

Preface by LaVerne Stokes

How are Christians to understand and respond to our distressed inner-city communities? Building on both the perspective of God's new creation and the view from the neighborhood, Mark R. Gornik's *To Live in Peace* shows how the life of the church, the strategies of community development, and the practices of peacemaking can make a transformational difference.

Centering the book is the story of Baltimore's New Song Community Church, a church that stands as a witness to what can happen when the risks of the gospel are taken. Engaging with a wide range of theological and missiological perspectives, Gornik demonstrates how placing blame for the current conditions of life in the inner city on the residents themselves fails the test of critical analysis and the witness of Scripture. Yet his proposals also show ways that the church can work with the community to overcome structural obstacles to human flourishing.

To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City Details

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Missions M/D says

Building on both the perspective of God's new creation and the view from the neighborhood, "To Live in Peace" shows how the life of the church, the strategies of community development, and the practices of peacemaking can make a transformational difference.

Jennifer says

I started this book after a sermon series "The City" at my church. Gornik provided a great follow up with additional stories and biblical backing detailing the importance in loving your city and all whom dwell in it. The "everything everywhere" approach has proven unrealistic. Be a part of the city, a neighbor, and utilize the gifts from within to rebuild on faith, love, and hope.

Adam Ross says

This was a fantastic book. While it succumes to some trendy leftist stuff, its heart and soul is to help the poor and broken, and for the church to go into the place of pain in the world and say "crucify me instead." A really important book.

Doug says

As expected, this book turned out to be very good. Gornik spends effective time laying out a biblical theology of the poor, church, and kingdom without using categories that often freak out conservatives. I was surprised and at home with his reliance on Reformed/Presbyterian sources; I hadn't expected that. The best chapter, of course, is the one where he describes moving into a run-down corner of Baltimore to become part of the community, not to "do charity" or institute programs a la *When Helping Hurts*. A decade or so later, they had a focused church, medical care, education, job-service, and new homes, yet without any utopianism or romance, just the basic nongnostic gospel.

Joshua Forbes says

Gornik does a fantastic job in addressing the patterns of development and decay that some inner city neighborhoods go through. Truly scholarly in nature, perhaps a doctoral dissertation, Gornik lays a solid groundwork for seasoned and novice community developers alike to build on.

Joyce del Rosario says

I really enjoyed this book. It is basically the book I wish I could have written. Gornik combines missiology, his connection to CCDAs work, as well as first-hand experiences as a pastor and para-church minister to develop a well-rounded look at the issues of doing ministry in the city.

Jeanne says

I am working through this now, because the author is a personal friend. I am eager to see it through, and discuss it with Mark and others who lived in Jackson, MS in the 1980's

Melissa says

Gave me a brief but necessary history of inner cities in America. Thoughtful book that provides a biblical/theological framework to think about inner cities and a Christian response.

Missjgray says

One of the best books ever.

Cool things about Nehemiah, repentance, city building, urban dwelling, the flourishing of shalom, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Jubilee, the New Jerusalem and lots and lots about why we are to love the city and all who dwell there.

Sreju says

An incredibly thorough examination of the church's calling to live out the gospel in our community.

Ray says

For a generation or two, White American evangelicals, probably in exactly the same proportion as their secular counterparts, have been fleeing to the suburbs to escape the social ills of the city. Even more shameful than the scale of this white flight is the fact that almost no one reflects on this critically in the church. It never occurs to most to ever teach or preach about the importance of serving the city, or developing a theology of urban life. It all comes down to a rejection of the basic Biblical impulse that we Christians are called to go toward the pain, not away from it. I do NOT think all Xians are called to live in the inner city, but I DO think we need to ask questions about serving others instead of protecting ourselves, about living in community instead of fleeing to privacy. As we seek to apply these thoughts to our lives, Gornick is an outstanding, accessible place to start.

Gornick is both academically adept (he has a British PhD) and practically oriented (he planted a PCA church in inner city Baltimore). This book will challenge the most thoughtful (his footnotes alone are a massive education) and convict the most stubborn.

Churches live primarily to serve themselves and compete with one another for providing services to increasingly consumeristic congregations. For all the talk about mission and service, the churches are driven by numbers, ever more elaborate programs, psychobabble, and slick buildings. At best ministries of reconciliation and justice become optional add-ons to the program menu of churches, when the Gospel requires them to be at the core of all we do in the church.

Gornick lays out a sophisticated prescription for change. In the process he does not advocate for 'mercy' ministry that humiliates its recipients. Instead he calls for simply connecting faith with life. This unfolds into a vision for restoring the shalom of God's new creation through 'thousands of little things' done "right over a period of many years." He addresses both individuals and structures in the process.

Gornick seeks to activate the Biblical vision of urban renewal -- Isaiah's vision (Is. 58), and John's vision which closes the canon (Rev. 22). Here re-creating community is part of our shared creational identity.

Yes, some may quibble with his somewhat progressive political views that make subtle appearances from time to time. But these are not necessary to his themes. Fiscal conservatives can surely share his enthusiasm for urban renewal and Christian community. This is truly an indispensable book.

Drick says

This is perhaps the best book I have read on urban ministry and theology in a long time. Gornick and others are founding pastors of New Song Church in Sandtown, a neighborhood in Baltimore. Gornick provides a thorough analysis of the community and the work he and others did blending sociology, economics, theology, and political analysis in a seamless way. Gornick's footnotes and references are almost as rich as the text itself, so I will find myself going back to it again I am sure

Kelsey says

3.5

Laura says

recommended in the Helping Without Hurting seminar
