



For the City: Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel

Darrin Patrick , Joel A. Lindsey (Contributor) , Matt Carter

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Within ten years, nine out of ten people will claim “no religious affiliation.” Many of these people will live in urban areas. Church leaders must learn how to effectively engage in ministry with this urban core, a group that includes both the poor and marginalized as well as the wealthy and influential. This book will guide readers in developing a philosophy of ministry that can lead to restoration and renewal in their city. Matt Carter and Darrin Patrick explain the biblical, theological, and historical foundations of ministry within the urban core and how to plant churches where the gospel is not only faithfully preached and shared but also brings substantial benefits to those living in the community. For the City relates the wisdom gleaned from years of serving their cities for the sake of God’s kingdom. Carter and Patrick practically equip church leaders and Christians to look at their city as a mission field where individuals and churches can faithfully proclaim the gospel and live out the reality of a community changed and transformed by its message.

For the City: Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel Details

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From Reader Review For the City: Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel for online ebook

Josh Kopp says

Forward by Chris Tomlin (Chris actually worked with Matt Carter at Woodlands United Methodist church). Cool connections. Chris actually pushed Matt to start a new church plant.

Preface:

What makes a great church? Society says... "a church that meets our needs." But good preaching, good music, and good programs don't define a the successful church. "A great church, a healthy church, is one in which Jesus Christ is found in word and deed." A successful church has members who move and act. Through sacrificial service. It's not about you and having the church please you and fill you. You empty yourself into the church. Giving everything to further God's kingdom.

Chapters 1-2:

Matt (conservative) & Darrin (slightly liberal) give their backgrounds. We see their how their lives were influenced and burdened to follow the Scripture...and reach the city. Forget the church models...these guys just wanted to radically reach the world for Jesus. Matt asks, "Would your city grieve if you picked up and left?" Your church is so connected with the community and provides loving service every week that leaving would influence the city. How connected are our churches in reaching the lost? In serving our cities? Matt uses Spurgeon as an example. Look at his church! Look at the amazing things they did! Let's do the same!

The Bible stresses in Jer. 29 that we reach our cities specifically. We are to have a church FOR THE CITY.

Chapter 3:

Reaching their city of Austin. God gave them the unique burden for this city, even despite many setbacks (car stolen, robbed at gunpoint, beaten). Their hatred turned into love.

Matt talks to a seminary professor and the teacher wittingly says, "I find it interesting that the Holy Spirit continues to 'lead' young church planters to rich white suburban areas." Scary how true that is, isn't? We don't reach the dirty and ugly, because we're afraid we'll get ourselves dirty. Think of how much work we would have to do...and thus the modern church neglects the cities.

God calls a conservative southern baptist into the needy liberal downtown of Austin, Texas.

Matt goes on a sabbatical, and God shows him through the Old Testament how often the church today fails to reach the poor. Using Amos 5, God breaks Matt's heart. The religious feasts that the Israelites participated in "stunk" to God. They neglected the poor yet turned around and presented sacrifices to God almighty. Their worship music was "white noise" unto God. The people distressed the poor! They prized their cattle and their feasts more than the the needy. Your current/future church needs to have a foundation for meeting the needs of the community!

Chapter 4:

Great chapter and reference on contextualization. How should the gospel be presented to the lost? Not over-culturized or over-religionized.

Chapter 5:

Community. We live in community because we follow the example of the Trinity. God, Jesus, & Holy Spirit communing perfectly together. So we as the church, live unified as a testimony to the lost. But we also live in community with the city! We don't live in our Christian bubble. We are melded with the needs of the people.

Chapter 6:

Darrin shares different church ministries that serve his city of St. Louis. Don't just talk about doing things...Go out and actively reach the city!

Chapters 7-8:

As a leader of your ministry, Matt shares two ways the church today can successfully reach the city. First, you, the leader, must properly equip your congregation. And second, you must embrace suffering.

- Equip your followers: give them the vision, give them practical strategies to reach the city, follow-up.
- Suffering: See how God can work through the hardest of times. If you're comfortable, you're probably not serving.

Chapter 9:

Darrin and Matt conclude with a challenge to "live like Jonah." God directly calls Jonah to serve the city of Ninevah. What a great parallel to us as Christians today.

Ben Adkison says

Last weekend, myself, Logan, and Gibby headed off to the mountains for our first ever Basileia Church staff retreat. We had a blast, spent much needed time in strategy planning and prayer, and discussed a book by Darrin Patrick and Matt Carter entitled *For the City*. The book describes what it looks like for a church to so impact a local culture that the community notices and loves the church, even if they don't agree with everything the church stands for. It is a rather simple book with a lot of personal stories and some basic, but very important, principles about missional living. If you are wanting to figure out what missional living is all about, this is a very basic introduction that excites and encourages as it teaches.

3.5 out of 5 cups of black coffee

Aaron says

My full review is available at [Blogging Theologically](#):

What does it mean for a church to be "for the city"? As humanity increasingly becomes more urbanized, this question grows in importance. Pastors Darrin Patrick and Matt Carter have spent the last several years of their ministries trying to figure out what that means and what it looks like for the church to serve the city to the glory of God. And in their new book, *For the City: Proclaiming and Living Out the Gospel*, Patrick and Carter share what they've learned along the way, both from their successes and their failures...

Brett says

The world is becoming increasingly urban – and quickly. It is easy for churches to feel overwhelmed, embattled, and confused. Rather than responding to the city by fortifying or compromising, Patrick and Carter unpack what it means to be gospel-centered churches that works for the welfare of the city (Jeremiah 29:4-9) to the glory of God (not churches simply IN, AGAINST, or OF the city, but churches FOR the city). For The City tells the stories of Patrick (Journey Church; St. Louis, MO) and Carter (Austin Stone Community Church; Austin, TX), and fleshes out some important theological-missiological emphases (e.g. contextualization, community, suffering, service, equipping, etc.) along the way. B

Brent Rosendal says

A great book. One unlike any other book I have read before. The book talks about church planting in an urban context. Unlike other books that give more of a how to on church planting, this one shares personal stories about what the author's had done and their successes. On top of that, they talk about their failures and in my opinion, this was the strongest portion of the book, although I liked the entire book. As a foreign missionary, some of the book was very American however there are many principles that are transferable to cross-cultural ministry as well. If nothing else, the book has challenged me to live and minister to make a difference for the city I live in.

Rusty Graves says

I enjoyed the book and that it was written out of their experience as planters in their respective cities.

William Mcneely says

I really loved a discussion on not just the why, but the HOW TO, reach the city. To not be a church that is either against the city, of the city, in the city, but rather FOR THE CITY. The honesty of the authors failures was a sobering warning of the hardships of the pastorate. But also encouragement that although many things are out of your control as a pastor, God is the one who will sustain you and will not only teach, but discipline and train to be the pastor who isn't self-sufficient but who depends on the Lord. That last chapter on Jonah was also awesome! Never had thought of it that way.

Gregory says

This is a fantastic book. It is practical, readable, and very honest. Matt and Darrin have made plenty of mistakes in their respective ministry journeys, and they share these honestly, as well as the lessons they've learned. The stories of their lives, and of the two churches they now lead, is very encouraging. Matt and Darrin are well-grounded, in the Reformed Baptist tradition, but they know how to make the never-changing Gospel relevant to the people in the cities they serve. Another must-read on practical ministry in a long line of helpful publications from Zondervan!

Adam Lockhart says

Many books on church planting or even ministry in general are laid out with "do this" steps that aren't always useful in every context. This book breaks that mold. While using personal stories and examples Carter and Patrick do an excellent job of laying out high level strategies. Instead of insisting that their exact actions are "right" for all churches they ask questions that force us to wrestle with the big picture which is essentially this "How will be a church that if we closed our doors tomorrow the city would mourn?" That foundational question combines with Scripture, logic, and many other questions to create a book that those who seriously want to influence their community for Christ should read.

Luis Alexandre Ribeiro Branco says

I brought this book after reading the Darrin's book about the church planter, which I liked a lot. This book helps us think in different ways of being effective as a church for the city. It carries a bit of pastoral advice, evangelism ideas and urban theology. Nevertheless it is a book mainly based in a way the churches and the cities in America are based. Very different from the European way. It also carries a lot of the American pragmatism and most of the culture in Europe doesn't work pragmatically. The book is good as long as we are aware of those points.

Jared Totten says

"If your church closed its doors tomorrow, would your city even know it was gone?"

Church planting and community transformation are both hot topics in Christian print right now. For the City by Darrin Patrick and Matt Carter lies at the intersection of those two topics. However, the book grows out of the blood, sweat, and passion of two churches and pastors and is anything but opportunistic. Indeed it is a passionate plea to the body of Christ to live lives changed by the gospel that engage the city around them.

The book opens with three chapters (Part 1: A Tale of Two Cities) detailing the infancy of the two churches in Austin, TX and St. Louis, MO. While these chapters are light on practical application, it serves to emphasize the importance of knowing your city if you are to reach your city.

The remainder of the book (Part 2: In and For the City) lays out some of the central components to a church that will reach its city: contextualization, community, service, equipping, and suffering. These characteristics are fleshed out by personal accounts from the two churches—to mixed results. While some of the stories help give "handles" to these ideas, some of the other stories consume almost the entire chapter and leave very little space for further instruction. However, the book truly hits stride in the last three chapters ("Suffering", "Confessions", and "Conclusion: Live Like Jonah") and gospel rightly takes front and center in these humble and hopeful pieces.

In the end, For the City is a solid book by two pastors who are passionate about the gospel and what the gospel can do for their cities—and for yours.

Bj Stricklin says

This book is an essential read for any church leaders who are wrestling with the tensions of attractional church, missional movements, etc etc etc.

Matt Carter and Darrin Patrick put some very real, down-to-earth skin on what it means to create "missional communities" in our churches... groups of people who are committed to living out the gospel in the context that they live in. This is not just a book about theory. It's an honest reflection from two war-torn pastors who have led their churches to engage the needs of their cities with the hope that Jesus can bring! One of the beautiful things about this book is the diversity of the two cities where the churches are located... St. Louis and Austin. This helps the reader really contextualize how this fits into their own setting.

Personally, I found the chapters written by Matt Carter to be more helpful, but I think that has more to do with the context I find myself in. Patrick's selections are much more philosophical in nature and provide the groundwork for some of the more pragmatic points that Carter has to offer.

Great and easy read. And like all good books... leaves you with more questions to answer at the end!

Worth a read for any church leader, especially those who are finding the typical "small group" model to be found unfulfilling.

Jon says

gospel-centered overview of urban focused planting work.

humbly presented stories of God's grace fruitful times and lean times...including areas of chastening and discipline.

left me with a desire to reach into the needy areas of my community capitalizing on the relationships and opportunities God has already given me

clear discussion of contextualization with helpful real-life stories of over-contextualizaion and under-contextualizaion.

analysis of in-the-city, against-the-city, of-the-city and for-the-city church focus was convicting and insightful.

enjoyable, quick read due to solid content, impassioned pleas, and humorous and engaging stories. the authors are transparent.

communicated a contagious genuine love for urban ministry and for their cities--I would to visit these ministries!

stepped further than I would agree with into the goal of the church being the restorer of the streets of our

cities.

Ed says

The reviews looked phenomenal, and the goals were heart-warming, but in the end, it was more about two guys who started pastor led churches. They talked of successes and failures, but very little of disciple making and reproducing.

Kevin says

Being familiar with the Austin Stone church, I decided to read a book by one of its pastors. For the City talks about a lot of themes that the church talks about in weekly sermons, and advocates through different programs. The two authors (the other, Darrin Patrick, is a pastor in St. Louis) take turns authoring chapters, talking about how each church tries to connect with the local community. Much of what Matt Carter from the Austin Stone was writing was pretty familiar to me, but I thought it was interesting to hear his comments along with the fairly similar comments about St. Louis from Patrick.

One thing they touched upon was serving neighborhoods that had been neglected, or that were not in the best part of town. Both sought to connect people with others in their city, and try to bridge socioeconomic gaps. “Something a professor said in a seminary class was like a burr in my saddle. He said, ‘I find it interesting that the Holy Spirit continues to lead young church planters to rich white suburban areas.’” (56) In bridging these gaps, they tried to be relevant, and help contextualize the gospel. “The word contextualization basically means to consider the context – the setting and the culture – into which you are communicating your message and, if necessary, consider how you should adjust your message (without changing it) so that those to whom you are speaking are more likely to hear and accurately understand what you are saying to them.” (68) Both talked about successes and shortcomings. Patrick mentioned a few instances where he felt like they were trying so hard to connect with others, they were not as faithful to the gospel as they intended on being. “Both syncretists and sectarians fall into the trap of defining themselves by what they don’t want to be instead of what they are in the gospel. Syncretists don’t want to be offensive. Sectarians don’t want to be ‘sellouts.’ The error of both is that they leave out the gospel, which says we are offensive to God because of sin, but that Christ has come to redeem those [who] are sinful.” (81) I appreciated the honesty that both people spoke with about their shortcomings, and the lessons they had learned along the way.

Both are into getting people connected with their community, and having groups with Christian community. “In losing Charles he [C.S. Lewis] lost that part of Ronald that only Charles could bring out. Lewis writes, ‘No one human being can bring out all of another person, but it takes a whole circle of human beings (community) to extract the real you.’” (90) They also encouraged serving the community. I thought a great example was giving a helping hand to the less fortunate around Christmas. “I noticed that the kids, moms, and grandmas were ecstatic – smiling, laughing, crying, the whole nine yards. But the dads, if they were even there, did their best to sneak out the back door...’ While charity was helpful in providing a decent Christmas for lots of kids, it was terrible at building up and empowering the family – and the men and fathers in particular.” (107) I really like that idea – striving to help but also to empower. It’s good to empower the parents because they are the ones that will be there day in and day out. I also liked the part when Carter talked about how he initially wasn’t in a great position to be able to connect with people because he had not suffered much in his life. Through the loss of loved ones and his own cancer, he gained a greater level of

empathy and can now connect better with others because of his own hardships

They talked at length about lessons learned through starting a church. I thought it was interesting to hear both talk about how they were so dedicated to their role, that they felt that the ends justified the means. They would sometimes not be as gracious to those around them because they were so focused on the fact they were doing it for God, that it didn't matter to them as much how every interaction went. Carter mentioned that he sometimes perceived people who did not work until they were on the brink of exhaustion as wimps. "The mission can unwittingly become nothing more than God-talk that justifies our slavish devotion to the idols of approval and success." (162)

Overall, I thought this book had some interesting parts, but a lot of it was stuff I had heard before. It's hard to gauge how I would like it without much previous exposure. One slight criticism here is that sometimes a person's primary medium is the written word, and others mostly speak. The authors of the book seem like they primarily speak, and that it would be more powerful as an impassioned sermon, but they don't employ language in the same way an author would – writing is probably not their best medium. I thought the book was fine, but did not really feel that inspired or convicted from it. There were a few interesting stories, but it lacked a certain level of cohesiveness to tie it all together. It's also quite short, and doesn't have space to really deeply dive into the ideas and more fully explore them. I would say this book is decent, and provides some insight into how two churches in different places have reached out to their communities, exploring the similarities and differences in methods. It didn't really change my perspective too much, and was not as inspiring as I hoped it might be.
