

LIBRARY

VOCATIONAL STEWARDSHIP
FOR THE COMMON GOOD

K I N G D O M


C A L L I N G

Amy L. Sherman

Foreword by Reggie McNeal

Afterword by Steven Garber

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What Does a Rejoiced City Look Like?

The citizens of God's city are the best possible citizens of their earthly cities.

REV. TIM KELLER

If the missional call of the church is to "rejoice" our cities by offering our neighbors foretastes of kingdom realities, we need to understand what the Scriptures tell us about the coming kingdom. Congregational leaders need to know the marks of the kingdom—its characteristics, features, purposes and virtues. Then they need to preach and teach on these kingdom marks, helping their congregants catch a vision for what a rejoiced city looks like. Church members then have direction for strategically deploying their God-given vocational power to advance those kingdom expressions.

One helpful way of identifying these kingdom features is to examine closely the "preview" passages in the Bible. Pop a movie into your DVD player, and you'll first see previews of coming attractions. Similarly, throughout the Bible are previews of the coming "feature film": the kingdom of God in all its consummated fullness. These texts offer us glimpses into what life will be like in the new heavens and new earth.

Jesus used a preview passage (Is 61:1-2) when he stood up in a Nazarene synagogue and announced his mission on earth. Many believers are familiar with preview passages like Isaiah 11:6 ("the wolf will live with the lamb") and Micah 4:3 ("they will beat their swords into plowshares") be-

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cause these are commonly read during Advent. Many other preview passages, however, are less familiar.

A comprehensive study of all the preview passages is beyond the scope of this book. However, we can launch an initial excavation based on a collection of preview passages.¹ These offer us a clear view of the characteristics of the consummated kingdom. Preeminently, the preview passages reveal that the consummated kingdom is marked by two major, closely related features: justice and shalom. A rejoiced city, therefore, is one where ever-greater tastes of justice and shalom are made real.

Both concepts are massive. Using a couple of shorthand organizing schemes, I'll examine several specific dimensions of justice and shalom. Along the way, we'll meet Christians who are nurturing those aspects of justice and shalom through their work. My hope is that this material provides fodder for sermons and illustrations as church leaders seek to inspire their flock to catch a vision of being the *tsaddiqim* who rejoice the city.

JUSTICE

The latter half of Proverbs 11:10 draws our attention to the vital place of justice in rejoicing the city. The full verse reads, "When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy."

Readers familiar with Old Testament study recognize a structure here common to much Hebrew poetry: parallelism. Essentially, the poet says the same thing twice in a verse, using two slightly different constructions. In Proverbs 11:10, there is a connection between the "righteous prospering" on the one hand, and the "wicked perishing" on the other. Notice that both events—the righteous prospering and the wicked perishing—produce the same reaction: wild rejoicing. Jubilation arises when the wicked—who are described over and over in the Old Testament as doers of injustice and inequity—are cast down and replaced by the *tsaddiqim*, the doers of justice.

When the righteous prosper, justice prevails. The *tsaddiqim* seek to bring into reality three dimensions of justice that mark the consummated kingdom.² These are presented in figure 1.1. We'll look at each in turn.

Rescue. The consummated kingdom is marked by the end of all oppression. In it, the poor, the innocent and the helpless will be rescued from all the grim realities they face at the hands of violent oppressors. Psalm 10

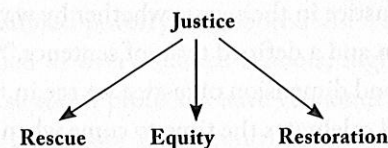


Figure 1.1. Three dimensions of justice

paints a terrifying picture of these realities, noting how the wicked person "hunts down the weak" and "lies in wait like a lion in cover" to attack and drag off the poor. The prophet laments in Isaiah 5:23 that the wicked "acquit the guilty for a bribe but deny justice to the innocent" and that they are "swift to shed innocent blood" (Is 59:7). Under the wicked, the social order is bankrupt and the people feel hopeless: "Justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We look for light, but all is darkness; for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows" (Is 59:9).

The work of rescue is about remedying these sorts of violent injustice. It involves identifying, exposing and transforming situations where there is an abuse of power, typically perpetuated through coercion and deception. It means bringing about the kinds of foretastes of justice celebrated in Isaiah 62:8-9 (ending bonded labor) and Isaiah 61:1 (freeing the illegally detained from their dark prisons).³

British solicitor Matthew Price has deployed his vocational talents to affect these kinds of rescue. For two years, Matthew and his wife and baby boy made their home Kampala, Uganda, serving the cause of justice on a short-term assignment through a British mission agency, BMS World Mission. There Matthew came alongside the Ugandan Christian Law Fellowship (UCLF), mentoring paralegals and law-school students to train them in "maintain[ing] justice in the courts" (Amos 5:15). Under his supervision, the students reached out to prisoners, many of whom were victims of illegal detention. They were not served due process of law and had languished in overcrowded jails for months, not even knowing what crimes they were charged with.

Matthew and his team visited police stations and jail cells to advise prisoners of their rights under Ugandan law. By the end of his first year, Matthew and the UCLF lawyers had offered representation to more than 260 prisoners, and nearly two hundred of their cases were completed. He explains, "Through the intervention of Christian lawyers these prisoners

have finally tasted justice in their case, whether by way of an acquittal and release or conviction and a defined term of sentence.”⁴

Equity. The second dimension of justice we see in the preview passages is equity. Isaiah 11:4 celebrates the time to come when the King will righteously “judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth” (ASV). Jeremiah looks forward with similar anticipation: “‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will grow a righteous branch for David. He will be a king who will rule wisely. He will do what is fair and right in the land’” (Jer 23:5 God’s Word Translation).

Other prophets also celebrate the equitable relations that will characterize life in the new heavens and new earth. In Isaiah we learn no more scoundrels will be in power, defrauding the needy (Is 32:5-8). Ezekiel prophesies that there will be no one who plunders the weak (Ezek 34:17-22).

Equity is not a simple word to define. It denotes fairness and impartiality. Equity is about ensuring that the poor and weak are not disproportionately burdened by society’s common problems. It is about promoting public policies that do not favor the rich over the poor but treat people equally. It is about avoiding policies that unfairly burden the poor and weak.

Equity is somewhat easier to describe than to define. Consider, for example, the process of seeking equitable solutions to the challenge of providing affordable housing in a community. Such housing has to be constructed, and that requires money. Decisions have to be made about where to locate the units. Those decisions entail costs. To oversimplify for the purposes of illustration, in light of this societal challenge, two possible paths could be pursued. One involves concentrating the building and placement of affordable housing in poor, politically weak communities such as inner-city neighborhoods. We might label this approach “concentrating the burden.” The other path involves distributing the cost of building the housing over a wide region and spreading those units across many different neighborhoods. We might label this approach “sharing the burden.”

In many cities, the first path is taken—largely as a result of NIMBYism (“Not In My Back Yard”). Better-off citizens in suburban municipalities don’t want such housing to be built in their neighborhoods, out of fears about crime or depressed property values. Since the economically well off are typically also well connected politically, affordable housing often gets built only in already depressed areas of an inner city. This creates what

scholars call “concentrated poverty neighborhoods.”⁵ And that brings attendant problems such as overwhelmed schools, higher crime rates and social isolation. These social problems have economic costs (for example, it is harder to start businesses in concentrated poverty neighborhoods). This approach also financially squeezes the municipalities where concentrated poverty neighborhoods exist. They have to spend more money on law enforcement and social welfare programs while having less revenue from property and business taxes.

The second path is the more equitable approach. In this scenario, the costs for constructing housing are shared across a metropolitan region, and the housing units are scattered throughout the area to avoid creating concentrated poverty neighborhoods. This is a more difficult approach to put into practice politically, but it has been implemented in places where persevering citizens demanded it.

Lobbyist Rich Nymoen played a role in a successful faith-based campaign to pursue just this approach to the affordable housing issue in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota back in the mid-1990s.⁶ He was a new attorney from the University of Minnesota Law School. His decision to get involved in the effort was prompted in part by his embrace of the concept of metropolitan equity. He’d learned of this idea through an adjunct professor at the university, Myron Orfield, who was also a state legislator at the time.⁷

Orfield was pushing a variety of legislative initiatives, including one called “fair share” housing. The approach was attractive to Nymoen as it emphasized that “we’re all in this together.” It called for a regional approach to share the costs of constructing affordable housing.

Nymoen began working with a coalition of congregations and nonprofits that eventually was named ISALAH. It first led a successful campaign to heavily increase state funding for affordable housing. Then it began promoting the idea of inclusionary housing—scattering affordable housing in mixed-income developments to avoid the problems of concentrated poverty.

This battle to promote equity wasn’t easy, and it took three years. In the end, decisions about affordable housing were placed into the hands of a seven-county metropolitan council. The council members negotiate housing goals (such as the number of units to build and where they would be

located). Each county contributes financially to the regional housing fund, instead of that burden being borne by the city of Minneapolis alone.

Restoration. The third dimension of biblical justice we see in the grand story of creation/Fall/redemption/consummation concerns restoration.

In the Bible, justice is a relational concept, not simply an abstract legal concept. That is to say, biblical justice is not solely concerned with the punishment of wrongdoing, but with the healing of wrongdoers and their restoration to the community. Justice and salvation are linked concepts. As one scholar put it, "The justice of God is all about restoring wholeness in relationships—with God and with other human beings."⁸

Much of Zechariah 8 is a preview passage, and two verses speak of God's restorative justice (Zech 8:16-17). The Israelites have committed grave offenses against God. They have acted unjustly, failing to render just judgments in the courts, swearing falsely and plotting evil against their neighbors. God's response is not only punitive but also corrective. The text recalls God's judgment, but God promises forgiveness and a restoration of the relationship, and then reminds the people not to repeat their former sins.

In a rejoiced city, the criminal justice system includes this notion of restorative justice, as opposed to focusing exclusively on retributive justice. Certainly it calls offenders to account, yet it also seeks to address the *harm* of the crime, not just the legal offense against the state. It takes the victim seriously and seeks the reinstatement of the offender into the social fabric when possible. Recognizing that crime is about harm to human relationships, it seeks reconciliation of those relationships to the greatest degree possible.⁹

The restorative justice movement has had some success in infiltrating criminal justice systems in the United States and abroad. The system in Genesee County, New York, is one of them. There a sheriff named Doug Call and a longtime public servant named Dennis Wittman worked together to incorporate key principles of restorative justice into the way the county prosecuted nonviolent offenders. The initiative became known as Genesee Justice.

By the late 1970s, Call had deepened his faith by attending seminary and become convinced that true justice was not always served under the prevailing system. He recalled a case in which a young woman lost both

legs in an accident caused by a twenty-year-old man. The young man was sentenced to one year in jail. At the end of the year, he moved to nearby Rochester and took a good-paying job. The victim, meanwhile, was left legless and in debt because of medical bills.

"The system broke down in her case," says Call. "We didn't make him [the offender] constructively responsible for his crime."¹⁰ Call felt it was time to try a different approach. The more he talked about it, the more his friends urged him to run for the office of county sheriff. He did, winning that post in 1980.

Early on, Sheriff Call hired former fellow seminarian Dennis Wittman, who was then serving as a town supervisor in the area. Call asked Wittman to establish a new sentencing program requiring community service for nonviolent offenders. Call wanted offenders to do some good for the community rather than just sit in jail, being a drain on taxpayer dollars. Over the next twenty-five years, Wittman tirelessly implemented the program. When he retired in 2006, nearly five thousand offenders had performed more than 350,000 hours of unpaid work in Genesee County.

The two men were pleased with the program but felt Genesee Justice also needed to do more to attend to crime victims. Over the years, they implemented several new initiatives. One involved partnering with the local faith community to provide practical assistance to victims, such as home repairs in cases of robbery. Another brought changes to sentencing procedures whereby victims were permitted to offer "impact statements" about the harm they had suffered. A third was a reconciliation program bringing victims and offenders together face-to-face in mediated conversations. Wittman says, "Wherever there was a gap in the justice system we tried to fill it."¹¹

SHALOM

A rejoiced city is marked by the three dimensions of justice noted above: rescue, equity and restoration. It is also a place where justice's twin sister, shalom, is evident in increasing measure.

Theologian Cornelius Plantinga Jr. defines *shalom* as "the webbing together of God, humans, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and delight. . . . We call it peace, but it means far more than mere peace of mind

or cease-fire among enemies. In the Bible shalom means *universal flourishing, wholeness, and delight*.¹²

The consummated kingdom is characterized by shalom in the four fundamental relationships of life: peace with God, peace with self, peace with others and peace with the creation. Several of the characteristic marks of the kingdom can be loosely organized under those four headings, as depicted in table 1.2.¹³ I say “loosely” organized because some kingdom values, such as beauty or wholeness, could fit under more than one heading. But this schematic offers us a starting point for constructing a robust understanding of the dimensions of shalom. Let’s look at each in detail.

Table 1.2. Marks of the Consummated Kingdom

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>Peace with God</i> Intimacy with God Beauty <i>peace with god</i> | <i>Peace with Self</i> Health/Wholeness Hope Comfort <i>social capital</i> |
| <i>Peace with Others</i> Unity Security/Lack of Violence | <i>Peace with the Creation</i> Economic flourishing Sustainability <i>cannot profitably sustain</i> |

PEACE WITH GOD

Intimacy with God. At the center of our joy in the consummated kingdom will be our intimate relationship with God. As Zephaniah exulted, we will “sing,” “shout aloud” and “be glad” because the Lord will be *with* us. The awesome Creator of all will “rejoice over [us] with singing” and “take great delight” in us (Zeph 3:14-20). We will see him “face to face” (1 Cor 13:12).

With this great hope before us, an essential part of our mission now is introducing people to a personal relationship with God. Evangelism that leads people to follow Jesus offers new believers a foretaste of the intimacy with God they will one day experience for eternity. Many of us have opportunities to do evangelism through our work-based relationships.

Stanley Tam is an excellent example. He’s been running thriving businesses since the 1930s. He legally incorporated one firm, United States Plastic Corporation, so that God was a 51-percent shareholder. The company has made over 120 million dollars. Tam sends millions of that to support evangelistic ministries worldwide. He reports that through such groups, some 140,000 people have made decisions for Christ.

But Tam doesn’t just write checks so others can do the work. He’s an evangelist himself. He “retired” a few years back and opened a small furniture-making store. On its front door, he hung a sign: “Are you seeking peace? Come in for a free Bible.” It has led to many interesting conversations.

Heisman trophy winner Danny Wuerffel seized opportunities he had to share his faith during his first “real” job after college—as a professional football player for the New Orleans Saints. He recalls expecting to be ridiculed in the locker room for his faith, but he found that the opposite happened. In the highly competitive and stressful world of professional sports, Danny’s pastoral heart and manner were attractive. The environment “created a lot of ministry opportunities where people actually came to me asking some really neat questions,” he explains.¹⁴

Additionally, in his first year with the Saints, Danny and a fellow team member started an *Our Daily Bread* club:

We’d challenge people to read *Our Daily Bread* [a monthly devotional booklet with short, daily readings] each morning, and you had to remember what it was about. And if anyone asked you and you didn’t know, you had to put a dollar in the pot. And I thought we’d get maybe five or six guys, but we ended up with fifty-six players and coaches that year.

Danny established similar clubs in the other pro teams he played on. His years as a quarterback offered, as he says, “a pretty great opportunity to share who I was and to share my faith and how that could connect in the world of the NFL.”

Beauty. In the new earth, nature’s comeliness will reach its pinnacle; the wilderness itself will burst into blossom, and streams will gush in the desert (Is 35). To complement all this natural beauty, human culture will flourish. All the great creativity of humankind—artistry in music, dance, painting, woodcrafts, sculpture, architecture and more—will be brought into the New Jerusalem (Is 60).

God is the source of all beauty and creativity. Artists, musicians, sculptors, writers, actors and dancers can lead people into *worship* of this God. Artistic talent can connect us to that transcendent beauty; it has a “vertical” purpose.¹⁵

Artists Jessie Nilo and Lisa Marten from Boise Vineyard Church in Idaho have brought beauty to many. Jessie, a graphic designer and illustrator, launched VineArts at the church in 2004. Her group of twenty profes-

sional and emerging artists deployed their talents to create spaces in the church building for worship prompted by beauty. Jessie felt there had been nothing “visually moving” at the church facility to complement the Vineyard’s spiritually rich teaching. So VineArts painted murals on the walls. It also created a gallery at the church, with artwork from a variety of media, where congregants could spend quiet time. “I really wanted it to be about worship and contemplation,” Jessie explains.¹⁶

One day the Vineyard’s missions pastor suggested to Jessie the possibility of an arts-oriented short-term mission trip abroad. He’d told his Ecuadorian pastor friend about how VineArts was enriching the worship life of the Boise congregation, and that pastor asked if some artists would come to his church. In June 2010, five artists from Boise Vineyard traveled to Quito to serve Iglesia la Viña.

The highlight of the trip was a special morning of worship and arts facilitated by the team. In the worship room, they set up several large canvases alongside small tables with paint supplies. “The pastor explained to them that this was a morning where all forms of worship, including our creativity, would be brought,” Lisa says.¹⁷ While the musicians played worship songs, congregants could get up and paint on the canvases to express their hearts to God. “It seemed to involve all the senses at once,” Jessie recalls. “They came up with some beautiful imagery—around themes of redemption and transformation and living water.” On that Sunday morning, God met his worshipers in a moving way as they spoke to him through a new, visual language, thanks to artists using their vocation for the kingdom.

PEACE WITH SELF

Health/wholeness. How wonderful it will be in the age to come when we enjoy freedom from the decay of our bodies. In the consummated kingdom, there will be no more blindness or deafness (Is 32:3-4). The “lame will leap like the deer” (Is 35:6). There will be no more sickness of body or mind or spirit (Is 65:19).

Jesus’ earthly ministry showed him ever attentive to the sick. Time and again, he snatched foretastes of the coming kingdom and granted sufferers healing and relief. Today we continue to represent him as we build medical clinics and hospitals, create new distribution channels to get pre-

scription medicines where they are needed, advocate for adequate access to health care for all who need it and conduct research into new health-care technologies.

As a primary care physician in a small private practice, Dr. Andy Macfarlan reports that his faith motivates him to take a very holistic approach to patient care. He believes that God has created human beings in such a way that the spiritual, emotional and physical all intertwine. When doctors attend to patients with resources for all these arenas, he says, the patient gets the best possible care. To him, this is what it looks like to advance the kingdom value of wholeness.

This approach requires a deep commitment to relationships. Andy’s conviction that “the purpose of life is about love relationships with God, self, others and the environment” motivated his desire to go into primary care medicine.¹⁸ He also never wanted to work in a big practice, because time with patients might be compromised. Andy measures success in terms of not only providing the most excellent and competent health care, but also delivering it in a way that deeply respects patients. For him, a huge part of the definition of success is having patients “go out of [here] saying, ‘I was listened to; I was given enough time. They respected me.’”

Out of respect for his elderly patients, Andy has sponsored special luncheons in his home for those over age seventy. “I want to celebrate the gifts they have given me in my practice over the years,” he explains. His relationships with his senior patients have deepened his spiritual life. “These are the people who have a long-term perspective on what it means to have a relationship with God and know where God is in their life and how important that is over time,” he says.

Andy’s desire for patients to be served with dignity through a long-lasting relationship with a primary doctor has motivated him to launch a new initiative in his city. A free clinic there serves the working poor who lack health insurance, but they rarely see the same doctor. So Andy founded the Physicians Partnership Network (PPN). Through it, doctors coordinate pro bono care for patients who meet certain eligibility requirements. Each doctor agrees to take on a certain number of patients through PPN and serve them at their own offices. The free clinic then handles paperwork and provides liability coverage for participating doctors. Although PPN began in late 2010, Andy had already recruited thirty-six

doctors who were seeing about 250 patients through the program as of early 2011.

Hope. There is a way in which all the preview passages are about hope. All make promises about what the glorious future life in the new heavens and new earth will be like. They speak to us in the midst of our pain and assure us that none who hope in the Lord will be disappointed. We learn that God will set “the lonely in families” (Ps 68:6), and he will heal the barren (Ps 113:9). Because of God’s goodness, faithfulness and justice, the islands will put their hope in his law (Is 42:3-4). In the new creation, all our hopes—for change, for healing, for renewal, for reunion, for resurrection—will be fulfilled.

Offering hope to those who feel hopeless is kingdom work. Through their work as urban gardeners, Mark and Courtney Williams are nurturing hope in their distressed neighborhood in inner-city Pittsburgh.

Courtney grew up in rural Kentucky, where farming was “very much a part of the culture I knew,” she says.¹⁹ After graduating from Wheaton College, she worked at Grow Pittsburgh, “an urban agricultural organization that grew vegetables for high-end restaurants and worked with teenagers from troubled neighborhoods.” There she honed her gardening skills and gained knowledge in health and nutrition. When her husband’s non-profit employer decided to launch a summer urban-gardening initiative, they hired Courtney as coordinator. The program was such a hit that the job became full time.

Today she and Mark oversee the three Lots of Hope gardens. One emerged from a long-standing community eyesore: an abandoned baseball field that had been “waist-high with weeds and bushes and garbage.” Middle-school students of the neighborhood cleaned up the trash, turned the sod and planted seeds. The theme verse for the project, Mark explains, is Genesis 2:15: “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”²⁰

Life isn’t the way it ought to be for these kids, Mark says. They suffer because of abuse, family members with addictions, discrimination and poverty. But as they work to turn the vacant lot into a thing of beauty and health, they accomplish “one small step towards making this neighborhood like it’s supposed to be.”²¹

The Lots of Hope name came about because of the transformation

Courtney and Mark witnessed among the middle-school students involved in the program. As Mark reports:

The pre- and post-test was just a one-question survey. We said, “Do you believe it’s possible for our neighborhood to change?” Without fail, all the kids said no. At the end of our semester, [the survey] said, “Do you believe it’s possible for our neighborhood to change?” All of them said yes.²²

Comfort. God cares about the wounded in spirit. Rich in compassion, he comes with “comfort speedy.”²³ His comfort is expressed in multiple metaphors in Isaiah 54—of those rejected and abandoned who experience embrace; of the disgraced and humiliated who receive new dignity and healing; of the widow who experiences the Lord himself as husband.

Presence with the grieving, counseling for the afflicted—these are kingdom works. Our efforts to uncover the mysteries of mental illness, our therapy programs to heal the sexually abused and emotionally traumatized, our work in all kinds of counseling centers and rehabilitation camps, and our faithful visitation ministries to shut-ins and those in nursing homes—all these are expressions of kingdom priorities.

Nurse Susan Beeney works daily to bring comfort to the grieving through New Hope Grief Support. New Hope runs some thirty weekly grief groups, provides grief counselors in public schools and partners with the U.S. military in reaching out to grieving families of soldiers killed in action. Most uniquely, in 2003 Beeney’s organization created New Hope Kids Camp—the only camp of its kind in the nation. Each camp provides fifteen grieving children between the ages of five and eighteen with the priceless gift of time away, listening ears, group therapy sessions, art, games, pet therapy, a mobile marine museum and nature activities. “The camps are small in number, but they are huge in the effect,” Beeney reports.²⁴

PEACE WITH OTHERS

Unity. In the consummated kingdom, we will experience deeper, richer, more satisfying community with other people. Isaiah 25:6-9 paints a picture of the great feast God himself will prepare for “all peoples.” In the new earth, we will experience peace and harmony as members from every “nation, tribe, people and language” join in common worship of King Jesus (Rev 7:9-20).

Today our efforts to encourage racial reconciliation and build diversity and crosscultural sensitivity advance this kingdom foretaste of unity. In the multiracial village of South Holland, Illinois, Mayor Don De Graff has made the promotion of unity a major theme throughout his many years on the job.

Fifty years ago, South Holland was a mostly white, historically Dutch community. In 1990, the population was 86 percent white.²⁵ Today De Graff reports that the town is 72 percent African Americans, 23 to 24 percent Caucasians, 3 to 4 percent Hispanics and 1 to 2 percent Asians.²⁶

To break down the barriers among these diverse groups, De Graff has promoted CommUNITY dinners. As the Village of South Holland website explains, "The main goal of CommUNITY Dinners is to foster positive discussions between people with differences in a relaxed and enjoyable setting. This helps members of the community get to know one another in a positive setting."²⁷ Several dinners are sponsored throughout the year. "The churches, the business association and the schools all promote these community dinners," De Graff reports. "At these meetings [we have] opportunity to talk about this broader concept of 'How do we live in a community together? What makes us tick? What makes us special and unique?'"

The mayor also strongly encourages neighborhoods to hold block parties. "We provided resources for that, which include food, fire engines, police, park benches . . . all in an effort to try and bring people together." He's found that such social events can jump-start new friendships between neighbors and catalyze the development of new neighborhood associations.

In a multiethnic community, there is a risk of prejudice between racial groups, prejudices that can be expressed in housing discrimination. De Graff works intentionally with the local realtors association to "keep close tabs on our housing situation." The association provides him with "stats as to the length of time it [takes] to sell a house, the average prices, and [we watch for] abuses or red-lining, or any illegal, unethical activities."

In South Holland, De Graff says proudly, "we have virtually broken down the walls that typically divide people. And the reason is because we make an honest and intentional intent, day in and day out, month in and month out, to address those head on. We are very proactive."

Security/lack of violence. One day, God will cause all wars to cease (Ps 46:9). In the new heavens and new earth, swords will be remade into plowshares (Mic 4:3). Nations will no longer take up arms against one another. The day of violence will be eternally ended, and God's people will enjoy perfect security. As Ezekiel put it beautifully, we will be secure in our land and live in safety, and no one will make us afraid (Ezek 34:27-28).

Today diplomacy to prevent and end warfare, and efforts to protect public safety, to nurture forgiveness and healing between former enemies and to reduce violence (for example, through educational programs, mentoring or therapy) all help to nurture foretastes of the peace that awaits us in the age to come.

In Uganda, God has used a veterinarian to promote a foretaste of security. Dr. Val Shean, a member of Christian Veterinary Mission, has been serving in the Karamoja region of northeastern Uganda since 1992. Tribes there have a decades-long legacy of warring over cattle. Things intensified in the late 1970s with the introduction of automatic weapons to the region. "Since 1979 we have had fighting, fighting, fighting in this land, from one corner to the next," Shean says.²⁸ A small cattle raid by one side leads to retaliation, and then the violence escalates. "Sometimes hundreds of people would come with machine guns, descending upon small villages," she says.

In spring 2009, though, a small miracle unfolded. More than six thousand Karamojong people were peacefully resettled in over sixty villages. These were members of the Pian and Bokora subtribes who had been killing each other. The peace accord was a direct result of Shean's labors.

Among the "cattle-obsessed" Karamojong people, Shean was highly regarded. Her professional prowess as a veterinarian earned her respect and friendships with leaders on both the Pian and Bokora sides. Having gained their trust, she used her influence to urge them to stop the bloodshed. She convinced leaders to study biblical principles of reconciliation.

Drawing on her networks, Shean brought a team of mature Christian men from Oregon to Uganda to teach on reconciliation using Ken Sande's book *The Peacemaker*. In winter 2007, she and this team spent two weeks teaching sixty influential elders and pastors, warriors and women from each subtribe. Though they needed to adapt Sande's book to the African context, the biblical principles of peacemaking took hold, bringing revival

and repentance among the people.²⁹ In subsequent months, more than 2,500 people from the Pian and Bokoro groups completed the training.³⁰ In November 2007, representatives from each tribe met for a breakthrough peace council.

PEACE WITH THE CREATION

Economic flourishing. The new heaven and new earth will be a place of economic bounty. All people will have access to the resources needed for their economic well-being. Every person will rest secure under his or her own vine and fig tree (Mic 4:4) and enjoy the fruits of his or her labors (Is 65:22). All will have shelter (Is 65:21). Prosperity will reign as God lavishly provides food: "In that day the mountains will drip new wine, and the hills will flow with milk" (Joel 3:18). Hunger will be no more (Is 49:10).

Believers advance foretastes of the kingdom when they devote themselves to the great work of relief and development; to hunger alleviation; to microenterprise; to sustainable agriculture; to efforts to find new ways to provide everyone with adequate shelter and clean water; and to advocacy for the rule of law so that just, free enterprise can flourish.

Diversified Conveyors Inc. (DCI), owned by Tom and Beth Phillips, is bringing unique economic benefits to Memphis—and beyond. The company has become a leading manufacturer of conveyor systems for such giants as UPS and FedEx. It employs thirty-five individuals in the Memphis headquarters and many more in field offices.

From the beginning, the Phillipses envisioned their firm as a "beyond-profit" company. "Because of what Christ has done for us, how can we not bless others?" they reason.³¹ DCI partners with Advance Memphis, a Christian nonprofit that runs job training classes for residents of the Cleaborn/Foote neighborhood (the nation's third-poorest ZIP code). Residents graduating from Advance Memphis have secured jobs at DCI. The Phillipses have also created scholarship funds out of the company's profits that assist residents of Cleaborn/Foote to enroll in a vocational training school or earn a bachelor's degree in college.³²

Not only this, but the Phillipses recently hired a full-time missions coordinator.³³ Their company may be the only for-profit corporation in the country with such a position. But with the number of partnerships DCI

forms with ministries, and the significant amount of profits it earmarks for charitable giving, wise stewardship required a full-time person in the role. Locally, DCI supports urban renewal projects, literacy initiatives, prison outreach and more. Internationally, it funds ministries doing everything from health care to microloans, with partners in Nepal, Burma, Poland, Peru, Brazil and several other far-flung nations.

Sustainability. So many of the preview passages speak of the healing of the creation itself as God restores what was once barren. Isaiah 51:3 is representative: "He will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD." God will bring streams to the desert, making the burning sands a pool and bedecking the wilderness with blooms (Is 35:1-2, 7). God loves the earth he created. He will one day set it free from its groaning. Meanwhile, we show forth his goodness and his future intentions by stewarding the creation with care.

Today human efforts to respond effectively to industrial accidents such as oil spills, to conserve rare animal species, to reclaim polluted streams and to better steward the natural world through green technologies and buildings all participate in bringing foretastes of the new earth.

Oceanographer Jorge Vazquez says he still remembers long walks with his father along the beach when he was a youngster. His dad would point out different organisms and creation's beauty. "Those long walks instilled in me a love for understanding our planet, and more importantly, the desire to make sure we are good stewards of the precious gift we call planet Earth," he says.³⁴ Today as a scientist with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, Vazquez works to improve the quality of sea-surface temperature data, an important element in the quest to understand and monitor global warming.³⁵

CONCLUSION: TEACHING THE PREVIEW PASSAGES

The preview passages we've examined here are beautiful, inspiring and hopeful. Missional leaders can use them to cast vision powerfully among their congregants for the work of rejoicing the city through vocational stewardship. In closing, though, note that it is important to help congregants avoid two extremes as they listen to this sort of preaching.

On the one hand, some parishioners might wrongly assume that they (or the church) can "just do it." That is, they may vastly underestimate

what it takes to usher in these foretastes of justice and shalom. They may fail to rely sufficiently on Jesus and the Spirit. While the preview passages permit us a big God-sized vision for our labors and our hopes, there is a danger of them encouraging Utopianism. The kingdom of justice and shalom will arrive in its fullness only at the return of the King. And only in the King's power—and by *his* wisdom and guidance—will we make progress in transforming our communities.

On the other hand, we must not allow parishioners to believe that, because the *full* vision of the preview passages won't be realized until the "age to come," we don't need to do anything now. It's certainly true that we are waiting for the kingdom's full consummation at Jesus' return. But while we wait, it is the task of the church—Christ's body—to enact and embody foretastes of the coming realities of that kingdom. We as Jesus' disciples have the amazing privilege of participating in his work of restoration. Indeed, joining him in this work constitutes the very center of our redeemed lives.

To put it succinctly, we need to remember that the kingdom of God is both *now* and *not yet*.

Preaching on the preview passages directs believers' gaze toward the "life of the world to come." That phrase is from the final sentence of the Nicene Creed, which many Christians recite weekly in their congregations.³⁶ Despite such creedal recitations—and the frequent injunctions of the New Testament to fix our eyes on that which is eternal³⁷—many churchgoers are not regularly looking in that direction. Many believers are distracted easily by the cares, temptations and idols of this world. Few have a clear vision for enacting and embodying kingdom foretastes. Consequently, parishioners need regular reminders about the beautiful world that is to come as well as exhortations to live *now* in ways that correspond to those hopes. Preaching the preview passages enables pastors to remind congregants that Jesus is on the move to enact these realities—and is calling us all to join him in his works of restoration.

Such preaching must then offer practical applications of what this looks like. My hope is that the pictures painted here of Christians working to advance tastes of justice and shalom help us to see what is possible and plausible in this time when Christ's kingdom is mysteriously both *now* and *not yet*.

What Do the Righteous Look Like?

When the righteous [tsaddiqim] prosper, the city rejoices.

PROVERBS 11:10

A central premise of this book is that the average middle-class (or wealthier) Christian in America has been blessed with much from God—skills, wealth, opportunity, vocational position, education, influence, networks. We are, in short, the prospering. The purpose of all these blessings is simple to state and difficult to live: we are blessed to be a blessing. Our generous heavenly Father desires us to deploy our time, talents and treasure to offer others foretastes of the coming kingdom. Those who do so are called the *tsaddiqim*, the righteous. What we saw from examples in Michael Lindsay's book, though, is that it is possible to be the prospering without being the *tsaddiqim*.

Clearly, living as the *tsaddiqim* isn't easy. It requires tremendous effort and intentionality. More importantly, it requires power from God's Holy Spirit. It also requires understanding what a *tsaddiq* looks like.

But it *is* possible.

In this chapter, we'll examine the characteristics of the righteousness of the *tsaddiqim*.¹ And, since this book is mainly about our work lives, we'll focus especially on what it means to be the *tsaddiqim* in the context of our vocations.

Notes

Introduction

¹D. Michael Lindsay, *Faith in the Halls of Power: How Evangelicals Joined the American Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 226.

²*Ibid.*, p. 192.

³*Ibid.*, p. 130.

⁴For example, Greg Newman, a San Francisco venture capitalist, has provided start-up funds for a candle company in Thailand that employs women recovering from sexual abuse. Full-time philanthropists Dennis and Eileen Bakke have established the Harvey Fellows program to encourage smart evangelicals to study at Ivy League schools. William Inboden used his positions in the upper echelons of government to craft the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. He describes himself as one who wants to shape the culture, not just follow it.

⁵Timothy J. Keller, "Creation Care and Justice," sermon delivered at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, January 16, 2005.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Shalom* is the rich Hebrew term conveying the idea of peace with God, peace with self, peace with others and peace with the created order. *Peace* here refers not simply to the absence of hostilities but to deep wholeness.

⁸I'm indebted to Rev. Jeff White of New Song Harlem Church in New York City for this insight.

⁹To be sure, Jesus also clearly taught that the kingdom is also "not yet." We wait and long in our still-broken world for its full consummation. Our efforts alone will not and cannot inaugurate it. We are permitted a big God-sized vision for our labors and our hopes, but we are not allowed Utopianism. The kingdom will arrive in fullness only at the return of the King.

¹⁰Don Simmons, president, Creative Potential Consulting and Training, telephone interview with the author, August 5, 2010.

¹¹The term is Bill Hybels's from his book *Holy Discontent: Fueling the Fire That Ignites Personal Vision* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007).

¹²I spend a disproportionate amount of time on pathway one, "Bloom Where You're Planted," because it is the most important and most common expression of vocational stewardship. It's also the pathway that every church—regardless of size or limited resources—can and should emphasize.

¹³Lisa Belkin, "Time Wasted? Perhaps It's Well Spent," *New York Times*, May 31, 2007 <www.nytimes.com/2007/05/31/fashion/31work.html?spc=19&csq=&st=nyt>.

Chapter 1: What Does a Rejoiced City Look Like?

¹The passages studied are Ps 46:9; 72; Zech 8:4-13; Is 2:2-5; 11; 25:6-9; 26:1-12; 32:1-8; 35; 42:1-4; 49:8-21; 51:3-6; 54; 61-62; 65:17-25; Jer 23:5-6; Ezek 34:11-31; Joel 3:17-18; Amos 9:11-15; Mic 4:3-4; Zeph 3:14-20; Zech 8:3-17; 14:6-21; Rev 21.

²There are likely more than three dimensions, but our investigation here must be limited.

³The Hebrew word for "do justice" in Micah 6:8 is *mishpat*. As Tim Keller notes, it occurs over two hundred times in the Old Testament and connotes the ideas of punishing wrongdoing and giving people their rights (*Generous Justice* [New York: Dutton, 2010], pp. 3-9). Christians in a variety of professions can play important parts in the work of rescue. Law enforcement officers and undercover detectives locate victims and document the presence of abuse. Prosecutors and judges bring perpetrators to account. Social workers, mental health workers and professionals using music, art and dance therapy can bring healing to victims. Investigative journalists and other communications professionals (graphic designers, editors, photographers, videographers, screenwriters, film producers) can raise awareness by publicizing the stories of oppression worldwide. Human rights advocates, diplomats and public officials can work to craft and implement legislation criminalizing trafficking, bonded labor and other forms of abuse. Public relations specialists and professional fundraisers can deploy their talents to raise resources for nonprofit organizations conducting rescue operations and for aftercare homes.

⁴Matthew Price, missionary with BMS World Mission, "Prayer Letter," April 2009, and personal correspondence with the author, July 5, 2011.

⁵A classic text on the problems of concentrated poverty neighborhoods is William Julius Wilson's *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

⁶Rich Nymoen offered his skills as a lobbyist and attorney in the fight for equity. Christians in other occupations, such as public administrators, politicians, public policy researchers, economists, experts in policy evaluation and political scientists, can also advance this kingdom value through their work.

⁷Rich Nymoen, "ISAIAH's Land Tax Campaign in Minnesota," *Groundswell* (March/April 2004) <<http://commonground-usa.net/isaiah04.htm>>.

⁸Ted Grimsrud, "Biblical Basis for Restorative Justice," address to the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., December 1, 2008.

⁹Multiple professions offer opportunities for working to bring about restorative justice: working in prison administration; serving as a mediator or counselor; working for victim assistance units of criminal justice agencies; being involved in advocacy to promote restorative justice approaches; teaching restorative justice principles in law schools and conflict resolution programs.

¹⁰As quoted in Howard Owens, "The Genesee Justice Story," *The Batavian*, November 26, 2010 <<http://thebatavian.com/blogs/howard-owens/genesee-justice-story/22423>>.

¹¹Paul Mrozek, "MHA Salutes Dennis Wittman," Restorative Justice Online (May

20, 2010) <www.restorativejusticeonline.net/RJOB/mha-salutes-dennis-wittman/>.

¹²Cornelius Plantinga Jr., “Educating for Shalom: Our Calling as a Christian College,” Calvin College <www.calvin.edu/about/shalom.htm>. Emphasis in original.

¹³This is not an exhaustive listing of kingdom marks. Additional ones include truth, joy, solidarity, accessibility, community, creativity and service.

¹⁴All quotes from Danny Wuerffel are from a telephone interview with the author, October 5, 2010.

¹⁵Art also serves “horizontal” purposes. Artists of all sorts create works that feed the aesthetic hunger of our souls. We need beauty, for God made us with senses and placed us in a sensory world. Environment matters. The landscape architect’s efforts to beautify the city, the engineer’s work to clean up abandoned lots and the city planner’s establishment of a new public park—these are all kingdom endeavors.

¹⁶All quotes from Jessie Nilo, founder and director, VineArts, are from a telephone interview with the author, September 1, 2010. In addition to the ways VineArts artists promote beauty in worship, they’ve also deployed their artistic talents to bring beauty to troubled individuals. Artists from VineArts visit nursing homes and a local crisis pregnancy center, facilitating art projects by the elderly and by teen moms-to-be. The art helps draw people out from their anxieties and sadness, Jessie reports.

¹⁷Lisa Marten, owner, relevartart, telephone interview with the author, September 1, 2010.

¹⁸All quotes from Andrew Macfarlan, MD, Albemarle Square Family Healthcare, Charlottesville, Va., are from an interview with the author, March 6, 2011.

¹⁹All quotes from Courtney Williams, Community Gardening Coordinator, Lots of Hope Garden, The Pittsburgh Project, are from a telephone interview with the author, August 27, 2010.

²⁰Mark Williams, Community Outreach Coordinator, The Pittsburgh Project, telephone interview with the author, August 27, 2010.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³From James Montgomery’s 1821 hymn “Hail to the Lord’s Anointed.”

²⁴Thyda Duong, “New Hope, ‘New Normal,’” *Long Beach Business Journal*, October 14–27, 2008, posted on New Hope Grief Support Community <www.newhopegrief.org/newnormal.htm>.

²⁵“South Holland, IL,” Encyclopedia of Chicago <www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1173.html>.

²⁶Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from Don De Graff, mayor, South Holland, Ill., are from a telephone interview with the author’s assistant Kelly Givens, March 3, 2011.

²⁷“2010 CommUNITY Dinners,” Village of South Holland <www.southholland.org/index.php?page=events/commdinners>.

²⁸“Cattle, Guns, and Murder . . . or Peace?” Christian Veterinary Mission <www.cvmusa.org/Page.aspx?pid=3049>.

²⁹Rob Cullivan, “Boring Church Works on Uganda Peace Making,” *Portland Tribune*, July 22, 2010 <www.portlandtribune.com/news/story.php?story_id=127932275124029100>.

³⁰Ken Sande, “Cattle Rustling, AK-47s, and Peacemaking,” Peacemaker Ministries (April 29, 2010) <<http://bookstore.peacemaker.net/blog/?m=201004>>.

³¹Al Tizon, Ron Sider, John Perkins and Wayne Gordon, “Business on a Mission,” *Prism*, November/December 2008, p. 9.

³²Ibid., p. 10.

³³Ibid., p. 9.

³⁴Dr. Jorge Vazquez, “Inspiring Scientist—Dr. Jorge Vazquez,” Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology <http://stardustnext.jpl.nasa.gov/Insp_people/vazquez.html>.

³⁵“Jorge Vazquez,” Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, <<http://science.jpl.nasa.gov/people/Vazquez/>>.

³⁶The creed closes with “And we look for the resurrection of the body, and the life of the world to come.” The Nicene Creed, Creeds of Christendom <www.creeds.net/ancient/nicene.htm>.

³⁷For example, 2 Cor 4:18; Col 3:2; Heb 11:10.

Chapter 2: What Do the Righteous Look Like?

¹As we take up this topic of righteousness, some readers may be puzzled by a conundrum. On the one hand, the Bible constantly holds up the challenge to be righteous while, on the other, it makes it crystal clear that “there is no one righteous, not even one” (Rom 3:10). How do we hold these things together? We start by recognizing that God alone is perfect in righteousness. We are sinners, and we rely for salvation on the imputed righteousness of Christ for our salvation. So, as I use the word *righteous* throughout this chapter, I’m not claiming that we can be perfect.

Additionally, nothing that I say in this chapter should be construed as meaning that Christians, through our own “righteous” conduct, can earn salvation. The righteousness I discuss here is not the same thing as the total sanctification that awaits us in the new earth. Righteousness is what we possess as saved sinners whom God calls “saints.” His Spirit lives in us and has made us—and is making us—“new creations.” The call to live as a *tsaddiq* is not the same thing as a call to live as a perfect, sinless person. We Christians aren’t perfect. No, far from it. But we have been made anew and we’ve decided to follow Jesus as Lord. Now his Spirit resides in us, empowering us to be his disciples. Looking backward from the cross of Christ, we understand that the righteous are those who trust God, follow him, love him and seek his purposes—though not perfectly.

²Given how often I use these terms in the book, it may be useful to know how to pronounce them. *Tsaddiq* is pronounced “tsad-deek” and *tsaddiqim* is “tsad-de-keem.”

³N. T. Wright, “Righteousness,” in *New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. David F. Wright, Sinclair B. Ferguson and J. I. Packer (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1988), pp. 590–92.