

## Praise for *Center Church*

In a fast-changing culture that seems alien to many Christians (just as Christians seem alien to many in the culture!), it is easy for Christians to throw up their hands in despair and adopt a purely defensive mode. In this important book, Tim Keller unpacks the gospel and gently but firmly reminds us that it is nonnegotiable. At the same time, he enables us to think through how we can responsibly interact with the culture, how we can—indeed, must—appreciate good things within it, and how we can firmly and faithfully apply the gospel to it. But this is not a mechanical how-to book; rather, it is a reflective meditation on some hugely important themes in Scripture written by someone who has exercised faithful pastoral ministry in a major city for two decades.

D. A. Carson, research professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

No one has listened more closely to the harmonies of city, culture, church, and Scripture than Tim Keller. In *Center Church*, he not only describes the different strains of music but also tells us how he has orchestrated the results for the sake of ministry outreach and renewal. Now it's our turn to listen, as Tim practically yet powerfully prepares us to participate in this great symphony of the gospel.

Bryan Chapell, president, Covenant Theological Seminary

*Center Church* is an immensely helpful resource for the next generation of church leaders. It is theologically profound, thought-provoking, and energizing, and it will make you uncomfortable in measure. Once again, Tim Keller has hit the bull's-eye!

Alistair Begg, senior pastor, Parkside Church, Cleveland, Ohio

We don't need another "do ministry like my church does ministry" book. Nor do we need another book that critiques other church models. We need a book that helps us think critically and biblically as we structure our churches. *Center Church* is packed with Tim Keller's experience, humility, and wisdom. This book will help you if you are serious about seeing your city transformed by the gospel of grace.

Darrin Patrick, lead pastor, The Journey, St. Louis, Missouri

As our culture continues to move toward a post-Christian secularism, it is more vital than ever that Christians know the gospel well and know how to communicate it effectively. In *Center Church*, Tim Keller masterfully explains what the gospel is and how to relate it successfully wherever we serve. This is more than an academic analysis; it is pastoral coaching of the best sort, based on three decades of successful practice. Thanks, Tim.

Sandy Willson, senior minister, Second Presbyterian Church, Memphis, Tennessee

Most of us observe and see the obvious. Tim observes and sees that which is unseen by others—especially when it comes to the truth of God's Word and the culture of the day. Once again, he has given us deeper insights—this time regarding the church and how she can experience her healthiest potential. How foolish to know of this book and not read it!

Randy Pope, pastor, Perimeter Church, Atlanta, Georgia

This outstanding book, like the Manhattan ministry out of which it has come, shows how Reformed theological acumen and wise pastoral intelligence may combine to achieve spiritual fruitfulness in urban contexts everywhere. Every page illuminates. Keller is a huge gift to today's church.

J. I. Packer, professor emeritus, Regent College

*Center Church* is not only a doctrinally rigorous and socially perceptive explanation of a sustained and remarkable work of God in Manhattan but also a hugely important, original, and timely call to mission that is appropriately contextualized for contemporary urban culture. We need to carefully learn from these principles if we are to reach our cities for Christ.

Richard Coekin, director, Co-Mission church planting network, London, England

Cities are challenging and complex but also important and strategic. And those who are called to minister in cities need encouragement and resources that fuel hope and effectiveness. That's why I'm so glad that Tim Keller has written this book. His passion for the gospel, heart for the city, and vision of a movement of the Holy Spirit that will transform lives and bring hope and peace to our cities has compelled him to share his insights and thinking with us. What's more, the church he serves speaks to the integrity of his heart and the possibility of the reality of this vision. Be prepared. Your thinking will be sharpened, and your heart will be moved.

Dr. Crawford W. Loritts Jr., senior pastor, Fellowship Bible Church, Roswell, Georgia

Tim Keller has given us the must-read book on gospel-shaped ministry. Robustly theological and profoundly practical, it is a top-to-bottom survey of gospel implications for the life and ministry of the church. The gap between biblical and practical theology is masterfully bridged. Having worked with Tim and Redeemer City to City, I have benefited from the content of this book and can also attest to its profound influence on ministers and churches throughout the world. This is not simply curriculum content; it is exactly the kind of life-giving, generative gospel theology our churches need. No thoughtful Christian's bookshelf should be without it.

Stephen T. Um, senior minister, Citylife Presbyterian Church, Boston, Massachusetts

Church leaders abandon their unique calling if they merely think theologically to the exclusion of seeing the world in light of the gospel and helping their churches live in the world with gospel wisdom. No one makes this case more clearly today than Tim Keller. He resists the all-too-easy pattern of selling a simple model of what it means to be the church that fits every setting. Instead he brings to life the myriad ways churches are called to be faithful and fruitful in their own unique cultural context. Read this book if you want to learn how to ask the really important (and difficult) questions by which the gospel confronts our ecclesial identity.

Richard Lints, Andrew Mutch distinguished professor of theology, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

I'm not exaggerating when I say that *Center Church* is my favorite book Tim Keller has written thus far. Perhaps this book simply represents the distillation of Tim's wisdom—the synthesis of years of marinating in the gospel, exegeting the text of Scripture, and engaging the soul of our culture; his willingness to dialogue without diatribe; his ongoing commitment to think through the radical implications of God's grace; his great love for Jesus' bride, God's kingdom, and the history of redemption. It's all refreshingly here. What an awesome and practical read! I cannot wait to use this book with emerging leaders and churches willing to dream.

Scotty Smith, founding pastor, Christ Community Church, Franklin, Tennessee

Many know Tim Keller the pastor, apologist, and theologian. But he is also an urban evangelist—an evangelist for the city. In *Center Church*, we find all of the unique facets of his vision and calling in one place. More than essential reading, it is a gift because Tim Keller has given his heart and life to the work of the kingdom in the city.

Mark R. Gornik, director, City Seminary of New York

In *Center Church*, one of the great missionary statesmen of our times lays out a vision of the church vigorous enough to transform entire cities through its agency of the gospel. Tim is a gifted teacher, an outstanding leader, and an exemplary disciple of Jesus. A worthy read!

Alan Hirsch, founder of Forge Missional Training Network

We live in a day of remarkable church leaders and wonderful Christian thinkers, but I'm not sure there's a more thoughtful church leader in our day than Tim Keller. *Center Church* is his call for church ministry formed by deep theological reflection and sensitive cultural exegesis executed by courageous leaders so that the city may once more flourish under the gospel.

John Ortberg, senior pastor, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, Menlo Park, California

Tim Keller's church in New York City serves as one of the world's best models for gospel-centered ministry that wisely, biblically, and fruitfully connects with its community. This is mainly due to Dr. Keller's deep understanding of the gospel and his exceptional gift for interpreting culture. His latest book will be immensely helpful to anyone doing ministry anywhere. *Center Church* is not a manual for replicating Keller's ministry, but something much more important: a theological vision for how the gospel of Jesus Christ relates to culture, ministry, and the Christian life.

Philip Ryken, president, Wheaton College