



# PRISM

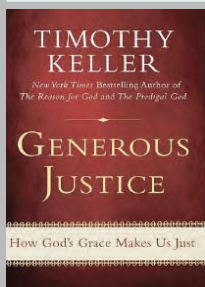
## ROBBIN' THE 'HOOD

Payday lenders prey on the poor,  
but Christians are fighting back

From Croatia to Haiti—  
what real help looks like

Moms take on the global  
challenge of AIDS

Celebrating the power of  
advocacy!



**Generous Justice**  
by Timothy Keller  
Dutton

Reviewed by Tim Høiland

If you have experienced the grace of God, Tim Keller argues convincingly in his latest book, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just*, it is inevitable that your life will be marked by a passion for doing justice among the poor and marginalized.

Keller, who for more than two decades has pastored Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, is well known for his bestselling work of apologetics, *The Reason for God*, and for his leadership of Redeemer City to City, an organization supporting church planters in New York City and elsewhere.

While Keller is a preacher and has devoted much of his vocational energy to evangelism and church planting, he considers justice an equally essential calling of the church. “The biblical idea of justice,” Keller writes, “is part and parcel of what God is doing in history. God is reconciling humanity to himself—and as a result of this great transaction, he is reconciling all things to himself.”

This argument is rooted in Keller’s well-articulated theology of shalom, which he defines as “complete reconciliation, a state of the fullest flourishing in every dimension—physical, emotional, social, and spiritual—because all relationships are right, perfect, and filled with joy.” He describes shalom as a tapestry in which thousands upon thousands of interwoven threads are perfectly arranged. Doing justice, then, is an essential part of how Christians begin to reweave that shalom in the world as a grateful response to the grace we have freely received from God.

It is no secret that the theme of social justice has enjoyed a renaissance among evangelicals in recent years, but it is clear that *Generous Justice* isn’t a vain attempt by Keller to jump on an already loud and well-crowded bandwagon. Keller points to the genesis of his justice thinking by describing his experience as a conflicted college student 40 years ago, seeing that while his secular friends were active in the civil rights movement, the Christians he knew viewed Martin Luther King, Jr. with suspicion and fear. Through involvement with a small group of Christians intent on exploring the relationship between justice and the Christian faith, however, Keller came to see that the Bible provided the very basis for social justice in general and the civil rights movement in particular.

While pursuing a doctoral degree at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Keller studied the office of deacons and how it had evolved over the years. “Deacons,” Keller discovered, “had historically been designated to work with the poor and needy in the community, but over the years this legacy had been lost, and instead they had evolved into janitors and treasurers.” Shortly after completing these studies, Keller was asked by his denomination to start a church in metro New York, providing him an opportunity to test this newfound understanding in a context where injustice and need were in no short supply.

While Keller celebrates the trend of increased concern for the poor and oppressed, especially among young Christians, he notes that all too often it coexists paradoxically with an unquestioned consumerism that “undermines self-denial and delayed gratification.” This is why Keller so passionately points to our need for the gospel: It is the beauty of Christ—

not statistics, not guilt, not even flashy do-gooder social media campaigns—that will compel us joyfully and consistently toward justice and the denial of self for the greater good.

For churches, small groups, and individuals in search of a deeper, more generous, more theologically integrated practice of justice, this is a book long overdue.

*Tim Høiland is an independent writer and international development professional. He blogs about the intersections of faith, justice, and peace in the Americas at [TJHoiland.com](http://TJHoiland.com).*



**Common Prayer**

by Shane Claiborne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove,  
and Enuma Okoro  
Zondervan

Reviewed by Amanda Kaminski

“Some liturgical types smile when evangelicals discover the ‘miracle’ of liturgy,” write Wilson-Hartgrove, Claiborne, and Okoro in their new book, *Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals*. Christ followers possess varying levels of familiarity with the liturgical life, and this book purposes to serve people from all walks of the faith—from high church to no church. *Common Prayer* offers a compilation of morning, midday, and evening liturgies for families, communities, coworkers, dorm mates, and individuals. The liturgies are designed to be prayed in community but allow those outside of physical communion to know that their prayers are part of a canticle of praise being offered to God from around the world.

This guidebook leads disciples into a rhythm of daily prayer situated within weekly cycles that make up the larger annual series of biblical seasons: from Advent through Christmas, to Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and with “Ordinary Time” in between. Intentional prayer, responsive reading, Scripture meditation, and song are the “heartbeat for the global church,” and the authors invite us to re-center the Christian life around God’s story, over and against schedules and lives dictated by pop culture, busyness, or even national calendars. Participating in these timeless petitions, songs, and observances, the church finds herself swept up in the dance of God’s history and involved in God’s ongoing work. Liturgy interrupts our life and focuses us by reshaping “our perceptions and lives with new rhythms, new holy days, a whole new story.” These disciplined gatherings and exercises join us together with the saints, the persecuted church, and the global body.

The authors frame the liturgies with beautiful art, functional tips, reflections, and action ideas to stir the imaginations of participants and inspire faith in deed. Many of the morning prayers offer a glimpse of church history through quotes or vignettes. Each month also proposes a list of further readings, inviting readers to dive deeper and discover practical applications. An additional section offers special prayers for events—such as planting or harvest, healing, commissioning or dedication of the home or workplace—where through intentional liturgical ritual believers can invoke divine blessing or express gratitude for and grow in awareness of God’s active presence in the world. Want even more? A comprehensive database is available at [CommonPrayer.net](http://CommonPrayer.net).

From Australia to Brazil, from India to Sierra Leone, and in 37 US