



EXCERPT



***The Hopeful Neighborhood***  
*What Happens When Christians Pursue the Common Good*

November 3, 2020 | \$17, 192 pages, casebound | 978-0-8308-4803-4

When Christians join together to pursue the common good of our neighborhoods, we bring hope to the world, credibility to the church, and glory to God. Filled with original research from the Barna Group and Lutheran Hour Ministries, this book from Don Everts offers constructive, practical ways that Christians and churches can bless our local communities.

## Loving Everyone Always Today

Christians in America today may not be suffering as much as Gordius or those Christians after him who suffered under Nero's intense persecution, but Christians in the West are definitely in a different season from where we've been for a while.

Cultural observers and researchers (both Christian and non-Christian) have begun to study this massive paradigm shift going on in the West called *postmodernity*. Among the many findings are those related to the Christian church in the West undergoing a transition from being at the center of society to being at the margins, and Western society undergoing a transition from being Christianized on the whole to being post-Christian on the whole.

To use Paul's terminology, for about three hundred years in the West the gospel was "in season," but since the early 1900s Christianity seems to be a little less so with every passing year. While Christianity is still very much in season (compared with many other places in the world today), the latest research confirms and quantifies what most Christians in the West feel intuitively: this shift to a more post-Christian culture is uncomfortable for Christians.

While the discomfort Christians are feeling is very real and needs to be acknowledged and accounted for, it bears noting that these greater cultural shifts are not necessarily the result of a nefarious evil conspiracy. As Paul wisely observed, there are going to be different seasons for the gospel—that's just the nature of life on fallen earth. In addition, it bears noting that at times we Christians can be part of the cause of our culture's venom or apathy toward the gospel—sometimes we are our own "worst enemies." In fact, some have argued that Christianity's decline in the West is simply a predictable product of choices we Christians have made.

While the state of Christianity in the West is nowhere near as precarious and dangerous as it is in many places in the world today, it is nonetheless true that Christianity in the West has entered into a tougher season. And what is it like for Christians to experience a change in seasons like this? Research shows that a decent percentage of Christians today feel misunderstood (65 percent), persecuted (60 percent), marginalized (48 percent), silenced (46 percent), and afraid to speak up (47 percent) because of their Christian faith.

The ground we Christians have taken for granted is shifting beneath our feet, and just like Gordius, we feel this shift personally. Sometimes we don't merely feel displaced, we feel personally injured—whether we've been injured or not. The truth is, there's probably less to be afraid of than we think, as our first year's research into spiritual conversations revealed. And yet many Christians today find the shifts in culture to be enormously frightening and disturbing. We feel a sense of displaced heritage, second-class citizenship, and menacing external threats. Even if all these feelings are a bit overwrought, we, understandably, want to do something about it. And sometimes, if we're honest like Gordius, the something we want to do is punch back in some way.

This is why Peter's letter comes at the perfect time for us, just as it did to all those in Asia Minor in the early '60s. Right when some of us are tempted to feel anger and bitterness, Peter's words arrive to arrest our fears and haunt our days: *Love.*

*Everyone. Always.*

-Adapted from chapter 3, "Love Everyone Always"



Tara Burns, print and online publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or tburns@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, author interviews  
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com



ivpress.com/media



BIO



### ***The Hopeful Neighborhood***

*What Happens When Christians Pursue the Common Good*

November 3, 2020 | \$17, 192 pages, casebound | 978-0-8308-4803-4

*"This book does such a beautiful job of preparing us for life on mission with Jesus in the place where we live and with the people who live near us, in our neighborhoods. And my friend Don shares so much of his own journey—he's lived in thirty neighborhoods! And he lovingly, carefully, persuasively guides us through the barriers to engaging and loving our neighbors as Christ calls. I hope you gain as much from the journey as I have."*

## Don Everts

**Don Everts** is reluctant to call himself an evangelist, but for decades he has found himself talking about Jesus with all sorts of skeptical and curious people. He is a writer for Lutheran Hour Ministries and has served as a pastor and a campus minister. He has also been a speaker and trainer for Alpha and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Don and his wife, Wendy, live in a wonderfully messy multigenerational household in the St. Louis area with their three children and Don's mother, plus a dog that thinks he's a cat, and a cat that spends time in the neighborhood sewers.

Don's many books include:

- *The Spiritually Vibrant Home: The Power of Messy Prayers, Loud Tables, and Open Doors*
- *The Reluctant Witness: Discovering the Delight of Spiritual Conversations*
- *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus* (with Doug Schaupp)
- *Breaking the Huddle: How Your Community Can Grow Its Witness* (with Doug Schaupp and Val Gordon)
- *Jesus with Dirty Feet: A Down-to-Earth Look at Christianity for the Curious Skeptical*
- *Getting Your Feet Dirty: A Down-to-Earth Look at Following Jesus*
- *The Smell of Sin: and the Fresh Air of Grace*
- *Go and Do: Becoming a Missional Christian*

Follow Don on Twitter: @DonEverts.



---

**Krista Clayton**, associate director, publicity  
800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or [kclayton@ivpress.com](mailto:kclayton@ivpress.com)



[ivpress.com/media](http://ivpress.com/media)