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Divine Merger: What Happens When Jesus Collides with Your Community

Mark E. Strong

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MARK E. STRONG

FOREWORD BY KEVIN PALAU



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN JESUS

COLLIDES WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

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Mark E. Strong : Divine Merger: What Happens When Jesus Collides with Your Community before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Divine Merger: What Happens When Jesus Collides with Your Community:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Andrew A.MilerExcellent!!!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. In the Intersection of Faith and LifeBy Warren RacheleThe phrase ldquo;standing in the gaprdquo; is often used in Christianese to apply to a broad array of applications and circumstance. Borrowed from the

prophet Ezekiel, the phrase gets pulled out of context to mean anything from being responsible for prophetic utterance to intercessory prayer to inserting yourself as a protective compound at a point of weakness. Pastor Strong might have been tempted to utilize this well-worn phrase as he encourages the church toward a more missional stance in her ministry, but to do so would forge a misunderstanding of the concept. Missional-minded Christians do not necessarily stand between the divine and the secular, they carry the divine presence within them and we event throughout the community. Strong uses numerous vignettes from his community in Portland, Oregon to portray the numerous facets of what it means to be salt and light in a local ministry context. Emphasizing that relationship is the catalyst for many a divine encounter, Pastor Strong encourages the reader to discover places where the community and the people of God can merge while seeking a common objective. Though his context is urban-- moreover, gentrifying urban mdash; the spiritually minded reader will have no problems transferring the ideas and objectives to their own context. I appreciate the heart of the pastor that is evident in this contribution to the missional library. His years of experience combined with the results of his church's efforts provide us with much stronger motivation to steer our own ministries in this direction than do some of the more theoretically minded volumes. A quick read, *Divine Merger*, will linger in your mind and heart where the Spirit can take it and run. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Road Map to Show the Way - "Divine Merger"! By Customer Mark Strong's "Divine Merger" delivers a clear answer to the question, "What happens when Jesus collides with your community?" As a road map to show the way, "Divine Merger" spells out with refreshing simplicity how we can change our own perspective in approaching those in our community and the power that ultimately comes to a congregation whose mindset has been altered to embrace both their church and their community with an equal passion. And how to keep balance, humor and sanity along the way! Strong's experience as a pastor, community leader and his "steady-as-you-go" approach teaches readers to see grocery clerks, dog walkers, or baristas, with new eyes. A storyteller extraordinaire, he shares successes and failures with humor and humility, so that the reader gleans much of what the author envisions without wading through layers of Christianese. In addition, he offers practical steps for the reader to evaluate where personal purpose, community challenges, and church involvement intersect. I've had the privilege of sitting at Strong's feet in his church. I have garnered much from watching this book unfold, and cheered its publication. I find it invaluable as a handbook for street ministry in my area; the content and chapter questions, consistently cause me to understand my own motivation, strength and focus. I believe that you, like me, won't be able to put it down. Five stars! Katy Jenkin

What would happen if your community had a head-on collision with Jesus? Pastor and community leader Mark Strong says, "You would have exactly what God wants: a divine merger!" He continues: "A divine merger is when the church intentionally integrates with its community. . . . The result is a kingdom transformation." This book is designed to give you the vision and tools you need to fulfill your own God-given mission in your community and church. Ranging from single-person sponsored ministries to church-wide and even multi-church regional ministries, these pages are packed full of ideas. The practical wisdom here will help any follower of Christ, pastor or church leader engage their community. Each chapter concludes with questions for reflection appropriate for either individuals or groups. Are you ready to plan your divine merger?

"Gentrification, spiritual lethargy and the clash between new realities and old dreams are part of Mark's journey as a leader in his church and community. As one who strives to live his life fully invested in both spheres, Mark provides in this book a mixture of practical implementation, pastoral encouragement and theological grounding for embracing our call to partner with Jesus in the transformative collisions between our church and our community." (Rick McKinley, lead pastor, Imago Dei Community, Portland, OR, author of *Jesus in the Margins*) "Mark Strong is a pastor's pastor, and a deeply committed leader and preacher. In *Divine Merger* he challenges us to do the spiritual work of bringing our communities and our churches together. He does this with wisdom and grace, inviting us to intentionally seek God's leading for change for both sides. The book is inspiring, biblical and practical. If you want to catalyze change in your church and community, this book, filled with stories of Mark's own experiences and insights learned on the battlefield, can be a trusted guide." (MaryKate Morse, George Fox Seminary, author of *A Guidebook to Prayer*) "Mark Strong is a legend in our city. The archetype of a wise, humble, faithful urban pastor. Many younger planters look to him for more than mentorship, but for a template to pour our own lives into. When a guy like Mark talks about the collision of Jesus and community, I listen." (John Mark Comer, *Bridgetown: A Jesus Church*, Portland, OR) "Overall the book stresses the importance of relationships. It belongs in the missions and evangelism category. This kind of work is what John Perkins calls 'holistic community development,' and I would recommend it for those interested in urban ministry." (Dave Baker, CBA Retailers+Resources, March 16, 2016) About the Author Mark E. Strong (DMin, George Fox Seminary) is senior pastor of LifeChange Christian Church, a diverse congregation located in the heart of inner-city Portland, Oregon. He is the author of *Church for the Fatherless* and he serves on the Board of Regents at George Fox Seminary. He and his wife Marla have four children.