

Grounded: in the Body in Time & Place, in Scripture

Embodying Christ in the Neighbourhood: A Reflection on Place, Home, and Mission

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Meet the author

Rev. Dr. Karina Kreminski is co-director of Neighbourhood Matters. She taught Missional Studies at Morling College Sydney. She was previously a senior pastor at a church in Sydney. She is a speaker, writer, mentor, and community worker in her local neighborhood. She is the author of *Urban Spirituality: Embodying God's Mission in the Neighborhood*.

Chapter overview

For too long the church has been internally focused and neglected its missional role in the community where it lives and breathes. Mission can be seen not as not primarily about activity but about embodying the values of Jesus. The gospel must always be fleshed out rather than captured in creeds, propositions, and theologies. What does it look like if we specifically apply this to our local communities and contexts? If we ask, “What is the Spirit of God doing in our local neighborhood?” then we have an opportunity to think about the intersection between place, embodying the gospel, and fleshing out the way of Jesus in our local community. The church has given little attention to reflecting on a theology of place and often practises a disembodied expression of the gospel. This detrimentally affects God’s missional call on our lives as it hinders us from grounding ourselves in a specific place and time. Due to a subtle Gnosticism and a preference for an “other-worldly” spirituality, Christians have preferred to see the “life to come” as home. The challenge is to consider the possibility that this world is home, even though most importantly and ultimately, it will be renewed at the restoration of all things.

General Study Questions

Question 1

What is your neighbourhood like?

Question 2

Is where you live important to you, and if so, how?

Question 3

Do you feel closer to God in the natural environment than in an urban environment?

Question 4

What do you think is meant by the statement “God thinks our physical environment matters” (p.43)?

Question 5

Consider the implications of the claim that “To be human means to be located and placed” (p.44).

Question 6

How do you see a dualism between the spiritual and the material, or the spiritual and the secular being expressed?

Question 7

What is the difference between a place and a space?

Question 8

In what ways can we make spaces into places?

Question 9

What does it mean to be placed in the neighbourhood?

Question 10

What would it be like to be displaced?

Question 11

How would you ‘exegete’ your neighbourhood? (p.55)

Question 12

In what ways could your community work towards your built environment promoting “sacred spaces, compassion and respect for humanity” (p.48)?

Academic Questions

Question 1

What is meant by a theology of place?

Question 2

What are the implications of the Incarnation and of bodily resurrection for a theology of place?

Question 3

What is the difference between Promethean and Epimethean moral visions for cities?

Question 4

How can we be good ‘homemakers’ in our world?

Question 5

What is meant by the statement “(J)ust as places can be desecrated, so they can be redeemed” (p.56)? How might this take place?