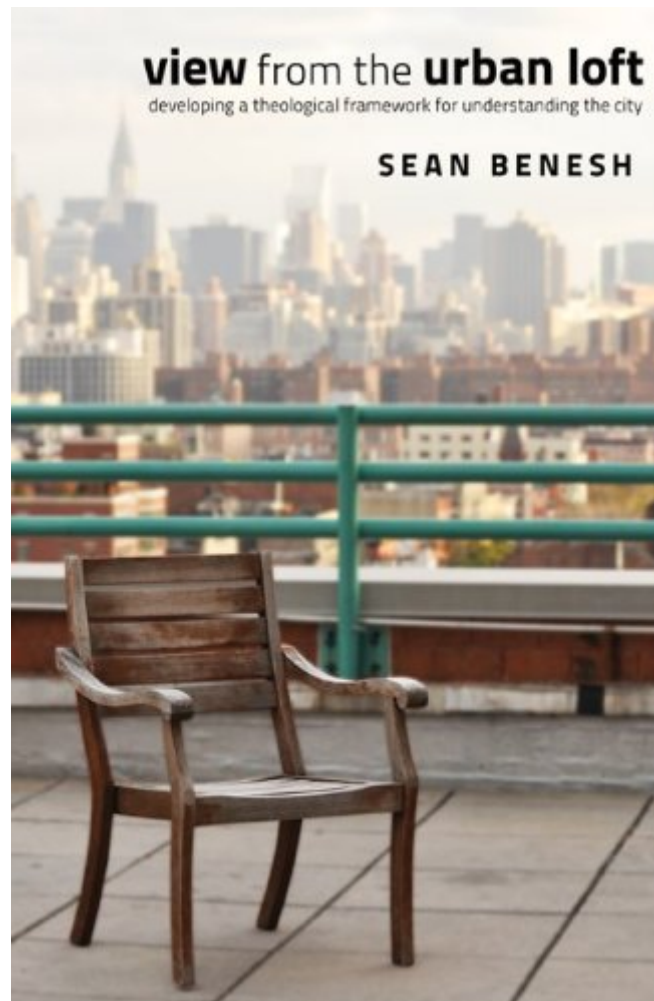


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View From The Urban Loft: Developing A Theological Framework For Understanding The City



Synopsis

As the world hurtles towards urbanization at an ever-increasing pace, there arises the need for further theological reflection on the city. Globalization, international immigration, and densification in cities are having a transformative impact on the urban landscape. Urban mission is at the forefront of many denominations, church planting networks, ministries, and mission organizations yearning for citywide transformation. How are we to think biblically and theologically about the city? *View from the Urban Loft* will take readers through the development of cities throughout history, act as a guide to navigating the current forces shaping urban environments, and seek to uncover a theology of the city that gives Christians a rationale and a biblical understanding of the meaning and purposes of the city and then how to live in it for the glory of God."Since Gorringer's *Theology of the Built Environment* came out, I've been yearning for someone to write a more accessible version for missional practitioners and church planters. Enter Sean Benesh. *View from the Urban Loft* not only covers the history and theology of the city, but anchors those insights in a missional framework, offering real hope for those of us trying to shape authentic neighborhoods and transformed cities."—Michael Frost, author of *The Road to Missional*"Sean Benesh brings a church planter's heart, vital experience, and good theological reflection to the task of reminding and equipping the church to engage the urban setting. A worthy read for those called to reach the city."—Alan Hirsch, author of *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*"Sean provides a fine overview of the contemporary issues for articulating a theology of the city. His insights for integration of those issues into an urban, missional practice is fun to read. His sensitivity to contextual issues will help any practitioner see how to pursue mission with the city. I am particularly pleased by his insights into Canadian missiological issues."—Glenn Smith, Executive Director of Christian Direction and Senior Associate for Large Cities, Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

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Customer Reviews

In *View from the Urban Loft*, Sean Benesh provides a primer on the city for Jesus followers in the 21st century. Covering the gamut of necessary topics, from the biblical roots of the city to an introduction to church planting in walkable environments, Benesh aims to draw Jesus followers in to holistic thinking on how cities- a grace gift from God- can truly be transformed for the Kingdom cause of Jesus. Benesh is unrelenting and thorough in his probing of the city. Beginning with the belief that cities are a grace gift from God, Benesh launches into a history of the city, asking questions of how a city should be defined according to Greek, Ancient Near East, Biblical, and modern definitions. His questions are vintage Benesh- penetrating in insight, yet bewildering because Benesh does not give any easy answers. For example, in trying to answer the question of if the Bible sees the origins of the city as stemming from natural, human, or divine causes, Benesh exposes the reader to each theory and gives his supposed answer in the form of a question: "Could the answer be somewhere in a combination of all three?" (66) Many authors like combined answers, sure, but Benesh has a knack for asking a lot of honest questions to make the reader truly wrestle with their conclusions. There are times, however, that this sort of journey-writing leaves the reader with too little. For example, in trying to justify a theology of care for a geographical place, Benesh's conclusion- that the incarnation is the theological basis- is wanting. Perhaps the tension he brings up- that we are called to be pilgrims as well- can only give us so much. Or perhaps Benesh is pushing his reader to dive in more on their own.

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