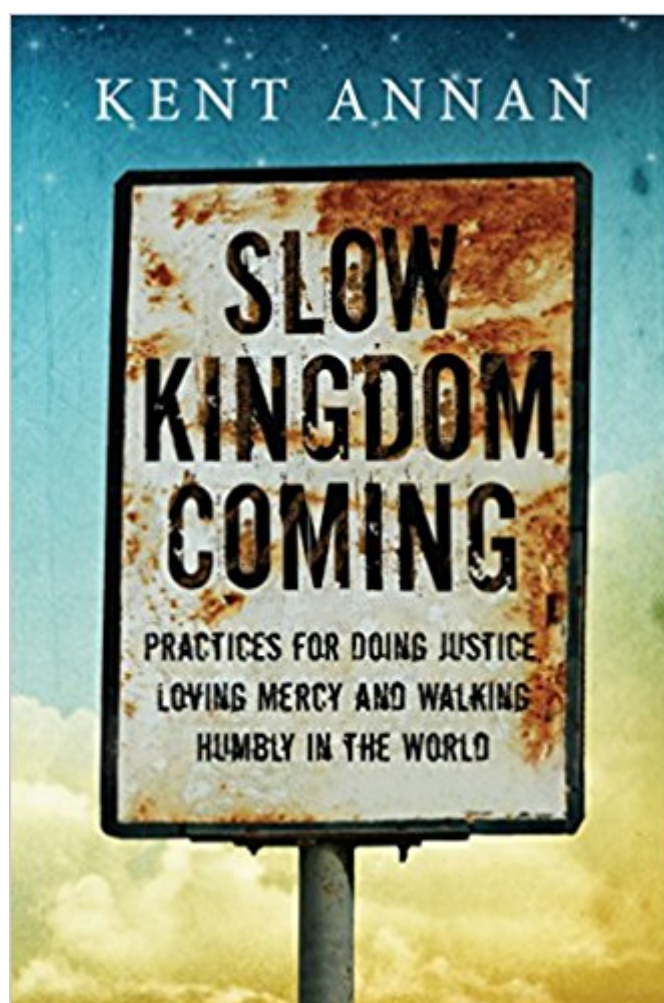


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Slow Kingdom Coming: Practices For Doing Justice, Loving Mercy And Walking Humbly In The World



Synopsis

No one said pursuing justice would be easy. The road can be so challenging and the destination so distant that you may be discouraged by a lack of progress, compassion or commitment in your quest for justice. How do you stay committed to the journey when God's kingdom can seem so slow in coming? Kent Annan understands the struggle of working for justice over the long haul. He confesses, "Over the past twenty years, I've succumbed to various failed shortcuts instead of living the freedom of faithful practices." In this book, he shares practices he has learned that will encourage and help you to keep making a difference in the face of the world's challenging issues. All Christians are called to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly in the world. *Slow Kingdom Coming* will guide and strengthen you on this journey to persevere until God's kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.

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Customer Reviews

"Seeking first the kingdom of God often feels like running the last mile of a marathon in wet sand. Progress seems painfully slow, and we often want to cry out in agony. Kent Annan provides us with practices to give us strength in the race so that we can run and not grow weary. I wish I'd had this book years ago!" (Brian Fikkert, founder and president, Chalmers Center, Covenant College, coauthor of *When Helping Hurts*) "There is an African proverb that says, 'If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.' In *Slow Kingdom Coming* Kent Annan shows us how to live into the meaning of these words by experiencing the life-changing impact of working together for

justice and healing, both locally and globally. If you want to be a part of the change you hope to see in the world, I highly recommend this book!" (Brenda Salter McNeil, author of *A Credible Witness* and *Roadmap to Reconciliation*) "Slow Kingdom Coming is one of the most honest yet hopeful reads for those who seek to do the work of justice today. Kent calls out shortsighted, quick-fix approaches and then offers a more responsible, sustainable way to love the world. This book is accessible, inspiring and actionable. It should be required reading for anyone who is serious about participating in the slow yet beautiful work of God's redemption in the world." (Jena Lee Nardella, cofounder, Blood:Water, author of *One Thousand Wells*) "Kent Annan is doing some of the most redemptive work on the planet. His newest book is a breath of fresh air — he steps back from all the action to consider the practices, prayer and disciplined reflection that sustains the work of justice. Slow Kingdom Coming is about going slow in a fast world, going deep in a shallow world and going far in a world that likes shortcuts. Brilliant." (Shane Claiborne, speaker, activist, author of *Executing Grace*) "In a culture that's tempted by quick and glamorous results, we often forget that the work of mercy and justice is long, laborious and often messy. I deeply appreciated Slow Kingdom Coming by Kent Annan because it's vulnerable, confessional and invitational. It's vulnerable because Annan shares the good and bad. He resists the common temptation to portray the work of justice as a neatly packaged product. It's confessional because Kent shares from his personal mistakes and struggles. We need this kind of honesty and truth telling. And last, it's invitational — in other words, hopeful. It's a humble reminder to us that we're not the saviors of the world. Ultimately, it's God's mission, and we are invited to participate in it." (Eugene Cho, pastor, Quest Church, founder, *One Day's Wages*, author of *Overrated*) "Kent Annan lives and works in the real world and he knows that the world in which we live is desperate for the transformation of justice — transformation that will last. But it is in our very desperation that we often forget that the transformation for which we so long only comes slowly. The field of neuroscience is teaching us that the most permanent forms of healthy brain changes — and, by extension, relational and institutional changes — emerge over the course of lengthy, persevering practice. Slow Kingdom Coming is a siren call, drawing our attention away from a world of quick fixes to God's timing, tempo and purpose. In it Annan graciously gifts us with a deeply practical manual for how to join God at his pace in his work of bringing justice to the time and place we occupy. But more so, he leaves us with an offering of spiritual disciplines by which God can change us more permanently in all areas of our lives. If you want justice, and you want it as God wants it — when God wants it — this is a must-read book." (Curt Thompson, author of *The Soul of Shame*) "How can I say this? Each day when I move out into the world, I want to be clothed with the truths shared in Slow Kingdom

Coming. I'm not, but I want to be. I want to be as gentle and as smart as Kent is as he writes. I want to be as opened-eyed and open-hearted as those he quotes, from Weil and Bonhoeffer to a homeless vet in a dark park and a young mom praying over a photo on her refrigerator. I'll recommend [this] to everyone I know who wants to do justice more wisely and love mercy more purely and walk ever more humbly with our God. Yes, I love this book!" (Lynne Hybels, advocate for global engagement, Willow Creek Community Church)"An immensely helpful, honest and practical guide for transforming good intentions into tangible action! Slow Kingdom Coming gives an honest look at the challenges and shortcuts that accompany a passion for justice. Annan raises the real questions, and with an honesty and transparency seasoned by years of experience, he provides insights and examples from his personal playbook. He takes ancient and familiar practices like confession and turns them into prophetic and energizing fuel for both the inner life and outward practice." (Nikki Toyama-Szeto, director, International Justice Mission's Institute for Biblical Justice, coauthor of The God of Justice)"In this wise and insightful book, born out of years of working with some of the world's most vulnerable people, Kent Annan beautifully describes five practices that lead to lasting change and draw us deeper into God's 'slow kingdom coming,' the flourishing life God intends for all creation. This is a fundamentally hopeful vision. If we are attentive to it, it could radically transform how we care for our neighbors and transform us at the same time." (C. Christopher Smith and John Pattison, authors of Slow Church)"Slow Kingdom Coming is a captivating read, a must for any who believe God may be calling them to minister to and with the poor. It is a worthy successor to its predecessors and builds upon this rich foundation." (Bruce Wydick, Christianity Today, October 26, 2016)"Slow Kingdom Coming is riveting reading. Kent Annan has put into print the core issues of being Christ's ambassadors to a hurting world. We all get discouraged, impatient and diverted by ordinary approaches to helping. This book teaches us core spiritual practices that will result in a steady dedication to God and to his care for the vulnerable. It will make us more effective, more realistic, more loving and more deeply changed by the ministry to which God is calling us. To anyone with a heart for justice but some confusion when it comes to practicing compassion, I highly recommend this book!" (Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor, Northland: A Church Distributed)"I had three reasons for reading Slow Kingdom Coming: I am on my own spiritual journey and find Kent's writing inspiring. My writing includes lots of stories and Kent is a master story writer. And finally, I serve on my church's mission committee and we greatly need the frame Kent provides here. Kent is a gifted writer with important and timely things to share in this book." (Stephen Lundin, bestselling author of Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Performance)"Slow Coming Kingdom reminds us that all things good and beautiful take

time, especially the reign of God. Seasoned by a life of service, Annan gives us permission to slow down and incorporate wise practices that will help us endure in the patient, percolating work of social justice. If you care about making the world a better place, this is an important book for examining your motivations and learning to cooperate with the Divine in the healing of our world." (Phileena Heuertz, cofounder, Gravity, a Center for Contemplative Activism, author of *Pilgrimage of a Soul*) "Somewhere between being apathetic and selfish on the one hand and carrying the weight of the world on the other hand lies a way of life that contributes to the healing of the world. This beautiful book will help you find that sweet spot, that healing way of life, and keep you living there so you can join God in the slow kingdom coming." (Brian D. McLaren, author, speaker, activist) "If you've ever found long-term service and loving your neighbor to be more difficult than you initially imagined, then you need to read *Slow Kingdom Coming*. As an experienced development professional, Kent shares five transformative practices to help you avoid compassion fatigue, maximize impact and walk humbly in the world. Grounded in real life experience and rooted in Scripture, this is a book I will be widely sharing with my global colleagues and friends." (Peter Greer, president and CEO, HOPE International, coauthor of *Mission Drift*) "Slow Kingdom Coming is deeply truthful and beautifully rendered, with stories drawn from the lives of collaborators around the world alongside important research. Smart, accessible, theologically rich and sociologically engaged, this book deserves a close read by all those drawn to live out Scripture's commands to do justice in our broken world." (Brian Howell, professor of anthropology, Wheaton College, author of *Short-Term Mission*)

Kent Annan (MDiv, Princeton Theological Seminary) is a writer, speaker and co-director of Haiti Partners, a nonprofit focused on education in Haiti. He is the author of *After Shock and Following Jesus through the Eye of the Needle* and has spent fifteen years working with people in difficult situations around the world, including in Europe with refugees and in Haiti. Kent is on the board of directors of Equitas Group, a philanthropic foundation focused on ending child exploitation in Haiti and Southeast Asia. His writing has appeared in publications including *Christianity Today*, *Utne Reader*, *Subtropics*, *Geez*, *Adbusters*, *The Sun*, *Orion* and *Sojourners*. One of his essays was cited as a "Notable Essay" in the *Best American Essays* series and he wrote a chapter for the book *Global Perspectives on the Bible*. He has been featured on national TV and radio shows. Speaking regularly to groups around the country, Kent also teaches adult education at his local church. He travels to Haiti regularly from Florida, where he lives with his wife Shelly and their two children.

Soundbite: “Awakening to justice involves listening to other people’s lives. We practice awakening to justice by choosing who we talk with, what stories we read, what trips we take. That opens people’s eyes to educational challenges and also pulls back the curtain on big systemic issues of wealth, poverty, government representations, and race that many of them didn’t know in-depth before. Part of this practice of attention involves asking ourselves, What breaks my heart? In the world, my country or my neighborhood, what makes me angry because it should be better? Questions like these can awaken our attention for how we are called to serve the Kingdom. We are accountable for the responsibilities we are trusted with, not for all the needs around us.” (Kent Annan, *Slow Kingdom Coming: Practices for Doing Justice, Loving Mercy, and Walking Humbly in the World*, Intervarsity Press, 2016, pp. 30-32, 35).

Review: Kent Annan has been committed to justice ministries for 25 years. During that time, he says, “I’ve been paralyzed by the complexity of trying to help others. I’ve huddled in bed during daylight because of sadness and discouragement. I’ve rushed to get good things done and so didn’t treat people as well as I should. I’m still confessing regularly my faults and longing to better participate in justice that God’s Kingdom would come on earth as it is in Heaven. I confess that I wish this weren’t such a slow kingdom coming.” (Kent Annan, *Slow Kingdom Coming: Practices for Doing Justice, Loving Mercy, and Walking Humbly in the World*, Intervarsity Press, 2016, p. 9).

His book combines his personal experience of working for justice with five practices that can help readers “find the freedom to handle what you can and what you are called to and handle this well as we respond faithfully to needs and opportunities around us.” (p. 11). The practices are “attention (awakening to justice), confession (the posture for engaging), respect (the golden rule for helping), partnering (with, not for), and truthing (hard thinking and feet on the ground)” (pp. 27-120). Many North American Christians have a sincere desire to bring justice to our broken world. But they also need to recognize where they “ignore part of reality or live with a partially anesthetized heart.” (p. 55). They need the encouragement and the correctives that Annan provides in this book.

M.L. Codman-Wilson, Ph.D., 8/19/2016 Excerpts: “Over the past 20 years, I have learned that kneeling for confession is the right posture for entering into the work of justice with humility, supplication, and vulnerability. If we don’t

lower ourselves before God and neighbors, we will fail at lasting change; we need to be transformed ourselves as we work for the world to become more just.

Sin can blind us •so we are unaware of selfishness that leads us to exploit when we tend to help.

Sin can blind us •so we can't see the needs under the surface.

(pp. 44, 46). In Haiti, when you approach someone's yard, you call out, *hon*, meaning honor. Saying this announces that you come to visit with honor for them, their family, their property. You are acknowledging their humanity, dignity, their right of response. You are confirming that it's up to them whether you enter or not and on what terms.

Will they accept you and what you bring? *Resp*, meaning respect, is the word you wait to hear if you are invited.

Respect is having a due regard for the feelings, wishes, and rights of others. The practice of respect has to happen at every stage of doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly in the world.

If justice work involves helping people find their way into more respectful circumstances, then every step must be taken while practicing respect through listening, imagining, and promoting rights.

Respect is called the Golden Rule for helping. (pp. 63-65).

"The scientific process called *truthing* involves checking big picture assessment against a reality on the ground.

I was fortunate to see examples of *truthing* early in my justice work from people like Scott McCracken.

Scott had developed a vibrant center for refugees (in Europe) to access helpful services and find a supportive community. His work was informed by spending two weeks living on the streets with the refugees. Scott did this so he could gain new insight into what was and wasn't helpful for people he was serving. It was done within a long-term commitment, not as poverty tourism.

(pp. 104, 108).

Because of Hope- Kent writes about his work to help those in need, who suffer: "This book is about five faithful practices that can help us be committed to deep instead of shallow changemaking a long-term difference.....a faithful approach because ...(of) Hope." After reading 'Slow Kingdom Coming', I'm motivated by Hope to do good work for Justice; Hoping to see more of God's Kingdom here on Earth, now. Loved this book, and I will reread, refer to, and recommend. Leslie Tilley

If you have ever wondered how best to serve others, through donations, volunteerism, working with church groups, or as part of your employment etc. this book is a very worthwhile read. Whether as

an individual or as part of an organization, Kent's clearly explained process for the best use of our resources for doing justice in our world will be of great benefit. His use of personal anecdotes, real-life examples and biblical references help make this instructional book very readable.

This is a must read book for anyone wondering "what can I do". Through story telling, biblical teaching and scripture, this book provides practical tools that will empower you on your journey. If your heart is breaking for injustices of our world, there is hope.

Those who go to participate in God's mission in this world, those who support them, and anyone interested in either activity will benefit from Kent Annan's new book. *Slow Kingdom Coming* gives a clear exposition of the theology of mission and spiritual practices to sustain mission, and includes a highly approachable guide that makes group study exciting as well as informative.

This is an excellent book for Christians--and anyone else--who wants to work for a better world without becoming exhausted or cynical. Annan writes clearly and elegantly and humbly about his own work in Haiti and elsewhere. He invites the reader to connect their own story to his, and the prophets', and Jesus', and justice workers everywhere.

Kent Annan gives us permission to take a deep breath and get back to viewing justice as a spiritual journey. The five practices he outlines -- disciplines if you will -- will allow us to keep things in perspective and stay focused on the challenges without being intimidated by it all. Annan calls us to Attention, Confession, Respect, Partnering, and Truthing. It's a simple, humble, and healthy way to serve. It might seem slower at times, thus the title of the book, but it will be far more effective. A blend of personal stories with theological insights, Kent does a great job of making it all seem real and tangible, yet simultaneously thoughtful and purposeful.

The book is very helpful in describing what healthy missions endeavors should. It also helps one understand the harm people can cause when they are not aware of the respect and mutuality implicit in CHRISTIAN mission

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