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Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods

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Recommended Citation

Brooks, Jonathan, "Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods" (2020).
Symposium on Worship Archive. 47.

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CHURCH FORSAKEN: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods

"There are no God-forsaken places, just church-forsaken places."
John Fuller, former director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN POSITION: _____ where you don't want to be.
⁴ *Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon.*

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN PROCESS: _____ to previously forsaken places.
⁵ *Build houses and live in them...*

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN PLAN: _____ to the Whole Gospel.
...Plant gardens and eat what they produce.

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN PLACE: _____ the value of place.
⁶ *Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease.*

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN PEOPLE: _____ the poor and marginalized.
⁷ *But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile...*

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN PURPOSE: _____ one another of our collective power.
...Pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

THE CHURCH FORSAKEN PERSPECTIVE: _____ our vision to see like God.
For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

There are three main ways in which the surrounding community views churches.

Church "IN" the community _____

- Building is located in a community.
- Have little to do with the community life or neighbors.

Church "TO/FOR" the community _____

- Located in the community and offer services to/for the community.
- Church decides what programs/services to offer the community.
- The "ownership" of the programs/services is held by church.

Church "WITH" the community _____

- Church is an integral part of the community.
- Existing relationships and programs utilize the collective gifts of the community.
- Decisions about programs/services to offer are made *with* the community.
- The ownership of the programs/services is shared *with* the community.

Raised on the south side of Chicago, Jonathan Brooks moved as far away as possible as soon as he could. But through unforeseen events he found himself not only back in Englewood but also serving as a pastor and community leader. In this book he challenges Christians to be fully present in their communities, helping local churches rediscover that loving our neighbors means loving our neighborhoods.

