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Unlikely: Setting Aside Our Differences to Live Out the Gospel

Kevin Palau

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Unlikely: Setting Aside Our Differences to Live Out the Gospel Kevin Palau
The inspiring story of an unlikely partnership between a band of churches and the openly gay mayor of Portland that led to unprecedented change throughout the city and launched a nationwide movement called CityServe.

Our dream is to help change the mindset of the city about the church, and the mindset of the church about the city.

Portland is among the most unchurched and politically progressive cities in the nation. It's a European-type city with a unique edge, a television show called *Portlandia* that emphasizes its weirdness, and the country's largest naked bike ride. You wouldn't expect Portland to be home to one of the most successful partnerships between local government and area churches. But it is.

In 2007, Kevin Palau and a few dozen pastors approached Portland's mayor and asked the question: How can we serve you with no strings attached? City officials identified five initial areas of need—hunger, homelessness, healthcare, the environment, and public schools—and so began a partnership, CityServe, between the city and a band of churches seeking to live out the gospel message. Since then, the CityServe model has spread like wildfire, inspiring communities across the country to take up the cause in their own cities.

Unlikely not only tells the story of the inception of CityServe, but also challenges readers to evaluate their understanding of the gospel. Today's church finds itself torn between social justice and direct proclamation. *Unlikely* proposes a both/and scenario, showing how the gospel can truly penetrate a region—through word *and* deed.

CityServe is proof that when differences can be put aside for a worthy cause, real change can be attained, and unlikely beauty is born.

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