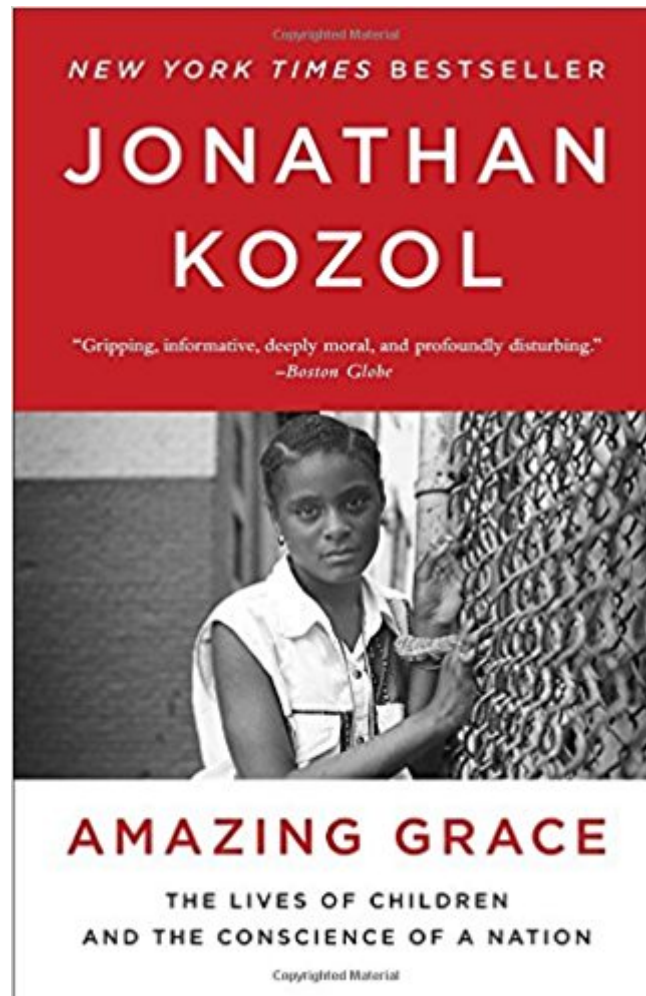




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Amazing Grace: The Lives Of Children And The Conscience Of A Nation



Synopsis

Amazing Grace is Jonathan Kozol's classic book on life and death in the South Bronx "the poorest urban neighborhood of the United States. He brings us into overcrowded schools, dysfunctional hospitals, and rat-infested homes where families have been ravaged by depression and anxiety, drug-related violence, and the spread of AIDS. But he also introduces us to devoted and unselfish teachers, dedicated ministers, and "at the heart and center of the book" courageous and delightful children. The children we come to meet through the friendships they have formed with Jonathan defy the stereotypes of urban youth too frequently presented by the media. Tender, generous, and often religiously devout, they speak with eloquence and honesty about the poverty and racial isolation that have wounded but not hardened them. Amidst all of the despair, it is the very young whose luminous capacity for love and transcendent sense of faith in human decency give reason for hope.

Book Information

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Broadway Books; 1 edition (June 26, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0770435661

ISBN-13: 978-0770435660

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 127 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #26,882 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Asian #53 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Poverty #61 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Urban

Customer Reviews

Kozol (Savage Inequalities) began visiting New York's South Bronx in 1993, focusing on Mott Haven, a poor neighborhood that is two thirds Hispanic, one third black. This disquieting report graphically portrays a world where babies are born to drug-using mothers with AIDS, where children are frequently murdered, jobs are scarce and a large proportion of the men are either in prison or on crack cocaine or heroin. Kozol interviewed ministers, teachers, drug pushers, children who have not yet given up hope. His powerfully understated report takes us inside rat-infested homes that are

freezing in winter, overcrowded schools, dysfunctional clinics, soup kitchens. Rejecting what he calls the punitive, blame-the-poor ideology that has swept the nation, Kozol points to systemic discrimination, hopelessness, limited economic opportunities and New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's cutbacks in social services as causes of this crisis. While his narrative offers no specific solutions, it forcefully drives home his conviction: a civilized nation cannot allow this situation to continue. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Alicea and Kozol paint a vivid portrait of life in one of America's most impoverished neighborhoods, New York City's South Bronx. While telling similar stories, each narrative has its own unique flavor and characteristics that reveal the crushing nature of poverty in America and recount the lives of those who rise above it. Kozol (*Savage Inequalities*, LJ 9/15/91) describes a neighborhood ravaged by drugs, violence, hunger, AIDS, and antipathy but also one where children defy all the stereotypes. In the South Bronx, where the median income is \$7600 a year and everything breaks down, Kozol reveals that the one thing that has remained resilient is the children. One of the resident children is 15-year-old Alicea, who saw his mother and sister succumb to AIDS, a father incarcerated in prison, and friends entrapped by drugs or violence. Like that of many children, his story is a life of options or despair. The path they pursue is dependent on government leadership. Both books should be required reading for policymakers and those concerned with the plight of the American poor. ?Michael A. Lutes, Univ. of Notre Dame Lib., Ind. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

This is a story about a very different kind of community, in one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country. The question most readers are left with in their hearts is to ask, can this community be changed? And if so, what would it take to make that happen? A useful parameter in this text is that it is written, presumably, from the voices of the children who are in this unknown-to-us reality of dire impoverishment. A valid criticism of the book is that there is not even an indirect suggestion for "what's next" in terms of response to poverty, or change. I assign this book as part of my Community Psychology course, and most with whom I'm discussed this book, when asked what was most memorable, reference the teddy bears in the trees. There is a park where single mothers buy drugs and clean needle exchanges take place, and there is a set-apart place in the park for the children of the women, in order to keep them distant from the transactions. Community members have hung teddy bears on the branches of the trees there, and it is depicted as a fun place for the

kids to play. It makes me think of the daycare in the upscale grocery store, where parents leave the kids while they go buy what they need... At this point late 2009 the content is over 15 years old (Published in 1996, obviously written before published). Demographics have changed and we know of other U.S. communities akin to this one. Still, it's an important book to read to remind us of a sombering relationship of social science constructs: sense of community does not always empower.

I was given this book when I started to work as an inner city physician . I was wanting to understand more about what brings one to a place in their life where they had lost a sense of who they were. I also wanted to know more about what helps people survive. Jonathan Kozal's books are so beautifully written, gentle and extremely moving . They have taught me a lot about the questions that I have and the people I serve. I believe they should be included in every school curriculum.

It is hard to believe these living conditions are still taking place in our country. It is a sad commentary.

Excellent book! My daughter got it for a college course but I also read it and loved it. Really enlightening and awakening!

A good book. Hard to read, but an accurate account of how trick and trap takes down entire cities. Whether by design or default, lots of folks moved to major cities in search of a better life, had same for perhaps a generation, and then were trapped when the jobs left.

I love this book and have read it many times. It brings to life a way of life that many people will never encounter or understand. It shows that most poor people do not chose to live in poverty and in fact haven't always lived this way. No matter how hard you try sometimes bad things just seem to happen. Even in her dire situation people in this book still find a bit of good in other and while there lives seem unimaginable, they are still helping others. Always leaves me wanting to do more! Thank you for all your books Mr. Kozel!

This was a required text for my Intro to Sociology course. I'd have to say it was the best required text I had that semester. Even though it was published in the 90's, it is still very relevant to our society today. I loved the personal stories of the characters and the inside perspective of living in extreme poverty.

and I did. I'm not sure I made it to the very last page as it is sooooo depressing, so sad, so TRUE. I recommend it highly to anyone who thinks this is "post-racial America" and to all who care. The streets are dangerous now. Not just in huge cities, either. These kids and their parents are as brave, as strong, and as smart as they can possibly be. And yet, there just is no "out".

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