



JUNE 2014

OUR PLACE IN THE STORY

BY TIM KELLER

I recently read Matthew Bowman's *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism* (Oxford, 2014). The book recounts that the original established churches of New York were the Dutch Reformed and Anglican churches. Then the evangelical awakening, spearheaded by George Whitefield and others in the late 1730's and 40's, emphasized the importance of a conversion experience through hearing the gospel proclaimed.

Though the older churches rejected Whitefield and the evangelical idea of the need for conversion, the new Presbyterian congregations were opened to him. Over the course of the 18th century, led by the ministers John Gano of First Baptist and John Rodgers of First Presbyterian, these two denominations embraced evangelical ministry and grew and flourished more than other denominations. First

Presbyterian planted Brick, Cedar Street (later Fifth Ave), and Rutgers Presbyterian. First Baptist also saw many new Baptist churches begun around the city. By the first half of the 1800's, evangelical Christianity was the "cultural consensus" and had come to "cultural dominance" in the New York (p. 33-34.) The Fulton Street revival of 1857-1859 may have been its high tide.

After this, however, Protestant churches began to face a fast-rising population of poor and Catholic residents, especially in Lower Manhattan. There, Protestant churches found their attendances quickly dwindling. Their ministries assumed that non-Christians would be culturally Protestant, that they would view their church as a place they ought to be, and would understand the sermons preached. But now they were surrounded by people who would not darken the Protestants'

doors, and found much of what was said incomprehensible.

Bowman also observes that by the 1880's, New York City was becoming the first commercial urban capital, so filled with restaurants, stores, and theaters that simply walking, shopping, and eating became a past-time in itself (pp. 43, 155-165). This damaged the attractive reach of the church, which had always relied on being the main form of communal eating, music, gathering, and instruction in society, drawing the neighbors in to hear the Word preached. Now all these supportive social structures had been superceded.

How did the Protestant churches respond? At first they simply moved from the more multi-ethnic, commercialized areas to residential, Protestant parts of the city nearer Central Park. Another strategy was to erect enormous, stately, beautiful buildings and

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HFNY SPRING BENEFIT — THANK YOU!

Hope for New York's Young Supporters Committee hosted a Spring Benefit on Wednesday, May 7. The night was filled with an inspiring program, great food, drinks, and music, and the awesome company of young New Yorkers passionate about mercy and justice in New York City

(See our photos at <http://goo.gl/NHOSF8>.)

Our Spring Benefit guests gave more than \$88,500 to support our affiliates' work to bring empowerment, restoration, and hope to people in need all over our city! That number, plus a \$50,000 match from an anonymous donor,

means that our young supporters were part of raising more than \$138,500.

Find out more at hfny.org/springbenefit, or email us at youngsupporters@hfny.org if you'd like to learn more about Hope for New York's Young Supporters Committee.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD: REDEEMER'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY WEEKEND IS SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2014

Whether you are a current congregant or a former member/attender of Redeemer we want you to join us for our 25th anniversary weekend.

See more about our anniversary at redeemer.com/25years.

To stay informed about plans for our 25th anniversary, RSVP to

the event page on Facebook at [redeemer.com/FB25](https://www.facebook.com/redeemer.com/FB25) and help us get the word out to other former Redeemerites so that they know what's going on during this special weekend.

Help us by using the Facebook event page to invite friends and get updates so that you can recon-

nect with old Redeemer friends and current congregants in NYC that weekend.

Special events are being planned for the W83 Ministry Center throughout the weekend for founders, diaspora, members and congregants, both past and present. We hope to see you!

COMPASSION IN ACTION: HOPE FOR NEW YORK DISTRIBUTES \$1.3 MILLION IN GRANTS

BY ESTHER LARSON, SENIOR MANAGER OF AFFILIATE DEVELOPMENT

Hope for New York's (HFNY) vision is for a city in which all New Yorkers — every individual, family, neighborhood, and community — flourish through the demonstration of Christ's love through practical acts of compassion.

As Christians, we know that our response to the brokenness and pain we see all around us in New York City should mirror that of Jesus: compassion. Compassion for our fellow human beings, created in the image of Christ, loved by our Creator.

At HFNY, we mobilize volunteers to demonstrate practical compassion every day of the week throughout the City. Through the sacrificial generosity of our donors, we're also able to demonstrate practical compassion through financial grants.

This spring, we were able to invest over \$1.3 million to strengthen the work of our non-profit affiliates across the city, from the Bronx to Bushwick, from Long Island City to Chelsea.

That's \$1.3 million to these amazing organizations directly serving poor or marginalized populations, including the homeless, at-risk youth, immigrants, vulnerable women, and others.

Specifically, this year's grants will meet practical needs including:

- Emergency food supplies for food pantries
- Computers for job training classes
- Sports equipment for youth programs
- Enrichment field trips and college visits for mentoring programs

We also distributed "matching grants" to eight of our affiliates in an effort to encourage new and increased donations to support their work. We are working and praying with these organizations as they seek to fulfill those matching amounts.

We're so thankful for the generosity of so many that makes serving and investing in the flourishing of NYC possible. Please pray for us as we continue to partner with our affiliate non-profits to strengthen and support their work throughout the year, and please pray for our affiliate organizations, that God would provide all that they need to continue their work of loving and serving the poor and marginalized of our city.

To learn more about HFNY's grantmaking process, visit hfny.org/grant-giving.

REDEEMER REPORT

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

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Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(between Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30/11:30 a.m., 5 & 7 p.m.

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(between 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services: 9:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

2013-14 CFW CITY RHYTHMS RECAP

This year, the Center for Faith & Work launched *City Rhythms*, a series focused on exploring a wide spectrum of the key industries and sectors contributing to the overall mosaic of New York City. The specific goals of the series are:

- To explore how each particular vocation is important to and contributes to the overall flourishing of our city
- To invite a deeper awareness and appreciation for fields outside our own
- To demonstrate the interconnectedness of all fields in regards to seeking renewal in our city
- To provide the necessary space and structure for attendees to process his/her own work in light of how God is sovereignly at work in our city

The series began in September, highlighting the fields of Fashion and Finance. James Herring, managing director at a NYC financial institution, and Fiona Diefenbacher, director of the BFA Fashion Design program at Parsons The New School for Design, shared their questions of calling and identity that can be particularly challenging in these fields. Additional events for the month included tours of Manhattan's financial and fashion districts.

October brought a focus on Art with Mason Jar Music's Jon Seale presenting his unique approach to collaboration and the

communication of beauty, and Acoustic Associate Joe Solway of Arup who provided a fascinating behind-the-scenes peek into the long-awaited Second Avenue subway project.

Our winter events included evenings focused on the Food and Marketing/Advertising industries respectively, and we were pleased to begin working with our "resident chef," Katy McNulty, an entrepreneur and founder of The Pixie and the Scout, a custom caterer committed to "cooking and eating toward the future of food."

In January, we introduced monthly theological reflections for each industry given by CFW Executive Director David H. Kim. These talks are available on the faithandwork.org website and have provided a theological perspective related to the respective areas of work explored.

The series resumed in the spring with March's focus on Theater. This event featured a performance by Tony Award Nominee Elizabeth A. Davis and an illuminating panel of theater producers, marketers and experts in the field. April featured the Film industry through a conversation with Rachel Chanoff, curator for various film festivals in our city. We were also excited to premier CFW's Artist-in-Residence Ben Stamper's

newly commissioned work *Presence: 5 Haikus for 5 Boros*, and a theological response to the film by Baylor professor, Joe Kickasola. The series concluded in May with a celebratory focus on urban planning via the work of City Planner Jonathan Keller.



Amilee Watkins

Overall, the series engaged over 700 participants and highlighted 10 distinctive industries in the City. We hope that through the exploration of all these important sectors, God's love for this city becomes even more evident, as he calls us to re-imagine our own work in light of his larger redemptive purposes.



For more details and resources from each of these events, visit faithandwork.org/cityrhythms



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sanctuaries, seeking to draw people in and assert their presence in the public space from which they felt expelled (pp. 53-84.) None of these things stopped the decline.

Finally Bowman traces out how the crisis split the church. Slowly but surely some began to move away from a confidence in preaching and in the transmission of teaching and truth to bring about conversion. At the more scholarly level figures like Charles A. Briggs of Union Theological Seminary taught that the Bible contained errors, that only the main story-lines of the Bible were God's Word, that human reason and experience had to guide us rather than only the Scripture. To appeal to the modern person, it was argued, we had to abandon the belief that the Bible was completely truthful and the key to all life-change.

At the practical level, Presbyterian ministers like Henry Van Dyke at Brick Presbyterian sought to change people through the arts and the aesthetic experience, while Henry Sloan Coffin at Madison Avenue Presbyterian

pioneered the full-service church that provided social and educational services. Bowman writes: "If redemption had come by hearing for generations of evangelicals since the Reformation, in New York City ... it would now come through *doing*." (p. 112) Rather than try to convert people through changing their beliefs, the churches sought to make people followers of Christ through loving action, social reform, and education.

The other reaction to the secularizing city was taken by the Baptists. While Presbyterians and others moved toward what would be called Liberalism, Baptists moved toward what came to be called Fundamentalism. I. M. Haldeman, who pastored First Baptist for almost 50 years and John Roach Straton of Calvary Baptist developed a very combative stance toward the city. Fundamentalist preaching also moved away from historic preaching because it began to focus much more on materialism and moral evils such as drinking and sexual promiscuity. To show how these two pathways

diverged more and more, Bowman has two concluding chapters, one on the fundamentalist Straton and one on the liberal Harry Emerson Fosdick, who was the first pastor of Riverside Church.

In a short newsletter article it is impossible to avoid over-generalization. Yet it is hard not to see that by the second half of the 20th century, the older kind of Protestant evangelicalism—true to historic orthodox doctrine, yet also intellectually robust and socially engaged—was weak or vanished in New York City. And now it is growing back. There are at least a 100 churches that we can discern that have been begun over the last 20 years in center city New York (and some older churches renewed) that are closer to the older kind of Christianity that used to flourish here. However, we too face the issue of a culture that is not interested in what we have to say. How do we reach them?

We must not make the same mistake again. We must not respond with either withdrawal nor with assimilation to the spirit of the age.