



OCTOBER 2016

CIVILITY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

BY TIM KELLER

This month I will join with Nicholas Kristof of the *New York Times* and John Inazu of the Washington University Law School, to discuss “Civility in the Public Square.” This could be read as nothing more than an appeal for people to *be nicer* to one another. However, I hope it will be an introduction for many to a much more crucial and ambitious project.

“It could be argued that America has never really been a genuinely pluralistic, perspective-diverse, free society.”

It could be argued that America has never really been a genuinely pluralistic, perspective-diverse, free society. We have never been a place where people who deeply

differ with one another, whose views offend and outrage one another, but who nonetheless treat one another with respect and hear each other out. Those who have held the reins of cultural power — its greatest academic centers, its most powerful corporations, and the media — have always excluded unpopular voices and minority views that fell on the wrong side of the public morality of the day. Many white evangelical Christians in the 1980’s and 90’s wanted to occupy those places of power and showed little concern at the time to create a society that respected communities with sharply differing moral visions.

Today cultural power has shifted, but those newly come to power seem to show as little interest in genuine pluralism as did the cultural elites in the past. If anything, observers argue that different perspectives and viewpoints are treated with even less respect and courtesy than in the past. The agenda has become not to engage, but to marginalize and silence.

What will it take to create genuinely pluralistic society? That will start not in the courtroom (though the courts are important) but primarily in neighborhoods, at the local level. John Inazu’s *Confident Pluralism: Surviving and Thriving* (Continued on page 3)

HOPE FOR NEW YORK 25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY CORRIE MITCHELL

This year, Hope for New York turns 25. Twenty-five years of holistically serving the poor and marginalized in our city. Twenty-five years of doing justice and loving mercy. Twenty-five years of watching God transform the lives of our fellow New Yorkers. Twenty-five years of speaking love and hope into our city. And to think it all

started with a group of young people who, despite their lack of experience or training, responded to the call with a simple, “Let’s do it.”

Go back with us, if you will, to New York City in the winter of 1989. It was the coldest one in 40 years, lots of snow on the ground. Yvonne Dodd Sawyer had moved to New York from

Dallas, like most transplants, in pursuit of professional advancement — in her case, as a writer. She was living on the Upper East Side, two blocks from where the small, newly started Redeemer Presbyterian Church, led by an unknown pastor, Timothy Keller, was meeting. Although Sawyer had (Continued on page 4)

WEST SIDE CHURCH PLANT LAUNCH PILOTED BY REDEEMER NATIVE

The pastor chosen to be the West Side Site Pastor for the launch of the first daughter church has been a part of Redeemer life, culture, and ministry for a long time. Michael Keller, along with his wife Sara and daughters Lucy (nearly 6) and Kate (4 in January) have attended the Westside congregation for the past seven years, where they have been active in ministry, as well as in starting and establishing a successful college ministry, Reformed University Ministry.

Michael Keller was born in Hopewell, VA, in 1980 and moved to NYC in 1989, with the rest of the Keller family. He grew up on Roosevelt Island with his two brothers (David, now in private equity, and Jonathan, a NYC City Planner) and watched his mother and father plant Redeemer Presbyterian Church. He attended NYC public school for both elementary and middle school, and attended The Stony Brook School for high school.

He graduated from Vanderbilt University with Honors, where he double majored in Psychology and History. Although raised in the middle of

a gospel-centered church, Michael traces his actual conversion to the RUF Fellowship on Vanderbilt's campus, as does his wife, Sara, to whom he became engaged his senior year.

After their marriage, Michael and Sara returned to New

Harvard University in Education.

Remembering the part that RUF ministry had played in his and Sara's conversion, Michael returned to New York to pioneer an urban model of RUF campus groups called City Campus Ministry. He has spoken to college students three times a week for the last seven years, honing his apologetic skills, and accompanying the Redeemer team to Oxford University apologetic conferences over the past five years.

Michael is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program at the Free University of Amsterdam in Computational Linguistics applied to Historical Theology, specifically Jonathan Edwards. Sara has just completed her BSN from Columbia University, and is currently working on her MSN at Columbia in Pediatrics.

When asked how the church plant will unfold, Michael answered, "I have been tasked to start a new site of the Westside Redeemer congregation. My weekly duties will be organizing, planning, and executing the launch of this West Side congregation plant, and

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Kate, Michael, Sara and Lucy Keller

York, living in the traditional four-story walk-up with an air-shaft view while he worked for New Life church in Queens. He then attended Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, receiving both an M.Div and a Th.M in Apologetics. Following seminary Michael joined the staff of Citylife Presbyterian Church in Boston and for five years was the Pastor of Community Life.

During that time Sara taught high school at Boston Trinity Academy, and coached girls' basketball and soccer. She also found time to earn an MA at

REDEEMER REPORT

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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.

THE WONDER AND FEAR OF TECHNOLOGY

*Redeemer's Center for Faith & Work will hold its 6th annual Faith & Work Conference
November 11-12, 2016 on The Wonder and Fear of Technology.*

Technology, both theoretically and practically, has staked its claim in our cultural moment. It is here to stay. This dominance has fostered much positive innovation, yet also exposed a great deal of fear and anxiety about our future, prodding the theological realm for greater nuance and application. Is technology inherently at odds with tradition? Join us as we examine the future of work and develop new thought on the intersection of faith and technology.

Tim Keller will launch the program on Friday evening, and a host of other distinguished presenters will follow, including Derek Thompson (Senior Editor at *The Atlantic* and author of *A World Without Work*), Alissa Wilkinson (Writer at Vox and Christianity Today), Peter Thiel (Co-founder of Paypal), Nigel Cameron (President and CEO, Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies) and others. Performances will be given by Adam Wade (Girls, Inside Amy Schumer) and The Brilliance.

CFW will also hold a Pre-Conference Intensive on November 11 for those interested in further exploring the holistic approach to faith and work integration. CFW Executive Director David H. Kim will provide training and instruction with a behind-the-scenes look at the theological foundations and organizational structures necessary for faith and work.

For more information and to register for both events, visit cfwconference.com

CIVILITY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

through Deep Difference (University of Chicago Press, 2016) shows the way. He calls for us to come together with our neighbors around what he calls “aspirations” of tolerance, humility, and patience. “Tolerance” is neither indifference (we may be appalled at the other person’s views) nor acceptance. It means rather treating the other *person* with respect even if we find her ideas difficult to endure.

“Humility” is not to doubt the truth of one’s own beliefs, but to recognize the limits of what we can prove to others. Even if your Christian, Muslim, or secular views of the world and morality are true, there is no way to prove them to all rational persons. And that should humble you.

Finally, “patience” does not mean passivity, nor does it

mean to countenance injustice or evil. Yet if there is tolerance and humility, they should lead us to also be slow to posit motives, to be careful but persistent in our efforts to understand, to even empathize and to take time to communicate our own point of view. In sum, we should tolerate rather than demonize, we should be humble rather than defensive, and we should seek patiently to work toward as much agreement as possible, rather than simply trying to coerce the other side.

There are many good reasons to wonder if the project of “confident pluralism” can succeed. The most telling criticism is that our social institutions no longer can produce these aspirations, traditionally called “virtues” or qualities of

character. Indeed, our culture seems to breed their opposites. Tolerance and patience are now seen as inferior to outrage, protest, and anger. Self-assertion is again, as in ancient times, far more valued than humility. Our society is becoming radically individualistic, and religious authority is perceived to be one of the main barriers to human freedom and flourishing.

There is another barrier. Face-to-face interaction — not video conferencing, e-mail, phone calls, or social media — is the best place to recapture and practice these aspirations. It is much harder to caricature, insult, and denounce people as evil fools when you are three feet away. But today fewer and fewer of our relationships are face-to-face.

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JOIN US: REMEMBER MERCY

David's lament in Psalm 13, "How long, O Lord?" often becomes personally real and relevant in our lives. We live in a broken world — a broken world compounded with personal sins. Our own brokenness can be utterly crushing, but this is where the Diaconate comes in. Our deacons and deaconesses are here to walk alongside of those going through hardship in our church family.

Recently, the Diaconate was able to provide financial assistance to a family torn apart by mental illness and death. When

we handed a check to one of the family members who had been holding himself together with stoicism, he clutched the check in his hand, broke down and said, "No one has ever given me money to help me, ever." He almost did not want to cash the check so that "I can be reminded of what it's like to receive help." It's heartbreaking to encounter a young man who had not experienced much kindness in life, but it also highlights our need for God's grace and mercy.

With "Rise Where You Are"

being our ministry theme this year, we would like to invite you to join us in living out mercy. Please help the Diaconate by identifying and nominating fellow Redeemer members who are compassionate, servant-hearted and spiritually mature to be candidates for the Diaconate. Nomination month is November. And consider providing financial gifts to support the work of the Diaconate online and/or on Special Offering Sunday on November 20.

We look forward to your participation.

HFNY 25TH ANNIVERSARY ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

been a long-time believer, when she heard Keller preach about serving the needs of the city, something in her heart gravitated toward the idea.

And so Sawyer and a few other Redeemerites hosted a half-day workshop to see who else among them was similarly interested in serving their city. Jeff White preached on the Good Samaritan, and the group of about 50 people brainstormed — their main focus: What does New York need? And, Sawyer says, almost everything from their original list got accomplished! "What did we know? We were just a bunch of twenty-somethings and thirty-somethings who were out to change the world," Sawyer says. "And, by golly, some of us did!"

Of course, it took a few years. In 1992, Hope for New York officially opened its doors,

so to speak, as a 501(c)(3), partnering with three affiliates: Bailey House, Operation Exodus, and St. Paul's House. These were three organizations where not only were members of Redeemer already serving regularly, but they also focused their efforts on two of the largest areas of need in New York City at the time: homelessness and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. This was contextualized community ministry. And it was about filling gaps.

As Redeemer was growing and filling the gap of strong evangelical churches in New York, HFNY was giving people a chance to do volunteer service on behalf of the church — to use their gifts as MBAs and accountants and lawyers to be real assets to small non-profit organizations whose accounting was in a shoebox, for exam-

ple. (Yes, that is a true HFNY story.)

And then there was a significant shift — from supporting ministries that already existed in the city to actually helping start some that would fill needs not yet being met. That's how Avail NYC (at the time called Midtown Pregnancy Support Center) started. Sometimes they failed, but that was okay, too. This was all in line with Keller's entrepreneurial idea of how people should use their gifts, Sawyer says. "People came to us with an idea, and we either placed them somewhere or had them start it. We were just really good at filling gaps."

And that's exactly what Hope for New York has been doing for 25 years — resourcing and connecting New Yorkers to do justice and love mercy

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RISE WHERE YOU ARE OFFERS SPIRITUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

BY MAX ANDERSON

This ministry year's theme is directly tied to the Rise vision of becoming a movement of people and churches that serve the entire city at an entirely new level. Today 5% of center city New Yorkers are part of a gospel-centered church. As we stated last spring, we want to see that number rise to 15% in the next ten years. However, it is unlikely we will ever see the church rising to this level if we each think someone else will do it. All of us have to play an active role!

The point is, **we cannot grow a movement that brings long-term gospel renewal in New York City**

without YOU!

The "Rise Where You Are" slogan is meant to catalyze us into mission, so that we all be-



come less *consumers* of ministry and more *producers* of ministry; to perceive ourselves as not just residents, but as being *sent* into the city.

What does this mean for you?

This year we are asking each

of you to wrestle with the vision and specifically rise by 1) faithfully and proactively *discerning* God's calling in your life and 2) actively *engaging* the city with the gospel in unique ways that you can concretely point to at the end of the year.

We are excited to announce that this November we will take a big step when we will introduce a new Spiritual Self-Assessment which will further equip you in discerning God's calling in your life. The spiritual self-assessment will be a tool for thinking through where you are spiritually and what God might be calling you to do in this season. Stay tuned!

CIVILITY IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

Is there any hope, then, that we can move forward into genuine pluralism? I don't know, but I do know what Christians can do. First, Christians can admit their contribution to and responsibility for the current situation. Much of the hostility to religious freedom comes from people with memories of how the churches, when they had more social power, marginalized people who differed with them. We should admit this.

But secondly, we should follow James K.A. Smith's proposal in his June 2016, Bavinck Lecture at Kampen titled "Reforming Public Theology." There he says Christians

should consciously seek to form people who are capable of tolerance, humility, and patience through public worship. We should consider how the Christian practice of confession could engender humility. We should remember how praying in worship for our neighbors, even our opponents, in light of the cross and Jesus' costly forgiveness of us, can create both tolerance and patience. There are also innumerable biblical texts to be preached and studied, from those describing the life of the Jewish exiles in Babylon to the Good Samaritan parable. They all direct Christians to show sacrificial love, not just tolerance, toward those

with whom we differ deeply.

Smith concludes: "Recognizing (and documenting) the way that Christian worship forms citizens *for* pluralism might be a way to counter the "religion-is-poison" narrative by out-narration, showing that it is in fact Christianity (and perhaps religious communities more broadly) that do the work of forming citizens for common life and the public good."

I believe that is exactly right. Could the Christian church become one of or even the main factory where good citizens for a pluralistic society are formed? Yes it could. Who would have thought it?



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HFNY 25TH ANNIVERSARY ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 4)

in their neighborhoods. Today, we partner with more than 40 affiliates to serve the city's poor and marginalized in tangible ways. We've invested more than \$12M in direct grants, capacity building assistance, and leadership development to our non-profit partners. We mobilize thousands of volunteers to use their time and skills to love their neighbors. We also part-

ner with three other churches that have a heart for showing Christ's love to our city.

We are nowhere near finished. We yearn to see a city where Christians are the first ones in line to serve the poor and marginalized, where churches are working together to solve poverty issues, and where faith-based nonprofits are thriving. And that means

expanding. We hope to invest in twice as many non-profit affiliates as we do now, incubate start-up nonprofits that will serve New Yorkers holistically and sustainably, and cultivate new church partners to activate a movement of Christians to love and serve their city.

Here's to another 25 years of bringing the hope of the gospel to our neighbors in need.

WEST SIDE CHURCH PLANT ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 2)

meeting with congregants and leaders who decide to make this site their new home."

"I have been around Redeemer my whole life, so it is exciting to be on staff and actually work at Redeemer. The WS congregation has been my home for so many years, it feels completely natural to work for it as well."

When not busy with ministry, family, and helping friends

and family with their IT problems, Michael says, "If you know me, you know I love Jacob's Pickles, and all the people who work there. I have a hard time motivating myself to exercise, but I love playing pickup soccer and ultimate Frisbee at Riverside Park during the week. I also use my bicycle as my primary mode of transportation around New York, so maybe that counts as exercise."

He went on to say "I saw with my own eyes that the best way to reach New Yorkers is to plant churches and I'm excited to start this new congregation, both to meet the needs of current Redeemerites better, as well as to mobilize others to serve and care for their city in tangible ways."

Sign up for email updates about the new site at redeemer.com/newwestsite.