

DECEMBER 2016

A CULTURE OF PLENTY

BY TIM KELLER

You have no doubt received, and will continue to receive, many pleas for year-end giving to a vast variety of charitable causes. This is *not* another one!

Instead, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the women and men, singles and families who sacrificially gave to all Redeemer's causes this year. The Rise campaign deserves special mention, of course, but I also want to thank those who gave faithfully to the general offering, the Operating Budget (that pays the mortgage, rents the facilities, funds the salaries and keeps the lights on.) Thanks for supporting the Easter Sacrificial Of-

fering for Hope For New York (and His Toy Store), for giving the money entrusted to the diaconate for their mercy work, and countless other gifts towards mission trips, RUS City Campus College Ministry, and other ministry projects.

Of course, all our praise should be primarily to God. He has given us every cent and possession we have, the "plenty" that will supply the needs of others (2 Corinthians 8:14). And he alone can make our fearful, selfish hearts generous. Without that help, we always feel poor. It takes an experience of God's costly, self-donating love in Christ to unlock our hearts and purses and

enable us to sing "Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold. ... Take my heart it is thine own, it shall be thy royal throne, it shall be thy royal throne." His Spirit makes us feel that we have plenty for ourselves, and only then we will be generous to others. (1 Timothy 6:7-8; 18-19)

If we are going to realize the vision of the Rise Campaign for our city, we will need to deepen this "culture of plenty" and generosity in every congregation.

So all praise to God for his help this year in moving us toward that goal. And thank you for your gifts.

THANKS FOR MAKING HIS TOY STORE HAPPEN

We at Hope for New York want to thank the hundreds of you who donated to make this Christmas special for your neighbors in need through His Toy Store! You're bringing hope to so many — from moms and dads in residential recovery programs, to the formerly incarcerated reconnecting with their families, and the working poor in low-income neighborhoods.

Every year Hope for New York hosts pop-up stores across

New York City with the help of our partner churches and affiliates. At these stores parents from neighborhoods all the way from Park Slope to the South Bronx can shop for brand new toys for their children at no cost.

This year, thanks to your generosity, we're hosting 11 pop-up His Toy Stores (our biggest number yet!) all over New York City on December 3 and 10. Across all of these stores we'll be providing 2,614 toys to 1,150 families. Take

a moment to reflect on just how incredible that is!

Think of it this way: thousands of smiles will light up on Christmas morning thanks to your help!

Generosity like yours helps families like Seanette's experience joy this Christmas.

Seanette has shopped at His Toy Store every year since it came to the South Bronx in partnership with *A House on*
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2016 ADVENT WORSHIP SCHEDULE

DOWNTOWN

December 24 Lessons and Carols service:

5:00 p.m. service.
No childcare at this service.

December 25 Christmas morning service:

9:30 a.m. service only.
No childcare at this service.

EAST SIDE

December 18 Lessons and Carols services:

9:45 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. services.
A special morning schedule with second morning service added.
No classes for Kindergarten - 5th grade.

December 24 Christmas Eve service:

4:00 and 5:30 p.m. services.
Regis High School, 55 E 84th St.
No childcare at these services.

December 25 Christmas morning service:

10:30 a.m. service only.
Limited childcare for infants to 4-years-old.

WEST SIDE

December 18 Lessons and Carols services:

8:30, 10:00 and 11:30 a.m.: Orchestra, soloists, carol singing, scripture readings.
5:00 and 6:45 p.m.: Jazz band, string quartet, soloists, carol singing, scripture readings.
No classes for Kindergarten - 5th grade.

December 24 Christmas Eve service:

5 p.m. service. Childcare will be available for nursery to pre-K.

December 25 Christmas morning services:

9:30 and 11:30 a.m. services.
No elementary classes at these services. No evening services.

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.

CHRISTIANS AS AGENTS OF RECONCILIATION

BY DAVID BISGROVE

It has been a tumultuous political season, punctuated by an outcome last Tuesday that, regardless of your political persuasion, was largely unexpected. Some are jubilant while others are despondent, leaving us more divided after the election than we were prior. How are Christians to process all that has happened? How can we help others?

To help answer that question I have included here some thoughts I shared at a recent event hosted at W83 entitled 'Civility in the Public Square.' I have edited them in the hope that they will help you both process your own experience of the election and positively shape conversations you are having with others. Because regardless of who you voted for or your response to the results, our primary citizenship is heavenly and therefore our primary loyalty is to our King who has called each of us to be ambassadors of his gospel of peace and reconciliation.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.
— 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

A little over 150 years ago America was being torn apart by civil war; a fracture rooted

in deep differences that threatened the very nature of what it means to be a nation defined by the phrase *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one). As you also may know that crisis elicited from the fertile mind of Abraham Lincoln words that have become canonized as American scripture:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

I am in no way suggesting that the current state of our political landscape matches the horror of the conflict over which Lincoln presided. But his words, *we are not enemies but friends*, speak to a shared optimism that *e pluribus unum* is not an empty slogan but a virtuous ideal to which we should strive.

So let me suggest three ways in which Christians can embody a disposition that is at the core of our faith and founder; qualities that flow from the gospel that Jesus taught and lived, and qualities that are critical if we are to be his *ambassadors of reconciliation* that is at the heart of his gospel and our calling (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).

The first quality is *gospel shaped humility*, which is an antidote to discourse that is too often convinced of the superior virtue of its position and therefore too resistant to change. Gospel humility, in which we acknowledge and confess both our own sin in contributing to the toxic division in which we find our-

selves *and* our need for wisdom from others, opens up dialogues where listening becomes more important than speaking, and our posture towards those with whom we disagree is marked by empathy and compassion.

The second is *gospel shaped grace*, which is an antidote to discourse that demonizes and confers the status of enemy on those with whom we disagree. God's grace reminds us that while we were his enemy (Romans 5:5-8) he demonstrated his love to us through Christ's death. This undeserved favor that God has shown us liberates us from the need to feel superior towards others and creates a spirit of love and generosity that allows us to reach across our differences.

The final quality is *gospel shaped hope*, which is an antidote to a nostalgic longing for some glorious past that grips so many people; what Terry Eagleton in his book entitled *Culture* defines as a longing for *the paradise we have lost*. This kind of nostalgia can quickly devolve into fear, cynicism, distrust and despair. Gospel hope, rooted in the resurrection, reign and promised return of Jesus, allows us to envision and work towards a future in which one day swords will be beaten into ploughshares (Isaiah 2:4) and where justice and righteousness will roll on forever like a mighty river (Amos 5:24).

So as we move forward from November 8th may God help us embody gospel shaped humility, grace and hope so that it strengthens our bonds of affection and reminds us that we are not enemies, but friends.

MAKE THIS A CHRISTMAS OF HOPE

BY ELISE CHONG

What is your vision for New York City?

For the past 25 years, our vision at Hope for New York has been a New York City in which all New Yorkers experience economic, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual flourishing through the demonstration of Christ's love.

We want to see neighborhoods and lives renewed. Lives like Vianeli's. At eight years old, Vianeli was admitted into foster care because of an unsafe family situation. But through Operation Exodus, an afterschool mentoring program in Washington Heights, she experienced consistency and love — and has since devoted her life to empowering children and teens through the very program that supported her.

"I speak to young people not as a victim, but as a leader, who is an overcomer through Christ," Vianeli said. "I am able to speak and lead from experience, unafraid, believing that God can

make something positive out of what seemed to be the worst possible situation."

As we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we look to the future with excitement. In the next 10 years, we plan to incubate new non-profits to holistically serve our city, activate New York City churches to love their neighbors, and unite New Yorkers to provide solutions to poverty.

By 2027, we want to expand our non-profit partners from 45 to 90 affiliates and increase our church partners from 3 to 30. Just imagine the kind of impact this could have on our city!

But we can't achieve this without you. Last year, because of the generosity of our donors, we gave more than \$1.7 million in grants and mobilized over 3,500 volunteers to serve more than 43,000 hours.

Will you give by December 31 and help us continue to serve the poor of our city? You can

make your year-end by:

- Giving online at hfny.org/givehfny
- Sending a check to Hope for New York, 1166 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 1610, New York, NY 10023
- Asking your company if they match charitable donations
- Becoming a monthly supporter by joining The Hope Exchange at hfny.org/hopeexchange/

Your gift will enable us to go deeper and wider with our work next year — partnering with more churches to mobilize more Christians giving and serving in this city, strengthening more local non-profits, and loving more and more of our neighbors.

May you have a Christmas full of joy and hope!

RECAP: *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.

On November 11-12, the Center for Faith & Work hosted their 6th annual conference on *The Wonder and Fear of Technology*

to develop new thought on the intersection of faith and technology and examine the future of work.

Opening night featured Derek Thompson (Senior Editor, *The Atlantic*) as he discussed how work has shaped American identity in the last 200 years and how automation will both change and reaffirm the meaning that people derive from their work. Tim Keller (New York *Times* best selling author and Redeemer Presbyterian Church Pastor) then

spoke on how we move toward a re-enchanted view of God's creation and the technological tools we employ. Alissa Wilkinson further explored a re-enchanted worldview through the lens of popular television and film narratives. The trio then participated in a panel discussion with CFW Executive Director, David H. Kim.

Saturday morning began with worship led by The Brilliance before David H. Kim discussed
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THANK GOD FOR HIS PERFECT GIFTS

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

—James 1:17

This past Thanksgiving Season we had our annual Special Offering for the Diaconate's Mercy Fund. In this quiet moment, as the offering baskets were passed we were able to quiet our hearts and listen.

We heard the beautiful tes-

timonies of congregants whose lives had been touched by the Diaconate ministry. And we on the Diaconate cannot have done our work without the faithful and generous gifts from you. These stories often resonate in our own hearts. They can call up moments in our own lives or the lives of our families or friends when the touch of God's love practically and personally has changed us forever, all in a single experience. One testimony becomes a chorus of thanksgiving

for a whole congregation.

So during this holiday season, we are thankful for you dear congregants for sharing what you have to help bring the tender love of Jesus to the needy brothers and sisters in our midst. Please accept our gratitude and our invitation to continue your giving toward our work of restoration through the Diaconate ministry.

To give to our Mercy Fund visit redeemer.com/mercygift.

CITY TO CITY INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVE RECAP

BY MEREDITH DENTON, INTENSIVE PROJECT MANAGER

The International Intensive is a four-week training program designed to equip urban church planters by exposing them to urban church planting concepts, theological resources to grow churches, leadership modules, and other church planting principles. On top of the training, and just as crucial, strong relationships are built during the Intensive. The relationships formed over these four weeks become strong sources of support and accountability for these families, and deep friendships are made that last for years.

On October 15, Redeemer City to City welcomed 23 church planters and trainers to this year's International Intensive in New York City. Of these 23 planters, eight were able to bring their spouses, and two couples brought their children. Church planting couples that attend training together have the clearest vision as they enter ministry. What a delight to see these families to-

gether, to get to know their kids, and to watch these couples be encouraged and strengthened by this training.

The twenty cities represented in this year's class are: Accra, Al Ain, Athens, Barcelona, Christchurch, Dublin, Istanbul, Krakow, Madrid, Melbourne, Nairobi, Paris, Pretoria, San Jose, Santiago, Stockholm, Svitlovodsk, Sydney, Tel Aviv, and Warsaw.

For the first time, we had global trainers participate in the International Intensive. These seven trainers received additional teaching on gospel-based training concepts. Three new sessions were added this year: a session on Public Faith, a Church Planting Experience Panel given by New York City pastors, and a three-day Parakaleo training conference. Parakaleo provides specific support and training to church planter wives. Jessica Tam from Sydney said, "Parakaleo — Oh my, where do I start? The ses-

sions were so insightful, full of depth, and really helped to expound what it means to [seek to] live gospel-centered lives — in thought, action, and in our hearts."

This past month has been full of learning, fellowship, and encouragement for the church planters, global trainers, and CTC staff. Shebu John, church planter from Melbourne said, "The Intensive was a deep, rich time to reorient my heart to the gospel, stir my affections for the Kingdom, and give me a glimpse into Christ's heart for the nations." What a privilege to see what God is doing in New York City and around the world through His people. As the members of the International Intensive Class of 2016 return to their cities, please pray that the knowledge gained and friendships made during these past four weeks will encourage them as they seek to build gospel movements in cities through new churches.



1166 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
16TH FLOOR
NEW YORK, NY 10036

FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK NY
PERMIT # 349

HIS TOY STORE THANKS ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

Beekman four years ago. She not only shops for her little sister and her aunt's four kids (ages 16, 12, 11, 11, and 5), all of whom live with her and her mom, but, as a staff member at *A House on Beekman*, she also volunteers at the South Bronx store each year.

"It means a lot to the families," Seanette says. "There was one time my momma had a co-worker who was living in the

shelter, and she was like, 'I don't know how my kids are gonna get Christmas toys.' So we gave them our tickets so they could go and get something. In times of need like that, His Toy Store comes through."

And His Toy Store is so much more than a one-time outreach. It serves as an avenue for our neighbors to get connected to local ministries for year-round

support. That means they're getting connected to after-school programs, homeless shelters, addiction recovery programs, and more. All of this because of your support of His Toy Store. Thank you!

Follow @hopefornewyork on Twitter and @hfnny on Instagram to stay in the loop about our ongoing work across the city to serve the poor and marginalized.

CONFERENCE RECAP ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

the critical role of technology in our God-given mandate to cultivate the world. Engineer and author Derek C. Schuurman then explained how a Christian perspective of technology can be informed by the biblical narrative, and framed by the themes of creation, fall, redemption and restoration. The morning session ended with author Nancy Jo Sales and sociologist Felicia Wu Song discussing the effects of social media on in-person relationships and our capacity for

empathy.

The final session of the conference looked at how humans can shape the future as stewards of technology. Programmer Jane Stewart Adams examined the ways data-driven strategies can perpetuate discrimination in hiring practices. Nigel Cameron (CEO, Center for Policy on Emerging Technologies) discussed the necessity of human wisdom for technological development and how Christians can develop a non-naive optimism

about the future of technology.

Closing conversations for the conference looked at how the gospel rightly orders our world so that our technologies can bring hopeful fear and wonder that reflects not only our image but God's glory.

The weekend was a fantastic starting point for further conversations on how the gospel replaces current normative models of technology that spawn fear with a fuller notion of the divine signature that has authored us all.