

JANUARY 2018

CULTURAL (DIS) ENGAGEMENT

BY TIM KELLER

Last October's Agora event at W83rd with Michael Gerson brought to the fore the question of how Christians engage in the public square in our cultural moment. The question kept coming up: isn't there a fast-growing hostility to religion in general and orthodox Christian faith in particular? Many Christians seek to integrate their faith with their work and be "faithfully present" (to use James D. Hunter's term) in every sphere of public culture. But isn't the welcome mat being withdrawn? Over the last 2-3 years we have seen a series of high profile candi-

dates for jobs (e.g. U.S. circuit judge, company CEO) embattled or rejected for their religious views. One candidate for a job was assailed by a U.S. Senator for his belief that faith in Jesus Christ was the only way of salvation.

In the past these kinds of views, while certainly always unpopular, were not considered political positions that made one unfit for public office. But today they are, in the minds of a growing number of people. This is happening in hundreds of thousand other, less visible arenas. Is it not, then, time to stop talking about Christian

cultural engagement?

Christians must 'know the times and seasons' (1 Chronicles 12:32). Cultures and societies can be more or less resistant to Christian faith. "Winter" time describes a society that is hostile, perhaps even violently so. "Spring" is a situation in which the church is seen by many as dangerous, but faith is nonetheless getting traction with growing numbers of people. "Summer" is a society in which the culture has largely embraced the Christian faith and believers feel quite at home in society. "Autumn" is a society that is
(Continued on page 8)

RESEARCH AT REDEEMER COUNSELING SERVICES

Redeemer Counseling Services is shaped at its core by the foundation of the Gospel and its power to transform and heal lives. Our primary aim in our counseling approach has been to make the gospel central in the counseling process. For over a decade, counselors at Redeemer Counseling have collaborated to create a dis-

tinct Gospel-Centered Psychotherapy, a framework based on biblical foundations that supplements and transforms the counseling process by making it Gospel-centered.

Along with Redeemer Churches and Ministries, Redeemer Counseling has a love for the Gospel and cultural renewal. Since 2012, Redeemer

Counseling began conducting research to validate Gospel-Centered Psychotherapy and to build credibility in the field of psychology. Then just last year we were given a very special opportunity when one of our counselors, Elena E. Kim, was granted \$15,000 by The John Templeton Foundation
(Continued on page 10)

HOW DON'T WALK BY WILL CHANGE YOUR VIEW OF NYC

BY HOPE FOR NEW YORK

Andrea Yee volunteered with Don't Walk By, an annual outreach to serve our neighbors living on the streets, for the first time in February, 2016, and it changed the way she viewed the city she has called home for nine years now.

She says Don't Walk By gave her a sense of ownership of the city. She was able to talk with her homeless neighbors as just that — neighbors, rather than as strangers.

“Volunteering with Don't Walk By provided the opportunity, support, and tools to live out Mark 12 where we are called to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength AND to love our neighbor as ourselves,” Andrea, who is a member at Redeemer West Side, said.

She learned that a simple “hello” could make all the

difference. That a small interaction can make a bigger impact than you might realize. “Every person is wonderfully and beautifully created and deserves to be recognized and known,” Andrea said.

Throughout the day, Andrea was able to meet other first-time Don't Walk By volunteers. Together, they talked about the mutual feeling of being called to spend the day serving the city. It was a powerful moment that really drew them together as a team.

“It reminded me of one of my favorite C.S. Lewis quotes,” Andrea said. “*What draws people to be friends is that they see the same truth, they share it.*”

Andrea considers serving with Don't Walk By a highlight of her year, and it has made a lasting impact on how she looks at the city.

“If you consider NYC your

home, you need to volunteer with Don't Walk By just once,” Andrea said. “Also, make sure to wear two pairs of socks!”

Don't Walk by is an outreach of The Rescue Alliance, a collaboration of faith-based organizations working together to restore the well-being of homeless men, women, and children in New York City.

Every Saturday in February, volunteers will canvas the streets of Manhattan, meeting individuals and inviting them back to an anchor church where they are offered a hot meal, clothing, basic medical care, and an opportunity to connect with holistic residential recovery programs.

Visit hfny.org/dwb for more information and to sign up for one of the four outreaches in February.

REDEEMER REPORT

Cregan Cooke, Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

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

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
Office: 1166 Avenue of the Americas, 16th Floor, New York, NY 10036
212-808-4460 (T) 212-808-4465 (F) redeemer.com

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

West Side Church Plant:
NY Society for Ethical Culture
2 W. 64th St.
(at Central Park West)
Service: 10:30 a.m.

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

SHORT-TERM MISSION SUNDAYS 2018

Redeemer's 2018 Short-Term Mission trips will be highlighted at all services on Missions Sunday, January 21 (East Side, Downtown, and West Side) and February 3 (Lincoln Square). Members of our past mission teams will be sharing testimonies and answering questions about previous and upcoming trips at the Missions Table during coffee hour. This year, we will make 17 trips to South Africa, the Philippines, Tokyo, Madagascar, Guatemala, and more!

What is your Short Term Mission IQ?

Q: *What exactly is a Short Term Mission trip?*

A: Mission trips are special endeavors where a team of 10-20 people travels internationally to serve a church in a cross-cultural context. Teams may carry out social justice and mercy projects, discuss how faith informs our work, provide medical care, present community outreach concerts, lead children's Bible classes or teach about entrepreneurship (among many other possibilities!) while spreading the love of Christ.

Q: *How do you determine where mission teams go?*

A: We identify churches we serve through our connection to City to City, an organization dedicated to church planting in global cities (redeemercitytocity.org). We serve international church plants which partner with City to City.

Q: *How do you decide what kind of work is done overseas?*

A: The teams initiate projects based on the directives and needs of the hosting church planter/pastor.

Q: *Who should go on a mission trip?*

A: There is no personality type best suited for a mission trip. Each individual is gifted with a unique set of skills, interests, hobbies, and passions they can bring to form a well-rounded team.

Q: *What is the time commitment?*

A: Team preparation begins several months before the trip. Teams meet at least five times before they travel. In addition to holding discussions on raising funds and preparing for our specific tasks/programs, we will be spending a significant amount of time building our team into a cohesive group of brothers and sisters in Christ.

Q: *Why does our church encourage Short-Term Mission trips?*

A: The vision of Redeemer's Short-Term Mission is based on Mark 16:15, *Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone*. We love what MTW Missionary Mike Pettingill, a previous host pastor in Honduras, says about missions:

“The primary point of missions is not to build houses or teach VBS. The purpose of missions is to glorify God. Everything exists to bring praises to God and missions seeks to exalt God's name. We are all missionaries. Some of us are called to go far away and others are called to stay local, but we are all called to participate.”

We hope you'll prayerfully consider joining a Short-Term Mission team this year!

SHORT-TERM MISSION TO MADAGASCAR

BY CHRISTINA STANTON

In July the Madagascar Finance team traveled to Antananarivo with eight members, ready to teach business and finance courses to the local community in partnership with Tana City

of Haiti is \$739. That means the average person earns about \$1 per day.

That being said, there are several positives that compel us to invest in helping the locals attain a more prosperous future. The people of Madagascar are very well educated and hardworking. The average person starts working at 4 or 5 a.m. and finishes at 6 or 7 p.m. Madagascar is rich in natural resources. They have oil, semiprecious gems, arable land, graphite, bauxite and spices, among other things. The excellent educational system, work ethic, culture and land are prime for significant and sustainable growth.

Many of the participants came to the workshop with nascent businesses, while others had well-evolved business ideas and plans in industries like solar cell consulting, virtual reality gaming arcades, computer consulting, graphic design and new agri-businesses. Some of the classes we taught included:

- Christian Leadership in Business
- Business Planning
- Market Research 101/102
- Marketing 101/102
- Budgeting 101/102
- Negotiation and Raising Capital
- Risk Management
- Law

In addition to teaching classes, we also hosted a lunch for the homeless and held a worship session at the church for more than 100 people from the streets of Antananarivo. We made countless peanut butter sandwiches and handed out bowls of stew prepared by the church. It was a beautiful event filled with praise to our Lord and Savior. Our team spent a lot of time at Tana City Church and its ministry partners. Through worship services, Bible studies, and prayer groups we got to know many of the congregants well.

We felt incredibly blessed by the opportunity to share our work expertise with the people of Madagascar. We were welcomed into the homes of many with open arms and learned a

(Continued on page 9)



Entrepreneurship Classes

Church. This is the third year that Redeemer has sent a team to Madagascar's capital city with the goal of helping entrepreneurs start their own businesses. The team developed and implemented a week-long workshop, which 60 people attended. Some of the participants traveled across the country to take part!

Although the team worked hard to leave the attendees in a better place than before the week



Redeemer teammate Eugene Krishnan and Malagasy students

began, there are several difficult realities Malagasy people face. Madagascar is an incredibly poor country. The nominal GDP per capita is \$401. To put that in context, the GDP per capita

HOPE FOR ALL IN HONG KONG

BY SUSAN THORSON, REDEEMER CITY TO CITY

Hong Kong is one of the world's most significant financial centers. It has been crowned the most competitive economy for the second year running by the International Institute for Management Development, and, according to *Business Insider*, it's the second most wealthy and economically healthy city in the world.

But there's another side to this vibrant, fast-paced, beautiful place. The city's rising housing costs have created an acute crisis, forcing up to 200,000 residents to rent and sleep in wire cubicles, known as cage homes, measuring four by six feet and stacked three deep in cramped apartment buildings. Foreign domestic workers are paid less than the city's normal minimum wage. The *South China Morning Post* reported, "Hong Kong's ethnic minorities continue to face barriers when accessing housing, employment, health and recreational services." And *Business Insider* recently stated that Hong Kong's wealth gap has widened to a historic high, which makes it the second-most unequal city in terms of income, right behind NYC.

And it is here that Ebson Simick and Tryfina Phipon have planted a church.

Ebson and Tryfina grew up in Darjeeling, India. Separately,

they moved to Hong Kong — Ebson to work with young minorities living on the street, and Tryfina to be part of YWAM Hong Kong. Being minorities gave them a unique perspective and compassion. They met,



married and began serving together. As they shared the gospel, many came to know Christ.

Feeling ill-equipped to care for these new converts, Ebson and Tryfina went to a seminary in the U.S. for further theological training. While there, they heard about CTC and felt God affirming their growing vision to plant a church in Hong Kong. They wanted this church to be a place where people without families could become family. So, with the support of their home church in Hong Kong, they planted Hope for All Church.

Hope for All Church is in the Yau Ma Tei neighborhood of Hong Kong. Both the name of the church and the makeup of the area are significant. Yau Ma Tei is a highly urbanized area. Like many areas of Hong

Kong, the residents range from wealthy to very poor. Its highest populations are from Nepal, India, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia, with many residents being part of the 1.5 generation — individuals who immigrate to a new country before or during their early teens.

Ebson and Tryfina say, "These individuals were born in their own countries and came to live in Hong Kong when they were very young. They've had to change their environment — losing their identity — and they are kind of confused. They often have little proficiency in their native tongue, Chinese or English. Chinese is a must language for them in Hong Kong, so without it, it's very difficult for them to do well in school or to get jobs. God is calling us to be a church for these people."

Ebson and Tryfina find much depth in the people God is gathering. Tryfina says, "The people are so rich in hospitality and gifted in teaching. They love God and are not afraid to tell people about Jesus Christ. We see it as a place of growth — economically and spirituality. God is moving in the hearts of the people."

(Continued on page 9)

HOW PUBLIC FAITH BROUGHT ME TO CHRIST

BY SUSAN NACORDA

I did not grow up in a Christian home. After witnessing the World Trade Center buildings collapse on September 11, 2001, I was invited by a fellow NYU student to join her friends for a night of prayer. I said, “No, thank you. I don’t pray.” Even though I turned her down, she befriended me and over the next few months, she and her friends became my friends. I was attracted to the way they loved one another and me, and was often amazed by their generosity and care. I eventually accepted one of their many invitations to come to church because I grew to trust them and love their community. Less than a year later, in large part thanks to their persistence, I became a follower of Christ.

Similarly, when I reflect on how the rest of my family became followers of Christ, I do not simply see one person at work, but the Holy Spirit working through a community. When I started sharing the gospel with my family, I couldn’t do it alone because sharing the gospel is challenging. I needed the support

and help of my own Christian community. These friends not only prayed with and for me regularly for years, but they loved my family, too. Many of them embodied the love and truth of Christ to my family that helped make the gospel more real for them.

It’s been the most beautiful thing in my life to see my family come to know Christ. Hearing my mom, brother, dad and step-mom talk about their faith and love of Jesus is an endless joy and wonder. When I thank God for the new life we have in Christ, I also thank Him for the community who prayed for, loved and supported us.

Each of us is called to share our hope in Christ, but we need one another’s prayer and partnership along the way. That’s why this February 16-17, we will hold the second Formation conference, called Public Faith: *Formed to Share our Hope in Christ*. We encourage Community Groups to attend together.

In the spring of 2017, I had the privilege of participating in a training led by Timothy

Keller and the Ravi Zacharias Ministry team. I left that training with a greater understanding of how to address modern issues with Christianity, people’s questions “beneath the question” and hard sayings in the Bible.

I’m thrilled that all Redeemer congregants have an opportunity to be trained by Tim and this team at the Public Faith Conference. We believe this event will help equip our churches with practical, wise and winsome ways of sharing our faith. Registration is now open to all Redeemer attendees at redeemer.com/formation and will open to non-Redeemer registrants after January 15. As a bonus, if five or more members of a Community Group sign up, each person will receive a free copy of Tim Keller’s new devotional on the Proverbs.

I hope you and your community group will consider attending so that our churches become increasingly equipped to share the hope we have in Christ so others might come to know that love which is better than life!

AUTHENTIC NEIGHBOR: THE GOSPEL POWER OF PROXIMITY

BY PETER ONG

As New Yorkers, daily we find ourselves in situations of close proximity to a diversity of people, some of whom look at lot like us, and others who don't look very much like us at all. This diversity is evident even by looking around your subway car, or at the choices of language when you use an ATM.

As Christians, we are called to be authentic neighbors to those around us. What does it mean to be an authentic neighbor? While it is certainly evident in what we do, it is also about the heart behind what we do. Being an authentic neighbor is both a challenge to move physically closer in proximity to those who are different from us and a challenge to align our heart with the heart of God, who cares deeply for those who have been marginalized.

When we align our heart to God's, we will hear clearly our call to regularly invite people, especially those who are different from us, into our lives through the sharing of time, attention, and resources. The posture of our heart will

also allow us to more clearly see the inherent worth of our neighbors — who are, too, made in the Image of God — from whom we were once divided.

So, as a Church, we are to enter into issues of racism, sexual abuse, misuses of power and authority, immigration, affordable housing, gentrification, lack of access to education and other justice “issues” not just as “issues,” but as realities that deeply affect our neighbors. If we are being authentic neighbors, we will be in proximity to those who are suffering because of systemic injustices, and we will create occasions to engage and walk alongside our neighbors.

The early Church is a good model for this. The early Church was filled with converts who were from the margins of society — the poor, the oppressed, the sick — as well as members of the ruling class. These Christians willingly drew near to those who were sick, fearing not the danger of doing so, but instead, taking on the pain and suffering of their neighbors.

Surely, the marked movement toward those who were discarded and forgotten was a strong witness to the world of our Christ, who radically and sacrificially loved us by giving His life for us in the midst of our rebellion against Him. This kind of self-giving love is possible only for the person who has received the love of Christ in such abundance that it necessarily overflows into this powerful love of neighbor.

We in the modern Church should seek to move toward those who are forgotten with the full measure of our compassion in such a way that our lives (and words) boldly proclaim that we are here. We are close. We weep with those who weep. We give voice to the voiceless. We remember those the world has forgotten. And we bear witness to the inherent dignity of all.

All this — done in Jesus' name — would almost certainly point our neighbors to the great love with which God, being rich in mercy, first loved us.

losing patience with Christianity, where it is increasingly seen as problematic, and so it becomes marginalized from the centers of culture. We might add that there are such things as “early Fall” and “late Spring” where Christianity is not seen as dangerous but as merely odd. (See *Center Church*, pp.237-238).

This means that we must not think that there is any one approach to culture that is always the right one. In *Center Church*, we talk about several historic models of cultural engagement or disengagement.

The **Transformationist** envisions Christians heavily involved in the arts, business, the media, politics, and the academy, all working from a Christian world-view, and therefore reshaping culture.

The **Relevance** model calls Christians not so much to change society but to serve it and to make it a place of justice and peace.

The **Two Kingdoms** approach denies that Christians should try to change culture, but rather they should build up the church through the Word and Sacrament and do their daily work well.

The **Counter-culturalist** approach emphatically discourages Christians from trying to engage culture, but to create a Christian alternative commu-

nity — a counter-culture.

So which one is the biblically right one? Actually, the proponents of each have good Scriptural warrant. But none of them, in my view, can do justice to all the biblical material. Why has one not been able, historically, to become the consensus position? One reason is that each of them has its own dangers. Another reason is that each one is more appropriate in a one cultural “season” more than another. For example, the Counter-culturalist is obviously best in times of Winter, and the Transformationist in Summer time. Yet each of these approaches has both strengths and weaknesses, even in their most appropriate cultural season, as I argue in *Center Church*, pp.194-234.

What this means is that we must never be too rigidly committed to one of these models so that we can’t respond to changing circumstances. And regardless of which (or which combination) of these we employ, we should keep the wise insights of every one the models ever before us. The Counter-culturalist worries rightly that some other models will lead Christian leaders to try to take their cues from secular elites in order to gain acceptance and blend in. The Transformationist worries rightly that some models are just too

pessimistic about the power of the faith to change minds and lives. Some groups worry about over-adaptation and compromise. Some others worry about rigidity and pride. All the worries are valid.

So where are we now? What season is it, for Christianity, in our country? Well, as long as I have been here, New York City has always been late fall or early winter. But in the culture at large, things are certainly growing ‘colder.’ Yet we should also keep in mind that, just as both summer and winter weather conditions in the U.S. vary widely by region, so in any society there will be “colder” and “warmer” places.

Some vocational fields (think of business and the arts) will differ from one another, and so will geographical regions. Also, while a post-Christian culture may be in some ways more hostile than a pre-Christian one, in other ways Christianity will still resonate more deeply with many people, because of its influence on the deep sources of the people’s thinking. So we should be prepared for the strongest rebuff, yet we do not know how deep the winter will get, or when a thaw might come.

Every February you start to think that Winter is endless. But it never is.



EXCITING NEWS ABOUT CFW!

See our website:
faithandwork.com/excitingnews

MADAGASCAR ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 4)

tremendous amount about the work that God is already doing in this beautiful country.

This year will be the fourth year that we've received teams from RPC (medical and finance).

It has always been a great privilege to host them and see God's love demonstrated in a very practical way. They're amazing!

— Pastor Tanteraka

Read about our other 2017 Short Term Mission trips [waiting for url from STM].

HONG KONG ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 5)

Ebson is excited about the potential. He says, "We see so much division. But what if there is a church where all these minorities with different economics are all included, treated as God's image-bearers? This is a beautiful picture that only God can create."

In May, Ebson and Tryfina attended City to City Asia Pacific's Intensive in Taipei, a two-week training event for church planters. They are still affected by the gospel-focused teaching

they received. Ebson says, "I've been asking God what does it mean for *me* to be renewed, especially during this time when we are praying about gospel renewal in our community."

The sessions on mercy and justice spoke deeply to Tryfina, and she's excited to see this teaching impact their new church. She also came away with a new way of relating to the gospel. She says, "I've always thought of the gospel as in the past — when I became a

Christian. But I'm seeing it differently. I was a sinner, and God saved me. That's in the past. But in the present — I am loved. It's not just the past. It's present and future as well."

Hope for All Church launched in September 2017. Join us in praying for Ebson, Tryfina and the community they serve.

This article originally appeared in the CTC Snapshot. For more information, visit redeemercitycity.com



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

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

EDITOR'S CORRECTION:

The December Redeemer Report included an article from the Center for Faith & Work with an error in the headline, misstating the first name of Pulitzer Prize winning author, Marilynne Robinson. CFW will host Ms. Robinson at a forthcoming event in February. The editor apologizes to both Marilynne Robinson and CFW for this error.

RESEARCH AT RCS ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

to spearhead the effort of gathering empirical data to support and validate the effectiveness of our Gospel-Centered Psychotherapy. As part of that research, Redeemer Counseling was chosen as one of 22 selected sites to participate in this international effort to validate spiritually oriented psychotherapies.

It gives us great joy to be given this opportunity, and we ask that you participate in this effort by helping us raise \$50,000 over the next two years. The funds will go towards the many hours of conducting research and data analysis, staffing and additional resources. To find more information about our research project and funding

goals, please visit:

counseling.redeemer.com/researchfund.

Please partner with us as we introduce the power of the Gospel into the field of psychology through our approach, Gospel-Centered Psychotherapy.