

OCTOBER 2018

EVANGELISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH

BY TIM KELLER

There has always been a strong tendency for Christians to “withdraw into a kind of closed, evangelical, monastic community.” (as John Stott says in *Motives and Methods*, p.14.) This is not, of course, how things were in the beginning of the church.

In Michael Green’s seminal *Evangelism in the Early Church* (2nd ed, Eerdmans, 2003), he shows that early Christianity’s explosive growth “was in reality accomplished by means of informal missionaries.” (Green, p.243) That is, Christian laypeople, not trained preachers and evangelists, carried on the mission of the church “not through formal preaching, but informal” conversation — “in homes and wine shops, on walks, and around market stalls ... they did it naturally, enthusiastically ... Having found treasure, they meant to share it with others, to the limit of their ability.” (Green, p.243-244.)

It’s clear from the New Testament and from other historical documents that one of the main centers of Christian evangelism was in the *oikos* — the ‘household.’ A person’s strongest relationships were within

the household — with blood relatives, servants, clients, and friends, so when a person became a Christian it was in the household that he or she would get a serious hearing. If the head of the household became a believer (such as Lydia the seller of dye and the Philippian jailer) the entire home became a ministry center — where the gospel was taught to all the household’s members and neighbors. If, however, some other member of the household became a Christian — the wife, children, or slaves and laborers — then the gospel would spread more indirectly. (Green sketches out the different ways the gospel moved through households, depending on who was the first convert. pp.322ff.)

Household evangelism was very important, but from both the Bible and from early historical record we know that simple friendship was one of the main carriers of the gospel. We see it in John 1 when Philip passes his knowledge of Jesus on to his friend Nathaniel.

Green relates how Pantaenus led Clement of Alexandria to Christ, Justin led Tatian, Octavius led Minucius Felix to Christ

— all through friendship, a relationship that was taken very seriously by the ancients.

Michael Green gives an extended account of how the future St. Gregory was won to faith. When Gregory was eighteen, he and his brother were traveling to study law at Berytus (today, Beirut). But on their journey they came to Caesarea in Palestine where they met the well-known and respected scholar Origen. He persuaded the brothers to remain for a while and let him tutor them in the history of philosophy. They stayed, and to their surprise, Origen did not keep the traditional distance between professor and pupil but opened his life to them as friends. He connected the principles of philosophy to Christian teaching and showed how that teaching changed one’s life in the most personal and practical ways. Gregory stayed and received his full education under Origen for seven years, and in the process was converted to Christianity. (Green, pp.342ff.)

It is informal but sustained relationships and conversation that will become more
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MEET HFNY'S NEW AFFILIATES — AND CELEBRATE WITH US!

At Hope for New York we want to see more Christians, organizations, and churches working together to help all New Yorkers flourish. That's why we launched our 10-year vision in 2017 to expand our current network by 2027 — so we can holistically love and serve even more of our neighbors in need.

This is the time of year that we take a step back to celebrate all that has happened this past fiscal year. (That is, July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017.) And we have so much to celebrate that it's hard to know where to start!

We could start by celebrating that we were able to invest more than **\$2.1 million of funding** into our non-profit affiliates. That's our highest grant distribution to date! It includes \$1,877,000 in direct grants (including \$45,000 in

collaboration grants), \$75,000 in capacity building grants, and \$213,743 in volunteer impact grants!

We could also celebrate the **3,200+ volunteers** who gave more than **43,000 hours** to serve our neighbors in need. That includes more than 1,700 new volunteers, 342 volunteers who served in leadership roles (shout out to our 100 HFNY Reps and 80 Team Leaders!) and 36 volunteers who led opportunities to serve at our affiliates.

Or we could start by celebrating the new additions to our network! We are so excited to welcome our new church partner, **Hope Midtown West**, and three new non-profit affiliates. Who are our new affiliates and how are they loving and serving our neighbors? **Global Empowerment Services** empowers immi-

grant communities in Jamaica, Queens by providing programs taught by certified tutors. **Recovery House of Worship Brooklyn** helps hurting people heal by providing holistic care to those experiencing or recovering from addiction in Downtown Brooklyn. **ViVA Uptown** provides youth development, wellness initiatives, and housing support to see the flourishing of Washington Heights and Inwood.

Here's to all the awesome moments we are celebrating from this past (fiscal) year — and we're looking forward to what this next one will bring as we continue to seek the spiritual, social, and economic flourishing of all New Yorkers!

To learn more about ways you can get involved in a movement of mercy and justice, visit hfny.org.

REDEEMER REPORT

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Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(btw Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m.
and 5 p.m.

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

DUBAI: WHY WE ARE FREE TO WORSHIP

BY SCOTT ZELLER

Planted in 2010, Redeemer Church of Dubai gathers weekly as a congregation of nearly 1,000 brothers and sisters representing dozens and dozens of nationalities. Redeemer in Dubai has also been a launching point for several other church plants in the region and is home to a training center for pastors, planters and future church leaders. Known as the place where the tallest building in the world was built on the desert sand and where the sands of new islands were built on the waters off its coastline, Dubai is a remarkable place. And the story of how Christian ministry came to find a place here in this Islamic kingdom is equally as remarkable.

The freedoms we enjoy to do ministry in Dubai come from a long legacy of faithful ministry in the Gulf region of the Middle East. Back in the late 1800s and early 1900s, as the Gilded Age flourished in America, some Christian missionaries left their homes and came to the coast of the Arabian Gulf to open a hospital in Bahrain. Enduring the incredible heat, despite the lack of any modern conveniences, and as guests in a Muslim land, these missionaries served faithfully and won the local people's trust.

Decades after those pioneers had come, in 1960, when the United Arab Emirates (UAE) were yet to be

united and were still called the Trucial States, the tribes living in the area were at risk of dying out. Their population was in danger primarily because of the lack of adequate medical care. One in every two children and one in every three mothers were dying in childbirth. The ruling Sheikh at the time knew of the Christian hospital in Bahrain, about 300 miles away, and appealed to the Christian medical missionaries there to come to the Trucial States to start a maternity hospital.

Drs. Pat and Marian Kennedy responded to the invitation. And despite the fact that their first workspace was a simple clay house with a thatched roof, the Kennedys' hospital immediately changed the crisis, making it safe to have children. Most of the current rulers of Dubai and of the UAE were born in that hospital. Over time, more staff came, all Christians, and were able to develop meaningful relationships with the local families because they came to love and to serve and to care for them.

About eight years ago, after everything we know now to have been the modern story for the UAE — all the oil money, and the flashy shopping malls, and the buildings and everything the area is now famous for — one ruling family gave over \$100 million to build a beautiful new hospi-

tal on the site of that original maternity ward. The administrators of the hospital thought the donation might be given very privately, to avoid word getting out that Muslim leaders were funding the building of a Christian hospital in the Middle East. However, when the time came to cut the ribbon on the new building, the ruling family was present. In response to the donation, one of the Kennedys' children said to the Sheik, "We can never repay you for this." The Sheik responded, "No, we can never repay you. What your family did for us, we can never repay."

And so the current ministry we have in Dubai and the openness we have to worship as Christians is due directly in part to Christians who came when there was no "value" to being here: there was nothing glitzy or glamorous about coming to this area of the world. No, those original missionaries came because they were compelled and motivated by the love of Christ to a lifetime of faithful service — wherever Christ would call them to go. And one fruit of their sacrifice is now tens of thousands of Christians all throughout Dubai and the UAE get to worship each week and practice their faith openly.

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GROWTH AND CHANGE AT CITY TO CITY

City to City (CTC) is a ministry birthed out of Redeemer nearly twenty years ago, with a heart for equipping leaders around the world to start new churches. While City to City became a separate transdenominational movement agency in 2008, the close relationship with Redeemer remains. The Lord has been gracious and continues to raise up leaders around the world. New churches are being planted, and transdenominational networks of churches in cities are developing and working for the gospel flourishing of their city. Here are a few recent highlights:

- City to City's (CTC) Canadian regional affiliate hosted a ***team of global leaders in Vancouver to pray***, dream and strategize for the future as we collectively long for the world's cities to grow deep in the gospel. This Global Leadership Team ("GLT") is composed of ministry representatives from each of CTC's regional affiliates, and selected CTC staff.
- While CTC's has historically focused globally (as well as locally here in New York City), we are excited to ***officially launch City to City North America*** at the The Gospel & Our Cities conference in Chicago at

Moody Church October 18-20. Long-time CTC leader Al Barth will be leading those efforts that will touch several US cities.

- Over the last six months, our regional affiliate, City to City Asia Pacific, saw a transition in leadership from Curt Yeo to ***Guna Raman***. Guna has been one of the regional leaders in Asia and is based in Singapore. After serving twenty-nine years as senior pastor of Agape Baptist Church, the church he founded, he made the transition to CEO of City to City Asia Pacific in September. Meanwhile, ***Curt Yeo***, a native New Yorker, has joined CTC as Vice President of Global Field Operations and will serve our growing global affiliate networks that relate to us here in New York.
- ***Stephan Pues***, a pastor in Frankfurt, Germany, recently took the helm as ***head of City to City Europe***. Tim Keller will be joining Stephan and hundreds of European pastors and leaders at an October conference in Krakow, which we are praying will be a catalyst for gospel movement throughout Europe.
- ***Katherine Leary Alsdorf***, founder of the Center for

Faith and Work at Redeemer, has joined CTC in an interim part-time role to lead efforts to create a strategic plan around faith and work that serves CTCs vision and mission.

- ***Andres Garza, the head of City to City Latin America***, and leaders in that region of the world are planning a May, 2019, conference in Brazil. Tim Keller will be speaking as part of this conference that will take place in two locations, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

To support the wonderful work going on in New York City and around the world, the CTC staff is growing and now has more than 50 part-time and full-time employees.

As City to City continues to grow and serve regional affiliates and networks of leaders around the world, prayer is critical. Our vision is large as we pray that the Lord raises up tens of thousands of leaders in the global cities of the world that have a heart for their city and desire to start gospel centered churches. Our prayer is that millions come to know Jesus and love their cities into great change. Without prayer and God's favor, our strategies, our plans and our actions will fail. Please come alongside us and pray.

MADAGASCAR MISSIONS TRIP 2018

BY CHRISTINA STANTON

The Madagascar team this year was a delightful mix of people: a father/daughter, two single men in Finance, and two families. Each one, young and old, contributed in a unique way to this trip, which was hosted for the sixth year by Tana City Centre Church.

The week started off with a combined church service. Three churches came together for a combined service and daylong festival in a park. The service included prayers in several languages (7 to be exact, with at least 10 nationalities represented within the church) and a local professional gospel choir. The congregants of each church wore traditional clothing and Redeemer Downtown pastor Michael Smith delivered the message. Afterward, the attendees enjoyed a potluck lunch, followed by games and activities for the kids, such as fun in bouncy castles. It was a wonderful start to a week of jam-packed events!

Throughout the week, the team hosted seminars with such topics as Marriage, Entrepreneurship, and Faith and Work, as well as an Arts event and a women's conference. Each was targeted at assisting and engaging within the diverse ministries for this very active church, where Pastor Tanteraka, "Tank" for short, and his congregants

meet myriad needs within the community.

The team also worked at a special "Street Family" event held every Friday at Tana City Centre Church. The team set up more bouncy castles, offered costumed characters, and provided lunch for 100 street



Redeemer missions team with church staff

kids at a park earlier in the week. Michael Smith was able to spend time talking with and encouraging local pastors at a special lunch, while other team members spent a day serving at a local orphanage.

Wrapping up the week, the teammates hosted a "prom" for children with disabilities in partnership with a local non-profit organization called Growing the Nations. Local children were fitted with outfits donated from friends/family in the US and brought over by our team, and they were treated to full hair and makeup sessions and taught how to "walk the runway." Then they strutted their stuff on a platform resembling a modeling runway specially made for the event at the church. Friends

and family were invited, and after the children made their modeling debut, they enjoyed a buffet dinner. This was a great way to show those children who are often seen as "burdens" that they are loved and beautiful. And a phenomenal reminder for all the rest of 1 Samuel 16:7 — that God looks not at outward appearances but looks on the heart.

The team spent much time with our host, Pastor Tanteraka "Tank," and with the congregants of Tana City Centre Church. They also enjoyed spending time with others in the community, as well as the Growing the Nations organization and its staff. Many friendships began, and many more that had begun over the past six years of serving were strengthened. With the Lord's help, our committed team will make every effort to maintain these special relationships throughout the year, and we look forward to future opportunities to visit and serve this amazing community.

"The Redeemer teams serve us so well! Each year they do a great job in providing a holistic ministry (from word ministry to social ministry). And each year it gets better and better — we love the Redeemer teams!"

— Pastor Tanteraka



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EVANGELISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

important in our increasingly secular world, as many Christian beliefs are highly offensive to people, as was the case in the first century. Now, as then, most people won't show up to hear Christian public speakers. Movement toward Christian belief will have to be personal, organic, and incremental. We must question our friends' working answers about meaning, morality, identity, and hope. We must also take time to answer their questions about Christianity.

But don't call this "friendship evangelism." Friends share their hearts with each other and do what's best for each other. If you are a Christian, then evangelism will come out naturally and organically in friendship if you don't let your pride, fears, and pessimism cut it off and make you hide your faith and heart from them. It is the gospel that tells us we are completely accepted in Christ. That removes both the fear that keeps us from being vulnerable, and the pride that

could lead us to treat friends as 'evangelistic projects.' That is to dehumanize them. You are not befriending them just to give them the good news; you are giving them the good news because you love them as a friend. The more these gospel dynamics are present in our lives the more we will draw in new people like a magnet (Acts 2:47) and help them find faith in the most credible, natural, and fruitful way.

FREE TO WORSHIP ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

Scott Zeller is the executive pastor for Redeemer Church of Dubai and oversees a variety of church planting and network development initiatives from that church. Scott, his wife Angela, and their four children are from the U.S. and came to

the Middle East after several years spent in a church plant in Delhi, India. Their passion is to be part of the work of God to see all nations come to know his mysteries through the church (Ephesians 3:10).

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