

“Conservative Christianity After the Christian Right”

Dr. Timothy Keller, Founding Pastor
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MICHAEL CROMARTIE: Dr. Tim Keller is the best-selling author of many books. He is also the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan, which has been featured in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

His latest book is just out. It's on vocation and work called *Every Good Endeavor*. Tim, we are grateful for you taking the time, because we all know how busy you are.

DR. TIMOTHY KELLER: I am old enough that I was a conservative Protestant Christian before there was a Christian right. I was raised in kind of a liberal Lutheran church, the old LCA, Lutheran Church in America. I became a Christian — and an evangelical one at that — during college by reading John Stott books and C.S. Lewis books and that sort of thing. And at that time, if you were a theological conservative it didn't mean you were a political conservative.

And now the other thing, as many of you know, the church that I pastor and have pastored for quite a while is full of what is known as the millennials. A high percentage of them are unaffiliated, the 18 to 29 year olds, and then the next generation, those are the people that are there in my church.

32 is the median age of the people who attend Redeemer, which makes it about 80 percent under 42 or something like that. And so I live in that world that is totally allergic to institutional religion, and I live amongst what you have to call younger evangelicals. And so it's just as well I do speak to this I guess, because I'm old enough and my church is young enough that maybe I can say something about it.

Here are some definitions. Number one, I'm actually a conservative Protestant, as you know, not a conservative Christian only. I'm not a scholar here. I'm here as a practitioner. And as a practitioner, I don't feel like I know enough about the worlds of conservative

Catholics and Orthodox and their numbers and the issues to talk much about them. So about 80 percent of what I say is really going to fit more conservative Protestant Christianity. So actually it should say conservative Protestant Christianity after the Christian right, because that's mainly what I am going to talk about.

Secondly, what is a conservative Protestant? I'll use the Bebbington four plus one. Now, David Bebbington was a historian and a sociologist who tried to define evangelicalism and came up with these four characteristics. [First is] the authority of the Bible — by that, I think it means the Bible trumps reason and experience. Secondly, the necessity of a conversion experience of some kind. Thirdly, salvation through faith in Christ's work on the cross, not good works. Fourth, mission, the idea of activism, needing to take this message to the world.

And my fifth one I would add — even though it may be inherent, it may be implied, I would call it supernatural Christianity. Liberal Christianity tried to redo all of Christian doctrine in terms of naturalistic assumptions, no miracles. And I would say an evangelical conservative Protestant definitely believes in miracles, believes the resurrection really happened.

Conservative Protestantism — and who are they? The seven percent of Black Protestants, the vast majority of them would fit the Bebbington four plus one. So that gets you right now to almost 30 percent of the population, or close. Less than a third, more than a quarter, and that's who I want to talk about.

And so I'd like to give you three things that I think I'm fairly confident, at street level admittedly, will happen in the future. And then I'd like to talk to you about some things that might happen in the future that could move the needle either way.

So, first of all, three things that I'm fairly confident of happening. One is that conservative Protestant Christianity is going to be growing moderately in numbers and greatly in cultural diversity and racial diversity in a fragmented culture. Secondly, conservative Protestant Christianity is going to become consciously outside the box politically, but not consciously outside the box theologically. And, thirdly, it is going to get both more and less culturally influential simultaneously, with the end result in doubt.

Number one, when I say "growing moderately," I mean that the number of the devout people in the country is increasing, as well as the number of secular people. The big change is the erosion is in the middle. The devout numbers have not actually gone down that much. It depends on how you read them. But basically, they are not in freefall by any means. What I think is fair [is] that you don't so much see secularization as polarization, and what is really disappearing is the middle. It is actually very important for what is happening right now. It used to be that the devout and the mushy middle — nominal Christians, people that would identify as Christians, people who would come to church sporadically, people who certainly respect the Bible and Christianity — the devout and the mushy middle together was a super majority of people who just created a kind of "Christian-y" sort of culture.

Luis is right in saying lots and lots of unaffiliated people are not atheists or agnostics. But what has happened is that the mushy middle used to be more identified with the devout. Now it's more identified with the secular. That's all.

So what's happening is the roof has come off for the devout. The devout had a kind of a shelter, an umbrella. You couldn't be all that caustic toward traditional classic Christian teaching and truth. I spoke on Friday morning to the American Bible Society's board. American Bible Society does a lot of polling about the Bible...the use of the Bible, reading the Bible, attitudes toward the Bible. They said the very same thing that I heard from Luis, that actually the number of people who are devout Bible readers is not changing that much.

What is changing is for the first time in history a growing group of people who think the Bible is bad, it's dangerous, it's regressive, it's a bad cultural force, that was just never there. It was very tiny. And that's because the middle ground has shifted, so it is more identified with the more secular, the less religious, and it's less identified now with the more devout.

I would say, to try to understand what is going on, if you go to a guy like Robert Bellah, or you go to Charles Taylor, or you go to the people that say that what's happening now is expressive individualism, like Charles Taylor calls it "exclusive humanism," it's the fruit of

the enlightenment. And the enlightenment said that my reason, not trumped by revelation or tradition or anything else, is the way I'm going to find truth.

It was interesting, Luc Ferry, who is a French philosopher, wrote a book called *A Brief History of Thought*. And he says that that idea that the individual consciousness and reason is the arbiter of truth is actually like an acid that eats through its own container. In other words, what it does is that it not only eats away at tradition and religion, but it actually eats away at everything. It eats away at all institutions, it eats away at anything that is going to trump my sovereign and sacred ability to decide what is right or wrong for me.

And so that is the one side. And on the other side there is the sociology of knowledge approach, which says, yes, social media and mobility and the iPod, all of those things have reinforced individualism.

Through the sociology and knowledge side you can do an intellectual history side. For whatever reason, the center is coming off, and the people who are able to overcome the acids of individualism, you might say, are people that have to be really devout now. It's just not enough to simply say, "I go to church. My father was Methodist and my grandfather was Methodist, so I'm a Methodist. I don't go to church very often." That has just all gone away.

Now, here is why I think probably conservative Protestantism will either grow moderately or stay the same — but I think it will grow. Here is the reason why, and I'm going to be a little more optimistic.

First of all, as we have already seen, it is mainly white people who are getting more secular in the world. White people. Just keep that in mind, since most of you are. And there is a tendency for us to think it is just impossible to overcome this practically. That we are reality, and because so many of our people are getting more and more secular and unaffiliated, and so forth; this is the way the world is going. It's just not true. I understand that by 2050 maybe only 30 percent of the world will be white, something like that. So white people are definitely getting more secular, but they are not the majority of the world.

Now, I am in a spot where I have seen a lot of disaffected, Anglo-type people who go off to college, decide that I can't find a Christianity or a faith that really works for me, and then get recaptured by Redeemer and churches in Manhattan. I do know we can hold our own with that crowd.

We actually did a survey a couple of years ago in which we looked at Manhattan, from south of the top of Central Park, and maybe extreme western New Jersey and extreme eastern Queens and Brooklyn. As many of you know, that's sort of the professional core of the city and has about 1,050,000 people. We tried to identify every evangelical-ish Protestant church. And we were fairly generous in using our Bebbington four approach.

We realized that in 1989 there were about 100 of those churches, with about 9,000 Manhattan residents attending them, which is less than one percent of the population. And in 2009, there were about 200 of those churches, and there are now 34,000 Manhattan residents in those churches.

Now, from one side, that is a big uptick. From another side, it's still a fringe phenomenon. Nevertheless, it means we are holding our own. However, the primary reason why I think that evangelicalism or maybe conservative Protestantism is going to probably hold its own and grow is because of the rise of global Christianity. Many of those folks are coming here, especially in the city.

Here is what I do know. Korea, in 100 years, went from about zero to 40 percent Christian. Africa, in 100 years, from 1900 to 2000, went from nine percent to about 50 percent Christian. China is probably on a 100-year trajectory to do about the same thing, probably go from about two or three percent to maybe 30 or so. By the way, that is going to change the history of the world, right there. Because as some of you may know, China is a little bigger than Korea. And, of course, there are already more Pentecostal evangelical Christians in China than there are in all of the United States.

So, now what does that mean? It means that Christianity is growing in these non-Western places at seven to 10 times the rate of the population in many cases, and they are coming to the Western cities. The biggest churches by far in London right now are African churches.

What happened in New York? Very interesting. In 1965, the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens were, outside of black Protestants, basically a Catholic-Jewish place. There were a few scattered mainline churches, and that was about it.

There has been an enormous influx, and now almost certainly out of the eight million New Yorkers, 10 percent are Pentecostal Christians. My son is an urban planner, works for the city of New York. He says when you go to Manhattan community boards, they are very secular.

But if you go out into the Bronx and Queens and Brooklyn, places like that, he says community boards, where zoning decisions get made, half the community boards are appointed by the Mayor — he says, "They are opened and closed in prayer," especially in the Bronx, because it is all led by black and Latino Pentecostal ministers. They are the community leaders.

And we guess that 12 to 15 percent now of — it's a guess — the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn are probably what you call Bebbington five, Pentecostal or evangelical.

Now, what happens is those folks are very ethnic. They are not from eastern southern Europe, which is what used to dominate New York. They're from the eastern southern hemisphere. And when they come, they win their own folks and they grow and they plant tons and tons of churches.

And then, when their kids grow up, go to college, learn to speak English, they come into the center, and that's why if you go into Redeemer, you'll see we are only about 43 percent white. Redeemer has 5- or 6,000 people attending weekly. 15 percent of the people who go to Redeemer either have their doctorate or are working on it out of the 6,000. It's 70 percent single.

This is pretty unusual. And it's still a fringe phenomenon, actually. It hasn't captured the cultural imagination, but the fact is that to a great degree, we are fueled by lots and lots of people who have actually been won to faith in ethnic churches.

They need to get a kind of religion and Christianity that helps them figure out what it means to be a Christian in the dominant culture. And very often some of the ethnic churches can't do that.

A good, quick example of this was some years ago I had three Korean pastors from Queens come to see me, and they sat down. They said, “You know, a lot of our Korean folks — boys and girls who were raised in our churches go off to college, they stop going to church, but now they are showing up at your church. Why?”

And I said, “I can tell you.” I said, “You're Korean, so you are not individualistic.” So when their kids are growing up and they come and they say to you, “Why should we be Christian?” you say to them, “Because we're a Christian family, because we're Christian people” — they give a collectivistic answer. But then they send them off to Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, and then they come out but they are not just Asian, they are Asian-American. They are still more collectivistic, but they are not just like their parents either.

And so basically they come to Redeemer— I give them individual reasons. I say, “Christianity makes emotional sense. Christianity makes cultural sense. And Christianity makes rational and intellectual sense, too.” But unless you can show them the first two, nobody is going to sit around to ask, what is the evidence for the resurrection. So we have a way of doing that that helps a lot of people make the jump. Not everybody makes the jump. Like I said, the country is getting more multi-ethnic. Non-white people tend to be more communal, less individualistic.

Pentecostal churches are— as far as I know right now — the most multi-ethnic human institutions in the world. They bring together white people, black people, Hispanic people, and Asian people, better than non-Pentecostal evangelical churches, which don't do that as well.

We tend to be Asian-Anglo right on the ground. If you're not into charismatic worship, basically Anglo/Asian and Black/Hispanic tend to mix well, because they like the same kind of choices, like the same kind of music. But if you are Pentecostal, it just brings the whole thing together.

But, increasingly, the evangelical Pentecostal communities are going to be led by non-white people, they are going to have a lot of moral authority because of that — so I see, basically, conservative Protestantism in this country is growing slowly, but not much, not a great deal, but the needle is not going down to zero, or not down to five percent or two percent. It is not going in the European direction, at least not in the next generation or two. Number one.

Number two, I said consciously outside the box politically, but not theologically. And it's because of what I am going to call the inertia of the Bible. First of all, it is true that younger evangelicals are not wedded that much to the Christian right. To me, the Christian right was conservative politics, which would mean smaller government, lower taxes, strong national defense, a pretty high value on free market capitalism. To me the Christian right was that, along with traditional 2,000-year-old Christian values of anti-abortion, no easy divorce, homosexuality is wrong. And you put that together you had the Christian right.

Now, there is no doubt that on the economic and political side that younger evangelicals just are not as wedded to the high value of the free market, super strong national defense, or small government. They are very sensitive to issues of what they would call justice and the needs of the poor. And if they see public policies that don't seem to take that into account, they are not happy.

It is also true that conservative politics tends to say that race isn't a big problem anymore. But increasing numbers of the evangelicals are not white. And even my Asian members, of which we have many, who have gone off to Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, come back and have great jobs in the city, and so on — they know race is an issue.

It doesn't make any sense to non-white people to say, "Well, we are past that. We don't have to pay any attention to it in public policy anymore," which seems to be what they hear from conservatives. So because some of the evangelicals — and the younger evangelicals are multi-ethnic — so many are not white, because of their concerns about justice and the poor, they do perceive the conservatism as being kind of clueless and heartless to some degree.

However, in spite of the fact that there are a very small number of very vocal people saying, "I'm evangelical and I think homosexuality is all right," I don't believe the vast

majority of younger evangelicals are going to change theologically — I just don't see the needle moving in the area of the social issues. I see it in the political issues.

And here is what I mean by the "inertia of the Bible." Because of the cacophony of voices about what the Bible means now — and I have never heard anything like it in my whole life, how many people are arguing over how to interpret the Bible, and there are so many voices out there saying you can get anything you want to believe out of it — I have to admit, a lot of people just throw up their hands.

If you're not really reading the Bible through, you throw up your hands and say, "Who is to say?" There is no way to interpret it. Anybody can get anything out of it they want. But if you actually read the Bible, I'd say that about 20 percent of the Bible is really not very easy to understand. In other words, when you read it, it just doesn't make much sense. It takes background, it is questionable, there are people who have different views.

But if you take the 80 percent that actually is relatively clear, especially if both liberal and conservative commentators say, "Here is what the author meant," it's not that hard to tell what the author was getting at. And the 80 percent actually, I would say, comes out looking kind of like Catholic social theory or African-Americans' way of reading it.

Why? Because on the one hand there is a lot of emphasis on the poor and redistribution of wealth. I really don't think it's that hard to make the case. In spite of the Old Testament Holy War stuff, by and large, you read the Bible canonically all the way through, Old and New Testament as a Christian, and there is an awful lot of emphasis on peace-making.

It is very hard to get, I think, nationalism out of the Bible, especially when nationalism is constantly being undermined, especially in the New Testament. And even the Christian understanding of the Old Testament was that the people of God existed as a nation state for a period of time, and now the people of God is actually a kind of multi-ethnic international fellowship.

And so at that point, that's why when Jesus says, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, God the things that are God's", that is a change, and saying Christians don't exist as a nation state anymore, and they shouldn't exist as a nation state anymore. That you're a Christian first, and you're white or black or Asian or Hispanic second.

You're a Christian first, and you're from Ohio or Pennsylvania or Texas second. And when you do that — and I think that's what Ephesians is all about — when you start to read the Bible through, on the one hand, it looks liberal in those areas. It is not great on nationalism, and it's not great on keeping all of your money for yourself. It is big, big, big on helping the poor.

But on the other hand, it is really very clear on marriage and sex, and stuff like that. And the seven times the Bible mentions homosexuality, it is always negative. The Bible opens and closes with a heterosexual marriage. Everybody knows when you read it, it privileges heterosexuality. It is very obvious.

So I think that basically the common sense reading of the Bible is going to bring you out — and this is the inertia — of not really being, I don't think, the Christian right, but on the other hand really not becoming liberal Protestants either. There is a tendency to say, "Where are evangelicals going?"

I think they are going to look more and more politically, actually, like conservative Roman Catholics. And like African-Americans. I think that's where they're going. But the inertia of the Bible keeps them from, I think, getting really very liberal when it comes to theology and social ethics.

And let me just give you a good example of this. Jonathan Rauch, in *The Advocate*, two years ago made a really good point. As you all know, he would certainly be a gay activist. He says this: "Gay people believe that to say homosexuality is a sin is just as bigoted as saying black people are inferior. It's the same thing."

He says, then, here is the problem. If you go to the Quran and the Old Testament and the New Testament, even though you can get anything you want out of any text, that is, to some degree, true. But he says white supremacy is not a core teaching of the Bible. No matter how you read it, you just can't get white supremacy out of there.

He says, on the other hand, it is really pretty obvious that the Bible has a problem with homosexuality. So he says you might want to say that both of these views are equally bigoted. But, on the one hand, you can go to Christians with white supremacy and say, "You are not being true to your own Bible."

The way to be persuasive is not just to beat on people from the outside, but to come inside to say if you're trying to change an Islamic person's practice, you go inside and say, "You're not being true to your own beliefs, to your own Islam."

So David Chappell, who wrote a book called *A Stone of Hope*, which is about the civil rights movement, says it is amazing how fast broad backing for segregation in the South collapsed when you went and you said, "You're not being true to your own beliefs." But to a great degree, it is because you can't get white supremacy out of the Bible. But Jonathan Rauch says the problem is, if you say to everybody, "Anyone who thinks homosexuality is a sin is a bigot," he says, "You are going to have to ask them to completely disassemble the way in which they read the Bible." Completely disassemble their whole approach to authority. You are basically going to have to ask them to completely kick their entire faith out the door. Rauch acknowledges that's not going to happen very fast. Now he hopes it happens eventually.

But, you see, I'm saying there's an inertia in the Bible that I think allows a person to get a lot of leeway on politics. You can be politically, economically, kind of liberal/conservative. There's a whole lot of ways of going, but it doesn't give you a whole lot of leeway on those social issues and your basic theology.

Lastly, I think that conservative Protestant Christianity is going to get both more and less culturally influential at the same time. And this is going to be a problem. The basic discourse inside evangelical and Pentecostal churches, and not so much the Pentecostal but certainly non-Pentecostal churches, has really shifted, because 30 years ago the expectation was this — if you're really sold out for Jesus, you'll go into the ministry or the mission field. If you're not sold out for Jesus, just get a job and give us the money, because we are doing the Lord's work. That has utterly changed, totally changed.

There is a huge movement inside conservative Protestantism right now to say, "The best thing you can possibly do with your faith is just go get a job and be a thoughtful, non-triumphalistic, but also non-assimilated Christian in the major cultural industries." It's a very powerful movement that says the best thing you can do is not try to take over the country. After all, we're not supposed to be a Christian nation. We don't do that. We're a pluralistic nation.

On the other hand, we don't want to just assimilate. The Bible gives us views of human nature and human thriving and human good and the purpose of life that are very different than the secular. So go out there and get involved and be very thoughtful Christians in your job. Serve other people, but do it on the basis of what your own understandings are, your own moral intuitions are, and integrate your faith with your work, and in a non-assimilations way.

Peter Berger said if the evangelicals become assimilated then they will just become like everybody else, which they might. There's a lot of pressure out there. And if they're triumphalistic, they will be just thrown out. In other words, if they just start to beat people over the head with a Bible, they just get thrown out. But it's possible that it might have a big effect, and I do think there is something like that going on out there.

That's on the one hand. On the other hand, as I mentioned, the roof came off. That is, you had the devout, you had the secular, and you had that middle ground that made it hard to speak disrespectfully of traditional values. That middle ground now has not so much gone secular, but they more identified with this side. They are identified with expressive individualism, and so they don't want to tell anybody how to live their lives. And so what that means now of course is that the devout suddenly realize that they are out there, that the umbrella is gone, and they are taking a lot of flak for their views, just public flak.

No matter how I add it up, I look at the mainline churches and I take out the quarter that are probably evangelical, my guess is that 80 percent of the clergy of this country would have some reservations about homosexuality — 75, 80 percent, something like that.

But what we were being told was that you are beyond the pale, not just that you're wrong, but that respect for you is wrong. And so that was heard loud and clear in the conservative Protestant world. Loud and clear. It was enormously discouraging. It was sort of a sense of it's not just that you're going to disagree with us, but basically you are saying we really don't even have a right to be in the public square.

So when you have that kind of pushback in the public square because now the middle is with the secular rather than with the devout, you have both — more people from conservative Protestantism trying to get into the cultural industries than ever before,

instead of just staying out and being in their own subculture; on the other hand, getting more pushback for their views than ever. What will happen?

I would think if you were in the media you would say this is a story, and I'm just going to have to keep an eye on it. Right now there is a tension between people wanting influence and people wanting to have less influence. And the end result is in doubt.

Now, lastly, and briefly, I said my belief as a conservative Protestant, is that Christianity is going to stay where it is pretty much, or grow a bit. I think it is not going to become less influential. It is going to be more embattled, I suppose.

But there are some things that could move the needle in a pretty good way. For example, when *New York* magazine wrote a snarky article about Redeemer some years ago, they said it was kind of striking. The reporter came in and was kind of shocked by the number of normal people. They expected, first of all, a small evangelical church in a place like Manhattan. And, secondly, they expected people that really weren't Manhattanites, but they walked around and they said, "Wait a minute. This is us." But they did say this is a fringe phenomenon.

Honestly three percent of the population— to me, if something captures the cultural imagination, the needle really starts to move. It means it gets to 15, 20, 25 percent. I don't know if that is going to happen, but it could happen if a couple of things happen.

Number one, something outside, usually. Korea went from zero to 40 percent Christian partly because there was a cultural problem that a lot of people felt. And it was the Japanese domination and the humiliation that the Koreans felt and the very idea that their way of life wasn't working. And in some ways, Christianity filled a vacuum, and I think Christianity, because I believe it's true, on its own merits, will always have a great appeal.

Revivals happen because not only has the church got some vitality, but something happens out in the culture that creates a vacuum. And a lot of people look at it who wouldn't have otherwise. I'm not sure what is going on in China. When I have gone to China and talked to Christians there, they said they thought for a lot of younger people

Tiananmen Square — the scales fell from their eyes and they realized socialism isn't necessarily the just system we thought it was.

And as one person told me, “Everybody my age, after Tiananmen Square, one-third became Christian, one-third just tried to get out, and one-third just tried to make money.” And he said about five percent now are still true believers in socialism.

So something has to happen in the culture for there to be a major change. I don't know whether something like that is going to happen in America or not. I don't foresee anything. But if there is some kind of upheaval, very often it really helps religion. Frankly, it is stability and materialism and material prosperity that tends to not help it so much. But on the church side, one of the things the church has to do is it has to learn how to reason differently.

As I have already said, you have to connect to baseline cultural narratives. You have to say that Christianity is better than secularism at dealing with cultural difference. I'll give you an example of that. It is better at making sense out of suffering. It is better at actually giving you a basis for human rights and justice.

You have to learn to go inside and say these are things you want. Charles Taylor's great book *Secular Age* says secularism actually doesn't have the intellectual resources to support many of its own commitments.

You've got to learn how to say that in more accessible language. And if you learn how to reason and not just say, “Jesus will make you happy,” but, on the other hand, not just beat on people from the outside but come inside their own beliefs, find their own cultural narratives and say, “Look, Christianity can...” — your life narrative will only have a happy ending in Jesus. And whatever your narrative is, there is no happy ending except in Jesus.

There is a way of doing that, and a lot of churches don't know how to do it. I think if they do do that they are going to get a lot of traction. Secondly, you've got to pull off creating real communities that at least take seriously the fact that people are individualists.

For example, I knew a Korean pastor once. We have a large church and I have a big staff. So when I was in a meeting, if we had a decision to make, we would talk. After one of the

meetings a Korean pastor said, "You know, in a Korean church, if we had a decision to make, the first person to speak would be the senior pastor. He would say, 'Here's what I think.' The next person would be the next senior person, and then down from the senior pastor down to the youngest."

So by the time the youngest person spoke, all you're doing is just saying "yea" to what everybody else has said. In other words, basically, the first person who speaks is the authority, and he basically sets the framework. And then everybody else just tweaks it, until you get down to the bottom and all you can do is cheer. He says what he noticed was in our church that I spoke last and what I would do is I would mask my views, because I was really trying to bring out what everybody was trying to say.

And then it was my job to be an arbiter between them, to try to find the solution that I knew would have the greatest amount of ownership, because I was the only one with the capital to say, "Look, seven of you want this, two of you want something like this, one of you doesn't, and one of you is just going to have to realize that you are just not going to get your way this time, but I'm hearing you."

That's a whole different approach to authority, and you've got to be able to do that. One of the reasons why the ethnic churches lose their kids is because they are still maintaining authority as if you are not in an individualistic place — there needs to be more transparency, more communication, more persuasion, but you can still have authority, but it has to be wielded in a very different way.

Also, the churches have to be much more joyful, not just dour. The churches also have to not beat up on other churches. There are a whole lot of ways in which you can create communities that I think appeal to individualistic people and still be communities. It's still a struggle.

And here is one last thing, and the last thing is I think conservative Protestantism could really thrive if they learned and reasoned better. Secondly, people want communities and then they hate them. So they want them, but then they are so individualistic they can't stand them. So you have to create communities that to some degree adapt, institutions that to some degree adapt to an anti-institutional environment. You have to split the difference.

There is one last thing, and that is I think Christians, on sex and gender, just need to lovingly challenge the culture to what has been called a wisdom contest. You sit down and say, look, we have such radically different understandings of the purpose of sexuality and what gender is — so radical — that let’s agree to this. We’re going to create communities based on a couple of different assumptions about sex and gender. And let’s give it 30 years. Let’s just see what the outcomes of the children are. Let’s see how people feel about the relationships. Let’s just see. That’s it.

Instead of arguing about it — obviously, politically, whoever gets the most votes wins and gets public policy. But I do think there needs to be a kind of respect for the fact that we are now not so much a secular place as a polarized place. If we really do believe we are a pluralistic society, then we need to recognize there are different moral communities that are going to go at this thing differently, and we ought to give goodwill to each other on those things, and then watch, and to some degree the proof will be in the pudding.

So if some of these things happen, I would say my belief as a conservative Protestant is it will at least maintain its own. It could actually become a bigger party and a bigger player in the culture, if some of those things happen.

FRED BARNES, *The Weekly Standard*: One of the things that you have been very involved in, Dr. Keller, is planting churches. Could you elaborate on that a little and how important that is in keeping evangelical Christianity from shrinking, and, rather, you say growing moderately.

TIM KELLER: Generally speaking, when you start a new church, how do you do that? There are several ways of doing it, but basically you’re starting a church largely from scratch. You gather a few Christians, they reach out to non-Christian unchurched friends. You have to get startup capital for two or three years before the church grows to the place where it is funding itself.

Studies have shown that churches that are less than 10 years old assimilate non-church people at six to 10 times the rate of older churches. There are a lot of reasons for that, and that’s exactly what happened to me.

In other words, for the first 10 years, pound for pound far more people from outside — people who didn't like church or weren't part of any church at all or weren't believers in Christianity at all — were the majority of people who were there on a Sunday. And that slowly changes. There are a lot of reasons why.

In the very beginning, churches completely focus on their non-members and attenders, just to survive. And also, there is no tradition that says "we've always done it this way." What happens of course is a church that is, say, 30 years old represents the leadership of the community 30 years ago, because they are the people that got involved in the church.

And so, the easiest one to see is the ethnic church plant. For example, in Astoria Queens it was very Greek and now it's more Hispanic. But what happens is the Greeks are in charge of the churches. The Hispanics come along and they can't get in, and so the Greek churches start getting smaller and smaller because the Greek leaders are not really opening up to Hispanics, yet the reality on the ground is there are more Hispanics in the neighborhood.

So unless you have new churches, you are not winning new people, you are not winning new generations, you are not winning the actual community as it is.

ROB GIFFORD, *The Economist*: Just a comment on China. I think the things that you say are true. It's just the Christian faith shorn of all its baggage. People don't believe in Maoism and Marxism anymore. They are looking for something to believe in. And what Chinese people are doing is they are saying, "So tell me about that Christian stuff." And you go, "Well, here's the thing. There's a God who created the universe, not in six 24-hour spans, and he loves mankind and he wants to enter into a relationship with mankind." And they go, "Well, that's kind of interesting." And they sort of take it on what it is, and many of them will reject it, as many people in the West will. But it is just shorn of all the sort of associated stuff that makes people reject it in the West.

TIM KELLER: Right. And now the only other thing I would add is surely the Chinese would say, "Isn't Christianity an instrument of Western oppression?" But, see, if you're in China, you are being given the gospel from another Chinese person. You are not getting some Western missionary there. It's already very Chinese-ified.

ROB GIFFORD: That's right. And there are more Chinese Christians than there are members of the Communist party, and as you say, that is going to increase substantially.

TIM KELLER: Lamin Sanneh, who teaches at Yale, is an African, Gambian. He has written a book called *Whose Religion is Christianity?* He would make an argument that Christianity is more open to cultural difference than any other religion — probably — but certainly more open to cultural difference than secularism. So, whereas, 96 percent of all Muslims are in this band right here, not in the Western, and 88 percent of Buddhists are right here, and 90 percent of Hindus are right here, like 22 percent of Christianity is in South America, 22 percent or something like that is in Africa, almost 20 percent is in Asia, 12 percent North America. So Lamin Sanneh's point is the idea is that now Christianity is really indigenous. It is really Africanized, Chinese-ified, every place. And so now if a person hears the gospel where they are they don't have the Western baggage.

The only people dealing with that baggage is us, the white people, and it's one of the reasons why it is very hard for me — I try to talk to a non-Christian white person in New York, and I spend the whole time apologizing. I say, "I'm going to prove that Christianity enables you to really repent and humble yourself," because the person just gives me all of the church history and everything, and I spend all my time apologizing. But in China you don't have to do that.

ROB GIFFORD: I think in the American context the culture wars have taken on such a sort of ferocity about homosexuality, that the Christian teaching on that is not going to change. [But] it is possible to be an evangelical Christian and a homosexually inclined person. And that is because God utterly loves gay people, and just as he loves straight people. And that sometimes gets lost in the ferocity.

TIM KELLER: The Bible says sex is not a consumer good. It's a way of self-donation. It's a way of giving yourself to somebody else inside marriage. It's a glue that creates a relationship that is long-lasting.

The second thing I think the Bible teaches pretty clearly is that male and female both have their own unique glories. Therefore, they are not interchangeable. And that any long-term community, family community, in which people are going to thrive, especially children are going to thrive, is you need all of the glories.

In other words, if male and female both have unique glories, and together they really show us the image of God better, that if you are going to have a long-term community, you need to have all of the glories.

And so on the one hand, Christians who are abusive or disdainful to gay people, or who say that even to have the attraction to the same-sex means you are "immediately out, I don't want to talk to you, you can't be here," of course, you're saved by grace. You're not saved by having perfect motives and having all of your desires in the right order.

CARL CANNON, RealClearPolitics.com: You talked about evangelical Christians gravitating towards the cultural establishments. And I thought of Hollywood. Do you see a third way, an accommodation that would allow really for gay evangelicals, is what I'm saying, to be prominent in the church, have a voice in the culture?

TIM KELLER: We'll see. If you can say, "I'm gay, and I have a high view of the Bible," all I have to do is say, "Great, tell me how you read these various texts." And if you say, "Here is how I would read these various texts," I would say, "Okay. What I want to know is, why are you being so selective?" I would say, if the Bible is actually a divine revelation, and if Christianity is essentially not the product of one culture but is really from God, then it would stand to reason that the Bible would offend every culture somewhere, that is, if it wasn't the product of Western culture, it would have to offend somebody in Western culture.

Every single culture would have texts of terror. It would have these texts that just are outrageous, that are terrible. If the Bible was true, and if Christianity was God's revelation, you would expect that, so you shouldn't say, "Well, it can't be true." Well, of course it could be true. In fact, if it wasn't — if you aren't outraged by anything, that would mitigate against the idea that Christianity is true.

So these are your texts of terror. They don't fit in with your view of things. So you have now loosened I think your way of reading the Bible to say, "Well, you know, that was culturally relative" or "People back then believed that, but we believe this now." So what about all of this stuff about the poor? Why are you taking that seriously? So much of that

stuff is from the Old Testament. It's primitive, agrarian theocracy. Why are you taking that and not taking this?

And whenever I have talked to people who say, "I'm gay and I'm evangelical," I'll say, "You are going to be gay, and you're going to be a Christian, but you're not going to be an evangelical because the Bebbington four, the first one says, 'The Bible trumps reason and experience.'"

And the Christianity you have will have a very, very different kind of passion and a very different kind of drive, a very different kind of feel. I'm not saying that isn't Christianity, but it will be different. It is certainly not going to be the evangelical Pentecostal Christianity that is out there.

SALLY QUINN, *The Washington Post*: I think everyone cherry-picks the Bible. Evangelicals and Christians cherry-pick the Bible just the way secularists cherry-pick the Bible. You take the stuff you like and you eliminate the stuff you don't like. That was just sort of continuing on this.

What I was interested in is when you started out you kept saying in terms of your church, "We hold our own." What do you mean? And how do you do that? Why don't you pretend that I am one of those people who has now just graduated from Harvard and I've got some great job at Goldman Sachs and I'm not all that interested. What have you got for me? I want to hear your spiel.

TIM KELLER: If a person has no particular need — in other words, they say, "Hey, look, my life is going along fine, and I really feel like I am competent to run my own life. What have you got for me?" I still could say something.

I could say, "Do you believe in God?" And usually they will say, "Well, I don't know." And I'll say, "Well, without God," I could give you some arguments.

But I can tell you this, I'll say as a pastor, at some point you are going to find that your identity is going to crush you, because it's based on achievement or it's based on parental expectations. It is enslaving, it will crush you, you will identify with your work, and you will also look down your nose at people because your identity is based not only on

performance but also on difference. It is based on the idea that I am better than other people who haven't got what I've got.

So Christianity gives you a basis of identity that is based on the love of God, it is a gift, it is not something you earn. It is not something that goes up or down based on your performance. It is something you can actually experience. It is extraordinarily non-oppressive. It is extraordinarily different. And some day you are probably going to need it, so I wish you would just take a look at this, read these books, and come if you can. If not, you know where I am.

AMY SULLIVAN, *National Journal*: I wanted to protest a few points. The first was that you seem to use interchangeably the terms "conservative Protestant" and "conservative evangelical," and I just want to clarify and see if you meant to do that. I'm just remembering from the Pew data that there is a fairly significant chunk of particularly white conservative Protestants who are mainliners and who don't actually self-identify as evangelical. I don't want to ask you necessarily to speak for the future of that tradition, but that's in there.

TIM KELLER: No, you're right. They are not really identical. For example, I was trying to put black Protestants in there. Black Protestants are not really evangelicals, I don't think, in some ways. But I also did the Bebbington five, and I think Luis actually said probably a quarter maybe of the mainline churches would be conservative in that sense, that they would be able to believe those five things. So nice catch.

AMY SULLIVAN: Particularly on the conversion point I think there are a fair number of mainliners who get a little twitchy about that.

TIM KELLER: Yes. Of course, a lot of evangelicals do think of conversion as a pretty dramatic thing. I have a tendency to move back and forth, and sometimes I get out there and realize that some evangelicals' view of a conversion is different than mine. It tends to be more phenomenological. That is more dramatic. And I think you're right that there are a number of people that don't go there and wouldn't, therefore, feel like they are evangelicals, but I would say they are because of the Bebbington five.

AMY SULLIVAN: Well, and on the Bebbington five, I wanted to point out that I would define myself as an evangelical who can be described by the Bebbington five. And I have a very different position than you do on homosexuality and gay marriage, and I think traditionally that view has been framed, as you say, as people not actually being evangelicals and having a perhaps distorted reading of the Bible. I think it's possible to say that I support gay marriage because of my evangelical faith. I would just protest against having my evangelicalism questioned because of my faith reading of this. And maybe that is being Baptist, where we have the priesthood of the believer, and so I get to decide what the Bible means for me. But that's my take.

TIM KELLER: You *could* believe homosexuality is a sin and still believe that same-sex marriage should be legal. You know that. Those are not the same issues. They overlap. So that view is to say, look, for Christians we believe this, but for same-sex marriage it shouldn't be a problem, because it's not our position to try to legislate Christian morality. I do agree that even if you think the Bible teaches homosexuality is wrong, you have to have a somewhat separate set of arguments to then go ahead and say it should be public policy, too. And I do know that Christians who are very evangelical in every way do differ on that. You didn't quite say that, but I thought it was a good opportunity to make that statement.

AMY SULLIVAN: I would also say I don't believe homosexuality is a sin. And I certainly would not characterize my position on that as having been a matter of trying to fit in in secular society or being influenced by the culture at large so much as being influenced by my evangelical faith.

TIM KELLER: First of all, I can see that your motivations have been questioned by people. In other words, I didn't, but I do know that what happens is if you have your position, people will question your motivation, saying you're a sellout. You're selling out to the culture, right? That's one. I'm not saying that.

You're sensitive, and rightly so, because when I said I think if you believe homosexuality is right, that you loosen your understanding of how you read the scripture to the place where not just that gets through but other things get through. I would just say that, in the

end, Christianity I think would lose a lot of the evangelical dynamic, because it comes from a very high view of the authority of the Bible. And if you bring it down to the place where that gets through, I'm not saying you're not a Christian. I wouldn't question your motives. And certainly you're evangelical, by and large, but I would say that there is some change that has happened. That's all. And I know that you probably don't agree, but I would take at least an hour to make the case that it has morphed into something else. I think there has been a change in the dynamic if you make that move.

TIMOTHY DALRYMPLE, Patheos.com: What do you think it is exactly that younger generations of evangelicals are striving after in this movement in the same general direction that hasn't really come together into something cohesive yet?

Number two, what kind of attitude would you encourage that younger generation of evangelicals to have toward the older generation of evangelicals who got involved in the political process, as they saw it, to defend certain values and truths that they held dear?

TIM KELLER: The second question is a little easier. I think they ought to be grateful to them. I am ambivalent about the Christian right, and most people outside of the leaders are, I think, and always have been.

I always say, if you read the op-ed pieces of *The New York Times*, say, about 80 years ago, 50 years ago, there are a lot of things in there that the current editors would just cringe at. And guess what? Fifty years from now the same thing is going to be true. See, there is a tendency for us to all say we have arrived at THE MOMENT. It is all downhill from here, and it was all uphill until here, that we alone can see these people were benighted and these people are unenlightened and these people weren't progressive and these people were this or these people were sellouts, and we and we alone know.

But I think we ought to be much more kind to people, and I always say the people who were involved with the Christian right were really trying hard. And in hindsight we are going to say it wasn't so good. Of course there are some bad motives in there. There has to be. There always are.

The first question is a harder one. Younger evangelicals at this point are maybe naïve. They are kind of captivated. They are making a lot of commitments they are not going to be able to keep. And they are seeing everything in terms of black and white.

But they sort of see — that is their way forward. They don’t want to be pietists, which is I’m just privatizing my Christianity, I have nothing to do with the world, I’m not making the world a better place, I’m just getting on my way to heaven. And they also don’t want to be triumphalists. They know that. They don’t say, “We are taking over the culture.” But they just are captivated by the idea of sacrificial service and pouring themselves out for the poor, and it’s just — that, along with the idea of not going into the mission field but going into the cultural industries and being a Christian there are the two things that are just sea changes, and they are huge ground notes right now in younger evangelicalism.

REBECCA SINDERBRAND, CNN: I was struck when you were talking about the difference between 1989 and today in terms of the numbers of churches in that area you are describing, the area of lower Manhattan, western Queens, northern Brooklyn. A lot of people are living there, mostly white, mostly educated — more of them are coming to the city and they are staying longer than they did in the past. So these are people who grew up in the suburbs, elsewhere, with more of — a church, evangelical tradition. So is it possible that this is not necessarily a growth, but just a transfer?

TIM KELLER: Well, no, definitely partly. Somewhere like 1997, I suddenly realized that people who are already Christian and conservative Protestants were moving to New York City. I would say that Redeemer would be about a third of the size it is if it wasn’t for that move. What happened was *Seinfeld* and *Friends* and the crime going down, and suddenly people wanted to live there.

Now, what that means is that there is a certain percentage of people who are actually coming in out of more secular backgrounds, but there are also a fair number of people who are coming to live their lives in New York.

REBECCA SINDERBRAND: Well, and that was just — not to take up more time, but that was just the second part of my question, which was, these people grew up in that faith

tradition in areas where there was probably a much stronger sense of church than other areas in New York City.

TIM KELLER: Sure. The real question was what Peter Berger said. If they assimilate too much, then, in a sense, they will become non-factors. But the fact that they are going to have an impact. But you are still thinking of white people coming, and there are white people who come. But there are a terrific number of Asians, Latinos.

There is another third that are people who have Christian roots but they are in the ethnic churches, and they come from the other parts of the world. They either came here as Christians or they were won to faith through these ethnic churches and they grew up. And unless you have churches in Manhattan to help them make the jump — so I gave you some examples of a kind of Christianity that is not as traditional, not as collectivistic, that is more in line with the cultural narratives of that life, so there are a lot of those folks. And then there are a third of people who are what you and I would call secular people who have found faith. So it's to some degree the migration, to some degree the cultural shift from first generation to second generation, and they tend to be more spiritual and religious and Bebbington five-ish. And then there are some converts, but it's not all converts. You're right.

KIRSTEN POWERS, Fox News/The Daily Beast/USA Today: I am constantly frustrated with the obsession over gay marriage on both sides, among evangelicals and among the secular media. And I always feel like the wrong question is being asked, and I'm interested to know what you think about this, because I think it's not about homosexuality. It's about sexuality. And so 95 percent of our country is actually heterosexual, and I think your church teaches, my church teaches, that sex is for marriage, and if you are living with your boyfriend, you couldn't join my church.

So why are we always talking about homosexuality and not just talking about the fact that the Bible teaches us on sexuality?

TIM KELLER: I think Ross Douthat rightly says that most of Christianity's critique, you say, of homosexual practice would also fit for most heterosexuals, too. It would be better for

us to narrate what the Bible says about sexuality in general, because that's what the Bible talks about.

It only talks about homosexuality, per se, seven times. And it is almost a footnote. The Bible says, "This is what sex is. This is what sex is for. It's the reunion of the genders. It is a covenant renewal ceremony."

Sex is actually a kind of Eucharist for married people. It is a way of getting married again. It's a way of putting yourself literally in each other's arms the way you did socially, economically, emotionally, culturally, every other way.

And I have found that if I just simply narrate what the Bible says sexuality is supposed to be — it is the reunion of the alienated genders, it is a covenant renewal ceremony, and all that sort of thing — the vast majority of people out there who are using sex as a consumer good, who are heterosexual, and who usually are professing Christians, they are the ones who usually start to feel weird, and so I would think that, obviously, however, gay people do, too. Gay people feel that I am challenging them when I preach on sex. But heterosexual people should, too.

MICHAEL GERSON, *The Washington Post*: One of the interesting things that you mentioned was how the inertia of the Bible leads to Catholic social thought as a model, and it fit my experience exactly when I went as a young evangelical to Capitol Hill and was looking for models of social engagement. But I found in general that evangelicalism on all of those things was really weak, that modern evangelicalism offered almost nothing when it came to, what is your model of social engagement? How do you interpret changing the culture, living out the ideas of human rights and human dignity and other things? Now, is that changing? When people in your church are looking for how is it that I relate to the world given this set of values, are there any evangelical sources?

TIM KELLER: Yes and no. No is they are not emerging yet. Yes is that part of the evangelical renaissance of saying I don't just have to be a missionary or a minister, I can go into the cultural industries.

As you know, there are an awful lot of conservative Protestants going into the academic world. There are an awful lot of them going a lot of different places, whether or not they

are going to maintain their distinctive identity as they go through, because there is nothing more socializing than academia. There are just a tremendous number of forces that are at play there.

There is just no intellectual tradition, really, and I wouldn't say it has changed that much. I just feel like I do see glimmers of hope, but it hasn't changed that much. We have to borrow from other traditions.

JON WARD, *The Huffington Post*: A two-part question about the response of conservative leaders to the gay marriage issue. If I'm John Boehner or Marco Rubio, what is your advice to me on the position I *should* take on the issue? That's the political question. And then, as a religious leader yourself, what is going to be the response to the Louie Giglio upset? How are you going to process it? How are you going to respond?

TIM KELLER: Your first question — I think younger evangelicals are not incredibly exercised. I think they realize that there are at least three positions you could have as a professing Christian. You could say, "I believe the Bible, but I think the Bible doesn't really condemn homosexuality." I have argued why I think there are some deep inconsistencies in that.

The second possibility is, "I believe homosexuality is wrong, but there is really no reason why to keep gay people out of the inherent conservatism of marriage." As some of you know, there are plenty of people who say marriage is an inherently conservative institution. David Blankenhorn's whole point is, let's just keep it where it is. And if gay people want to get into it, fine. What the country needs is strong marriages.

And then, the third view is that it is bad for human flourishing, because it is not the way human beings are wired. It is not good for children — the French approach, which is every child has the right to a father and a mother. So you shouldn't enshrine a particular form of marriage that permanently keeps a child from having one or the other.

So those are three positions, and I would say younger evangelicals are just not incredibly strident about it. They just aren't, because they know there is a liberal view, a liberal Christian view, there's a kind of conservative Christian view that is okay with gay marriage.

I would say that John Boehner and Marco Rubio ought to decide what they think is right instead of reading the polls, because they are going to be very confusing, and decide what is right and people will probably respect them more if they have a well thought out personal view.

The question about the Louie Giglio thing. I don't know, other than to say one of the dictionary definitions of bigotry, one of them, is lack of respect for or an effort to silence contrary opinion.

Now, I know that the comeback is that, "We don't let white supremacists have equal say in the public square. We won't put you in prison for believing in white supremacy, but you are not going to have a license for your radio station, you're not going to get an accreditation for your school. And we need to treat the view that homosexuality is a sin exactly the same way. It doesn't deserve respect. It should be silenced." That's one view.

And that is the view I think that was represented by the people that said you can't have anybody in the public square representing God and representing the faithful at a situation like this if you have a view that there is something wrong with homosexuality.

The only comeback would be Jonathan Rauch's approach. He says if orthodox faith does morph to the place where people still have that high view of the text, they are still people "of the Book", and we have completely embraced the idea of homosexuality as one way of loving and marriage, if that does happen, it will take a long time, a very long time. Not the sort of thing that could happen in 20 years or 50 years, in which case we need to learn to live together. We really have got to be civil to each other on the way.

We can't do what we did in the civil rights movement, which is basically shame the one group out of the public sphere. Don't do that or you are going to find it is not going to work. It is going to create terrific civil strife because that 30 percent of devout people is a big number of people. Not enough to win an election, but you certainly can't just marginalize them and say you are beyond the pale. You've got to show respect. They have to show respect, too.

So I would just plead for civility and say to Christians, because of what Miroslav Volf says about Christian identity — it is not based on difference, at least it shouldn't be, it doesn't

have to be — therefore, in some ways, we should be the peacemakers. We should be the people who are the least threatened. We should be the people who are most willing to say, “Let’s talk” and be civil and the most gracious. And we should at least try to take the lead in that. We may not be listened to. So there are some ideas.

BRIT HUME, Fox News: As an attraction to a church, as a feature of worship, the role of music, what is it? Is it because you’ve got a great pipe organ and a good organist? Is it because the choir is great? Is it because the hymns are familiar? What is it that makes music an attraction to a particular church?

TIM KELLER: Late modernity is not as rational, we are not as confident in reason. Certainly, younger people cannot — their eyes glaze over if you give them longer chains of reasoning. They just don’t do that. They tend to be more impressionistic, more intuitive. Doesn’t mean they are irrational. There still need to be arguments. But actually in that it means that the appeal of Christianity and the appeal of worship means it just can’t be a talking head. I try to be as good a preacher as I possibly can be. But for there just to be a quick hymn and a prayer and then Tim Keller holding forth, no matter how rational and compelling I am, it’s not going to capture people’s hearts.

Worship has always been holistic, I think, but the evangelical world has gotten pretty rationalistic and heady, and very oriented toward long, expository sermons and lots of reasoning. And I don’t think that is going to capture younger people in the future. So I would say music has always been important.

Obviously, you are asking a big, big question about, how does music mean? But I would — as a practitioner — I would say it is a very, very important place going forward. But I’ll tell you one thing is the Christian world is not behind on great musicians and great writers. It’s just not behind on that at all.

I used to say to my church planners, I’d say, historically, the people doing the music would be the faithful people, the people who are faithful to the church and they just love to use their musical gifts in church. But, honestly, if eight-year-old Sally does her clarinet piece for the offertory, everybody who knows little Sally and her mother and her grandmother and her father feels very warm when they hear the — they actually feel lifted up to God. “Isn’t it wonderful, Sally is using her gifts.” But anybody who comes in who doesn’t know

Sally or the family is just checking out because it's so awful. And so what I say is, excellence in music is more inclusive. Poor music is exclusive. It only edifies the people who know the musician. And great music, terrific music, is transcendent.

ELIZABETH DIAS, TIME Magazine: Dr. Keller, in thinking about the rise of non-white populations in many evangelical churches and your own, I wondered how you are negotiating the following: many Latina churches, particularly, have both husband and wife as pastors, not the wife as the associate pastor or the women's pastor. Many of the largest Latina churches, Pentecostal churches in America, and in Latin America, are run solely by women. And I'm wondering, how are you working that out on the ground at Redeemer? How are you counseling other pastors to work that out? I know the PCA doesn't ordain women. But is there an opening here? How do you see this?

TIM KELLER: Well, no, my denomination does not have women pastors, doesn't ordain women. First of all, our approach when we plant churches is that this is one of those areas that, like baptism, like tongues and healing and the other things, this is definitely one of those areas where the Christian church has always been divided and we really have to be civil to each other about that.

My belief is that issues like women's ordination, where there are constant historic differences, that we need to be civil to each other, we need to recognize that each community has something to offer. There is a pressure I think that my denomination and my church that I put on men, otherwise, they'd just opt out.

I don't see it, frankly. The reason I like being in my own denomination is not because I like to put men on the throne, because they just opt out of commitment and they tend to opt out of involvement.

But on the other hand, the problem is I do think that there are plenty of women who say, "I'm just not able to use my gifts, and I'm not able to do what I could do in your denomination." So is there room for difference? Yes. The evangelical churches are not at one, and the Pentecostal churches are not at one. And I do feel that they all need to thrive and they all have something to do.

ELIZABETH DIAS: Just as a quick follow up, are there ways that you all are actively trying to preserve that Latina cultural heritage of women leadership?

TIM KELLER: We are working against history in this sense. There's lots of Korean Presbyterians, like no Chinese Presbyterians. There are lots of Brazilian Presbyterians. There's like no Hispanic Presbyterians. Now, those are all exaggerations, but various denominational traditions for some reason thrive... The main Latin American Presbyterians are Brazilians that we have. We have a lot of Brazilians, and they are not quite the same. So the answer is, in a way it's not — if you are just asking Redeemer and my Presbyterianism, we don't have as many Hispanics there. I would love to have more and then maybe that would be more of an issue.

PAUL FARHI, *The Washington Post*: You mentioned very early on about younger evangelicals and their emphasis, or greater concern perhaps, than older evangelicals and their concern for the poor. And given the Bible's emphasis on redistribution of wealth, putting those two things together, does that portend some political implication for moving forward as these younger evangelicals grow older and become mainstream? Does that mean conservative evangelicalism becomes a more liberal kind of evangelicalism — that the government should be in the business of redistributing wealth?

TIM KELLER: I think that younger evangelicals will be more open to that, yes. See, actually, that is almost a yes or no question. I would say the fact is younger evangelicals in some ways feel that the older people, the baby boomers and everybody, sits in the economic catbird seat. A lot of them are resentful about the fact that they are having trouble moving ahead in their career. So I think personally, they may have trouble with this when they actually get to it, but theoretically, they don't have a problem with higher taxes if they felt it was really redistributing wealth.

I think when it comes right down to it, they'd have the same issues that a lot of people have when government actually starts to grow — honestly, when business starts to get powerful, when government starts to get powerful, the corruption comes in and everybody gets upset. And then there's a backlash and somehow we morph, we kind of move along this way. But right now the answer is basically yes, it does have implications.

DAVID BORNSTEIN, *The New York Times*: At the beginning you said that in your tradition that salvation comes through Christ and not through acts of service. Does this mitigate against the kind of public or social engagement that Michael was referring to? Or— we talk a lot about poverty, we care a lot about poverty, but we don't really organize around doing anything about poverty.

TIM KELLER: The problem with saying I'm saved by my works of service means that you are basically motivated by fear and self-interest. That is, the reason I have to help the poor is so I go to heaven. So why am I helping the poor? For me. I'm not doing it out of love for the poor or love for God. I'm doing it out of self-interest.

And you're afraid you're going to get divinely judged if you don't. If you say that once I take away all fear of God's condemnation from you, you lose all motivation for living a good life, then the only motivation you had for living a good life was fear. And there is a better motivation. It's love, it's gratitude, it's wanting to resemble the God who saved you.

DOYLE McMANUS, *Los Angeles Times*: The great innovation of the Christian Right was to say that Christian believers shouldn't merely be engaged in the world and shouldn't merely do social activism and vote. They should actually explicitly engage in political activism and raise money and campaign and become a caucus. You mentioned that the neo-Anabaptists kind of have the intellectual heat at the moment. This is not about any particular policy; it is not about any particular doctrine. It is about the question of coherent, conscious, explicit political activism by Christians. How do younger evangelicals feel about that?

TIM KELLER: Well, they are very ambivalent now, but what is interesting is — it comes back in through the back door. The front door was — or the old approach was, the way you engage the culture is largely through politics. It's true evangelicals are backing away from that idea. Now the idea would be you get into the cultural industries and serve by just thinking out the implications of your Christian faith for where you are working. Now, that actually does get you — then why leave politics out? Why should you go into the academy and into Hollywood and that sort of thing and not go into government?

ABRIDGED TRANSCRIPT

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Dr. Timothy Keller ♦ March 2013

So it comes in through the back door I think with a pretty different attitude. So it is still there. So I think that the older approach was more militant, frankly, and more triumphalistic, and maybe they are really afraid of that. In some ways, I must say, there may be a dearth of them wanting to go into politics — there's too few, frankly, because I always say, look, Hollywood, yes; Washington, no? Both places are difficult, and why not? So I actually have to encourage people who do want to be involved in government and politics to consider it. So I actually have had to overcome that a little bit.

MR. CROMARTIE: Thank you.

♦ END ♦

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