

Ambassadors▪ April 23 ▪ John Paul Schulze

1. New

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. - **Hebrews 13:14**

1. What new experience or thing have you recently had or look forward to having?
2. Describe something new you hope to see happen or experience in your life.
3. **RE-new**:

But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. - **Jeremiah 29:7**

1. Why does the church believe that racial reconciliation or refugee ministry are necessary for the renewal of the City?
2. What other practical ways can we experience and participate in the renewal of the city?
3. What fears or barriers to entry come to your mind that hinder your involvement in renewing the city?
4. **New City**:

**1** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.**2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."**5** And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." - **Revelation 21:1-5**

1. What phrases, words, ideas in this text or from today's sermon motivate you to seek and pray and engage in this city?

Tim Keller - The City, The Church, and The Future: Professor Grace Davie, emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Exeter in Great Britain.

In short, in the western world — including North America — our societies are becoming both more secular and more religious at the same time, and this is, as Davie says, “a challenging combination.” The reality is neither that belief in God is inevitably disappearing, nor that in some simplistic way “God is back.” Davie says that the religious landscape is now “paradoxical.” What is going away is inherited, institutionalized Christianity — what many would call “nominal Christianity.” Yet new patterns of orthodox Christian faith (and of other religions) are growing too. Contrary to the confident predictions of its death, religious faith “is an increasing presence in the modern world order.”

Grace Davies’ message is both exciting and challenging for Christians in cities today. It means that we should expect increasing skepticism and perhaps greater opposition. Gone is that great “canopy” of nominal Christians who were not personally devout but who thought religion was a good thing and important for society — and who were not very difficult to draw into Christian churches. On the other hand, contemporary people have the same intuitions of God and sin and spiritual longings for love, meaning, and grace that their ancestors did. People will hear the same message and some say, “You are mad!” (**Acts 26:24**) while others will be cut to the heart and ask, “What shall we do?” (**Acts 2:37**).