

Young, Wrestling, and Always Reforming

*The Mission of God and the Continuing
Reformation of the Church*



May 3 - 4, 2016 | Philadelphia, PA

#OFMReformed

MISSIO ALLIANCE:

AN OVERVIEW

During the last ten years we have witnessed increasing fragmentation within evangelical Protestantism in North America. Amidst the various calls for renewal, Emergent Village, The Gospel Coalition, and other organizations such as Acts 29, Redeemer City to City, and Transform Network have risen to provide places for theological reflection and training for the challenges of being the Church in 21st-Century North America. Much good has come forth. However, at a time when evangelicalism is being reinvigorated and reshaped by theology and practice, a significant number of Church leaders, from across a range of theological traditions, have voiced a shared desire for a collaborative alternative.

Consumer society presents challenges to discipleship, particularly in the North American context. Among these obstacles is an ever-increasing post-Christian culture that begs for new forms of cultural engagement. Furthermore, the language of Christianity is no longer native to large parts of North America. For the same reason, the region has also ceased to be a dynamic missionary-sending agent, instead itself becoming a primary place for mission.

Taking into account these significant cultural changes, the upcoming generations need clarity on the issues of scriptural authority, the robustness of the gospel, the incarnational nature of the Church, the importance of community, and the place of spiritual formation as discipleship. From these perspectives, we need to engage the cultural issues facing the evangelical church – including multi-cultural ministry and heterogeneous congregations, women in ministry, sexual identity, pluralism and God's concern for creation care and justice in the world. Many streams within evangelicalism have unique contributions to offer on all these questions and have many lines of coalescence in addition to other present options.

Thus, we are convicted of the need for an initiative that can offer theological and practical guidance to the North American Church seeking to navigate these issues together. To this end, we envision working in partnership to create conversational forums, media resources, and other training contexts - all for the sake of seeing Church leaders equipped for fuller and more faithful participation in God's mission.

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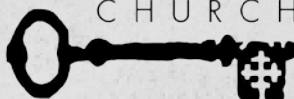


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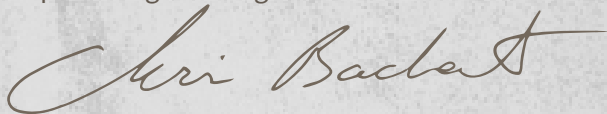
WELCOME LETTER

From Missio Alliance, and on behalf the Co-Organizing Partners who played a leading role in helping to shape this event, we want to welcome you to the 2nd gathering in our *Once & Future Mission Series*.

We have created this series as a means of strengthening the Church by bringing groups and leaders together to explore the unique strengths and contributions of major theological traditions within the Body of Christ as we seek to live faithfully into God's mission in our day. Our first event in this series brought a focus on the Anabaptist tradition and after hosting this event focused on the Reformed tradition, we hope to convene additional gatherings that will focus on the work of God in the Wesleyan/Holiness, Restorationist, Pentecostal, and still other traditions and streams. You can read more about the *Once & Future Mission Series* on the next page.

This gathering, which we entitled, "Young, Wrestling, and Always Reforming: The Mission of God and the Continuing Reformation of the Church," emerged from a strong and diverse group of voices who identify with the Reformed theological tradition, but haven't felt quite "at home" among other spaces of conversation and belonging claiming to represent this stream of the Church. Our hope and prayer is that this brief event might serve as a catalyst for new forms of connectedness and collaboration among these friends as well as between this tribe and other tribes who are asking similar questions, wrestling with similar issues, and evidence a primary commitment to journeying forward into God's mission together.

We're so grateful that you've chosen to join us for this unique and important gathering!



JR Rozko & Chris Backert | Missio Alliance Co-Directors

ONCE & FUTURE MISSION SERIES

In 1 Corinthians 12, the Apostle Paul speaks of unity and diversity in the Body of Christ. In terms of diversity, he highlights a plurality of gifts, callings, and abilities given by God to the Church. In terms of unity, he urges us to consider a common relationship to our triune God: “the same spirit...” “the same Lord...” and “the same God...” Paul may be primarily referring to unity and diversity in local communities of believers, but these same dynamics are central to the integrity of the Church as a whole. **Far from arguing for uniformity or dispassionate tolerance, Paul would have us know that Christ-centered unity and diversity are essential to the DNA of the new humanity made possible in and through Jesus!**

Given the increasing amounts of fear, polarization, and reactionary rhetoric that seem to be manifesting themselves in different quarters of the North American Church, this text offers a timely reminder and invitation. A reminder and invitation that is perhaps doubly significant in that much of this “cracking” stems from finding ourselves in a profound time of social dislocation.

The fact of the matter is, **the future of mission in North America is uncharted territory.** Never before have we found ourselves in a situation where the task before the Church is to bear witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ among entire cultural groups who believe they have heard the good news and have moved beyond it. In fact, the last time any of God’s people faced a similar situation was when the Celtic movement re-evangelized the British Isles in the 700’s after its initial evangelization in the 3rd century.

We believe that the Spirit is forging a new horizon for the Church; one that is built on the gifts of the traditions of our past, but fused together for a new reality in the future. We know the theological and missiological gifts that have carried us as we enter this new territory, but we do not know for certain how these gifts will come together – or what new gifts might yet be given – as we journey forward together.

It is in this spirit that Missio Alliance is excited to convene the “***Once & Future Mission Series.***”

The **Once & Future Mission Series** is dedicated to recognizing the gifts of our various traditions up to today and re-imagining those gifts for the future of mission. We seek to do this by bringing these gifts into conversation with other parts of the Body of Christ so that a “fusion of horizons” can begin to take shape – one that we believe will be necessary for the future of mission in North America.

Table of Contents

- 03** General Schedule
- 05** Plenary & Forum Schedule
- 09** Workshop Session 1
- 12** Workshop Session 2
- 15** Map - Liberti Church
- 19** Partnering Co-Sponsors

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One of the greatest needs in our world is to break down the barriers that separate people and groups from one another and North American Christians from global Christianity. I think Missio Alliance is the kind of organization that has the potential and the mission and the value set that is going to allow those things to happen.

*- Doug Cullum
Vice President and Dean,
Northeastern Seminary*

General Schedule

TUESDAY

- 10:30 - 11:00** WELCOME & WORSHIP
- 11:00 - 11:30** FORUM #1 - The Reformed Tradition: Past, Present, Future
- 11:35 - 12:45** PLENARY #1 - The Mission of God's Sovereignty
- 12:45 - 1:30** LUNCH
- 1:45 - 3:00** PLENARY #2 - The Witness of Trinitarian Priesthood
- 3:05 - 3:30** BREAK
- 3:30 - 4:45** WORKSHOP #1
- 4:45 - 5:00** BREAK
- 5:00 - 5:30** RESPONSE # 1 - Freeing Reformed Theology from its Christendom Captivity
- 5:30 - 6:00** FORUM #2 - The Reformed Tradition & the Christendom Legacy
- 7:30 - 9:30** FILM SCREENING - This Changed Everything: 500 Years of the Reformation *(Produced by Christian History Institute. Hosted by Dr. Frank James, President of Biblical Theological Seminary)*

WEDNESDAY

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 8:45 - 9:15 | WELCOME & WORSHIP |
| 9:15 - 10:30 | PLENARY #3 - The Reformation of the Church Today |
| 10:30 - 10:45 | BREAK |
| 10:45 - 12:00 | WORKSHOP #2 |
| 12:00 - 12:45 | LUNCH |
| 12:45 - 2:10 | PLENARY #4 - The Vocational Formation of the People of God |
| 2:10 - 2:30 | BREAK |
| 2:45 - 3:15 | RESPONSE & RESTORATION |
| 3:15 - 3:50 | FORUM #3 |
| 3:50 - 4:00 | CLOSING WORSHIP |

Plenary & Forum Schedule

EMCEE: *David Bailey*

FORUM 1: The Reformed Tradition: Past, Present, Future

HOST: David Bailey

PRESENTERS: Moses Chung, Peter Choi, Frank James, Shannon Kiser

PLENARY #1 / TALK #1:

EVERY SQUARE INCH AND MISSION FROM THE BOTTOM UP

Ruth Padilla DeBorst

One of the beauties of the Reformed tradition is the acknowledgement that there is no corner in all creation over which Christ does not cry “Mine!” As Christians we are invited into the loving mission of the Lord of the Universe! Still, there are questions that beg response: How and from where does God exercise God’s sovereignty? And what, then, does mission look like for the community sent into the world as Jesus was?

PLENARY #1 / TALK #2:

CHOSEN FOR MISSION: RE-IMAGINING ELECTION FOR THE SAKE OF OTHERS

Carl Ellis

One of the hallmarks of the reformed tradition is our doctrine of election. However, given our emphasis on human depravity, our good belief has become skewed into something that postures us with privilege as many in our circles have come to see themselves

as “the elect”. However, what if instead of privilege we were chosen for responsibility? What if, instead of “the chosen” we saw ourselves more as “the called”. Maybe it’s time we reconsider this hallmark belief in both doctrine and practice.

**PLENARY #2 / TALK #1:
FINALLY BECOMING TRINITARIAN:
FROM FATHER, SON, AND HOLY BOOK TO FATHER, SON, AND HOLY
SPIRIT**

Cherith Nordling

The Reformed tradition is marked by its confessions, which echo the earliest creeds of the church. These affirmations are wholly Trinitarian. However, in practice, the person and work of God the Holy Spirit are often conflated with concepts like “Providence” or circumscribed by Scripture. This results in the Spirit being reduced to an impersonal, vague “force” that acts on our conscience or illuminates Scripture. Nothing could be further from the divine reality of God the Holy Spirit with, for, and in us, from first creation through final new creation. The only way to be truly reformed and renewed in conformity to Jesus is to walk empowered by the Spirit, as Jesus did.

**PLENARY #2 / TALK #2:
THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS AS COUNTER-IMPERIAL
WITNESS**

Jin Kim

Calvin resisted the monopoly that the Roman priesthood exercised over the church, but his reformation did not fundamentally unmoor the church from clericalism rooted in empire. If Jesus alone is the “great high priest,” why have we ceded ministry to “ordained clergy”? How does such ecclesiastical patriarchy lead to unwitting service to empire, both in Constantine’s time and now? How can we truly propel the church into a robust priesthood of all believers in a socially networked world?

FORUM 2: The Reformed Tradition & the Christendom Legacy

HOST: Geoff Holsclaw (Theology on Mission)

PRESENTERS: Dave Fitch, Ruth Padilla Deborst, Carl Ellis, Cherith Nordling, Jin Kim

PLENARY #3 / TALK #1:

SEMPER REFORMANDA?: RECOVERING A FLEXIBLE, CONTEXTUAL, MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY FOR THE REFORMED COMMUNITY

Corey Widmer

Though the phrase “Reformed and ever Reforming” is often used as a motto of the Reformed community, the “ever reforming” part of the phrase has not been a very lively hallmark of our tradition! In fact, it can be argued that because of certain rigid features of Reformed theology, our movement is among the most resistant to creative forms of missiological adaptation for the new challenges facing the church in the secular West. If the Reformed movement is to flourish in the future, we need to understand what features about our theological tradition have kept us resistant to missiological adaptation, but also to celebrate and recover the aspects of the Reformed theological tradition that are particularly generative for fostering flexible, improvisational churches for the sake of God’s mission.

PLENARY #3 / TALK #2:

REFORMED OUTSIDE CHRISTENDOM: THEOLOGICAL TOOLS AND HEROES FOR THE NEW WORLD

Kyuboem Lee

Historically, the Reformed faith has existed among the privileged within Christendom. However, that world no longer exists. Does this mean that Reformed equals irrelevant? Not if we can rediscover some of the lesser known treasures in the Reformed tradition and re-appropriate them for the new missional context. Learning from the theological, missiological and pastoral work of past heroes in the Reformed tradition can help us chart new paths for us as we seek to

carry out the mission today.

**PLENARY #4 / TALK #1:
FORMED, NOT FOUND: HEARING AND HEEDING GOD’S CALL
FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD**

Tod Bolsinger

In this plenary, Tod Bolsinger, Vice President of Vocation and Formation at Fuller Seminary gives a vision for reformed vocational formation, and missional congregational transformation that will enable all of God’s people to heed the call of God in a rapidly changing world.

**PLENARY #4 / TALK #2:
THE REFORMED PASTOR IN RITTENHOUSE SQUARE**

Jared Ayers

In this plenary, Jared Ayers, founding and senior minister of Liberti Church in Philadelphia, PA, will offer some theological and missional “reporting from the field” on the ways in which the spiritual, theological, and sacramental resources of the Reformed tradition can be fruitful for the minister-in-mission in a skeptical, post-Christian context.

FORUM 3: Reformation and Restoration

HOST: Scott Jones

PRESENTERS: Carla Sunberg, Corey Widmer, Kyuboem Lee, Tod Bolsinger, Jared Ayers

Workshop Session 1 - TUESDAY

Always Reforming: Fresh Expressions of Church for the 21st Century (LL001)

Shannon Kiser & J.R. Briggs

Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda (The Church Reformed, and Always Reforming) keeps us attentive to the ongoing process of church renewal. The North American Church finds itself in a changing landscape in which globalization, the nature of networks, the flow of information, increasing secularization, and the rapid pace of change require us to consider what it means to be a faithful witness to the Living God in the 21st century. What does it look like to join the Sending God on mission in our neighborhoods and communities? What would it mean to give up the quest to be “relevant” and take seriously the call to be “incarnational?” How can we allow the Bible to read us afresh in new contexts, prompting us to live out the call to make disciples in a variety of settings and people groups? Join us to hear about how the church can be an instrument in the hands of the Holy Spirit beyond our church walls. Discover the missional practices that have the ability to foster fresh expressions of church in which the ancient claims of the gospel are made accessible for the vast populations who are not coming to our existing church doors. Learn how to partner with pioneer leaders who can take the never changing gospel to our ever changing streets and neighborhoods. According to

Barth, we are called to courageous and obedient faith, rather than simply following the spirit of the age. Come join in a conversation with Fresh Expression US Leaders, and explore what courageous faith just might look like in 21st Century ministry.

Mere Evangelicalism: Defining a Fracturing Movement

(Small Board Room)

Peter Choi

New divisions and realignments in evangelical identity mark the landscape of American Christianity today. This workshop will present a historical and theological frame for making sense of change and continuity in evangelicalism and plot a course for the future.

Emancipating Reformed Tradition from White Supremacy

(F202)

Carl Ellis, David Bailey, & Corey Widmer

Emerging out of its historical context, the majority of the Reformed Tradition in the United States (and the west in general) has been formed through the leadership of white, usually educated, males. This still continues to be the predominant voice of the Reformed movement today. Yet, for reasons of both faithfulness to the gospel itself as well as the quickly changing demographics of North America, the Reformed witness must be freed from the central lens that has guided and shaped it up through today. Join this conversation for a discussion of the theological and practical ways forward on this important subject.

Reimagining Women in Leadership (F302)

Frank & Carolyn James

Seems like everything that can be said about women in leadership has already been said, and a lot of us are bone weary of the debate. Anyone expecting this workshop to be more of the same, will be disappointed. Expect a fresh take on this worn out topic. We are moving the discussion to a new location beyond the debate and asking deeper questions that the debate often overlooks. Don't worry—the Bible will be central to our discussion, plus church history, plus a lot of common sense.

Theological Formation From and For Every Square Inch

(LL003)

Ruth Padilla DeBorst

An interactive session in which participants will explore a model of theological formation that promotes the practice of doing theology in community for the sake of the transformation of all dimensions of life in light of the reign of the slain Lamb.

Critical Conversations About The Mission Of God On The Ground In Local Churches (Large Board Room)

Moses Chung & Cory Willson

God is at work in your local neighborhood, but what about the Church? What would happen to our churches if we started with God's abundant activity, of the resurrection life all around us, and from this first step discerned the many possibilities there are to seek the good of the neighborhood as God's people?

Workshop Session 2 - WEDNESDAY

Seminary Didn't Prepare Me for This (F302)

Tod Bolsinger

After traveling over 100,000 miles and consulting with leaders from over 50 churches, Tod Bolsinger, author of *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory* discovered the same whispered complaint that the leading evangelical seminary heard from it's most loyal and grateful alumni: Seminary did not prepare me for the world in which I lead. In this seminar, we'll explore the key--and often missing--components of leadership necessary for Reformed pastors and organizational leaders to grow a faithful, fruitful, and missional community for a church in exile.

Reimagining Theological Education 500 Years After Calvin

(Large Board Room)

Jin Kim

Church of All Nations, a PCUSA congregation in Minneapolis, helped launch Underground Seminary in 2014 as an experiment in equipping leaders for serious discipleship & forming radical Christian communities. The first task is to decolonize the mind & body. What have we learned in these first two years?

Living in the Spirit as a Reformed Believer (F202)

Cherith Nordling

So what does it actually look like to walk in the spirit? Is this something we do individually, or communally, or both? Do I have to pray in tongues? Do I get to? How does one pray for healing, or listen for discernment, or move in the prophetic, or function in the most basic ways of walking in Conformity to Christ? In this session we'll be talking about any and all of the above, and more, ready to learn and listen together!

Is a Reformed Renewal of New Testament Discipleship Possible TODAY? (LL001)

Ed Gross & Brewster Hastings

Rigorous research, commitment to the Reformed Faith and life-changing spiritual experiences lead the presenters to answer the following questions in ways that may astound and transform your life: What did “disciple” mean to Jesus and other 2TJ rabbis? Were NT believers disciplined into the faith or evangelized in a way similar to today’s decisional models? Why did John Stott lead the call for an International Consultation of Discipleship before he died and what did its 450 participants from 54 countries conclude? Why is there a shift in missiology from advocating CPMs (Church Planting Movements) to DMMs (Disciple Making Movements)? And just how “reformed” are the Disciple Making Movements that are globally emerging? How can healing prayer and lay-led Discovery Bible Studies become a valid and vital part of Reformed ministries here and abroad today?

Preaching for Transformation (LL003)

Jared Ayers, Ruth Padilla DeBorst, Jin Kim, Corey Widmer, & Carl Ellis

Preaching for transformation involves not only helping hearers to understand the text, which has been the classic role of preaching in the Reformed tradition, but also to fire the heart and imagination so that the text begins to re-shape and re-narrate the lives of those who are listening. Here, a wide array of Reformed Preachers will discuss

their approach to the task and craft of preaching.

The Promise and Peril of Praying for Revival

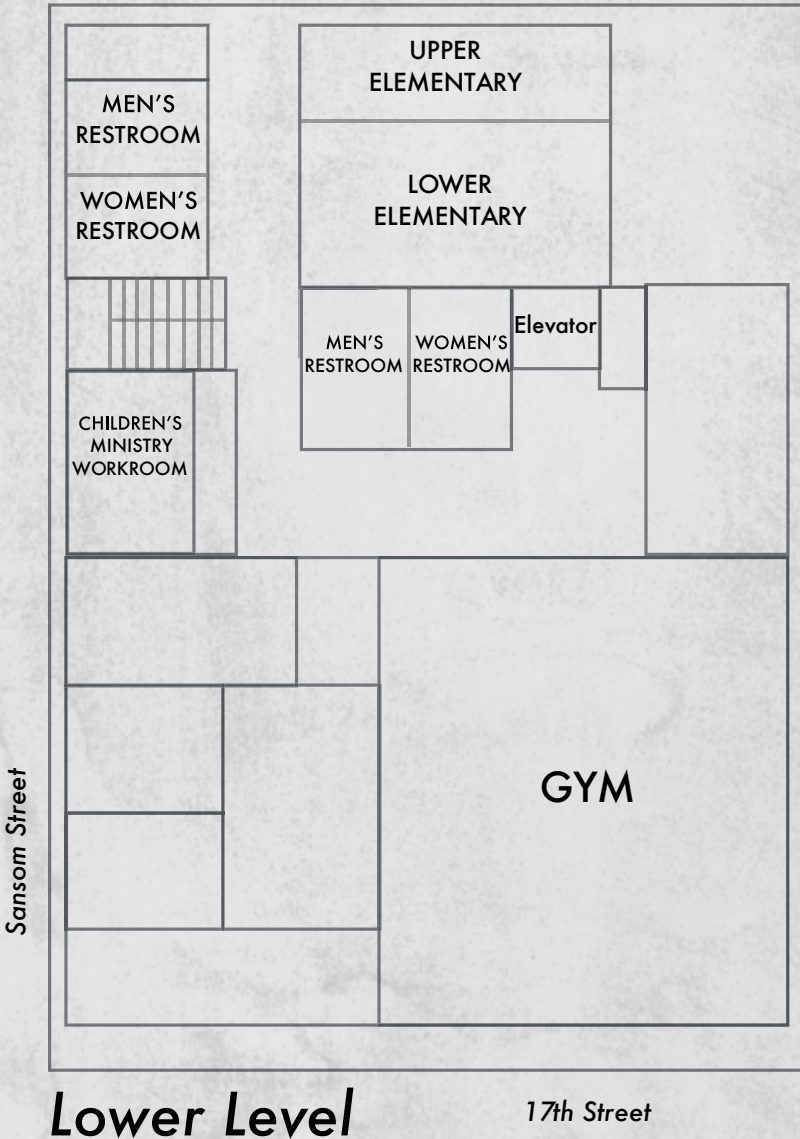
(Small Board Room)

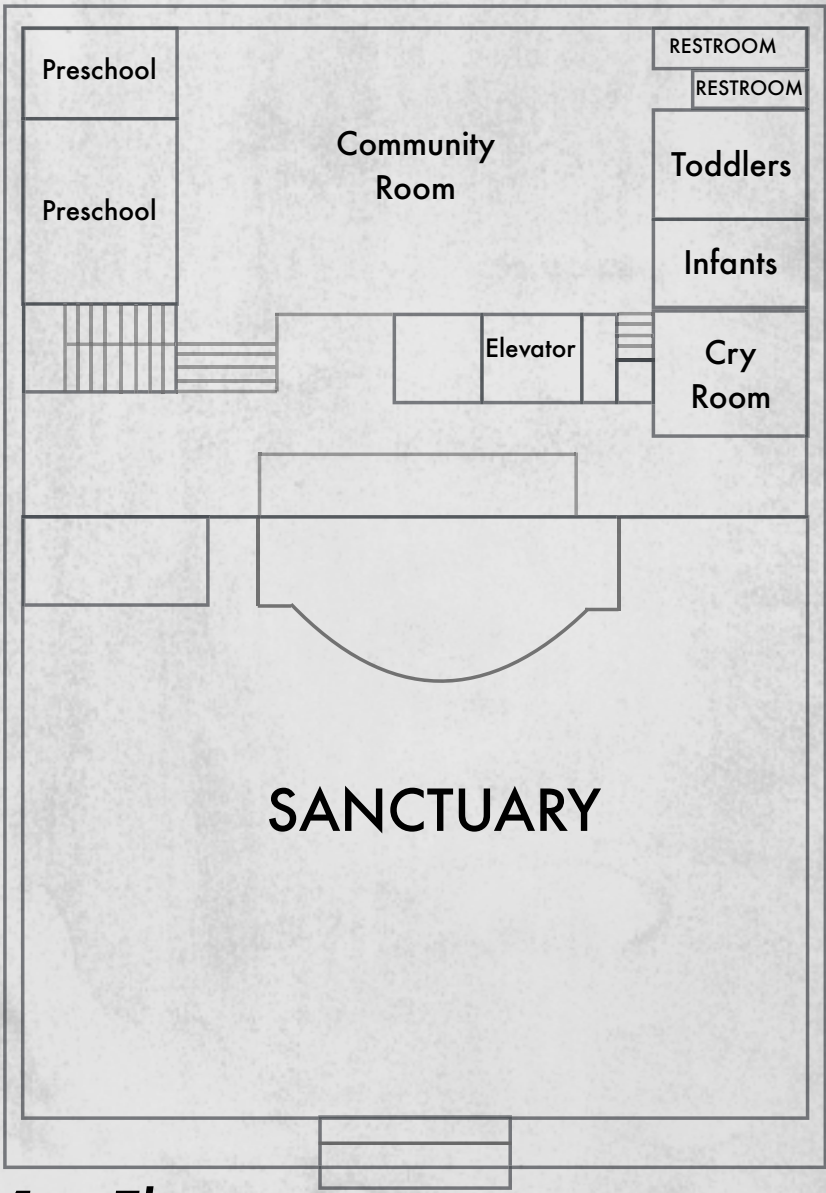
Peter Choi

The longing for revival is a characteristic, even defining, feature of evangelical spirituality. We will explore how this trend has both bolstered and worked at cross purposes with the mission of the church. We'll also discuss implications for missional engagement as well as spiritual formation.

Liberti Church

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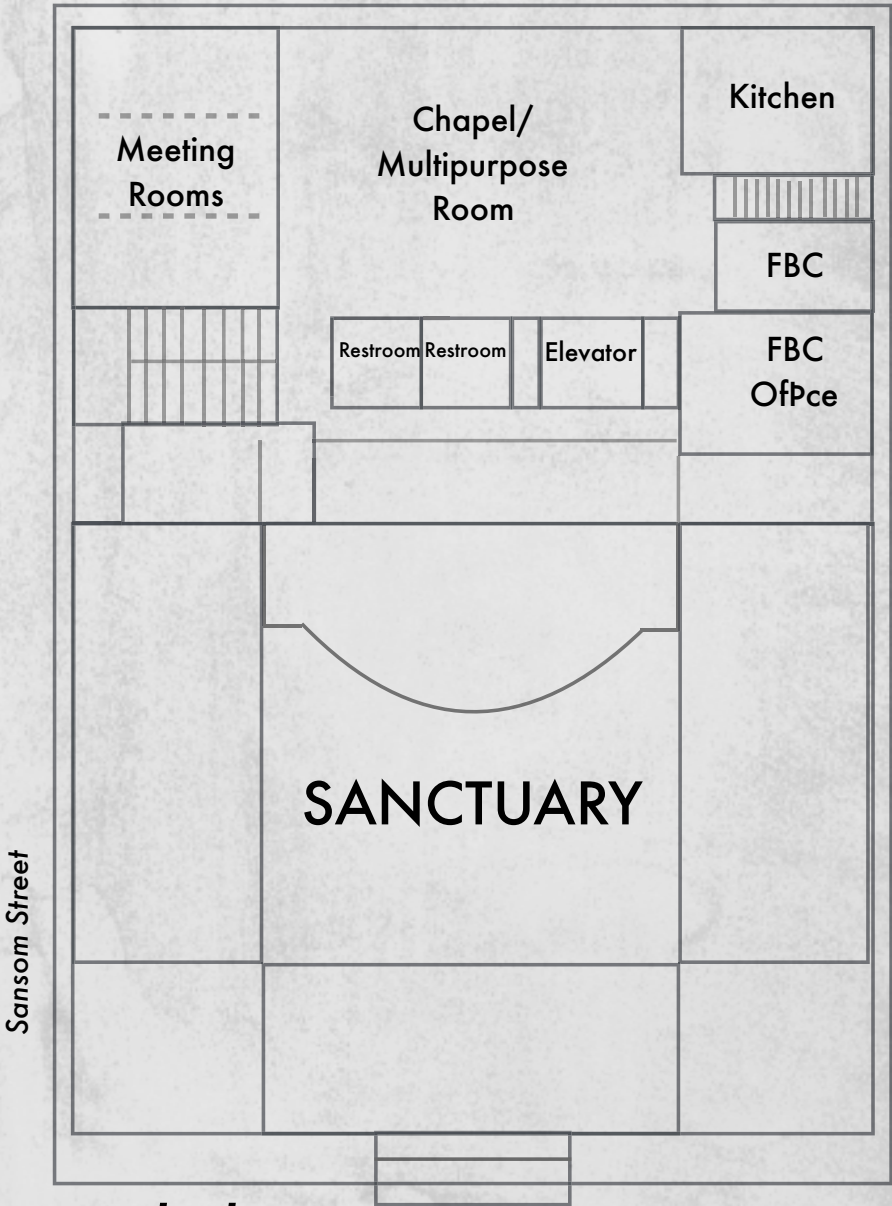




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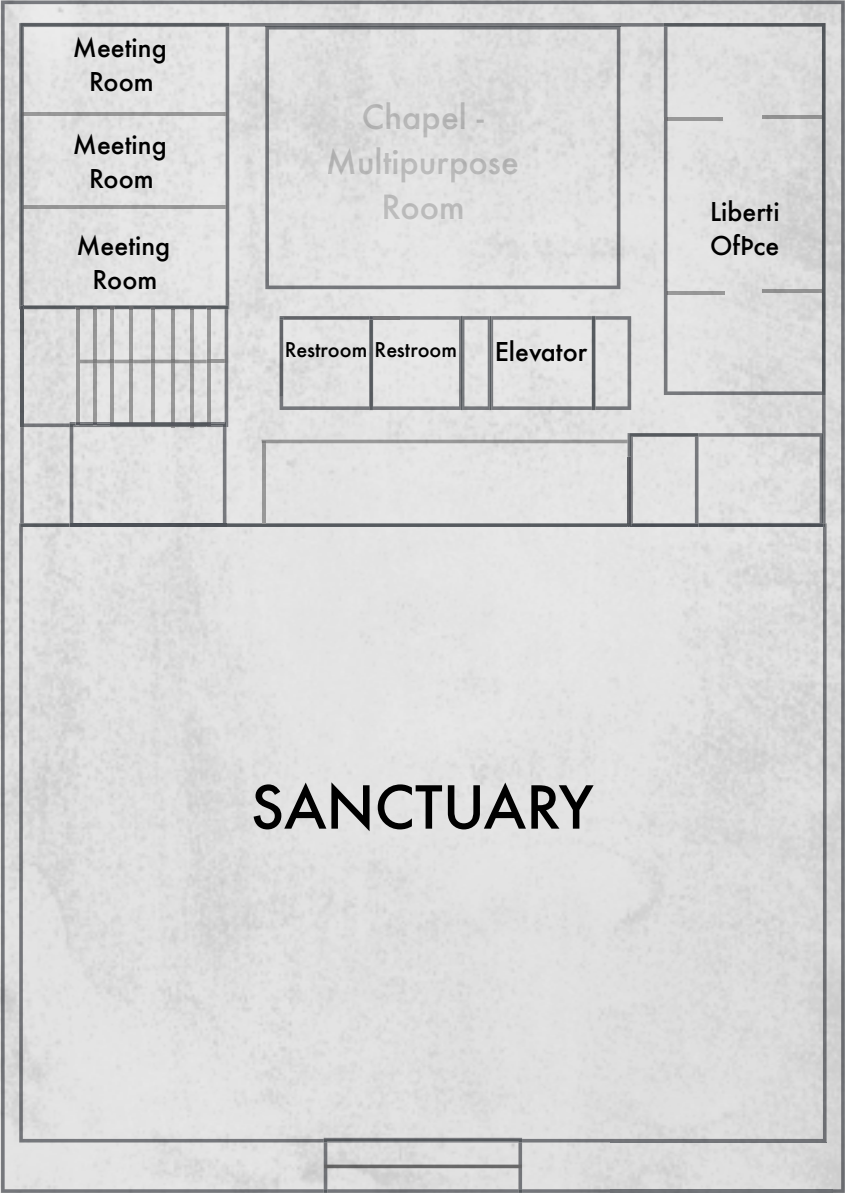
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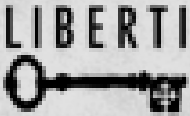
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Sansom Street

3rd Floor

17th Street



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We are fortunate to have so many exceptional groups partnering with us to make this gathering possible. The schools, denominations, tribes, networks, initiatives, and ministries represented at our gathering are doing good and needed work. We commend them to you and encourage you to spend time learning more about them in The Community Room area where snacks and refreshments will be available throughout our time together.



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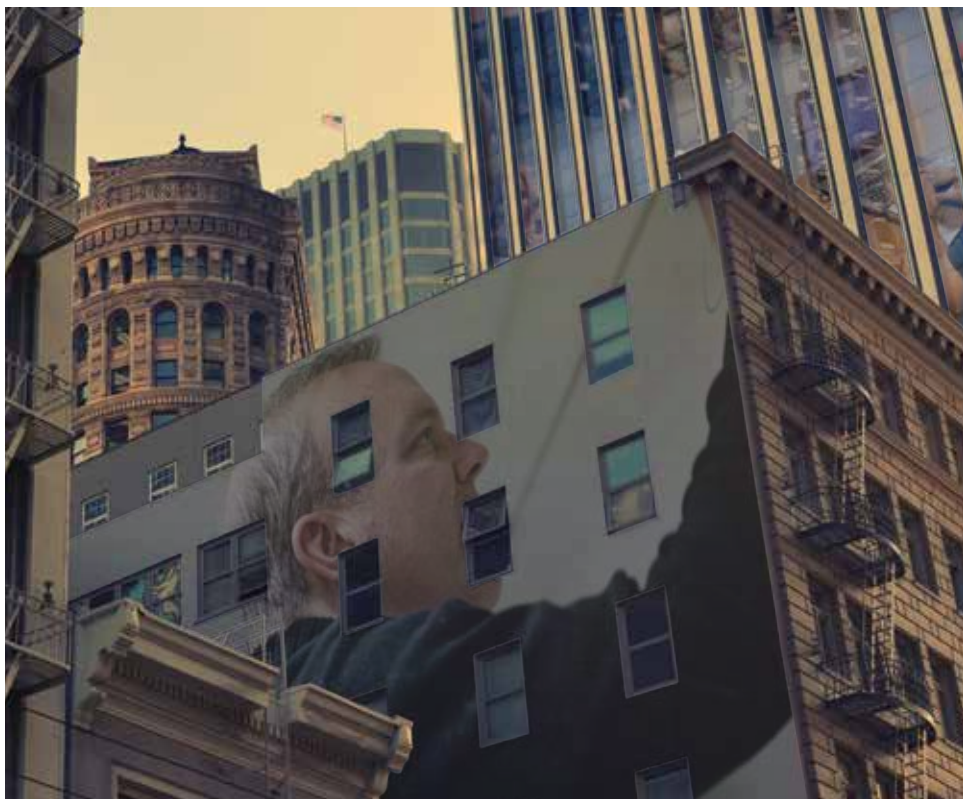


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THIS CHANGED EVERYTHING

500 Years of the Reformation

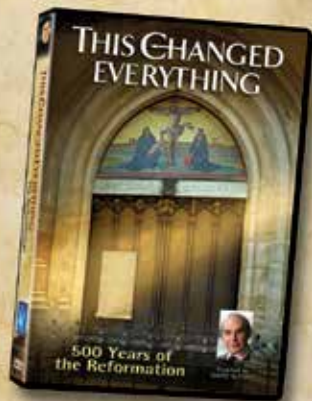
Christian History Institute presents a new three-part documentary on the Reformation. *This Changed Everything*, hosted by actor David Suchet, explores the roots and the fruits of the Reformation while grappling with difficult questions about the legacy of division.

Leading scholars from a broad range of perspectives tell the dramatic story of the Reformation, analyze its effects, and address vital questions about unity, truth, and the future of the church.

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Screening Tuesday at 7:30,
followed by Q & A
with Dr. Frank James

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