

1,700 Churches Band Together in New York City to Fight This

In New York City's iconic Central Park, world evangelist Luis Palau shared the Good News of Jesus Christ with thousands of people representing multiple languages, ethnicities and cultural backgrounds in an extraordinary display of the diversity of the body of Christ.

It was a fitting capstone to NY CityServe & CityFest, a historic campaign that brought together 1,700 churches and reached 180,000 people in person through more than 115 events in one of the most influential cities in the world.

Luis and his son Andrew partnered with local pastors Gabriel Salguero and A.R. Bernard, former New York Yankees pitcher Mariano Rivera, and musical guests Amanecer, Israel Houghton, Mandisa, Rescate, Matt Redman, Hezekiah Walker, Marcos Witt and TobyMac to put on a high energy program. Surprise guests who took the stage during the night included musical artist and good friend Chris Tomlin, as well as New York City mayor Bill de Blasio.

"This is such a beautiful scene of people coming together under a common cause," de Blasio said in his greeting from the stage. "CityFest is now part of our history. You are showing how much communities of faith contribute to civic life."

After the brief words from the mayor, the entire pastoral committee for the festival joined him on stage and prayed for him publicly.

The Central Park event was just one of many evangelistic events throughout the five boroughs of New York City under the umbrella of the campaign. On July 7, Luis Palau, Andrew

Palau, *New York Times* bestselling author Eric Metaxas, “America’s Got Talent” finalist David Garibaldi, Third Day, Newsboys, and Latin a cappella group Amanecer joined the ranks of legendary performers who have graced the stage of the iconic Radio City Music Hall. Thousands of people packed into the music hall to hear the Good News in one of the most storied venues in the country.

“I’m so inspired that the Good News has reached our city,” Brooklyn pastor Wilson Delgado commented at the event. “I thank God we get to witness this.”

Jennifer Jones Austin, head of the Protestant Welfare Agencies of New York City and member of the NY CityServe Executive Committee, also spoke from stage at Radio City Music Hall, sharing about the impact that local believers were having through the campaign, which included a service initiative—NY CityServe—that mobilized hundreds of Christians to love the city through ongoing, long-term service projects.

“CityServe has come to New York City much like God sends his angels,” Austin commented. “How fortunate we are that Luis Palau has brought CityServe to New York City.”

Then on Friday, July 10, hundreds of people packed around a stage, set up in the center of Times Square, where Luis Palau and Andrew Palau shared the Gospel multiple times and invited people into a relationship with Jesus. TobyMac, Mandisa, Amanecer, Matt Redman and Marcos Witt performed between messages.

“This is a really good event,” shared William, a follower of Christ who had come to take part in the Times Square event. “A lot of people who didn’t know about God, they’re going to know about God as our Lord and Savior.”

“We want all of New York City to know that God loves them and will save them from their sins,” Luis shared from the stage, his words audible from nearly every corner of the square and

his face plastered on six of the famous Jumbotron screens that make Times Square so famous. “I’ll give you an opportunity, right here in Times Square, to give your heart to God!”

At each invitation, hands shot into the air throughout the crowd as NY CityFest counselors—wearing black T-shirts if they spoke Spanish and orange if they spoke English—wove throughout the crowd to pray with those who had made decisions. One advertising executive, still in his business suit, heard the noise in Times Square as he left his office. He wandered down the street, came upon the festival, stuck around for the message and met with a counselor to commit his life to Christ. “I wasn’t expecting this,” he shared with the counselor. “Who knew I would come across such an amazing event and amazing message on my way home from work?”

At Radio City Music Hall and Central Park, the scene was much the same. Between the three evenings, thousands of people made documented decisions to follow Christ. In total, more than 10,000 individuals registered decisions for Christ throughout the entire campaign.

While the final week of events marked an end to the major evangelistic gatherings through NY CityFest, the Palau team plans to continue working in New York City for several years. Their goal is to continue to build long-term unity among churches and encourage the Body of Christ.

“This is more than a moment; this is a movement,” Gabriel Salguero said. “We’re asking how the church can be a healing presence in New York City.”