



The Reverend Mark Matthews: An Activist in the Progressive Era

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When the Reverend Mark Allison Matthews died in February 1940, thousands of mourners gathered at a Seattle church to pay their final respects. The Southern-born Presbyterian came to Seattle in 1902. He quickly established himself as a city leader and began building a congregation that was eventually among the nation's largest, with nearly 10,000 members. Throughout his career, he advocated Social Christianity, a blend of progressive reform and Christian values, as a blueprint for building a morally righteous community.

In telling Matthews's story, Dale Soden presents Matthews's multiple facets: a Southern-born, fundamentalist proponent of the Social Gospel; a national leader during the tumultuous years of schism within the American Presbyterian church; a social reformer who established day-care centers, kindergartens, night classes, and soup kitchens; a colorful figure who engaged in highly public and heated disputes with elected officials. Much of the controversy that surrounded Matthews centered on the proper relationship between church and state ? an issue that is still hotly debated.

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