

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

FEBRUARY 2003

WORK: CRUCIBLE OF FAITH

BY KATHERINE LEARY, DIRECTOR OF MARKETPLACE MINISTRIES

God makes it clear that He has some specific work for us to do

We often bemoan the classic New York party greeting, “Hello, it’s nice to meet you. What do you do?” But I’m not sure our complaints are warranted. Certainly it’s an awkward question to respond to when we’re out of work. We often feel vulnerable to people who are far more successful than we are, especially if they flaunt it. But, otherwise, what’s so bad about being identified by our work?

We were made for work—or so says the Bible. God cre-

ated man **in his own image**. God worked and He enjoyed the works he made: “He saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 17, 25, 35) Can you say that about your day? That was God’s plan for us.

Not only are we workers (who can delight in our works) because we are made in the image of God, but God makes it clear that He has some specific work for us to do. We’re His helpmates in the continuation of God’s creation. He invited Adam to

collaborate with Him in naming the animals (Gen. 2: 19-20), be good stewards of the earth (fill it, subdue it, keep it, Gen 2: 5-8, 15), be toolmakers and users (Gen. 2:5, 15), be producers to sustain ourselves (Gen 1: 28-30, 2: 9), and to be appreciators of beauty. (Gen. 2:9)

Certainly the rest of the drama in Eden has tainted this dream-like picture of working and delighting in it. Sin entered the world and God cursed Adam’s work and turned it into toil (Gen

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GOD IS THE HEALER OF MY BROKEN HEART

BY ALICE KATHERINE CHOI, LONDON MISSIONS TESTIMONY, AUGUST 2002

God is so real, so big and powerful, so loving and so graciously merciful—why would I ever go back to being a lukewarm Christian after all this?

Living as a lukewarm Christian, I had become very despondent. Finally, tired of being indecisive with my faith, I ended a two and a half year relationship with a non-Christian and rededicated my life to Jesus. With a new vision to pursue God at all costs, I asked about the London Missions Trip, completed the application and was invited to the first London team meeting.

Just a few days prior, I asked God to reveal Himself to me in a really big way, by opening doors so I could get the time off from work during our high season. Then I was very late in getting my support letters out. With two weeks left to raise

\$2,000, I kept praying that God would move people’s hearts to support me because I wanted to go so badly. All the support came through and the next thing I know, the Redeemer team and I are being greeted at the Heathrow Airport by Matt Irvine, an outgoing missionary from World Harvest Mission. Soon after we arrived at the London Bible College, I met Jenn Irvine, a former Redeemerite, and we bonded right away as we had so much in common. This

meeting was awe-inspiring for me because Jenn could relate to my life story and I was amazed how God had transformed her life. I kept thinking, if God could change Jenn then He surely can do a 180 with me!

The days went by rapidly: optional morning prayer, breakfast at the campus dining hall with a gracious dining staff composed of college students, Bible study, testimonies, road trips to beautiful Hindu Temples, Mosques and Buddhist temples,

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3:17), but that isn't the end of the story. God never gave up on his design for the world and human life.

The message of the gospel is that God became man to redeem the world of its sin and restore the whole of creation. Christ, who was there in the beginning (John 1), and who preserves creation (Col 1:16-17, is the mediator of both creation and re-creation. In fact, through our re-connectedness with God, by Jesus' saving grace, our partnership in God's re-creation is both re-established and strengthened through the power of the Holy Spirit.

What, in this world, does this mean? The gospel challenges the way we approach our work in many ways:

1. Our Work Matters! The gospel motivates us to do work that matters; work that we can look on at the end of the day and say, "It was good." This doesn't just apply to the helping professions. All kinds of work "matters": art, beautification, technological innovation, a good and fair deal, accurate books, bug-free software (ok, maybe that's too much to expect on this side of heaven), roads and subways.... In business we refer to "value-add." Did we add value to something in our world today?

(Work) is, or it should be, the full expression of the worker's faculties, the thing in which he finds spiritual, mental, and bodily satisfac-

tion, and the medium in which he offers himself to God. (Sayers, Creed or Chaos?)

It may be helpful to think of God as our boss and therefore align our work with his work. God's work is always either creating something new and wonderful or restoring something that is suffering in our fallen world. We tend to look for situations that benefit us the most, when instead God might be inviting us to places where we provide the most benefit. We need to get better at finding glimpses of God's work in ugly situations. We need to discover the thread of His redeeming work and take up his mission of renewal and recreation through our own work. The apostle Paul writes,

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Eph. 2:10)

2. We have outside help! In one intense conversation with a former boss, as he was handing the reigns for running the company over to me, he observed wryly, "Well, with God on your side, you'll probably be a better CEO than I was!" Sarcasm aside, some awareness of God's supernatural power made him nervous. His comment humbled me. Did I believe that God would gift me in accordance with the responsibilities he had given me? We have been given the power of the Holy Spirit, but to do what?

ME plus the Holy Spirit is far greater than ME without the Holy Spirit. But I certainly am not about to compare that combination to anyone else. And "greater" can only be applied through the eyes of God. Nonetheless, that "outside help" is invaluable. It helps us seek truth, it gives us courage and perseverance, and even changes us from within.

"For you did not receive a Spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship." Romans 8:15.

3. Work is a crucible for our faith! Given how much time most of us spend at it, it's a good thing that God can do his redemptive work in us even through our work. He uses our work and work situations to expose our passions and talents, but also our idols, sins, and weaknesses. Work gives us opportunities to develop loving relationships and demonstrate grace and forgiveness. It's a fertile field for our character growth and helps us fuse the truth of the gospel into our very being.

I do believe that my relationship with God has enabled me to take on career challenges I might otherwise have been afraid of. He's also shown me how quick I am to gather the credit to myself and view myself as either worthy or unworthy depending on the job I'm in or success I'm having at the moment. God has used both

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REDEEMER REPORT

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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM
EAST 69TH (BETWEEN PARK & LEXINGTON)
services at 9:30AM • 11:15AM • 6:00PM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
265 W. 79TH (79TH & BROADWAY)
services at 7:00PM

success and failures to teach me about himself, the person he is making me, and his work. And I'm confident that the more we are willing to become the people he wants us to be, the more good work he will find for us!

"...From everyone who has been given much will much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more." Luke 12:48

The cocktail party question, "What do you do?" may

arise from superficial motivations, but the question isn't bad. Let's ask ourselves the question on a regular basis. What do we do with the gifts God's given us? What do we do in our little corner of this fallen world to join in God's plan for redemption? How do we pray for help in our work? How do we seek the lessons God is trying to teach us? If work is this crucial a part of God's design for us, we need to learn all we can about God's

perspective on it.

Katherine Leary is Director of Marketplace Ministries at Redeemer. Before joining staff at Redeemer, Katherine managed a number of startup technology companies in New York and Silicon Valley. If you want to be part of an ongoing discussion of faith and work, watch for the SOCC classes: The Theology of Work, Leadership, and Vocational Decision Making. If you would like to join as a Prayer Partner for this initiative, please email: kleary@redeemer.com

NEW WEST SIDE EVENING SERVICE LOCATION

On January 19th, we began meeting at our new west side evening service location, all west siders are invited to visit the new location

First Baptist Church
265. West 79th St.
(at Broadway)

UPDATE YOUR INFO ONLINE

Starting March 15th, Redeemer will begin the first update of our contact information database in eight years.

During the month of February, you will receive a letter, with directions on how you can change your mailing address and even sign-up to receive mailings via email rather than conventional mail.

When you receive your letter, please go to our website, **www.redeemer.com** and update your information.

This will help us save financial resources, and trees!

ANOTHER THANK YOU FROM THE DIACONATE

The Diaconate officers at Redeemer were awe-struck by our Lord's amazing provisions by His people. Through the mercy and generosity you have shown us by Christ, the Diaconate received almost \$270,000 in December '02 donations alone—that is about double what we received in December '01.

Over the last year, our ministry served a great increase of people in need with longer durations of financial hardship. Following this, we forecasted a shortage of funds in the final months of this new year, based on normal giving; but in just one month this picture has completely changed.

Thank you all for remembering and having a heart for our ministry, for giving so generously, and for praying for us. Every dollar goes into the hands of our Diaconate clients. We are greatly encouraged, and have so much hope for all God will do for our clients by Christ. Praise the Lord, who is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine...." (from Eph. 3:20).

NEW YORK IS WHERE I'D RATHER STAY....

"... I get allergic smelling hay." Scott Crosby has returned to the staff of Redeemer as a new Director of Fellowship Groups. As many of you know, Scott had previously served Redeemer as Fellowship Group Leader and Coordinator from 93-97 and was the first full-time employee of the Tape Ministry. Scott and wife Anne Marie left New York for Nashville, TN 3 years ago where Scott served as a pastoral intern

working with young professionals and Anne Marie continued her work as a professional makeup artist.

Scott says, "eight years of living in New York and being profoundly engaged with Redeemer's vision for the city kept me longing to return." The Crosby's, along with Ezra, their 22 month old son, moved to the Upper Westside in October. Scott is working with Tony

Hinchliff overseeing the Westside Fellowship Groups and is finishing his Master of Divinity degree at Westminster Theological Seminary. In his spare time (what spare time, you may ask) Scott is mastering his skills in the kitchen as a chef. He is delighted to be back in the city and serving at Redeemer and ready to cook a good meal anytime someone stops by. Ya'll come over now, ya here?

GOD IS THE HEALER.... CONT. FROM FRONT PAGE

lots to learn! The afternoons were spent on outreach evangelism and we hosted a book table out in the shopping districts of Houndslow and Southhall, areas that are heavily dominated by South Asians. I was blown away by the open-mindedness of the passers-by. Some good conversations were initiated at the book table forum but I really saw God at work during the door-to-door walks in the neighborhoods near the New Life Masi Ghar Church. There, God really challenged me to step out in faith because I

don't like to be considered a proseletizer or the like in any way and that is precisely what I felt like as my teammates and I visited people around the neighbourhood. All I can say is that God is strong when I am feeling weak and discouraged.

Each new day, God revealed himself in a powerful way. Just to meet people who are so passionate about the Lord, who give up their prestige of being a Brahmin, for example, to follow Jesus or to move to another country as Matt and Jenn did

to spread the gospel... how beautifully humbling is that... there are so many incredible testimonies I heard and incredible miracles that God performed in my heart—I am so grateful to have gone to London because I can say, without a shadow of a doubt, that God is so real, so big and powerful, so loving and so graciously merciful—why would I ever go back to being a lukewarm Christian after all this? This Short-Term Missions trip changed my perspective on God and my purpose in life.

Hope For New York Volunteer Fair

Hope For New York will hold its biannual Volunteer Fair on Sunday, February 23rd after all Redeemer worship services.

This is your chance to meet the directors and volunteers from our ministry partners face to face. Discover how you can use your talents in mentoring children. Express your artistic side in healing fellowship with emotionally struggling individuals. Serve homeless men and women, or encourage teen mothers or those living with AIDS. There are both individual opportunities and group opportunities to serve together.

In addition, we continue to conduct **orientations on Friday afternoons from 12:00PM to 1:00PM** at our offices located at 271 Madison Ave. between 39th & 40th St., Suite 902. Feel free to bring your lunch. If you are not able to attend this, sign up for a monthly seminar held at the Hunter College West building on the 5th floor, room 505. You may register for an orientation by contacting Joe Ricci at **joe@hfn.org or (212) 808-4460 x114.**

It is our privilege to partner with you to build a great city with our words and our work. Please plan on visiting us on Sunday, February 23rd or at an upcoming orientation.

CORPORATE PRAYER RENEWAL TO END

BY TONY HINCHLIFF

After 6 years Redeemer's monthly prayer and healing service, CPR has come to an end.

CPR was originally conceived as a place for members of the Redeemer community to come together in corporate prayer and to provide an opportunity for those who wished to be anointed with oil by Redeemer's Elders.

The reason we have ended CPR is primarily a result of the growth and flourishing of Redeemer. This has happily challenged the church to rethink and make adjustments to how it does many aspects of its ministry. With regard to prayer the biggest change has been the growth of

Redeemer's small group system; we now have around 150 groups meeting weekly. The groups are the core of Redeemer's community life and are the primary locations for gospel transformation as group members encounter Christ together in scripture, worship and prayer. We believe that the sustained and personal prayer of the group members for each other, the church, our city and our world is appropriately the focus of Redeemer's prayer life.

We remain committed to providing access to Redeemer's Elders for those who wish to be anointed with oil in accordance with the instructions found in the book of James 5:15; *Is any one of*

you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. The Elders have instructed Redeemer's staff to devise a plan to make this aspect of their ministry more available to the congregation. We expect to have information regarding this before the end of February.

CPR has been a wonderful ministry and transforming experience for many. We are grateful for the faithful commitment and work over the years of; Susan Young, Scott Hinzman, Mark Giacobbe, Holly Kreuger and numerous others. Thank you all.



HOW CAN YOUR SKILLS HELP?

BY NANCY BARTER, HFNY VOLUNTEER

Twice last week on my way to work as I stepped on the always-packed A Train, I experienced that excited feeling one gets upon spotting open seats during rush hour and knowing that you are likely to be one of the lucky few. I naturally, along with the people in front of me, made a bee line in that direction, but as I approached the seats I noticed the others pausing—as if pondering whether to sit—and then quickly moving away to another part of the car. I was momentarily perplexed, but then I arrived at the seat and noticed, sprawled in the adjacent ones, a passed out homeless man. As I moved away to escape the stench, my spirits fell low and I was consumed by the conviction that, as a Christian, I was supposed to react differently, to do something to help. What though? I felt powerless.

New York City is on its knees and if the pundits are right, it's going to get worse before getting better. The prevailing spirit of depression—both emotional and economic—is hard to escape,

especially when compared to the exultant mood of a few years ago. If those of us in more affluent circles are poignantly aware of this change, imagine how it impacts the less fortunate members of our community. Unemployment figures are soaring up over 8% and the city's homeless statistics estimate that at least 35,000 individuals are without shelter during this coldest of winters.

So what are we to do with this information? There are many people who have devoted their lives to fighting this overwhelming economic and spiritual poverty, and we are called to support them and their work through prayer, encouragement and charitable giving. But frankly, that isn't enough. Each of us is called to be in the trenches and one of the best ways to do this is through volunteering a little bit of our time. God commands this of us: "You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in the land." (Deuteronomy 15:11)

Hope for New York (HFNY) provides access to a

number of faith-based organizations that are committed to bringing healing to the weak and hurting. Visit their recently updated website, www.hfny.org to see some of the tremendous efforts underway throughout the city. And these organizations are always under-resourced and in need of additional help, all kinds of help. So what are your skills, gifts and loves? Can any of these be put to use for the good of our community? **On Sunday, February 23rd, HFNY will be hosting its volunteer fair after each of Redeemer's services.** Stop by to meet some of the good men and women who work in these organizations.

Ask them about their organizations, offer to pray for them, and consider how your skills might be utilized by one of them. For you, volunteering is a meaningful way to spend some of your unallocated time; for these organizations, volunteers such as you can be their lifeblood.