

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

DECEMBER 2003

## THE KING HAS COME

*Live  
with an  
Outward  
Hope*

The Bible provides vivid descriptions of the birth of Jesus Christ. Shepherds living in open fields are visited by a choir of angels (Luke 2:8-15). Angels appear to a young engaged couple, telling them that they are going to be parents of the world's Savior (Matthew 1:20ff; Luke 2:26ff). Men of means and education travel hundreds of miles to worship an infant. (Matt 2:1-12) Why are angels suddenly showing up in a rural village a few miles southwest of Jerusalem? Why is the powerful ruler of this region, King Herod, so threatened by the birth of this child that he orders infanticide? (Matthew 2:16) The answer is that the King has come!

For hundreds of years the people of God had been waiting for a King to come and restore Israel to its position of glory. This expectation is highlighted by Matthew's use of a seven hundred year old prophecy when describing Christ's birth - "for out of you (Bethlehem) will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel". (Matthew 2:6, quoting Micah 5). In other words, the writers of the gospels were writing the opening pages of the climax of: "*a centuries old drama (during which the Jews had waited) for the turn in the story that would bring them out on top at last.*" ("The Challenge of Jesus", NT Wright).

The challenge for us today, is to think through the implications of what it means that the rule and reign of God has visibly come into our world. The effects of rebellion *against* God's rule are manifested in symptoms like greed, poverty, racism, war, and disease. The birth of Christ means that the great reversal of the curse of that rebellion has begun. Every parable and miracle of Jesus recorded in the Gospels points to this reversal. They are signs of renewal and rebirth that culminate in Christ's death and resurrection.

As we celebrate and reflect on Christ's birth this month, there are a couple of practical ways to apply its meaning to our lives.  
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BY DAVID BISGROVE

## SENSING GOD'S PRESENCE

*God  
is with  
us in  
suffering*

On Marathon Sunday, Tim gave a sermon from Acts about Paul off the coast of Crete in the storm on his way to Rome. Each sermon point led to another "ah-hah" moment for me as Tim probed with God's truth into unreconciled aspects of my experience of life:

**Point 1 - the paradox:**

God is in control AND our choices matter

**Point 2 - the product of the storm:**

God has a detailed plan to bring glory (significance) to us and through us, but that will entail suffering;

**Point 3 - God's presence in the storm:**

What matters is that God is with us in suffering, and in fact he wants us to be with others, on his behalf, in their suffering. In fact, that's how God

works to impact the world.

I left the auditorium to set up for Week 5 of our Sunday class on "Work and Cultural Renewal," with these points on my mind. My entire class syllabus was attempting to address how God works to impact the world with us and through us. But in all five weeks, I never once mentioned "suffering." We talked in the classes about understanding the gospel worldview and contrasting it with the worldviews of our culture. We did a sociological review of cultural "engagement" strategies, and talked about how

God can use us through our work or vocation. But in contrast to Paul in the boat and this sermon on suffering, all my focus had been on strategies for leadership in ways that are a bit more glamorous sounding. "Suffering" just didn't make my radar as a cultural change strategy. Had I failed my class? the final class was being led by a friend from Redeemer's early days, Mako Fujimura - a painter with growing international recognition, in the Japanese tradition of Nihonga. I'd billed him as the "case study" for all that we'd talked about in the prior four classes  
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BY KATHERINE LEARY



**INSIDE:**

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- REDEEMER'S ANNUAL VISION SERVICE
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First, the fact that the King has come should be a source of *Inner Peace*. Quite often each of us is confronted with worry that occurs when we look at the future and believe that there is no ultimate guarantee of justice, righteousness and mercy. In other words, we don't believe that Christ is in charge of the world. We don't trust him when he says: "come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:27). We can become angry or bitter when our lives don't turn out the way we think they should. We might say something like: "I should have gotten that promotion by now." or "Why am I still single?" In

other words, "If I were in charge of the universe, I would run things differently". However, worry and anger melt away when we remember that the God and King of the universe was born into a manger in an act of love and sacrifice.

Not only do we gain an inner peace from knowing that the King has come, but we also live with an *Outward Hope*. Jesus gave sight to the blind, food to the hungry, health to the diseased, and forgiveness to the condemned. He was born into a world aching for a King who would bring healing and renewal, and through his life, death, and resurrection that is what he has given us. Because of this, Christmas reminds

of a hope that motivates us to make Christ's kingdom visible everywhere. Cornelius Plantinga put it this way: "*Biblical hope has a wide-angle lens. It takes in whole nations and peoples. It brings into focus the entire created order – wolves and lambs, mountains and plains, rivers and valleys – (looking forward to a world) in which death, mourning and pain will have passed away.*" (Engaging God's World, Cornelius Plantinga). This is the desire of Redeemer– to live out the hope of Christmas in every area of our ministry, and that Christ will bring his renewing love to New York City.

As we celebrate Christ's birth, our joy is that the King has come!

## DIACONATE TESTIMONY OF A CHANGED LIFE

**M**y illness first surfaced in 1996 and I have battled with my health ever since. After a period of time, my illness meant I could no longer work and provide for myself. I needed financial assistance and was referred to the Diaconate help line number. They promptly returned my call and I met with my deaconess shortly thereafter. We now meet monthly to discuss my daily

needs. She created a budget with me and provided an opportunity for me to receive affordable counseling sessions.

I am grateful for the Diaconate's understanding, compassion and assistance during the last 11 months. Everyone from the Diaconate has been pleasant and eager to help me. I am thankful to the Lord and the Diaconate for saving me

during this time of great need. They are living proof that my personal prayers have been answered. I don't know what would have happened if it weren't for my deaconess and the Diaconate leadership. I am so thankful and appreciate all they have done and continue to do for me.

### DIACONATE MERCY FUND SPECIAL OFFERING – SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

**Once a year, the Diaconate receives a special offering to fund the needs of those under their care.**

Please prayerfully consider your gift to the Diaconate Mercy Fund. Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Acts 4:32-35 reminds us of the early church's practice of giving to provide for the needs of the body, "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions were his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need."

#### REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller  
Rebecca Lock  
Cregan Cooke  
Fred Liedtke

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OFFICE • 271 MADISON AVENUE • SUITE 1600 • NEW YORK, NEW YORK • 10016  
(212) 808-4460 (phone) (212) 808-4465 (fax) [www.redeemer.com](http://www.redeemer.com)

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

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
Corner of West 79TH and Broadway  
service at 7:00PM

# REDEEMER'S ANNUAL VISION SERVICE

January 21st, 2004 at 7:00PM – St. Bartholomew's (Park Ave. & East 51st St.)

Once a year we take an evening to look at our vision and update the congregation on how it is unfolding. This special service is a time to come together as a community and hear about what God is doing through Redeemer. There will be a time of praise and worship and Tim Keller will speak. Whether you have been going to Redeemer a long time or just a few weeks, attending this service is the best way to know what is happening in our church and enable you to join in carrying out the vision God has given us for renewing the city.

## SENSING GOD'S PRESENCE

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for good reason. Mako has not closeted himself in the safety of Christian circles, but intentionally moved his family NYC so he could live and work amidst its vibrant artists community. He's given public lectures about his paintings and talked about his work being a reflection of his individual struggle from darkness toward light. Without being pushy or self-righteous, he talks about Christ as someone to be taken seriously. God has used Mako, through his artistic gifts, to open others to Jesus.

But Mako didn't start the class with his credentials, or even images of his work. He started with a slide of rescue workers outside his apartment building two blocks from Tower 7 on September 11th. He talked about the difficult decision he and his wife made ten years ago to work and raise their family in the city; after a conversation with Tim Keller they

believed the move was in keeping with Jeremiah's words to the Israelites who were captive in Babylon to "seek the peace and prosperity of the city." In the midst of the panic and chaos of the September 11th morning, Mako felt God's presence with a reminder of that Jeremiah 29 based commitment.

His family was safe, but his Tribeca neighborhood and friends were devastated. In response to the needs he saw and felt all around him he opened his studio to neighboring artists and encouraged them to give voice to their experiences. Tribeca Temporary, as the studio turned gallery was eventually called, became a flicker of hope in a despairing place. Now, two years later, as Mako's kids bring home friends who lost a parent or he furthers relationships with neighbors, he struggles to know what more he can do. Perhaps God wants him to simply

be there with them, as God has been with him, and Paul was with the men on the doomed ship. Mako tied his own story to the sermon message, grateful for God's leading him to be in the right place at the right time.

As for me, I got to watch God at work. I got to watch how God's word is played out in the lives of people who love him. I also was humbled to experience His faithfulness, as He made sure the class got the message they needed, despite the flaw in my lesson planning.

Join us in Gospel Foundations classes offered after both the East side and West side morning services.

For more about the artists' work following September 11th, visit [www.tribecatemporary.com](http://www.tribecatemporary.com).

For Tim Keller's sermon on November 2, "Stay With The Ship," go to <http://www.redeemer.com/store>.

## REDEEMER WORSHIP SERVICE SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS FOR DECEMBER

### DECEMBER 7

(COMMUNION AT ALL SERVICES)

9:15am, Ethical Culture (West Side)  
10:30am, Hunter College (East Side)  
5:45pm, Hunter College (East Side)  
7:00pm, First Baptist Church (West Side)

### December 14

(DIACONATE SPECIAL OFFERING AT ALL SERVICES)

9:15am, Ethical Culture (West Side)  
10:30am, Hunter College (East Side)  
5:45pm, Hunter College (East Side)  
Jazz/Contemporary Lessons and Carols service  
7:00pm, First Baptist Church (West Side)  
Jazz/Contemporary Lessons and Carols service

### DECEMBER 21

9:15am, Ethical Culture (West Side)  
Classical Lessons and Carols service  
10:30am, Hunter College (East Side)  
Classical Lessons and Carols service  
5:45pm, Hunter College (East Side)  
7:00pm, First Baptist Church (West Side)

### December 28

9:15am, Ethical Culture (West Side)  
10:30am, Hunter College (East Side)  
7:00pm, First Baptist Church (West Side)  
\*THERE IS NO 5:45pm East Side service



## THE STEWARDSHIP CORNER

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As we close out another year, it is time to celebrate all that God has done through and for Redeemer in 2003, and plan for the challenges of 2004. This month, we are celebrating the opening of our West Side morning worship service. This is a significant milestone in Redeemer's ministry. It signifies the realization of this part of our vision. Five years ago it was decided that the establishment of multiple congregations around Central Park was critical to spreading the gospel and seeking "the peace and prosperity of the city" (Jeremiah 29:7). We will use the remaining funds raised in our first Capital Campaign to offset the significant (\$500K) annual increase to our budget. However, we will quickly need to fund this part of our vision with general operating dollars. This means that we will rely on:

- Generous year-end giving** – the last two years we have raised an average of \$1.3M in December. These year-end gifts allow us to start each year with adequate resources to fund our growing ministries and expanding Vision.

- Regular giving in 2004** – Our investment in the West Side service means that those who consider Redeemer their church will be asked to prayerfully consider their part in helping us reach our projected income needs of \$6.5M in 2004.

Please review the Stewardship section of the Redeemer website ([www.redeemer.com](http://www.redeemer.com)) for resources and information on how you can invest in our vision. You can also contact David Bisgrove at [david@redeemer.com](mailto:david@redeemer.com).

## GOSPEL & LIFE DISCIPLESHIP SERIES CONTINUES IN JANUARY

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### The Gospel & the World Conference January 9-10, 2004

The second in a series of three conferences, *The Gospel & the World* focuses on the missional calling of the Christian to engage the life of the world with the gospel of Christ. Tim Keller will lead plenary sessions on: The Gospel and the City; Belonging to a Missional Church; and Cultural Renewal. Seminar topics include; Sharing Your Faith; Holistic Ministry; and The Gospel and Work. **The conference will be held at the Sheraton Hotel (811 7th Avenue on 53rd Street) Early registration deadline: December 15, 2003.** Late Registration: January 5, 2004. For more details or to register, go to [www.redeemer.com](http://www.redeemer.com).

Conference Schedule:

**Friday, Jan 9th 7-9:30pm**  
(registration begins at 6:30pm)

**Saturday, Jan 10th 9am-1:30pm**  
(registration begins at 8:30am)