

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

DECEMBER 2007

CHRISTMAS: SO WHAT?

BY TIM KELLER

Christmas is the church's annual observance of the miracle of the incarnation, that God became human in the person of Jesus Christ. So what? What *practical* difference does it make that Jesus is not just a human being, but God himself? What *practical* difference does it make that Jesus was not simply a divine figure, but a real human being?

Jesus is God himself. First, if Jesus is God, it is not enough to simply believe in him or even to obey him. He is to be worshipped (2 Corinthians 3:18), reveled in, savored, and rejoiced in. The purpose of our lives is to behold his glory and beauty (John 17:24.) Jesus *is* God—and therefore he should be the ultimate beauty and satisfaction for our heart.

Second, if Jesus is God, he must be given the central priority of our lives. Jesus' claim to be God

is a polarizing statement. If he is *not* who he said he is, he should be mocked or utterly ignored. If he *is* who he said he is he should be adored completely—we should center our lives entirely around him. Jesus *is* God—and therefore he should be the pre-eminent concern of our choices, the ultimate Lord of over our wills.

Third, if Jesus is God, his salvation is of infinite value. His blood was shed as a 'ransom' (Mark 10:45) to pay for our sins. But his blood was the blood of God (Acts 20:28)! Imagine how valuable that is! He is able to save '*to the uttermost*' (Heb. 7:25—King James Version.) No sin is too great to be forgiven; no corruption is too great to be healed. Jesus *is* God—and therefore he should bring complete rest and assurance to our consciences.

Fourth, if Jesus is God, then

salvation is by grace. In every other religion the founder is a human being sent *by* God to show us what to do to be saved. But Jesus is God come himself. If we could save ourselves by our performance, God would have only needed to inform us what to do for salvation, and he could have sent a prophet. His personal coming, however, means he did not just tell us what *we* had to do to be saved, but he did *for* us all that we could not do ourselves.

Jesus is a real, fully human being. First, if God became truly human, we have a remarkable resource to face pain and suffering.

The incarnation means that for whatever reason God chose to let us fall into a condition of being limited, to suffer, to be subject to sorrows and death—he has nonetheless had the honesty and
(Continued on page 6)

DIACONATE MERCY FUND: SPECIAL OFFERING

Sunday, December 9, 2007

Once a year the Diaconate receives a special offering at all five services to fund the needs of Redeemer members and regular attendees who are under its care. Please prayerfully consider contributing to this vital ministry, which supports men, women and children who are experiencing financial, physical, social and spiritual hardships.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.
(Romans 12: 9-13)



ABE CHO JOINS REDEEMER STAFF

Abraham Cho comes to Redeemer as the newest assistant pastor and Director of Fellowship Groups after having served as the Director of University Ministries at Citylife Presbyterian Church in Boston. He completed his M.Div. at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, MA, and then went on to pursue a second degree in missiology with a particular interest in approaching post-Christian secular contexts as the missiological challenge of our day. He was ordained as an assistant pastor at Redeemer at the end of November.

Abe comes to New York with a strong sense of calling to minister in post-Christian urban settings. He senses that the two greatest challenges that face the church today are the challenges

of 1) rearticulating the historic gospel in an increasingly secular world and 2) building authentic gospel communities that will stand as a lived-out apologetic for the watching world. Abe says he is thrilled to be a part of the



Jordyn, Lydia, Ezra and Abe Cho

Fellowship Group team as it seeks to build and deepen authentic gospel community in a place as busy and as mobile as New York City.

Abe grew up all over the United States from Minneapolis, MN, to Virginia Beach, VA, and finally to New Haven, CT. Thankfully, his baseball allegiances lie with the Minnesota Twins, conveniently sidestepping any hostility that may have otherwise threatened his career in New York City.

He currently lives in Harlem with his wife of three and a half years, Jordyn, whom he met in seminary where she pursued a degree in Christian education. He has two children, a daughter, Lydia (almost two), and a newborn son, Ezra (four months). All things considered, the transition into the city for the Chos has been a remarkably smooth one. They are thankful for the warm welcome they have received from the community at Redeemer.

Center for Faith & Work Upcoming Events in December 2007

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
Sat, Dec 1, 10:00AM	What is a Gospel-Centered Venture?	An Entrepreneurship Initiative workshop. Register at www.faihandwork.org/ei (\$20)
Thu, Dec 6, 7:00PM	Legal Fellowship Dinner	Monthly vocation group meeting at Redeemer Office
Sun, Dec 9, 12:00PM	Finance Chat	Held at Hunter College Room 507
Tue, Dec 11, 7:00PM	Graduate Students Group	Monthly fellowship at Redeemer Office
Wed, Dec 12, 7:00PM	Marketing & Sales Christmas Party	New vocation group at Redeemer Office
Thu, Dec 13, 7:00PM	Health Care Fellowship	Monthly Prayer Fellowship. Contact aseon@hotmail.com for location and details.
Fri, Dec 14, 7:00PM	InterArts Fellowship	Monthly fellowship at Redeemer Office
Sun, Dec 16, 12:00PM	Health Care Fellowship Lunch	Monthly lunch gathering. Meet at Hunter College welcome desk at 69th St. entrance
Mon, Dec 17, 7:00PM	Entrepreneurs Fellowship	Apply for this group at www.faihandwork.org/entrepreneurs
Thu, Dec 20, 8:00AM	Legal Fellowship Breakfast	Monthly study on the book of Galatians. Held at Redeemer Office

Advance Registration or RSVP required for most CFW Events. Go to www.faihandwork.org

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM East 69TH (Between Park & Lexington) services at 10:30AM • 6:00PM	ETHICAL CULTURE West 64TH and CPW service at 9:15AM	FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Corner of West 79TH and Broadway service at 5:00PM & 7:15PM
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CALVIN CHIN CHOSEN TO HEAD ENTREPRENEURSHIP INITIATIVE

Calvin Chin, a former Redeemerite and member of Redeemer's first church plant in Rye, New York, has been hired to manage the growing Entrepreneurship Initiative run by Redeemer's the Center for Faith and Work (CFW). The Entrepreneurship Initiative (EI) began in March, 2006, when CFW held a Forum for prospective investors to gauge interest in a program to help Christians start gospel-centered ventures (see www.faithandwork.org/forum2006). After this Forum, a Steering Committee was formed to develop a full scale CFW Entrepreneurship Initiative. It formally launched last January with a church-wide business plan competition. The next step was to hire a full-time director.

Calvin has served on the board of Hope of New York since September, 2006. For the past 17 years Calvin worked in the financial services industry in

investment banking, lending, and private banking. His successful career included building and managing relationships with high net worth individuals, institutional investors and senior corporate managers at Alliance Bernstein, Chase, Bank of America, and Burnham Securities Inc. Calvin



*Calvin Chin
New Director
of the
Entrepreneurship
Initiative*

earned his M.B.A. from NYU's Stern School of Business.

The Entrepreneurship Initiative's goal is to create a movement of new, gospel-centered, culture-renewing institutions and ventures. In addition to the annual EI Forum, the Initiative includes the monthly Entrepreneurs

Fellowship, the annual business plan competition, the EI Network of people with skills and experience to mentor, partner, and consult with entrepreneurs, as well as a variety of seminars and workshops. The EI will help start gospel-centered ventures in much the same way as Redeemer's Church Planting Center helps pastors start new churches.

According to Katherine Leary, CFW Executive Director, "Calvin is a great person to manage this effort. He has a strong banking background and is passionate about helping entrepreneurs draw upon the resources of our faith, the church community, and the best practices of other successful entrepreneurs."

Calvin was born and raised in New York City's Chinatown. He lives with his wife, Amy, and their two children, Megan and Allison in Scarsdale.

Visit the website to learn more: www.faithandwork.org/ei

KNITTING FOR NEIGHBORS

New York winters can get awfully cold. For over 30,000 of our neighbors living on the streets, wintertime is much more than a minor inconvenience or an excuse to go shopping. Imagine the difference between braving the cold during your walk home from the subway and sleeping in the subway.

Last year a Hope for New York project began with this in mind—knitting. There is now a year-round effort by about 100 people who meet weekly, led by Tiffany Koch, to create scarves and hats for those who most need them. It is wonderful to see boxes of warm clothing, hand-made by

Redeemer members, pile up during the summer in anticipation of the coming cold.

On December 11th of this year, we will gather with about 300 of our hungry neighbors for a dinner celebration just west of Times Square. There will be lots of food and friends. We will sing songs and rejoice together in the coming of Emmanuel—God with us. At the end of the evening, each of our guests will receive a gift bag, and in that gift bag they will find beautiful hand-made garments that were created with just them in mind. What a great gift! How many of us own clothes that were manufactured so that we

might experience the kindness and graciousness of God through that clothing?

This labor of love will provide hundreds of homeless people with a measure warmth and beauty during Christmas. It won't solve all of the difficulties they're facing, but these gifts are created and given in response to the words of Jesus, who endured suffering far beyond the cold that we might not have to: "...Freely you have received, freely give." Matthew 6:8 Merry Christmas!

To become a part of the HFNY Knitting team, contact tiffanykoch@yahoo.com

STEWARDSHIP CORNER – ADVENT

Online Giving:

Make a one-time or monthly gift online via credit card or electronic check. Go to giving.redeemer.com.

Checks or Cash:

Checks should be made out to Redeemer Presbyterian Church. Place your checks or cash in the offering on Sundays, with your name and **current address** clearly identified. Alternatively, you may mail your checks (please don't send cash) to the church office at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 1359 Broadway, 4th Fl., New York, NY 10018.

Automatic Bill Pay:

If your bank has automated bill pay, you can set up Redeemer Presbyterian Church to receive electronically generated checks.

Stock Gifts:

If you would like to donate stock you can initiate the transfer through your broker and request that the shares be transferred to:
Charles Schwab
Account Name: Redeemer Presbyterian Church
Acct. No.: 7354-3138
DTC #: 0164
Before the transfer, contact Sandy Young, (212) 808-4460 x108 or sandy@redeemer.com, and provide the following: name of the security, number of shares and approximate date of transfer and gift designation.

Reflecting once again this Advent on the birth of Jesus, the prophet Isaiah helps us understand what we are celebrating, when he writes:

“Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.He will come and save you.” Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

These words remind us that the joy associated with Jesus' birth

is more than sentimentality, but an event that forever changed the world - bringing hope, healing and joy to a world too often filled with despair, brokenness and grief. As we reflect on another year of ministry, we are humbled and amazed at how the community at Redeemer celebrates and incarnates the joy and hope of the Gospel of Jesus.

For example, our Diaconate has provided counseling and financial assistance for over 140 men and women in our congregation; our congregation donated over 40,000 hours to organiza-

tions through Hope for New York, and our Counseling Center staff handled over 4000 client visits. These are all ways that those in our congregation and staff brought 'streams in the desert' to our community and City.

As we close out another year, please consider how you can contribute to Redeemer's vision. As is the case every year, almost 40% of our income is received in the last 3 months of the year; with **\$2.1M needed in December!** Listed in the margin at left are several ways to donate. Thank you again for your generous support!

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Locations and additional information available at www.redeemer.com

December 2: *Regular schedule; communion at all services*

December 9: 9:15AM—West Side morning service of Lessons and Carols with string orchestra, soloists, and scripture readings in a meditative recounting of the advent of Christ. *Special offering to support the work of the Diaconate at all services.*

December 16: *Note special morning service times!*

9:00AM—West Side morning service (early start time)

9:45AM & 11:30AM—East Side morning services of Lessons and Carols with Orchestra of the Redeemer, choir and soloists conducted by Miriam Burns. Music from the Saint-Saens Christmas Oratorio and the Mozart “Great” Mass in C minor. Scripture readings in multiple languages.

5:00PM & 7:15PM—West Side evening services of Lessons and Carols with band, horn section, soloists, scripture readings, and an update from New Song Community Church in Harlem.

6:00PM—East Side evening service of Lessons and Carols with jazz and gospel arrangements of carols, soloist Rozz Morehead, scripture readings in multiple languages and an update from New Song Community Church.

December 23: *Note combined evening services!*

Morning services on normal schedule

6:00PM—All evening services combined at Hunter College for a family-friendly, one hour service

No services at 5:00PM or 7:15PM this evening

December 30: *Note combined morning and evening services!*

10:30AM—Morning services combined at Hunter College

No 9:15AM service at Ethical Culture

5:00PM—All evening services combined at First Baptist Church

No services at 6:00PM or 7:15PM

HOLIDAY BLUES?

BY JUDY CHA, COUNSELING CENTER DIRECTOR

For many people, the holidays mean gifts, laughter, and a chance to spend time with friends and family. For others, however, the holidays can trigger the “blues.” The causes can range from fatigue, financial limitations, family tension, to grief over losses. Although there is no one-size-fits-all solution, here are a few general suggestions that may help you minimize and cope with the “holiday blues.”

1. Give meaning to the holidays by recognizing that Jesus Christ is the greatest gift of all. Create meaningful ways to celebrate Him and to share His love with those around you.

2. If you find yourself feeling tired or anxious, take a breather. Spend some time alone with God to recharge. Delegate and collaborate with friends and family to break down tasks to make them more manageable.

3. If you're feeling lonely, don't

overindulge in drinking, eating or partying as a way of avoiding sadness or loneliness. Instead, talk to someone about it—whether friend, pastor or professional counselor. Don't face it alone.

4. There may be complex issues in your family that require healing and restoration. Don't expect the holiday season to be the cure for all past problems. However, set goals toward reconciliation and forgiveness.

5. If you have lost a loved one, the holiday season can be extremely painful. It is important to make space to remember your loved one. Include memorial activities in the holiday plans, and seek solace and guidance from your Christian community. Get connected with others so that you have a strong support system that will let you experience God's truth and grace—growth, healing, and change doesn't happen in isolation.

It's not necessarily bad to experience the holiday blues. Emotions are there to tell us “Hey, I don't feel good, what's going on?” The blues may be an indicator that you should take inventory of your life and be reflective, and as a result, make decisions about moving toward growth and health. If despite your best efforts to remain upbeat, you find yourself persistently feeling down for a sustained period of time, don't try to “tough it out” alone.

So, for those who are struggling, reach out. For those who are sought, be a good listener. Serve and give to others, bringing the joy of the Gospel into their holidays. This may be a great antidote for the holiday blues!

For information about Redeemer Counseling Service, please contact Missy Terrell at (212) 370-0475 x131 or email missy@redeemer.com.

NEW SONG COMMUNITY CHURCH REFLECTS ON CHRISTMAS OF PEACE

Two years ago a group of Redeemer artists arranged and recorded *Christmas of Peace*, a thoughtful and contemplative holiday album, to benefit Harlem's New Song Community Corporation, the community ministry of New Song Community Church.

The money raised from sales of *Christmas of Peace* has helped New Song to provide for its neighbors in a way that deeply reflects the heart of the gospel. For example, New Song's after-school and educational enrichment programs have been having a measurable impact on the lives of the families they

touch. “Every year we are getting to see kids be first in their family to go to college,” White says. Over the past two years, the programs have expanded from being able to serve about 15 to about 75 students.

New Song has also recently opened an adult computer lab, located in their new education building. In addition, they will be opening a restaurant in 2008 as a way of providing their neighborhood with jobs and job training. New Song Community Corporation has also been able to offer eight units of affordable housing in its building, and intends to open and offer 100

more in the coming years.

“When your neighbors are lacking in some of the basic resources needed to flourish, the simple call to love your neighbor as yourself requires that you address those issues,” White says. “New Song is deeply grateful for the partnership it has with Redeemer. Our work would not be possible without Redeemer. On top of that, I love the CD! I think it's an amazing piece of art.”

You can purchase *Christmas of Peace* and support the ministry of New Song at www.redeemer.com/store or www.redeemer2.com/rstore/moreinfo.cfm?Product_ID=270



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CHRISTMAS: SO WHAT?

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the courage to take his own medicine.... He himself has gone through the whole of human experience—from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death....He was born in poverty and...suffered infinite pain—all for us—and thought it well worth his while.—Dorothy Sayers

The Bible never gives an exhaustive answer to the big question of “why?” But the doctrine of the incarnation gives us a resource in our suffering that is perhaps more valuable than an explanation. God descended into the world and became vulnerable and suffered and died himself. He is God-with-us (Matt 1:23)—he gives us his personal presence in our suffering. Only Christianity adds “courage” to God’s list of attributes. He knows what it’s like to experience hunger, danger, injustice, rejection, torture, suffering, and death.

Second, if God became truly

human, then Christians should not be too impressed with glitz, physical beauty, status, and power. The incarnation means that God was willing to empty himself of his glory and power and live humbly as a servant. That means, among other things, that he became extremely ordinary in appearance. The incarnation should mean that Christians do not go on appearances; it should mean the end of our snobbery.

Third, if God became truly human, then ‘matter matters.’ The incarnation means God assumed a physical body and entered the material world. Many philosophies see the material world either as an illusion (like eastern religions) or as polluted and intrinsically evil (like the Greeks) or as the product of random chance and doomed to final extinction in the death of the universe (like modern secularists.) But the incarnation means that God believes the material world to be a good thing. And the resurrection shows us that he intends to redeem the physical world as

well as the spiritual. This means that fighting disease, injustice, and hunger is on God’s agenda along with saving souls and forgiving sins. This also means that the material world is a good thing and it is God’s will for us to enjoy it.

Finally, if Jesus is God himself, become human, we live with an irrepressible, infallible hope. Some day all deformity, decay, sin, disease, imperfection will be wiped away (Romans 8:18-25.) Whatever problem we face—whether disease or injustice or some other suffering—eventually God’s power will triumph over it. Weeping may remain for the night, but joy comes with the morning (Ps 30:5.) Jesus is God—and that means ‘God has landed!’ Jesus is man—and that means God cares for us. God has become human; the ideal has penetrated the real and is transforming it into his likeness. The world is destined for joy sooner or later, and so are all those who ‘love and long for his appearing.’