

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

NOVEMBER 2011

CATALYST: ACTIVATING PEOPLE FOR MINISTRY

BY ABE CHO

Our current season of transition at Redeemer has provided us with a unique and exciting opportunity. As we form our new congregations we have the chance, like we haven't had in a long time, to help people catch a biblical vision *for being the church in the city rather than merely going to church in the city*. As Redeemer has grown larger it has become harder for people to see how they have been uniquely called and shaped by God to play a role that only they can play in God's work for the city and for the health of his church. This is the vision behind Catalyst—the desire to activate and equip all of God's people

for Spirit-led ministry in the city.

On the week of October 2 we saw nearly 1500 people at Redeemer get involved with this new vision. More than 900 people registered for their congregation's Catalyst Nights



where they are being connected more deeply into community, equipped with Redeemer's theology of ministry and helped to sense God's call more personally in their lives. In addition to these 900, over 60 Fellowship Groups

have become Catalyst Groups and are being equipped with the same material in their home settings. It was an overwhelmingly positive response.

But, just as a catalyst in a chemical reaction becomes obsolete after it initiates a change process, our hope is that Catalyst as a program becomes obsolete as well. What we want to see as a result of our time together is the beginning of a new chapter at Redeemer that will self-propagate, where all of God's people are being equipped, supported and challenged to live all areas of their lives as ministers of the gospel and ambassadors of Christ wherever he might take us.

HOPE FOR NEW YORK: HIS TOY STORE

Hope for New York created His Toy Store in 1995 to provide toys to families in need during the Christmas season. HFNY partners with host churches to set up and run several "toy stores" in low-income neighborhoods. Churches invite families to shop for toys at these stores—at *no cost*. Last year, HFNY mobilized over 350 volunteers to collect and

distribute nearly 3,000 toys to over 750 families! Through this program families are able to provide gifts for their children and also make a lasting connection to a local church.

We need your help and contribution to make this amazing Christmas ministry possible! There are many ways to get involved. Donate a new toy, give financially to the

Toy Campaign or volunteer to collect toys and run a toy store. Please visit www.hfny.org for more information.

Hope for New York will be **collecting toys every Sunday in November and on December 4 after ALL Redeemer services**. Bring your new toy and visit our Christmas table!



CCM: TWO YEARS OF ANSWERING QUESTIONS

BY MICHAEL KELLER, CITY CAMPUS MINISTRY

Am I really a Christian? At City Campus Ministry, we have spent the last two years working on finding answers to the questions that undergraduates ask. This is a frequent one—How can I know if I am really a Christian? Jonathan Edwards, a minister in New England in the 1740's, addressed this question.

Edwards said that you could not look only to your practices and deeds. The acts of going to church, reading the Bible, and praying do not make one a Christian.

On the other hand, Edwards was very clear that if we have no Christian practices, no desire to learn more about the character and nature of God and the works of Christ, then that is a sign that we are not genuine believers. If we never pray, read Scripture, or seek Christian fellowship, then there is a good chance we do not

really think Christianity is what it says it is.

How is that possible? Simply put, we always do and talk about what we love. If you love food, you end up eating out a lot, trying new places, and telling your friends (evangelizing) about those experiences. I have a friend who takes pictures of his meals to show others what he has eaten. He loves food that much. Everyone practices and talks about what they love. A true Christian would naturally do the same.

So on one hand you cannot look to any particular deed or practice as a sure sign of faith, but on the other hand if there are no external signs of your faith, it is probable you are not truly a believer.

In the end, Edwards believed that it was the overall truth of Christianity becoming real to the individual that had the power to transform. If Jesus

Christ is who he says he is, and God really did become man and die for his people with their particular sin issues, then the power of this belief would be so dynamic you could not stop the transformation that would take place. We would have a new desire to read about a God who would do this for us and then pray to him. We would want to be with others at church and in social situations to grow together. It would manifest itself in serving others, because we, too, were served by Christ and his work.

City Campus, a city-specific undergraduate ministry, desires to cultivate this seeking mentality. We meet regularly through the school year on Sundays at noon (East Side) or 7:00PM (West Side), and in small groups during the weekdays. Check out www.citycampusministry.com for more details, or look us up on Facebook.

BEYOND ABUSE SEMINAR

Saturday, January 14 from 9:00AM to 4:00PM at the Redeemer Offices

Beyond Abuse is a seminar on dealing with the weight of sexual abuse for survivors, loved ones of survivors and those who minister to survivors. All are welcome. Sallie Culbreth, the Founder and Executive Director of Committed to Freedom Ministries (www.committedtofreedom.org) will be the speaker. Cost: \$40 (breakfast and lunch included), limited scholarships available.

For more information email andreactf@gmail.com or call (917) 605-4040.

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
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services at 10:30AM & 6:00PM service at 9:15AM service at 5:00PM & 7:15PM

BAPTIZING THE IMAGINATION

BY ALISON LYTTON, GOTHAM ALUM, 2010

What do *The Dark Knight*, songs by indie rock musician Bon Iver, and slam poetry have in common? They're all artwork with which the Gotham Alumni interacted during our third annual retreat over the Columbus Day weekend entitled, "Baptizing the Imagination: the Unlikely Conversion of C. S. Lewis."

Through large group lectures, lively Q&As and small group discussions, we looked at Lewis' path from accepting the realities present in myth and imagination to ultimately realizing the truth of Jesus' life and resurrection. It was a call for us to think of our own imaginations differently. For Sarah Tsai (Gotham 2010), it "expanded my perception of what imagination in my life could mean, helping me to more fully recognize the Spirit at work in my job, my relationships with others, and my relationship with God."

As an exercise in strengthening our imaginative abilities, each of us brought a piece of art that has been meaningful to us and shared it in small groups on Saturday night. In Gotham we look at the world through the framework of death, resurrection and glory, and the artwork we shared reflected different aspects of

different artwork deepened our appreciation for the way God can work in and through our imaginations.

One of the great strengths of the Gotham Fellowship is bringing Christians together from diverse backgrounds and vocations and opening a discussion space for ideas to form and develop. Our final working



3rd Annual Gotham Fellowship Alumni Retreat

session gave us a chance to imaginatively brainstorm tangible ways to contribute to the church and the city, eliciting rich feedback from architect, dancer and lawyer alike. Recent fellow Jonathan Ng (Gotham 2011) emphasized that the retreat demonstrated that he is "part of a larger Gotham community that seeks to engage in and renew all aspects of our culture—an outworking of the type of balanced, thoughtful and nuanced Christianity that Redeemer has been cultivating for the past 22 years."

each. Artist Emily Adams (Gotham 2010) had "a blast exploring the imagination with the vocational non-artists, which helped me gain a fresh perspective on my own imaginative life!" From a handmade quilt made by one, to a truly glorious orchestral composition written by another alumna, experiencing

different artwork deepened our appreciation for the way God can work in and through our imaginations.

LAUNCHING THE *JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE* CURRICULUM

Do you think the Bible is primarily about you and the things you must do, or is the Bible primarily about Jesus and the things he has done? How do the Old Testament Scriptures testify about Jesus? Could you discover Jesus in every story in the Bible? This is

a particularly exciting year for the Redeemer Children's Ministry as we will launch a major new curriculum that we hope will not only answer these questions, but will also have an impact on our community, as well as resource other churches around the world.

BY TRACY THORNTON

Each year we receive hundreds of inquiries from churches across the country and around the world about the Children's Ministry curriculum at Redeemer. As a result of these inquiries, we learned that many other churches share a

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A GLOBAL MOVEMENT: INTERNATIONAL INTENSIVE AND OPEN HOUSE

Each September Redeemer City to City welcomes 12-15 church planters from strategic global cities to New York for our annual International Intensive. This four-week program is a time for church planters who are getting ready to launch new churches to spend some time away from their ministries and cities and to reflect together on how to approach them in a gospel-centered way. They also build relationships with each other for support, friendship and accountability.

This year's class included planters from Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Paris, Athens, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Beijing, Dubai, and Antananarivo (Ma-

dagascar). We also hosted planters from Los Angeles, Vancouver and Miami, three North American cities with particularly vibrant church planting movements.

The class was able to spend time with New York City church planters and Redeemer staff as well as participate in worship services, special events (such as a Center for Faith and Work event with Michael Gerson & Gideon Strauss), and CTC's annual Open House.

The Open House was in many ways a culmination and a celebration of these church planters, as well as an invitation to the Redeemer congregation to find out more about our work in global cities. The event

featured a display of art by local artists Kristin Spix and India Harvey and a fantastic taco stand, as well as talks by Tim Keller, Simon Murphy (a South African church planter we are partnering with in Singapore), and International Intensive participant Mez McConnell, who has already revitalized a church in the worst neighborhood in Edinburgh and is now planting several more.

You can find a full listing of churches we partner with or helped to plant at our website, redeemercitytocity.com. Please keep the International Intensive Class of '11 in your prayers as they return to their cities to launch their churches!

JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE...

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

desire for gospel-centered curriculum that can be easily adapted to a variety of urban settings where physical space and resources are limited. It is often difficult to find curriculum that is gospel-centered and culturally relevant for children, which is why Redeemer Children's Ministry took a lead in developing and launching *The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*.

Based on Tim Keller's teaching, Sally Lloyd Jones authored *The Jesus Storybook Bible* in 2007 as a way of communicating to children the gospel teaching we have been exposed to as adults at Redeemer. For

example, the story of the heroic David slaying the giant Goliath is often taught to children with the central message that they are to become brave like David. The main message, however, is really about a God who sends David to rescue his people. This points us toward an even greater hero, whose name is Jesus. Therefore, the overarching theme of the *Jesus Storybook Bible*, as well as this new curriculum, is that "Every story whispers Jesus' name."

Since January of this year, Sam Shammas, Redeemer's Curriculum Writer, has been working with Sally Lloyd-Jones and Zondervan to write

and publish *The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*. The result is a gospel-centric, urban curriculum that is adaptable to a variety of settings, and shows again and again that the Bible is the true story of a God who loves and rescues his people by sending his Son to live the lives they should have lived, and die the death they should have died.

We are currently piloting the *Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum* in our 1st and 2nd grade classrooms. The curriculum will be published by Zondervan and should be available for other churches to purchase in January 2012.

YOUTH GROUP MISSION TRIP TO UGANDA

BY CASEY SMITH AND DAVID PLANT

A game of soccer in Uganda. Fifteen-person teams. I was the only girl, and a *blonde* one at that! Like dozens of other examples from our time in Africa, my experience that afternoon brought me closer to an Awesome God. That hot afternoon on the dusty and uneven pitch, the students of TAOST, players with far greater skill and speed, extended amazing grace to me. Not only was this “Mzungu” included, I was encouraged and appreciated even as I flubbed the ball. In this small way, the Ugandans served me and accepted me for myself, giving me opportunities to play and to share in their beloved game.

What makes one generous to others? In the Book of Acts, we see a devotion to serving, an eagerness to share all things. Evidently, this came naturally to those who saw generosity

and diversity of community as an extension of having God’s forgiveness. According to Ephesians, the dividing wall of hostility has come down, and with it true fellowship between strangers, even enemies, is made possible. They are made *brothers and sisters* by Christ.

Life in Uganda is no doubt difficult. Children grow up fast and face the harshest of realities early and often. In the communities where we taught Bible lessons and did manual labor, hardship and suffering are impossible to ignore. Perhaps that’s why “community” comes first and people come together to nurture, love and build one another up. Many of the students were responsible for their younger siblings, and it is not uncommon to see a five-year-old going about playing and learning with endless energy with an 18-month-old on his back.

As we painted a church in Lwanda, they partnered with us, eagerly grabbing paintbrushes and working tirelessly alongside our team. It was noticeable how all the kids looked out for one another, that no child was ever left in tears, or without food, or on their own, for long. Their selflessness was like a window into joy, into faith in the midst of uncertainty. Was this what it means to be “poor in spirit?” Serious *and* Happy?

How could we describe their faith? It was so fundamental to them: They knew an Awesome God whose love was greater than their suffering, and far mightier than our cultural differences. Providentially, we as a church have been blessed with resources to offer others. And yet, it was very clear that we traveled to Uganda to receive that which cannot be bought. And, receive we did.

REDEEMER DIACONATE OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, November 17 at 7:00PM
Redeemer Offices, 1359 Broadway, 4th Floor

Come meet your friendly deacons and deaconesses! You are cordially invited to meet the Redeemer Diaconate*, a ministry that carries out mercy through deeds. Come learn what the Diaconate ministry does, hear about what it is like to be a deacon/deaconess and find out how you can be involved. Visit www.redeemer.com/diaconate for more information.

**The Diaconate is Redeemer’s mercy ministry addressing the needs of those in our church family experiencing hardship. The Diaconate is our response to God’s calling to be merciful, to love and care for one another in practical ways. If you know any regular attendees or church members in need of practical assistance, please encourage them to call the Diaconate helpline: (212) 726-1334.*



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NOVEMBER IS NOMINATION MONTH FOR ELDERS, DEACONS AND DEACONESSES

Are new elders, deacons and deaconesses needed?

Yes! Our church is at a critical juncture in light of our plan to establish three generative congregations to move out into the city and serve. The needs in our congregation are numerous and have been increasing. As our church continues to grow, we need your help to identify new servant-leaders.

As Redeemer's mercy ministry, the deacons and deaconesses serve on the Diaconate and provide practical assistance to those in our congregation who are facing challenging situations (Acts 6:1-4 & 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The elders serve on the Session and provide spiritual leadership to our congregation through oversight of Redeemer ministries, leaders and members (1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:6-9).

How can I nominate someone?

We are receiving nominations for elder, deacon and deaconess for the entire month of November. If you are a member, please prayerfully consider whether you or a fellow member you know could serve as elder, deacon or deaconess.

Members have the privilege and responsibility to nominate other members to these offices. Members may not nominate themselves. You can submit a nomination online www.redeemer.com/nominations, download a nomination form from the website or pick up a form at any service at the information center. Fax completed nomination forms to (646) 572-0020 or mail it into the office at 1359 Broadway, 4th fl., New York, NY 10018. You may also place nomination forms in the offering basket during any of the Sundays in November. The deadline for submitting nominations is November 30.