

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

DECEMBER 2011

## YEAR-END GENEROSITY

BY TIM KELLER

*“You might think you know what this article is about, but it’s not what you think. Near the end of the year everyone brings up financial giving, but that’s not what I want to talk about, primarily. The Bible says that God has poured out his mercy and Holy Spirit generously through Jesus Christ so we can be justified by grace (Titus 3:6). Why is mercy and forgiveness described in terms of ‘generosity’? Because God is under no obligation to give us any good gift. In fact, our sin has forfeited any favor or blessing we might have had. Yet, instead of giving us the punishment we deserve, he took that himself and gave us the riches of mercy and grace. He forgave, he was generous with us sinners. In the book of James there is another way that God is said to be generous. The author urges his readers to become spiritually mature and wise, and if they lack this, they should ask God, ‘Who gives generously to all*

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The Bible says that God has poured out his mercy and Holy Spirit generously through Jesus Christ so we can be justified by grace (Titus 3:6). Why is mercy and forgiveness described in terms of ‘generosity’? Because God is under no obligation to give us any good gift. In fact, our sin has forfeited any favor or blessing we might have had. Yet, instead of giving us the punishment we deserve, he took that himself and gave us the riches of mercy and grace. He forgave, he was generous with us sinners.

In the book of James there is another way that God is said to be generous. The author urges his readers to become spiritually mature and wise, and if they lack this, they should ask God, “Who gives generously to all

without finding fault.” (James 1:5) Here God is generous not in forgiveness but in ministry. He builds people up and shares his wisdom with others, and he is not stingy with his service, only giving to ‘deserving’ people. No, he ministers to others “without finding fault.”

Generosity, then, is basically a matter of the spirit. Isaiah 32:8 says, “The generous make generous plans, and by generous deeds they stand.” The Hebrew word here can be translated as ‘noble,’ ‘generous,’ and ‘large-hearted.’ Noble-hearted people are like God. They are eager to look for ways to share with, bless, and lift up others. Of course, as Paul said to Titus, the ultimate generosity was the cross. God so loved the world that he *gave* his most precious possession to die. (John 3:16)

At the end of the year I’m struck by our need for noble-hearted, all-round generosity. I have visited the three Catalyst sites this fall and I couldn’t be more impressed

and encouraged by the generosity of spirit I see there. Participants are not only giving of their precious time and energy to become more well-trained, but they are taking steps toward making Redeemer more truly a church in which every member is a minister. It is easy, especially in such a large church, to come to events simply to take—to receive ministry. But Catalyst participants are training to be ministry givers. That is radical generosity indeed.

There is another kind of generosity that will be sorely needed in our community over the next few years. We are making an exciting transition, but transition means change and there are always those who will experience any change as a loss. This means that we will have many opportunities to be grumpy with each other, to begin to murmur and complain against each other, to offend and be offended. But the answer to this is generosity

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# TIPPING POINT IN EUROPE

BY AL BARTH

From October 24-27 the City to City Europe network gathered nearly 500 leaders from 27 countries in Berlin to talk about “The Gospel in the City.” The event was organized by an Executive Team of key European leaders and church planters, and invitations were extended to anyone interested in urban church planting in Europe, across a variety of denominations and networks. On the second day of the conference a question was asked that has had me thinking ever since: “Could this conference represent a ‘tipping point’ in a movement of the gospel in the cities of Europe?”

In his book, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Malcolm Gladwell defines a tipping point as “the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point.” Might we be at a “tipping point,” a point at which the dam bursts and we see a flood of gospel-centered churches planted or replanted in cities across the continent, and thousands of believers in every city working out the implications of the gospel in their private and public lives, their work, their families and

the communities in which they live? Perhaps; only time will tell.

This much I know: The Holy Spirit is on the move. The momentum of the movement has been building. People are coming to Christ. Churches are being planted. Church planting networks have been and are being formed in multiple cities and regions. New young leaders are rising up with hope, courage and the vision to plant new churches in the cities of Europe. Many leaders of denominations and of key churches have been deeply encouraged and have begun to believe that the gospel can flourish in their cities. Many seem to have become less concerned about their own denominations and more concerned about the Kingdom of Christ.

It did feel like we might have crossed a divide during the conference. It felt like a movement.

For more than ten years Redeemer City to City has been quietly working behind the scenes helping to plant some fifty-four churches in the global cities of Europe. Many of those churches are now

planting daughter churches or working in conjunction with each other to plant additional churches. And now with the development of City to City Europe, we are seeing a movement of urban church planting in Europe take on a life of its own.

It is anticipated that nearly 150 new churches will be planted during the next five years in connection with the network. Those churches will be associated with a variety of denominations, and yet supported and encouraged by CTCE. 🌱

This article was excerpted from a longer one, which can be found at: [redeemercitycity.com/blog/view.jsp?Blog\\_param=393](http://redeemercitycity.com/blog/view.jsp?Blog_param=393)

You can find audio and video from the conference at [www.citytocityeurope.com](http://www.citytocityeurope.com) (registration required).

If you'd like to become a supporter of City to City Europe, you can donate at [www.citytocityeurope.com/donate](http://www.citytocityeurope.com/donate) via Paypal (payment gateway fee is required for international donations), or give to the coaching, training and catalytic work at [giving.redeemercitycity.com](http://giving.redeemercitycity.com)

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## REDEEMER REPORT

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Kathy Keller  
Heather Klein

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

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

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# W83 BUILDING TO OPEN IN FEBRUARY 2012!

BY DAVID BISGROVE

When we first set out to find our own space it was a major shift in the way we imagined Redeemer's life in the city. We had flourished as a nomadic congregation, renting space on the Upper East and Upper West Side. But as we contemplated the next phase of our vision it became clear that planting roots in the city would enhance our capacity to love and serve our neighbors. So in the fall of 2005 during the Vision Campaign, our membership and leaders agreed it was time for us to purchase a Ministry Center/Worship Space.

With the money given during the 2005 Campaign we began our search for a property and made a down payment on a parking garage on W. 83rd Street. After 3 years of construction, it is nearly ready to open. Looking back, it is incredible to see the ways in which God has led our congregation to this place. When we ran the Vision Campaign in 2005 our theme was: "Serving

Our Neighbors, Changing the World." This theme, which our church community seeks to live out daily, will have added meaning with the opening of the W83 building.

With our own worship space we have the opportunity to grow from five to six Sunday services! This is great news as we've learned from



*Installation of cross on W83 building*

past experience that new people, especially those unfamiliar with church, are uncomfortable trying to find a seat in a crowded service. Our 9:15AM and 5:00PM services have been near capacity for more than a year and we hate sending visitors to the "overflow" space. We hope and pray that many in our congregation, particularly

on the West Side, will take this opportunity to invite their friends who are not Christians to come to a worship service in our new space.

When the building opens we will hold four services at W83: 9:15AM, **11:15AM**, 5:00PM and 7:00PM. The 11:15AM service will be a new additional West Side service. Both

the new building and the additional service create opportunities to contribute to the hospitality and community building of Redeemer's Westside. We will need to mobilize scores of new volunteers to help out with things like hospitality, children,

and ushering, to name a few. If you have been thinking of serving at Redeemer, there has never been a better time. Ways to help in our new ministry space:

[www.redeemer.com/w83serve](http://www.redeemer.com/w83serve)

Thank you for your ongoing support and prayer for all God is doing through Redeemer.

## HIS TOY STORE: CHRISTMAS WITH HFNY

It's almost Christmas and we are happy that once again His Toy Store, a program of HFNY, will be able to provide toys for over 3,500 children from low-income communities in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Manhattan. Through His Toy Store, families in need are

empowered to provide gifts for their children and also have an opportunity to connect to their local church. We are grateful for everyone who is participating in His Toy Store during this season of great need. It's not too late to get involved! HFNY is collecting

new toys until Sunday, December 4. Bring in your gift to the HFNY table after any of the Redeemer services, or shop online and send your gift directly to the HFNY office: *His Toy Store, 1359 Broadway, Suite 410, NY, NY 10018.* Merry Christmas!

# GOSPEL & CULTURE CONFERENCE HUGE SUCCESS!

Close to 450 people gathered on Friday night & Saturday, November 4 & 5, for Redeemer's first *Gospel and Culture Conference*, hosted by the leaders of the Center for Faith & Work.

Twitter (#gospelculture) is alive with comments and photos.

Here are excerpts of what people have said:

“I felt a HUGE shift/calling/challenge/joyousness/andaboutathousandotheremotions all at once throughout the day on Saturday.

“We wanted to thank you & the rest of the CFW team for putting together the baddest (in the really awesome sense!!!) conference on gospel & culture. It was really good food for the soul.

“I thought the Glimpses were a fantastic element to bring to the conference, and gave people a chance to think outside of traditional perspectives on culture. The Devotional Mediation time was fantastic: an absolute moment of beauty and surrender for me. Thank you for giving us time to be still before the day began.

“Just wanted to say that I thought the conference this weekend was terrific. It was one of my favorite Redeemer events ever. I was inspired by the teaching and the testimonies. I felt like I really got to worship with the music, and I felt like a lot of thought was put into every detail, making this seem “worth the time” throughout.



“Things I thought were especially good:

• The Venue!—St. Bart's is beautiful and you put it to good use. I liked the “theater in the round” feeling—felt more like a community and less like just an audience.

• The Conference Book!—We're excited to use it as a devotional tool.

• The Music!—My goodness, this was the surprise of the conference. We were in tears multiple times during the worship. This worship meant a lot to me, regardless of the venue, but I think it was so cool during a conference on the gospel and culture.

• I liked the emphasis that this was from our church and that the conference wasn't a one time thing but that we're all in this together

“Congratulations on an amazing job well done with the Gospel & Culture Conference this weekend! God was at work in a major way in all of the “glimpses” on Friday night and the fabulous programs at St. Bart's yesterday. Thank you for facilitating such an incredible opportunity for all of us to reconnect with the redemptive work that He is doing throughout the City each and every day.

## 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](http://www.committedtofreedom.org)) will be the speaker. Cost: \$40 (breakfast and lunch included), limited scholarships available.

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

# CHRISTMAS EVE DOWNTOWN

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BY JOHN LIN

This fall has been a remarkable time for the Downtown congregation. Following a whirlwind summer of small gatherings and discussion about the demographic and cultural makeup of Downtown, we've spent the last couple of months as a Downtown community studying the theological values of Redeemer and thinking through how to express them in a Downtown congregation. We've had well over 200 people involved in leader gatherings throughout the fall.

Looking ahead to the Advent season, it thrills me to

announce that the Downtown congregation will be hosting a late night Christmas Eve service, beginning on Christmas Eve and ending minutes into Christmas Day as we celebrate the arrival of our Savior together. In fact, this will be the first late night Christmas Eve service in the history of Redeemer!

Everyone in the Redeemer community is invited, but we'd particularly love for Downtown people to attend. There will be cookies, coffee and hot chocolate prior to the service. Childcare will not be provided, because we are encouraging

children to participate fully in our service (children, feel free to come in your pajamas!) We encourage people to invite friends who have questions about the Christian faith. This service will be a great reminder of Christ's incarnation into this world as we think about our place of service in this city.

Come join us! For more information and to RSVP (so we can be sure to have enough cookies and seats!), please visit [www.redeemer.com/christmaseve](http://www.redeemer.com/christmaseve). To find out more about the Downtown congregation, visit [www.redeemer.com/downtown](http://www.redeemer.com/downtown).

# HFNY: A YEAR TO REMEMBER

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BY ELISE CHONG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on this past year, we are greatly encouraged by how God has used HFNY affiliates to serve the poor and marginalized in New York City. For example, Teen Challenge Brooklyn provides a residential substance abuse recovery program for over 30 individuals a year. The Father's Heart Ministries serves a hot, all-you-can-eat breakfast to approximately 700 men and women in the Lower East Side every Saturday. Operation Exodus provides quality after-school education and caring mentoring relationships to over 300 students in Washington Heights and Inwood. We invite you to view a video that shares the stories of lives being transformed across the city:

[www.hfny.org/impact](http://www.hfny.org/impact).

HFNY partners with our affiliates by providing volunteer and financial resources. This past year, HFNY volunteers contributed over 39,000 hours in service. In addition, HFNY gave away over \$1.1 million in grants to our affiliates—a 9% increase from last year! It is through the generous gifts of our supporters that we were able to give generously despite the current economic climate.

In this season, we need your help to expand our impact across New York City even more. HFNY is actively seeking to partner with new affiliates that serve the poor and marginalized in local neighborhoods. If you are interested

in helping identify new affiliates in your neighborhood or piloting a new volunteer opportunity, please visit [www.hfny.org/newaffiliates](http://www.hfny.org/newaffiliates).

Our vision is to see the city renewed and restored by the love of Christ. This Christmas season, please consider making a financial gift to HFNY. Your gifts are invested in organizations that are serving our neighbors with love and compassion and striving to break the cycle of poverty in our city. As we celebrate the birth of our Savior, who emptied himself of his glorious riches for our sake, we ask that you respond by remembering the poor amongst us. To make a donation online, please visit [www.hfny.org/donate](http://www.hfny.org/donate).

# RENEWAL GROUPS 2012

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Starting in January, Redeemer Counseling Services will launch five new Renewal Groups—a powerful counseling approach that combines the gospel with some of the best tools from counseling psychology. Each Renewal Group is made up of 5-8 people and a professional counselor focusing on a particular area of healing.

Participating in a group can provide people with:

- A greater understanding of one's thinking, emotional and behavioral patterns
- Key skills and concepts related to areas of healing like Sexual Integrity and Grief Recovery
- Accountability in a safe and confidential environment
- The opportunity to support and encourage others in their journeys

Renewal Groups will be offered in areas of: Sexual Integrity, Emotion Regulation, Sexual Abuse, Grief Recovery and Strengthening Relationships.

For more information, please visit: [www.redeemer.com/renewalgroups/](http://www.redeemer.com/renewalgroups/)

## THE PROMISE OF HOPE FUND

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BY JENIFER CHAN

Often in his teaching, Pastor Tim Keller reminds us that different people respond to suffering in different ways. Suffering can embitter some, but it also ennobles others.

In the final days of her battle with lung cancer, Shu Islam chose to respond to suffering with lavish generosity. Shu's vision was to make it possible for couples and families of limited financial means to receive care at Redeemer Counseling Services. She wanted others to experience the same joy and fulfillment found in God-centered relationships as she had in her own marriage.

With a seed gift from Shu, The Promise of Hope Fund was established in 2003. Since then, more than \$125,000 in donations have been made to the fund. As a result, more than 200 individuals, couples and families have received

healing counsel during some of their darkest hours.

Julia lost her husband to a drowning accident when their daughter was not yet two years old. "I wish I could say I felt God's comfort and presence then, but in actuality I did not." Through the Promise of Hope Fund, Julia received a full year's worth of grief counseling. "The gift of counseling was one of the few tangible ways I felt truly cared for. Each week, no matter what I had been going through, I rested in the knowledge that at least for one hour of my week, someone would listen to me talk about this grief without judgment and with compassion. It was like a candle in the pitch black space I found myself, whispering to me that I was not forgotten."

In recent years, the demand for Redeemer Counseling Services has grown dramatical-

ly, and along with it, the need for financial assistance. We invite you to prayerfully consider making a donation to The Promise of Hope Fund so that people like Julia can receive care in times of distress. God has multiplied Shu's gift over the years so that there has always been enough to meet the needs. God has done this through the generous gifts of ordinary people, which we continue to rely on.

We invite you also to make The Promise of Hope Fund known to men and women in your community who may be helped through it. For more information, please contact [rcs@redeemer.com](mailto:rcs@redeemer.com). If you would like to make a donation to the fund, please make a check out to Redeemer Presbyterian Church with "Promise of Hope Fund" in the memo.

# HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

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Please make note of the special service details in December and January.

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4**

Regular schedule; communion at all services

Rolling congregational meeting, beginning after 9:15AM service  
and ending after 10:30AM service

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11**

Annual Diaconate Offering at all services

Lessons and Carols at West Side Morning service

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18**

Lessons and Carols at East Side Morning service\*

*\*Two special service times: 9:45AM & 11:30AM*

Lessons and Carols at East Side Evening service

Lessons and Carols at both West Side Evening services

## **SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24 – CHRISTMAS EVE**

Christmas Eve service hosted by Redeemer Downtown Congregation

Fellowship reception before service begins at 10:00PM

Service of Lessons and Carols from 10:45PM to midnight

*RSVP at [www.redeemer.com/christmaseve](http://www.redeemer.com/christmaseve) for location  
and to make sure we have enough cookies and seats!*

## **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25 – CHRISTMAS DAY**

*Two services only:*

10:30AM at Hunter College Auditorium

6:00PM at First Baptist Church

## **JANUARY 1 – NEW YEAR'S DAY**

*Two services only:*

10:30AM at Hunter College Auditorium

6:00PM at First Baptist Church



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## YEAR-END GENEROSITY... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

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of spirit. The gospel should create a community in which people repent readily, humbly, and joyfully, and full forgiveness and embrace is granted just as eagerly. How we need the generous spirit of Jesus himself, who forgave those crucifying him before they repented, even before they knew what they were doing!

So we need generosity on all fronts. Of course, this includes sacrificial giving, stewardship of your finances.

It *is* the end of the year and as usual Redeemer is dependent on receiving a very large percentage of our annual budget in the final month of the year. Paul was talking about money when he wrote: “Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” (2 Corinthians 9:6)

Nevertheless, as you see, financial giving is not the only kind of generosity we need

poured out at Redeemer. It may not even be the most strategic kind, because people who are experiencing the other kinds of generosity within a church are so transformed by them that sacrificial giving of money seems quite natural.

Let’s “thank God for his inexpressible gift” (2 Corinthians 9:15), the grace of God in Jesus, and then respond likewise.