

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

AUGUST 2012

## BETA GROUPS AND GOD'S FASHION SENSE

BY DANIEL LEE

In the Old Testament, God commanded the prophet Jeremiah to purchase a linen belt. But this was not just some accessory that held his pants up. Christopher Wright, in *The Mission of God's People*, describes it this way:

*It would have been a sizeable piece of cloth, worn around the waist and loins, over the lower garment. In sparkling fresh whitover the lower garment. In sparkling fresh white linen, it would have been a very attractive piece of sartorial elegance, and probably rather out of character for Jeremiah. Walking round Jerusalem with that on would have attracted attention, and perhaps some grudging admiration." Walking round Jerusalem with that on would have attracted attention, and perhaps some grudging admiration.*

The idea was that God's people were to be for him what the belt was for Jeremiah—a treasured possession that would attract people to God and ultimately bring them into a loving relationship with him. God has always desired for people to see and encounter his beauty so that the entire world might know him.

It is natural then that we would want to be made more attractive so that his love and grace would reach our neighbors, colleagues and friends. And Redeemer has been seeking to do this from the start, but now, after 22 years of growth, we're changing our strategy from growing bigger to growing smaller. Not *shrinking* smaller; *growing* smaller. This means that, as the Downtown, East Side and West Side congregations local-

ize and engage their geographical contexts, we hope that our neighbors will experience the beauty, grace and love of God and feel welcome in our community.

This is where Beta Groups come in. Beta Groups are seven-week Community Groups that start in the fall and are designed so that people who are new to Redeemer can get a taste of community life at our church. As people in Beta Groups begin to process the gospel in communities where they are known and cared for, they can begin to see how God empowers them to more faithfully reflect his goodness and glory in their homes, workplaces and neighborhoods. And because the gospel has a funny habit of reaping where it doesn't sow, we'll begin to see  
*(Continued on page 6)*

## BEYOND ABUSE RETREAT: NOVEMBER 9-11

Three-day retreat for men and women who are survivors of childhood sexual abuse. Partners or other support people are welcome to attend.

For more information go to [www.committedtofreedom.org](http://www.committedtofreedom.org) or call Andrea Mungo at (917) 605-4040.



# REFLECTIONS FROM *THEOLOGY OF WORK CLASS*

## SUMMER 2012

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BY CHRISTOPHER K., INVESTMENT BANKING, TOW CLASS PARTICIPANT

Several years ago I decided to embark on a career path in finance. Despite popular disdain for the industry at the time—and perhaps still to this day—I had heard the money was good and that the hours would be “ridiculous.” I needed the money and I thought a busy lifestyle would give me a sense of importance. The decision was very easy.

But I soon discovered a problem: it turns out I’m a reluctant overachiever. I’m an overachiever because I’m always pressured to accomplish great things, impress the people around me, and generally prove that I’m superior to others in some way. I get anxious if I’m sitting around not doing something “important.” At the same time I exhibit a spirit of reluctance to the point of laziness. I have a hard time buckling down to work through tedious or complex tasks until I’m forced to at the very last minute. This laziness comes from a fear of failure and disapproval. This fear, in turn, stifles me from focused productivity and, counterintuitively, leads me to over-commit, procrastinate, and cram—which, by the way, takes a huge toll on my sleep.

As a reluctant overachiever, I found little joy in my work. My day-to-day was characterized by highs and lows as volatile as the stock market. Success fed my ego, failure devastated me, and the uncertainty of pending outcomes kept me restless.

Through the 4-week workshop on the Theology of Work offered by the Center for Faith & Work, however, I’ve come to see work in a completely different light. I learned that as we are created in the image of God, we are made to find joy and fulfillment in our work, as He does in His great works. But through the fall of man, caused by disordered loves and the idols we have created in place of God, work as God intended has been corrupted—not only in the sphere of our individual hearts, but also in communities and in the world (in an industry-wide or macro sense). The gospel is then the story of how God has redeemed us at all of these levels—hearts, communities,

and industries—through the work of Jesus Christ.

My big breakthrough during these classes was how redemption should operate in my heart. By nature I want to work for recognition and approval (to gain a sense of self-worth), and for money (to achieve financial security and social status). But when I look at what Jesus has done, I am humbled by the extent of my deep brokenness which cost him his life, while simultaneously I am lifted by the extent of God’s incredible love for me. No matter how extraordinary my accomplishments are or how sweeping my failures are, I am utterly worthless yet utterly loved.

The identity I find in Jesus equips me with a new capacity to find joy in my work. I’m not pressured to prove myself, but I’m inspired to try my best; I’m not afraid of failure or disapproval, so I’m daring and enterprising. But change is gradual. All I can say for now is that I’m convinced God is taking me in this direction.

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### REDEEMER REPORT

Cregan Cooke  
Heather Klein

HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM  
East 69TH (Between Park & Lexington)  
services at 10:30AM & 6:00PM

W83RD MINISTRY CENTER  
150 W. 83rd Street (between Columbus & Amsterdam)  
services at 9:15AM, 11:15AM, and 5:00PM & 7:00PM

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# WELCOME TO THE HFNY FAMILY, NEW AFFILIATES!

Hope for New York has added four new non-profit partners, or “affiliates,” to our roster, bringing our total to nearly 40 organizations across New York City! We launched these partnerships as pilot volunteer programs earlier this year, and we are now so excited to have them on board as official affiliates. There are open volunteer opportunities at all of these organizations, so read on to find out how you can serve.



## **INWOOD HOUSE**

*Neighborhood:* Upper East Side

*Population Served:* Pregnant and parenting teens

*HFNY Volunteer Opportunities:* Lead Saturday arts and crafts

*Contact:* savina@hfny.org

Inwood House provides pregnant and parenting teens who are homeless, adjudicated or in foster care a safe home and programs including counseling, prenatal care, and schooling.



## **THE BRIDGE-RITA BERGER HOUSE**

*Neighborhood:* Upper West Side

*Population Served:* People living with mental health issues  
or addiction disorders

*HFNY Volunteer Opportunities:* Lead Saturday activities & games

*Contact:* hfny.ritaberger@gmail.com

The Rita Berger House, a residence managed and sponsored by The Bridge, is a productive community for approximately 20 men and women living with mental health issues, addiction disorders, and/or HIV/AIDS.



## **EXODUS TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY**

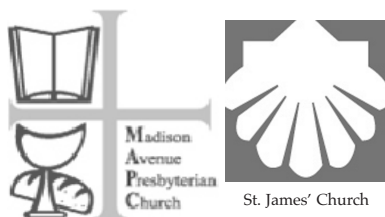
*Neighborhood:* East Harlem

*Population Served:* Formerly incarcerated men and women

*HFNY Volunteer Opportunities:* Life coaching, mentoring,  
career workshops

*Contact:* savina@hfny.org

Exodus Transitional Community provides supportive services to formerly incarcerated men and women with the mission of helping them reintegrate in to their communities and break the cycle of relapse into crime.



## **MADISON AVENUE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH-ST. JAMES SHELTER**

*Neighborhood:* Upper East Side

*Population Served:* Homeless men

*HFNY Volunteer Opportunities:* Prepare and serve dinner;  
Host overnight

*Contact:* hfny.mapc@gmail.com

The Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church-St. James' Shelter (MAPC-SJ) is a volunteer-run, 12-bed overnight shelter for homeless men that operates in conjunction with City's homeless emergency drop-in center.

*Know of a NYC non-profit that might be a good candidate to be an HFNY affiliate?*

*Email us at <http://hfny.org/newaffiliates>*

# YOUTH MINISTRY: CAPTURED BY AN IDEA

BY DAVID PLANT

As we continue to navigate the opportunities presented in our collegiate model, Redeemer's Youth Ministry will again experience some logistical changes this fall (see new schedule below).

But first, let me share with you an idea that has captured my imagination. I hope it will capture yours, too. The role that "Youth Ministry" can play in the ecosystem of the church is an important one. If practiced faithfully, we can expect a multi-generational community that encourages families and friends to worship and serve alongside one another in the Gospel for decades. Notice, this vision has less to do with the temporary subculture of "teen ministry" so often found in and around the Church and more to do with three things:

- 1) a shared passion
- 2) a shared community
- 3) a shared city

**First**, we have families who are passionate about their children and understand how crucial their presence is in the life of an enduring city church.

**Second**, it takes a shared vision from a diverse community. At

Redeemer, "Youth Ministry" is comprised of parents, pastors, lay leaders (typically, "young" professionals) and students who partner together over years, to explore who Christ is and live out the gospel in our schools and neighborhoods.

**Third**, it takes a shared city. Actually, it takes a shared *love* for a city that uniquely encourages families and leaders to remain here, while beckoning graduating students to return after college. Knowing that many of our students will return is exciting, because we will be able to seek the peace and renewal of NYC together.

The culmination of these three encourages us to prepare families for generations of life in the city. Imagine this next generation of "early twenty-something" professionals, continuing to walk alongside their now "thirty-something" lay leaders with over a decade of relational capital between them. That's ten years of mature Christian fellowship and their not even 25 years old.

As parents, Susan and I look forward to the joy of experiencing church with our son as

he grows into an adult. Of course, in order to do that, we'll need to continue to grow, as well, both in our relationship with God and in our relationship with one another. As he matures, his mother and I will need to embrace the parental roles for each age and stage of his life. Now we act as the dominant voice, functioning as both friend and judge. Then, however, we hope to function more as friend and mentor. Our evolving temperament and ability to support him in these ways will go along way towards our family continuing to worship and serve together.

A few years ago I couldn't have imagined that a ministry to these students and their families could so effectively embody Redeemer's vision for the city. And yet, the truth is the parents, pastors, leaders and students within the youth community are already experiencing the reality of this vision. It is for this reason we look forward to drawing closer to God in community with more and more families this year, and many more to come.

## YOUTH MINISTRY KICK-OFF: SEPTEMBER 2012

Starting September 9, Middle School will meet on both the East & West Sides after Sunday morning services. Sr High will meet on Friday nights at W83.

**Middle School (East Side):** 11:45PM-1:00PM in Hunter West Building, Rm. 610-611

**Middle School (West Side):** 12:45PM-2:00PM in W83 Ministry Center, Rm. 406

**Sr. High (Centralized):** Friday nights at 7:00PM, W83 Ministry Center, 5th Fl.

# REDEEMER COUNSELING SERVICES: FALL 2012 SEMINARS AND RENEWAL GROUPS

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Redeemer Counseling is offering a variety of resources for healing and growth this fall. Two seminars will be offered at the end of August:

1. *Living as Men of Integrity* on Wednesday, August 22 addresses sexual integrity issues
2. *Hope and Healing for Wives* on Thursday, August 30 is for wives of husbands struggling with sexual integrity issues (including pornography addiction)

As follow-ups to these seminars, groups will be available for men struggling with porn/sex addiction, and for their wives as well.

In addition, a new cycle of Renewal Groups is starting in September. These are counseling groups led by RCS staff that seek to combine gospel-centered theology and practical counseling tools for topics such as sexual abuse recovery, strengthening relationships, and grief recovery.

Please see [www.redemer.com/counseling](http://www.redemer.com/counseling) for more information. Online registration begins August 6 and is required for all seminars and groups.

## HOPE FOR NEW YORK CHARITY BIKE RIDE— SEPTEMBER 22, 2012

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### **Informational Sessions: Sunday, August 12 on East Side and West Side**

Join the Hope for New York cycling team to cycle and fundraise to support the poor and marginalized of our city!

Cyclists of all levels are invited to join us for the Escape New York bike ride on Saturday, September 22. We're on a mission to raise \$50,000 for HFNY! Riders raising \$500+ will receive an HFNY jersey, and riders raising \$100+ will receive an HFNY water bottle.

No experience? No problem. Get in shape with the HFNY cycling team through a series of training rides leading up to the actual event. Riders may choose from one of four scenic routes (25, 50, 65, or 100 miles) through Bergen and Rockland Counties.

To find out more, attend one of the informational sessions on Sunday, August 12: after the 9:15AM service at the Redeemer W83 Ministry Center (Room 405) or after the 10:30AM service at Hunter College (Room 508W). You can also find information on our website at <http://hfny.org/2012BikeRide/>



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## W83 MINISTRY CENTER UPDATE

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The last five months have been very active in the new W83 Ministry Center. Since the formal opening on March 4, approximately 2500 adults and 200 children are worshipping in the building each Sunday. We have hosted a number of large events for the entire church, as well as many other smaller events. Here is a list of some of the recent events:

- The CFW monthly Vocation night with 250 attendees

- The Marriage Conference with 770 attendees
- Vacation Bible School with over 160 children attending
- The Spring Congregational meeting & dinner reception
- HFNY affiliate training sessions and a Mercy & Justice workshop

We have also rented out our 4th floor classroom space (Monday through Friday from 7AM to 4PM) for the upcoming academic year to a neighboring high school who needs

space for a language lab while they complete renovations. This allows us to be good neighbors and good stewards, while still leaving most of the building for use by the RPC community. This will also generate good will in our neighborhood and income to help us offset the cost of the building.

We are grateful for the enthusiasm and generosity that made this building possible and look forward to many years of loving one another and our neighbors through W83.

## BETA GROUPS... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

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God's image spreading beyond our congregations to New York City and the world.

God is going through his closet looking for people he might adorn himself with in order to bring his beauty and love to the East Side, West Side

and Downtown. And not just within our congregations, but these neighborhoods where we live and serve. God is extending a gospel invitation to everyone in our city that is in need of his grace and mercy. So please participate in this great

movement by praying for the Beta Campaign as we seek to kick off 75+ groups with over 700 participants. And if you are new to Redeemer or the city and are not yet involved in a Community Group, consider joining a Beta Group this fall.