

SEPTEMBER 2013

REDEEMER'S PUBLIC FAITH

BY TIM KELLER

As a college student I attended a campus Christian fellowship that always, at every meeting, had a book table of literature for purchase. On the table there was a little booklet called *Doubters Welcome*. I remember my surprise at the title, because as a young believer I thought that Christians frowned on doubters and wanted them to just take that leap and have faith. But I came to realize that the Bible had a more balanced view. While we want doubts to give way to faith (John 20:28; James 1:6), we should be merciful and patient with those who are still in their doubt-troubled period. (Jude 1:22). On that campus the Christian fellowship was very inviting to skeptics and doubters, and there were always a lot of them mixed in with the believers.

I always wanted to be part of

a church that had that same spirit. When we began Redeemer Church in Manhattan in 1989, one of the first “core values” was that we wanted to be a place where those who were not believers (or who were not sure what they believed) would find their questions welcomed and addressed, their doubts and difficulties respected, and their struggles and concerns anticipated. We soon became aware of and glad for the presence of many, many doubters and spiritual inquirers in our midst. Over time, many of them discovered the Redeemer community to be an “incubator” where they were able to see the reasonable beauty of the Christian gospel and discover their own faith developing and growing.

However, the only way we were able to have a community filled with questioners was because believers at Redeemer were not afraid to

identify themselves publicly as Christians to others that they worked with and lived near. When you do that, it is inevitable that you get some blank stares or pushback, or even some hostility. And yet you also will find expressions of interest. And that interest, cultivated through caring relationship and personal transparency, can lead to someone finding his or her way into a community where doubt is welcome.

This coming year, across the congregations of Redeemer we are going to be encouraging the members of our community to renew their willingness to be public about their faith. We are going to have all our community groups in the fall discussing what it means to be open with friends and colleagues about what we believe. During
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WHAT IS YOUR HOPE FOR NEW YORK?

Hope for New York's great hope for the city is that all New Yorkers would experience spiritual, personal, social and economic well-being through the demonstration of Christ's love.

This month, we're asking our volunteers, affiliate staff, and church partners to talk to us about their “hopes for New York”—what they dream about for the communities and individuals with whom they work. A few of our volunteers recently shared some of their hopes:

“That my kids are equipped and empowered to make good choices in middle school this year and accept and own the Gospel.”
— *Volunteer, Operation Exodus Inner City*

“That women transitioning out of homelessness and abusive situations can experience renewal and reconciliation with God, themselves, and others.”
— *Volunteer, The Bowery Mission Women's Center*

“That our clients will experience a peace that the world cannot give them, and that, one day, God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more pain and suffering.”
— *Volunteer, Open Hands Legal Svcs.*

We look forward to sharing other hopes for New York with you as part of HFNY Sunday on September 22 (West Side) & September 29 (East Side and Downtown). Check out hfnyc.org/hope for more.

HUMANIZING WORK

BY DAVID H. KIM

Because of the gospel, our work can be an expression of our redeemed humanity. The gospel is at work to both humanize humanity and to humanize work, and it is this dual humanization that brings about a greater societal flourishing, restoring the Genesis mandate to cultivate the earth, filling it with people and ruling over all with care. (Genesis 1:28). When work places are humanized, there is a renewed flourishing.

In the coming year, CFW would like to identify, explore, highlight, and cultivate workplace practices that promote a humanized workplace. What does it mean for individuals to embrace the gospel vision of work and desire to see their workplaces flourish? How can our interactions with co-workers advance this vision for our work at all levels? What workplace policies and practices promote the full exploration and development of the human potential? To these ends, we invite you to our CFW Conference in the fall.

The CFW Conference on “Humanizing Work” (November 8-9, 2013) will 1) develop the theo-

logical underpinning and rationale for the importance of this concept, 2) show examples of the effects of a dehumanized workplace, 3) highlight best practices and the companies that have developed and promoted such practices, and 4) launch a website to help gather examples of humanized workplaces around the world.

Our upcoming conference will be focusing on four particular values or characteristics that we believe promote a humanized workplace. These do not reflect the bare minimum requirements of a humane work place, but values that resonate with what it means to be created in the image of God, called to bring order and flourishing in the world around us.

1. *Training:* Providing proper job training and preparation for the assigned role.
2. *Fairness:* Advancing equity and transparency
3. *Innovation:* Encouraging creativity at all levels.

4. *Opportunity:* Offering encouragement and possibilities for further growth and upward mobility.

The Biblical story of our work does not end with the resurrection of Christ. It continues with the ultimate vision of hope in the return of Christ. The topic of one of Jonathan Edwards’s dissertations was “The End for which God Created the World,” and in this influential work, Edwards concluded that the ultimate reason for God’s creating this world was a desire for the fullness of His own infinite goodness to be eternally communicated through His creation, stewarded by humanity. When Christ returns all that hinders and frustrates our work as the expression of our divine image will be wiped away, and for all eternity the work of humanity’s hands will forever creatively display God’s glory in an increasing and never-ending progression. With this final vision, we see that the Kingdom of God is truly at hand and that the work of grace abounds in our world to bring glimpses of this greater glory to come.

IT’S NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP FOR HFNY’S CHARITY BIKE RIDE ON SEPTEMBER 21!

Join Team HFNY to ride and fundraise for the poor and marginalized in our city. You can sign-up as an individual, join a Redeemer team, or start your own! This is a great event for community groups, groups of friends, neighbors and co-workers. Information and registration at hfny.org/2013bikeride.

REDEEMER REPORT

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Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

Hunter College Auditorium
East 69th St.
(between Park & Lexington)
Services at
10:30AM & 6PM

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services at
9:30AM, 11:30AM, 5PM, 7PM

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(between 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services at
9:30AM & 5PM

RE-IMAGINING CFW

With the beginning of the new year, the Center for Faith & Work began to re-imagine CFW. In July, CFW hosted its first Strategic Forum to communicate to our leaders our evolving vision. Executive Director David Kim did a presentation on “Stretching the Imagination” to envision what a Re-imagined NYC might look like, and highlighted what role the CFW community might play in God’s work here in the city. Three areas were discussed:

1. The Nature of the Church

We typically understand “church” to mean the gather church body meeting for worship on Sunday. But we don’t cease to be the church after leaving the Sunday service! CFW focuses on equipping, connecting, and mobilizing the scattered church to be the people of God every day of the week, reflecting the renewing power of the gospel throughout every sector of society.

2. The Importance of Connecting Vocational Networks

The scattered church provides a unique cross-industry community, motivated and connected by a vision for the renewal of all things. CFW desires to better understand the interconnectedness and interdependence of the various industries in NYC, in order to more effectively highlight God’s redemptive work in this city.

3. Mobilizing Toward Concrete Change

Because we believe that the gospel transforms not only individuals, but also institutions, we want to begin moving towards applications of our theological foundations by partnering with key people, organizations, and companies working to bring concrete change into the city.

As the Center for Faith & Work continues to Re-Imagine CFW in the coming year, they are excited to announce:

New: CFW Website at www.faithandwork.org

CFW has a strong commitment to NYC, and the redesigned website highlights the City and the work of the scattered church. Ministry programs are now organized around their primary purpose of equipping, connecting and mobilizing. News feeds provide easier access to theological articles, CFW News and topics. Social media outlets are more easily accessed to engage with CFW on multiple platforms.

New: Entrepreneurship & Innovation Applied Case Studies

As part of our targeted focus on supporting entrepreneurs in NYC and beyond, we will be implementing a year-long series of case studies from our community to provide a combination of practical, tactical, theological, and pastoral advice to common issues that entrepreneurs face. The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Kickoff on September 5th will launch the business plan

BY CENTER FOR FAITH & WORK

competition by casting a gospel vision of entrepreneurship. We will also debut our new Ei Applied Case Studies with a segment featuring Tegu founder Will Haughey, the Rev. David Kim and consulting experts.

New: Faith & Work Night is Now “City Rhythms”

Seeking to follow the vocational rhythms of the city, CFW will host a monthly cross-vocational gathering spotlighting specific sectors each month. Through these gatherings we hope to spark your imagination for the scope of the gospel’s impact across dozens of industries in this city. Each monthly gathering will include an artistic highlight, theological teaching, spiritual reflection, vocational spotlights, and time for networking and relationship building. City Rhythms will begin on September 19th and will highlight Fashion and Finance industries.

New: #NYCurrents

CFW is asking New Yorkers to tweet important issues, events, and trends in their field or industry and why it is important to NYC using the #NYCurrents hashtag. Follow the feed on the CFW website to stay keyed in to important events, shifts and trends in sectors throughout the city.

Stay tuned for more announcements from the Center for Faith & Work on new initiatives being launched this year!

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the rest of the year there will be even more opportunities than usual to invite interested friends into spaces where Christianity is being presented and thought out in a climate of friendly but pointed

questions.

To be “public” of course doesn’t mean being strident, nor to force the subject into conversations. It simply means that Christians should not hide who they are. Our faith

is central to how we think about things, make decisions, and how we face the challenges of life. If you are simply candid and natural in sharing who you are and what you do with
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others, they will learn that you go to church and have a vital, life-shaping faith.

But in a place like Manhattan even that is not easy. Twenty years ago, if you told friends that you regularly went to church they were usually perplexed and bemused. Today they may immediately begin asking you fairly antagonistic questions. Many Christians intuitively know that this is likely to happen, and so they semi-consciously hide their beliefs. It is ironic, of course, that in a culture that puts such a premium on transparency, freedom of expression, and the right to be yourself that Christians know they may be sharply criticized for going public with their faith.

Nevertheless, Paul is emphatic. He says he is “not ashamed of the gospel” (Romans 1:16) Does that mean that he is not embarrassed by it? Yes, but it means more. In 2 Timothy 1:8 he says, “Do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord...rather, join me in suffering

for the gospel by the power of God.” Here we see that the opposite of being ashamed is being willing to suffer for our public identification. In other words, Paul is calling all Christians not to be afraid of rejection, criticism, or worse—but to be open and public about their faith.

How can we do this? The gospel itself helps us. First, the joyful effects of the gospel in our own lives give us an enormous energy for witness. How can we keep our mouths closed about such a wonder? But second, the humbling nature of the gospel leads us to approach those who do not believe without superiority and with respect. Since we are saved only by God’s grace and not our own goodness, we expect to often find wisdom and compassion in non-Christians that at many points may exceed ours own. Third, the gospel brings us a new, profound experience of God’s love—and this lessens the sting and fear of others’ disapproval.

All this drains us of influences that can lead us to treat non-Christians as “evangelism cases”—people that we relate to, talk to, and care for only in order to win them over to our side. That is to objectify and dehumanize them, and, ironically, it is unwinsome. We don’t love people in order to share our faith with them. Rather, we share our faith and ourselves with them in order to love them. As Paul said to the Thessalonians, looking back on his ministry among them, “As a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our very selves.” (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8) **That is a perfect example of what we mean by public faith—it means going public with what’s in your heart, with humility and respect for others, as we speak of the truth of the gospel.**