

REDEEMER Report



JANUARY 2014

PASCAL'S METHOD FOR PRESENTING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

BY TIM KELLER

Men despise religion. They hate it and are afraid it may be true. The cure for this is first to show that religion is not contrary to reason, but worthy of reverence and respect. Next make it attractive, make good men wish it were true, and then show that it is.

Blaise Pascal was a brilliant 17th century French mathematician and physicist who had a dramatic Christian conversion experience and thereafter devoted much of his thought to Christianity and philosophy. He began to assemble notes and fragments that he hoped would be woven into a book called “The Defense of the Christian Religion” but he died just two months after his 39th birthday and it was never written. Those fragments, however, were pub-

lished as *Pensees* (“thoughts”) and it has become one of the most famous Christian books in history.

One of the most interesting of Pascal’s *Pensees* is the one printed above. Here Pascal looks holistically at how to present the Christian message to those who do not believe it. He begins with the psychology of non-belief. He says that people are not objective about religion (here meaning Christianity). They really despise it and don’t *want* it to be true—yet

fear it *may* be true. Now some of these are fair-minded people who see good, well-thought out reasons that Christianity is not true. Others are not so fair-minded and they just vilify and caricature it. But no one is neutral. People know instinctively that if Christianity is true they will lose control, and they will not be able to live anyway they wish. So they are rooting for it not to be true, and are more than willing to accept any objections to the faith they hear.

(Continued on page 4)

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH THE MERCY FUND

I'm so humbled by the abundance and generosity of all those involved to make this amazing blessing happen during such a dark time in my life. It's so wonderful to see Christ manifesting himself in his body, the church and to know I'm not alone.

– Diaconate Care Recipient

Happy New Year. There is an anticipatory atmosphere around us this time of the year. For those who have been going through a hard time, the hope is that the new year brings better times. How did you ring in the new year?

Did you anticipate God using you to make a difference in other people’s lives?

As we embark on this new year, we on the Diaconate thank all of you who have supported the mercy work of the Diaconate through your

prayers, encouragements and financial support. Your generous and sacrificial giving to the Diaconate’s Mercy Fund translated to more than 470 Redeemer individuals and families receiving help with rent,

(Continued on page 6)

HUMANIZING WORK: 2013 CFW CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

BY BEN DAVIS

Who doesn't wish their job was more 'humanized'? From Ecclesiastes to *Lean In*, people want not only to understand how to make sense of their work, but also how to make their work more sensible. *Humanizing work* is a phrase tied neither to a purely secular nor a solely biblical worldview. At the Center for Faith & Work's annual conference this year, the theme of Humanizing Work was explored from both perspectives.

The opening night featured author and Fast Co. contributor, Mark Crowley, presenting a compelling argument for work to be more humane. Most people today look to their jobs to provide much of their identity and status in the world. As such, managers must show their employees why their work matters and support them in it. For Mark, these and other practical tips are the best way to succeed as a manager in today's market reality.

Tim Keller then presented a biblical perspective for why humanizing work is critical and

laid out points of agreement and of conflict between the two worldviews. Much of the secular root motivation for humanizing work ultimately arises out self-interest. For example, you should treat well those who work for you because you



David Kim, Julia Easterlin, Tim Keller, Mark Crowley

will be seen as a better manager, leading to your promotion and recognition. Or, companies ought to care for their employees in order to grow their earnings more quickly and ultimately create higher value for the owners. While these are not in and of themselves bad ends, they are, ultimately, rooted in self-interest.

However, in looking at humanizing work from a biblical worldview, we see that the motivation for doing so is love through sacrifice. Jesus died for

us when we didn't deserve it; so should we be ready and willing to make sacrifices at work for others—to give up our own interests in order to serve those of others. When we see Christ's work restoring ours, we are free to take responsibility for the errors of our direct reports while pushing praise down to those below us in an organization. And we shouldn't do it with our own selfish interest at heart, so that we might be praised as being selfless, but we should do it while being reminded of the one who took on our Ultimate Errors while pushing His much-deserved praise and glory down upon us. The motivations of our hearts matter, and can be transformed by the gospel.

The conference did well in highlighting the agreement between the biblical and secular worldviews on the need for humanizing work, but yet also helped us consider the distinctiveness of the source for humanizing work as rooted in the love of Christ.

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

MISSIONS SUNDAY IS JANUARY 26

Mark your calendars! Redeemer's 2014 overseas mission trips will be highlighted at all services this month. On Sunday, January 26th, look out for the Missions Table at Coffee Hour. Literature on our upcoming mission trips will be available, and former team members will be on hand to answer any questions you might have. Some of our past team members will also be sharing testimonies of their personal experiences during the services.

This year we have great expectations that more people than ever before sign up for these short-term life-changing trips. On the roster are 10 trips, with the goal of sending up to 200 people to South Africa, Chile, Madagascar and more.

Mission trips are special volunteer teams of 10 to 20 people serving in an overseas cross-cultural context. Each team carries out social justice and mercy projects while spreading the love of Christ through personal encounters with local churches and non-believers.

We at Redeemer have a unique opportunity to engage in sustainable short-term missions. Through the connections of City to City, the global cities church planting arm of Redeemer, we partner with our international church planters as a way of supporting their work. We aren't starting from scratch or "parachuting in," but continuing an existing relationship and sharing the same gospel-

centered, city-loving values.

Last year we served church planters in East Asia, Tokyo, and Santiago, among other locations. Projects the teams developed and implemented included:

- Teaching Business and Finance classes to help adults start their own businesses
- Conducting workshops and seminars related to professional development and "Faith & Work"
- Giving specialized medical care to rural populations in Madagascar.
- Teaching English classes to university and middle school students in East Asia

Teams also brought over much needed materials such as dental and medical supplies, new clothes, and sports equipment donated by various companies. For a comprehensive recap of 2013 trips, please visit the website at www.redeemer.com/missions.

There is no "personality type" best suited for a mission trip. Every personality and skill set is of value and needed for a well-rounded team. Preparation for the trips includes general meetings, fundraisers, and socials where trip projects are

developed and team members get to know one another. The prep time in itself is a challenging and growing experience.

We strive to have the team members use their God-given skills and talents to enhance each trip. Mission trips are a great venue for using your professional skills or personal interests. Teresa Smith, a physical therapist who traveled to Madagascar as part of a medical team, said: "One little 7 year old boy named Joanito came in for several days of treatment. He had a big smile and bright eyes, and had to be carried into the clinic by his mom. The right side of his body moved unpredictably and in an uncontrolled way, so he used his 'good' left arm to anchor his right arm out of the way. After much work, and some time spent teaching him to move differently, and working on his balance and control, Joanito no longer needed to anchor his right arm to his lap with the left one. He sat independently at the edge of a wooden chair, and smiled." This is just one example of how one volunteer's unique skills were used to glorify God on a trip.

But I do not account my life of any value, nor as precious to myself, if only that I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

—Acts 20:24

REDEEMER MISSIONS: A NOTE FROM MADAGASCAR

Redeemer has always had a vision to see cities all over the world renewed by the gospel through church planting. That is why Redeemer City to City, the church planting and missions arm of Redeemer, was started. To date City to City has trained over 200 leaders who've gone on to start new gospel-centered churches in cities like London, Tokyo or Buenos Aires. Each year, Redeemer sends short-term mission teams to partner with these international church planters.

There are many stories of how Redeemerites have served all over the world. Here's just one story from a pastor in Madagascar, Tank Randrianjohary, who welcomed a Redeemer medical team to Antananarivo

to serve with his new church:

"We were so glad and thankful to see your team on Malagasy soil. We were able to set up a free clinic for the under-privileged people that we minister to regularly.

"The team was stretched pretty thin as they served close to 130 patients in three days. Each person was seen and cared for, and about 70 local people who work in various medical fields were encouraged through different workshops hosted by the Redeemer team.

This was mind-blowing for us, that a team of doctors from the United States would come at their own cost and serve us here. So much was done! But more than that, so much was built. Our friendships were

deepened, new relationships were started, and we learned new ways to serve and minister to those around us.

"I can say with confidence that our friends from Redeemer blessed us beyond our expectations. They were easy to work with, they gave everything they had, they were generous in so many ways and they refreshed us so that we keep "running the race" with joy. People in our church were comforted by their visit, knowing that we are not alone but have friends who we know are concerned about what we are doing and are praying alongside us. We are already looking forward to the next team that will come to serve with us, and hope to see our new friends again soon."

PASCAL'S METHOD... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

How should Christians respond? Pascal thinks there are basically three stages to bringing someone on the way to faith. First, you have to disarm them and surprise them. Many people hope that Christianity does not make sense on any level. They especially enjoy hearing about professing Christians who are intemperate, irrational, and hypocritical—this confirms them in their non-belief. When, however, some presentation of Christian faith—or simply a Christian believer's character—comes across as well-informed, thoughtful, sensible, open-minded, helpful, and

generous, then this breaks stereotypes and commands a begrudging respect.

After this, Pascal says, we should be somewhat more proactive. "Next make it attractive, make good men wish [Christianity] were true." We might object to the term 'make' and suggest that Christianity is already attractive, but that's to miss Pascal's point. Of course he is not saying that we should make Christianity into something it is not—rather we should reveal, point out, and expose its existing features. But the phrase "make good men wish it were true" gets across that this takes determination

and ingenuity. We must know our culture—know its hopes—and then show others that only in Christ will their aspirations ever find fulfillment, that only in him will the plot lines of their lives ever have resolution and a happy ending.

I'm glad Pascal calls for this, because, understandably, in these conversations we want to talk about sin and the barrier that creates between God and us. Pascal is not arguing against that. Certainly he is not telling us to hide that. But do we take time to talk about the manifold and astonishing blessings of salvation? Do we

(Continued on page 5)

SERVE YOUR HOMELESS NEIGHBORS AT *DON'T WALK BY 2014*

Have you always wanted to help the homeless men and women you see on the street or the subway, but haven't known where to start or even how to approach with sensitivity?

This February, join Hope for New York for the *Don't Walk By* campaign, an annual volunteer outreach to the homeless in NYC, where you'll engage with the homeless and learn how to best serve people living on the streets throughout the year.

Every Saturday next month (and one Saturday in March),

Don't Walk By volunteers will cover Manhattan on a search for the homeless, offering every person they encounter a care kit, warm food, clothing, blankets, and the opportunity to stay in a shelter for the night.

February 8:
Downtown Outreach
gathers at Oversea Chinese Mission (Hester St.)

February 15:
East Side Outreach
gathers at Fifth Avenue Presbyterian
(E. 55th St.)

February 22:
West Side Outreach
gathers at Calvary Baptist Church
(W. 57th St.)

March 1:
Uptown Outreach
gathers at Bethel Gospel Assembly
(E. 120th St.)

Visit hfnny.org/dontwalkby for more information and to register to volunteer. This is a great opportunity for community groups and friends!

PASCAL'S METHOD... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 4)

give time and effort to explaining the new birth, our new name and identity, adoption into God's family, the experience of God's love and beholding Christ's glory, the slow but radical change in our character, a growing freedom from our past and peace in our present, power and meaning in the face of suffering, membership in a new, universal multi-racial counter-cultural community, a mission to do justice and mercy on the earth, guidance from and personal fellowship with God himself, relationships of love that go on forever, the promise of our own future perfection and glorious beauty, complete confidence in the face of death, and the new heavens and new earth, a perfectly re-

stored material world?

If we do this, Pascal gives us a very specific outcome to shoot for. If we have pointed such things out in an effective way, then *some* (though surely not all) will say "If Christianity really can give that, it would be wonderful. Yes, it would be great if it were true. But of course Christianity isn't. What a shame!"

It is only then that most people will sit through any kind of substantial presentation of the evidence and reasons for the truth of Christianity. Now Pascal says to "show that it is [true]." If they have not been brought through stage 1 (being disarmed and surprised by the lives and speech of believers) and stage 2 (seeing the great

and attractive promises of God in Christ), their eyes will simply glaze over if you begin to talk about 'the evidence for the resurrection.' They will still expect Christianity to be at best useless and at worst a threat. But if Christianity has begun to make emotional and cultural sense they may listen to a sustained discussion of why it makes logical and rational sense. By 'emotional sense' I mean that Christianity must be shown to be fill holes and answer questions and account for phenomena in the personal, inward, heart realm. By 'cultural sense' I mean that Christianity must be shown to have the resources to powerfully address our social problems and

(Continued on page 6)



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PASCAL'S METHOD... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 5)

explain human social behavior. Only if someone's imagination is captured will most

people give a fair hearing to the strong arguments for the truth of Christianity. Let's appeal to

heart and imagination as well as to reason as we speak publicly about our faith in Jesus.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

food, utilities, counseling, job search training, transportation, along with spiritual support totaling \$386K in 2013. Another \$415K facilitated ongoing Sandy relief in the tri-state area. We had the privilege of seeing lives stabilized and transformed This

could not have happened without your partnership.

Thank you for your support of the ministry of the Redeemer Diaconate. May you continue to experience Christ manifesting himself in his body, the church.

If you are a Redeemer member or regular attendee with a financial or other practical need, please call the Diaconate Helpline (917) 719-0259. If you would like to read more about the Diaconate ministry, visit www.redeemer.com/diaconate.