

FEBRUARY 2015

THE REVOLUTIONARY CHRISTIAN HEART

BY TIM KELLER

In January and February at Redeemer the preaching is moving through the first two chapters of Mark in order to better understand who Jesus is and what he is doing. One of the more striking things about the gospel of Mark (and the other gospels) is how much attention Jesus gives to the human heart. The core of the story of Jesus' healing of the paralytic is how "He knew in his spirit... what they were thinking in their hearts" (Mark 2:8).

He not only discerned the heart thoughts and motives of his critics, but also those of the paralyzed man, to whose unarticulated longings for forgiveness Jesus responds. In Mark 3:5 Jesus is deeply distressed at "stubborn hearts" and in Mark 7:6 he condemns people who praise God in worship and yet "their hearts are from me." Indeed, Jesus startles his listeners when he says that

what condemns us is what comes "out of the heart" (Mark 7:19,21). Compliance with the law and religious observance mean nothing if the heart's motives and purposes are not set on God rather than on human approval or on self-congratulation. We can only please God and be free if he is the object of our heart's greatest love (Mark 12:30,33).

For the Greeks and Romans, the great human struggle was between the mind (which they believed was resident in the soul) and the passions (which they believed were resident in the body.) If you wanted to achieve strength, courage, self-control, and wisdom, you learned to sublimate the emotions to the dictates of reason.

For modern people, the great struggle is almost the reverse. We believe our deepest feelings are 'who we really are' and we must not repress or deny them.

The great human struggle is between the emotions and a repressive society that so often stands in the way of self-expression and realization.

The Bible teaches "none of the above." It says *the* human struggle happens within a single entity — the human heart. The main human struggle is not between the heart and something else, but between forces that tear it in different directions. The great battle is deciding to what your heart's greatest love, hope, and trust will be directed.

The "heart" to English speakers means the emotions. But the Bible also says our thinking comes from the heart (Genes 6:5; Proverbs 23:7; Daniel 2:30) as well as our willing, our plans and decisions (Proverbs 16:1,9; Matthew 12:33-34). This confuses us until we realize the Bible's view of human

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WE'RE MOVING!

The offices of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Redeemer City to City and Hope for New York are moving in late February 2015. Phone numbers and email addresses remain the same, but please make a note of our new mailing address:

**1166 Avenue of the Americas
16th Floor,
New York, NY 10036**

REDEEMER CITY TO CITY AND REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY PARTNER ON A GRADUATE DEGREE

For years the leadership of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and Redeemer City to City have seen the need for a Reformed seminary in New York City. While New York enjoys a few seminaries of different traditions, our core values come from a Reformed understanding of the gospel that is crucial to our preaching, our vision for ministry, our spiritual formation and everything we do.

To that end we have been working for nearly a decade to start an accredited degree program, and in fall of 2014 New York State finally granted our application.

What does this mean? For Redeemer Church, it means ministry staff no longer have to commute or move to another city for years before being eligible to become a Redeemer pastor. We will be able to retain and train our staff and leaders while they remain involved full-time in ministry in New York.

Further, interested lay men and women will have access to deeper theological education, enriching the church in every area of their ministries.

For City to City, it means cultivating ministry leaders much earlier in their process of spiritual and professional formation. Instead of offering already-trained pastors a new paradigm of gospel preaching and ministry, we will be able to develop them more fully from an earlier stage while they participate in ministry to this city.

For both organizations, it means a whole new path for people in New York City to pursue a seminary degree and the practical experience they need to be effective in ministry.

The Redeemer City Ministry Program will offer two important components:

- A two-year Master of Arts of Biblical Studies (MABS)

degree program through Reformed Theological Seminary (some classes taught virtually)

- City Ministry Year (CMY): one year of practical ministry training (including preaching, pastoral leadership and mission) through Redeemer City to City

Faculty for the MABS program will include RTS faculty as well as local adjuncts. For the CMY program, faculty will include Timothy Keller, Redeemer City to City staff, and local pastors. The first class for the MABS program will begin in fall of 2015 at our West 83rd Ministry Center.

Currently we are in the process of raising funds for scholarships. If interested you can donate at securecc.rts.edu/giving. Federal aid through student loans is not available.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CHRISTIAN HEART ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

nature is revolutionary, different than what you find in other human systems of thought.

The heart is used as a metaphor for the seat of our most basic orientation, our deepest commitments — what we trust the most (Proverbs 3:5; 23:26); it is what we most love and hope in, what we most treasure, what captures our imagination (Matthew 6:21) Ev-

ery heart has an inclination (Genesis 6:5), something it is directed toward. The direction of the heart, then, controls everything — our thinking, feeling, and decisions and actions. What we most love we find reasonable, desirable, and doable. Whatever we cherish in our hearts most controls the whole person. No wonder Jesus is so concerned about our hearts.

No wonder God ignores outward matters and looks supremely at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Jeremiah 17:10) No wonder the prophets said that the goal of salvation is not mere compliance but having the law “written on the heart” through spiritual rebirth (Jeremiah 31:33.) We always, in the end, do what
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REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(between Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30/11:30 a.m., 5 & 7 p.m.

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(between 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services: 9:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

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UPDATE FROM THE DIACONATE AND THANK YOU

The Diaconate* wrapped up a joyful time of ministry in 2014 and we could not have done it without God's help and your faithful prayer support and generous financial gifts. We are grateful that God has moved you to provide for hurting members in our church family. Your support made it possible for the love of God to be poured out in tangible ways — what a powerful witness that speaks volumes of God's mercy.

"Receiving financial aid through the Diaconate is such a meaningful event in someone's spiritual life. People often say it feels like God really does care and provide; that the church really is His family; that this community really is different," said one of our deacons, Kevin Feltes. "I wish everyone could hear that directly and see the work God does for these people, through the generosity of those who give."

The 2014 special offerings to our Mercy Fund totaled over \$500K, far exceeding our goal of \$450K for this year.

This ministry of mercy also could not happen without the women and men of the Diacon-

ate. Our deaconesses and deacons (deeks) made themselves available to meet the spiritual and practical needs of our congregation. These are individuals you see praying with others up front after each worship service, and carving out time to meet behind the scenes with those in need to assess their situations and to provide care.

As our church continues to grow so does the need for more deeks. We are excited to share with you that the following candidates have been nominated, interviewed and invited to begin the training.

East Side:

Kristin Carotenuto, Joanne Gough, Hannah Jang, Inok Kim and Nick Shatraw

West Side:

Gary Bowler, Pat Denson, James Griffin, Karen Kwong, Margaret Nelson, Jorge Perez, Nick Rubino-Bradway and Barry Russell

Downtown:

Faith Bowen, Daniel Chun, Daniel Clemens, Esther Larson and Michael Rooney

Please pray for these candidates as they go through training in theology and ministry skills and prepare for their interviews. They will be evaluated on their character, Christian life and experience, theological understanding, and giftedness and readiness to serve the church as a deek. Our current elders will then determine which candidates will be presented for election at the May 9 congregational meeting.

We would also like your prayers for the Diaconate as a whole — that we continue to serve the congregation with grace, joy, wisdom and love. It is our prayer that God will lead us to reflect deeply on his goodness, which enables us to continue to fulfill his ministry of mercy given to us.

**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, (917) 719-0259.*

TITLED

My main experience with Redeemer's Center for Faith and Work has been through the Gotham Fellowship, which I did last year. For those of you who haven't heard of Gotham, it is nine-month, multifaceted approach of pushing the truth that God loves you into every daily, seemingly mundane activity, thought and situation. This was done through reading, teaching, community, and practical applica-

tion projects.

One of our projects led to the biggest transformation I had during the program — an overhaul in my heart about two words that I had hated for some time:

Administrative Assistant

My title.

For ten years I've worked as an assistant at an asset management firm with the same team. I love my company, adore my team, like my role, and absolutely

BY KATHLEEN BOATMAN

hate my title.

But I didn't always. My third year at Lazard, another assistant was growing restless in her role and shared her frustrations with me. She said, "What are you going to do next? Surely you're not going to be *just an assistant* the rest of your life, right?"

Just an assistant.

That was the first time I realized how other people, or at least

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the heart wants the most.

The biblical understanding of the heart is culturally revolutionary. When Saint Augustine wrote his *Confessions*, the ancient world had never seen the anything like it.

He explored his past, his history, and the internal motivations that moved him. The reason the classical age never produced such a work was because, in its view, internal motives and feelings were inconsequential, merely things to

be overcome. On the other hand, our contemporary culture has no way — as Augustine had — to sift emotions, to discover which of them are liberating because they lead us away from the misery of self-absorption, and which are enslaving.

You can't change merely by changing your thinking, or through great acts of will, but rather by changing what you love most. Change happens not only

by giving your mind new truths — though it does involve that — but also by feeding the imagination new beauties so you love Jesus supremely. We change when we change what we worship the most. How do we do that? By seeing that Jesus' own heart was crushed and broken as he died on the Cross for us (Psalm 22:14). It is as we worship a crucified Savior that our hearts are transformed.

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some people, saw my job. It was a stepping stone, a temporary position, something that no one would aim for. It didn't require a college degree or necessarily a critical mind.

She eventually left the firm, but I increasingly noticed these things. As I grew more insecure about others' views of my role, I tried to soothe my wounded ego by telling myself, "People outside Lazard don't really know what you do. You do so much more than other

assistants." When asked what I do, I often made sure to include that I used to be a social worker and would make the joke that I still do social work — just for a different demographic. So insecure.

During those nine months in the Gotham program, God showed me how my pride was blinding me, robbing me of the gift of work He had given me, and captivating my thoughts and putting my focus on my reputation instead of on Him, His love, His plans, and His work.

Jesus didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing and obeyed the Father — even to the point of death. And he did this for us.

Knowledge of that kind of love has changed my vision of work. It has given me freedom from a prison I wasn't aware I was in. A freedom which makes attention to titles and professional hierarchies seem absurd. A freedom for which this captive is grateful.