

FEBRUARY 2016

THIS TAKES ALL OF US

BY TIM KELLER

In September 2014 we had an opportunity to look back to the beginnings of Redeemer now over 25 years ago. The original vision was for a church — and perhaps (we said) a network of churches — in the center of Manhattan that could reach even the most secular New Yorkers with the gospel.

We still have the original vision documents that arose out of our earliest meetings. It was a dream for a biblical church that ministered in both word and deed, that disciplined people for both public and private life and which both upheld the gospel and brought it to bear on the heart.

Kathy and I remember clearly that about 4 out of 5 people who heard about this vision told us that it simply couldn't be done. Those doubters were not simply being negative — the barriers were real. It seemed to be financially, culturally, and spiritually impossible to start historically orthodox, self-sustaining churches here. But the gospel proved itself to be more powerful than those barriers.

This year we turn from contemplating the past toward seeking God's grace for our future. What we do in the coming months will set the course for Redeemer for the next 10 years and beyond. Without any

exaggeration or hype, Kathy and I believe Redeemer's greatest fruitfulness is ahead of us. But it will take a re-casting of a vision for a new era, a new set of leaders, as well as a renewal of our confidence in the gospel.

At the end of February we will start that new journey. On February 29, at the Hammerstein Ballroom, the Lead Pastors David, John, Abe and I are asking the entire church to gather together for what we're calling "Redeemer Night." That night we want to introduce you to the next stage in Redeemer's vision. It will set a course for how we hope to serve this city
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"I'M IN"

BY BETHANY JENKINS

If each community group (CG) is like a single light, New York City is lit up like a constellation. On Tuesday nights, when my CG meets, I wonder about the hundreds of other CGs meeting at the same time. *Are they welcoming newcomers to the city? Are they celebrating joys or mourning losses? Are they worshipping God with prayer, song, or service?* It's rare, though, that I know the answers.

But for one night, the entire Redeemer community will come together to form a single bright light. On Monday, February 29, we'll sing, pray, and laugh at Redeemer Night, we'll also hear about God's call on us as Redeemer grows.

To be honest, I'm nervous about our future. I don't want to think about church being different from what I'm used to or being asked to step up in

ways I never have before. Yet this is exactly why I need Redeemer Night. I don't believe the gospel enough. I depend on human beings too much. I need to come together with all of you to confess my fears, worship the One who says, "Do not be afraid," and embrace the call, saying, "I don't need to understand everything to be obedient. I just need to say, 'I'm in.'"

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED: A GOTHAM FELLOWSHIP REFLECTION

BY LISA SWEENEY TAYLOR

My husband and I have been a part of Redeemer since we first arrived in the city in 2004. In 2011 a good friend and member of our Community Group was accepted to the Gotham Fellowship. At that point, I was vaguely familiar with the Center for Faith & Work and the Gotham Fellowship, but I hadn't considered getting involved with either.

I was inspired as I observed my friend during his year as a Gotham Fellow. He was enthusiastic about all the new ideas he was exposed to and he strongly encouraged his friends to apply to the program. As a typical busy New Yorker, I scoffed at the idea of making an intensive nine-month commitment, so I tried to convince my friend to give me the Gotham reading list. I figured I could get all this knowledge by reading the texts on my own. He refused. He said: "trust me — you just need to do Gotham."

Challenge accepted! I applied and joined the Gotham Fellowship class of 2013. When the program began, I naively thought I was there just for the deeper head knowledge. I had a great New York community and I didn't think I had room for more. I soon came to realize

that community is the conduit through which all the Gotham Fellowship learning happens. Every week, my cohort of 14 Fellows would gather around a table to pray for each other and discuss our assigned readings. We wrestled together with some difficult philosophical and theological concepts and I began to realize that by listening to my classmates question and discuss these ideas, the concepts sank deeper into my heart than if I had just read the texts on my own. As we moved into the heart renewal and community portion of the year, I began to understand that this Gotham experience was reshaping my heart.

I am the Executive Assistant to the President of a very large financial firm. My entire vocational existence is spent making sure my boss has everything he needs to succeed and flourish. My time in Gotham helped me realize that if the gospel truly does change everything, it has the power to reach into my professional life. The work I do and how I do it matters to God. Inspired by the Great Creator, I have the privilege to creatively fill the structures of my role. I have the tools to identify and repent of the sin

in my heart as it manifests in the workplace. In Gotham, we read lectures by Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper and the quote that has stuck with me is: "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!" What a powerful promise — that God cares about and is so deeply invested in our work. No job, no task, no profession is outside his sovereignty and his plan to restore his creation. And now I understand that my work — as an act of worship and obedience — is part of his plan.

Looking back on my 11 years in New York City, I now find that I see my life as "before Gotham and after Gotham" — it was that influential in my thinking and development, and it rooted me in a rich community. If you are interested in applying to the Gotham Fellowship or getting involved in the programs and conferences offered by the Center for Faith & Work, I strongly encourage you to pray about it ... and then do it.

Applications are now open for the 2016 Gotham Fellowship Class.

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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WHY WE LOVE *DON'T WALK BY*

BY KATE RHODES, HFNY MANAGER OF VOLUNTEER INITIATIVES

This year marks Hope for New York's sixth year of participation in *Don't Walk By!* *Don't Walk By* is an annual outreach to homeless men and women in New York City during the coldest season of the year. On every Saturday this February, volunteers will canvas Manhattan to engage people living on the street, offering them care kits and an invitation to return to a safe space for a warm meal, medical care, and the opportunity to connect with long-term recovery programs.

We love partnering with several organizations to host this outreach for a number of reasons including:

1. *Every street of Manhattan is surveyed to engage homeless men and women.*

Over the span of four Saturdays in the bitterly cold month of February, over 1,200 volunteers strategically survey every street of Manhattan to look for men and women living on the streets to offer them a warm meal, medical treatment, and a safe place to stay overnight.

2. *Our homeless neighbors are connected to long-term care and resources.*

After our volunteers meet men and women on the streets, they are invited back to an anchor church to receive a warm meal and place to stay.

There they will learn about various resources through our partner organizations, Bowery Mission, New York City Rescue Mission, and NYC Relief. This year, Open Hands Legal Services will also offer their resources to homeless guests. Our hope is that the guests will be connected with these affiliates year round and receive the long-term care they need to begin life transformation.

3. *Volunteers are equipped to serve our homeless neighbors year round.*

A common question we get at Hope for New York is how to effectively engage our homeless neighbors. Not only is *Don't Walk By* a wonderful opportunity to educate volunteers about how to serve homeless men and women, this outreach also provides a unique experience for volunteers to actively practice serving their homeless neighbors. By taking a Saturday to survey the streets and engage with homeless men and women, volunteers are learning life long practices of effectively engaging with this population. This experience equips volunteers to be more aware of homeless men and women on a regular basis and how to love them well.

4. *The love of Christ is exhibited to New York City through Don't Walk By.*

Through this mission, volunteers are actively participating in the service of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, the reason we want to engage in service to our homeless brothers and sisters is because as Christians we believe that God has shown compassion and mercy to us by offering us an eternal home in him. Therefore, we are reflecting the love of Christ to our homeless neighbors and exhibiting that love to New York City.

One volunteer from last year's outreach said her favorite part of *Don't Walk By* was: "Getting to know the needs of the communities around us, and learning to love and have compassion for others just as God loved us. Also, being able to work together with brothers and sisters from different churches to serve a single purpose."

We hope you will consider serving at *Don't Walk By* this year and invite others to do the same! Dates for each outreach are: Uptown, February 6; East Side, February 13; Downtown, February 20; and West Side, February 27. Find out more about each outreach and register at hfny.org/dwb.



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THIS TAKES ALL OF US ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

and the churches of this city in a way that we've only dreamed of until now. God has been working in Manhattan in ways not seen by historians in over one hundred years. We believe there is an opportunity to see the Body of Christ in center city New York multiply exponentially over the next decade.

Kathy has said that this is Redeemer's defining moment. Do we really believe that the 'impossible dream' of Redeemer's origin came true because of the power of the gospel? Or do we (secretly) think that it was due to certain methods or certain people who, if they pass off the scene, will take Redeemer's success with them? If we renew our belief in the power of the gospel, then we won't be daunted by the vision for the future presented that evening.

I believe that everything

God has done up to now has uniquely equipped us for what we will now embark on together, and this will take all of us — and I don't mean just "a lot of us." This will be a significant spiritual renewal and that requires extraordinary prayer. This will be an unprecedented city-missions project, involving many other churches and ministries in the city. It will require each one of us to be more open to being trained for leadership, more open to being 'sent out' in new ways into our neighborhoods. All of us must ask more intently how God might use us to bring growth and flourishing to the whole Body of Christ in center city, as well as to our neighbors.

Our goal is to bring all three congregations together on a single night. If God is gracious to us, it could be a historic meeting and we want as many

people as possible to be part of it.

Beginning on Monday, February 29, and continuing through the end of April, in our Sunday services and other gatherings, we will be coming together as a church to understand and commit ourselves to this vision. It will be a time to rise up as a community and seek God's help to answer his call to serve him in this time and place.

Please don't miss this evening gathering. It doesn't matter whether you are church leader of fifteen years or have only attended Redeemer for a few weeks. This will take all of us, so we need you there.

RSVP at redeemer.com/redeemernight — *and* personally invite as many other people as you know who attend Redeemer. Help us get the word out to everyone.