

APRIL 2016

THE GOSPEL AND OUR FUTURE

BY TIM KELLER

We are in the midst of our Rise Campaign, and the most important part of that effort is to cast a vision for Redeemer's ministry in the city over the next 10 years, as well as to raise the various resources we will need to accomplish that vision. We want to become a family of close-knit churches who, out of our faith in the gospel, partner with many other churches to exponentially grow the Body of Christ in quality and quantity until our presence makes a welcome and beneficial difference to the life of the entire city.

This will require the three current Redeemer congregations to become far more "generative" than they have been in the past. We must start more sites

and churches, collaborate more closely with other congregations, devote energy and resources to raise up and train more lay leaders, pastors, and ministry staff — than we have ever done before. We also want to root our East side congregation in its neighborhood for generations, acquiring a ministry center to enable them to reach residents and create community in ways that the West side congregation has been able to do through W83.

This vision, if God blesses it, would allow us to minister to the city in ways we have always dreamed of — but in ways that up to now we have *only* dreamed of. It's an enormous vision and a compelling one. But what's our motivation? Is it simply the kind

of *bigger-is-better* mindset so prevalent today? A franchise empire instead of a mega church one? No. Speaking for myself and for everyone else in Redeemer leadership, I can unequivocally say that is *not* the reason.

The reason is, still, always, first and last, the gospel itself. Let's look at the components of the Redeemer vision that we have been addressing in this Spring's sermon series.

The first sermon, preached February 28 on Galatians 2, was "The Centrality of the Gospel." In this passage Paul tells Peter that his racial attitudes were "not in line with the gospel." This means that the gospel has implications for every area of life.

(Continued on page 5)

RISE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERINGS

BY LYN COOK

One of the ways that the vision of RISE is already invigorating Redeemer is through neighborhood gatherings. The bold vision of the number of New Yorkers attending gospel teaching churches rising from 5% to 15% will take all of us. One exciting part of this vision is that the growth will necessarily affect every neighborhood in Manhattan for the

good of every person. Imagine increasing demonstrations of hope, love, justice, and generosity flowing out across the each neighborhood through the men and women live there. Imagine New Yorkers choosing to root themselves in a neighborhood not as mere consumers but as culture makers intent on giving themselves to meet the needs of others. Imagine neighbors

building relationships across differences to the point where the culture of the city flourishes and the good news of Christ is made clear.

Neighborhood gatherings, which are taking place across the city, are the catalyst that we hope will spark these changes. The gatherings seek to connect Redeemer communities to each

(Continued on page 6)

SEEKING SHALOM THROUGH REDEEMER CITY WALKS

BY HALLY CHU

On March 12, Redeemer Grace & Race, Redeemer City to City and Hope for New York co-sponsored City Walks in neighborhoods across the city. A Redeemer City to City church planter and Hope for New York affiliate staff hosted each walk, exploring the brokenness and beauty of the neighborhood and inviting congregants to talk about issues of justice and race. Hally Chu, a Hope for New York team leader with Exodus Transitional Community, participated in the East Harlem Walk.

For seven years, I have called a stretch of blocks spanning the East 110's home. I know East Harlem for the community garden next to my building; the excellent, hole-in-the-wall Thai takeout restaurant on my block; and the vibrancy and life that greet me whenever I step into the streets on a sunny day.

This is why I was so excited when City to City, Hope for New York, and Redeemer Grace & Race organized a City Walk in East Harlem. I wanted tour participants to take in the uniqueness of this neighborhood, both its beauty and its brokenness. I wanted to see East Harlem through a new lens. And Redeemer couldn't have arranged for a better tour guide: Pastor José Humphreys, a 15-year East Harlem resident who started Metro Hope Church, a church committed to serving East Harlem residents.

The tour route was simple: we started at the National Black Theater where Metro Hope Church meets on Sundays, walked east along 125th Street, and ended at Exodus Transitional Community, a Hope for New York affiliate that provides re-entry services to the formerly incarcerated.

Seeking Shalom

The theme that undergirded the City Walk was Jeremiah 29:7 — “Seek the peace (shalom) and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”

What does it mean to seek the shalom of East Harlem? Pastor José challenged us to start with identifying areas of brokenness that are around us, for where there is a lack of shalom, there is breakdown in relationships, communities, infrastructures, and systems.

For me, identifying brokenness meant spotting the tragedy within a beautifully painted mural: “Rest in peace, Tynde, Robert, Frederica.” It meant coming face to face with systemic inequality when passing a crowd of shelter dwellers, jobseekers, and displaced seniors gathered beneath the Metro-North viaduct on E 125th Street and Park Avenue. It meant asking where families can go to buy food now that the 125th Street PathMark is closed and the site sold to a luxury housing developer. It meant really seeing the empty storefront I pass by daily for what it is — a narrative of rising commercial rents, a dream deferred for

the former business owner, local job losses, and blight in the community for as long as the space remains empty.

Brokenness is also perpetuated on a broader, macro level. The poverty of the neighborhood is partially a function of the 11.5% unemployment rate. 30.7% of low-income households pay more than half their income on rent, and just over 20% of students perform at grade level in math and language arts.

Faced with such brokenness, bringing shalom to the community seems impossible. What can *we* — broken and sinful people ourselves — do? Pastor José pointed us to Jesus. As God incarnate, Jesus brought shalom wherever he went. He fed the hungry, healed the sick, comforted the brokenhearted, and most importantly, showed people the way to a reconciled relationship with God. He has gifted those of us who are his followers with different skills, passions, and professional capabilities to do his work. Through us, Jesus continues to bring shalom to the city in different ways — whether through supporting local businesses, volunteering with Hope for New York, addressing

(Continued on page 4)

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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HOW THE RISE CAMPAIGN IS CHANGING REDEEMER

BY MAX ANDERSON

The Rise Campaign is the biggest vision Redeemer has undertaken in our 27 years as a church. We're trying to raise \$40 million (that's more than double any previous campaign!) to accelerate the gospel movement in New York. Will we get there? Only God knows, and if we do get there, it will only be with his support.

Whether we raise all the money or not we are already seeing the RISE campaign change Redeemer. I've gotten a unique perspective on this by working on the campaign full-time the past few months and I wanted to share a few encouraging thoughts with you.

Redeemer Night was the biggest single event in Redeemer's history

On Leap Night, February 29, we gathered to launch the RISE Campaign. We had more than 2000 people RSVP to attend at Hammerstein Ballroom, another 600 RSVP'd for Redeemer Nightx (a simulcast at w83), and more than 1,000 people tuned in from home to watch the Livestream. I was both excited and terrified when I went outside and saw the line to get in stretching around the block.

Once we got everyone in we had a great evening. Andrew Nembr's tap dance performance was outstanding. We heard from David, Abe, John, Tim, Kathy, and the campaign chairs. We sang, we prayed, and we dreamed to-



gether about what God might do through us and through our church. More important than this event being big was that it was beautiful. I received so many encouraging notes from people saying they left inspired. I heard one attendee say she is totally rethinking her approach to the city and how God might work in her if she stayed. If you missed Redeemer Night — you can still watch it at rise.redeemer.com/videos/



Redeemer Night February 2016

More than 2,000 people have said "I'm In"

At Redeemer Night we asked people to say "I'm in" for the RISE vision. Specifically we asked people to say "I'm in" to pray for, engage with, and give to the RISE vision. So far, more than 2,000 people have said they are in. This is so encouraging! We've never had more than 1,300 people pledge to a campaign before. This isn't just en-

couraging, though, it's important — a vital part of achieving our vision. We won't grow from 5-15% of center city New Yorkers being changed by the gospel unless we have a groundswell of people making this vision their own. If you'd like to join us, say "I'm In" at rise.redeemer.com and check out our awesome map highlighting people rising all over the city (and around the world!).

Neighborhood Gatherings are creating a whole new level of community at Redeemer

Maybe my favorite part of the RISE campaign is the 60 Redeemer Neighborhood Gatherings happening all around the city. During the months of March and April, thousands of Redeemerites are gathering for "parties with a purpose" all around the city to meet their neighbors at Redeemer and engage with the RISE vision. Dozens of people are opening their homes, or hosting events at local bars for parties of 20-100 people. Some of these groups are going to continue meeting well beyond the end of the RISE Campaign, creating a whole new level of community at Redeemer.

Biggest changes are ahead

The RISE campaign is already affecting our church in so many ways. It's exciting to see. Of course, the biggest changes are ahead. Beginning April 17, *(Continued on page 6)*

IDENTITY, INTERSECTION AND INCARNATION AT W83

BY EVA TING

On any given morning, W83 Ministry Center opens its doors to a flurry of activity. It may be 139 elementary students filing through the doors and up the stairs to the classrooms, starting another day of school. It may be a catering company loading in the fifth floor loft to set up lunch for the television cast and crew shooting in the neighborhood. It may be the laughter and chatter from family and friends as they gather to celebrate a wedding.

Since March of 2012, Redeemer's mantra of "a church not for ourselves" has manifested in this brick and mortar presence on the Upper West Side. Owning this multi-use building has enabled us to root ourselves in the community in ways that would not have been possible without a physical presence. Our signs may tell the neighbors who we are, but it is our active involvement in the life of this neighborhood that gives them a sense of our *Identity* as we welcome people every day of the week. In 2015, we hosted seven ongoing after school programs, seven live per-

formances, and nine assemblies and receptions for various local schools. A glimpse at our calendar reveals at least half a dozen different groups using this building on most days.

We serve as a place of *Intersection*: people from all walks of life are welcomed into this space with hospitality, crossing paths in the most beautiful ways. The middle-aged UWS couple running a weekly community meditation class share a floor and conversations with the teachers and Spanish-speaking students of a weekly ESL program. The elementary school students sometimes assist the elderly neighbors gathered here once a week to collect donated groceries as part of a Diaconate service. We've held nine art exhibition openings this past year, inviting neighbors, congregants, artists and their friends to enjoy and talk about art together. Under one roof, everyone shares space and learns a little bit about one another simply because they bump up against one another.

Our physical presence in this neighborhood allows us to *In-*

carate. By opening our doors to the needs of the community, we communicate a vested interest in what affects our neighbors as it affects us, too. In April 2015, Council Member Rosenthal conducted her Town Hall in our sanctuary for concerned residents to speak up on issues. The Department of Transportation and Community Board 7 hosted meetings here to gather neighborhood input on where Citibike stations should be placed. We also have the privilege to celebrate with congregants and neighbors in their joyous life occasions, and last year we saw eight weddings and six bar and bat mitzvahs. We mourn with those who mourn as we hold their loved one's memorial services. We are not just a building; we function as a hub of community life and are weaving ourselves into the fabric of this neighborhood.

There are many ways to love our city and have a faithful presence. Through the gift of a building, we are endowed with the distinct ability to be physically present, to open our doors and serve our neighbors.

SEEKING SHALOM ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 2)

neighborhood issues through civic engagement, or even advancing justice through policy advocacy.

As I consider these and other ways to bring shalom to East Harlem, it occurs to me that what matters most is to be willing to go where God leads. The list above might not resonate with everyone, and that's okay,

because God calls us to serve in different ways. For me, I feel like one of the disciples who walked with and listened to Jesus on the road to Emmaus. I walk the streets of East Harlem and I feel my heart burn. At times, I am overwhelmed by the brokenness I see all around me. But with each greeting to a neighbor and each community meeting I

attend, I am reminded that God can use each act, no matter how small, to bring flourishing to this place that I call home.

Learn more about upcoming Grace & Race events, including "Grace, Justice and Mercy," a talk with Tim Keller and human rights lawyer Brian Stevenson on May 20, at redeemer.com/graceandrace.

NEW FAITH & WORK PODCAST!

The Center for Faith & Work now has a podcast. Weekly talks, lectures, and conversations center on the intersection of theology and culture as it applies to our everyday work. Topics range

from vocational-specific (business, law, arts, education, etc.) to practical resources regarding prayer, discernment, calling, and more, featuring speakers such as Tim Keller, David Brooks,

Nancy Ortberg, Anthony Bradley and many others. Subscribe to us on Soundcloud or iTunes (faithandwork.com/blog/new-faith-work-podcast).

THE GOSPEL AND OUR FUTURE ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

Redeemer's ministry has always been noted for its "balance" — we call people to be converted but we also care for the poor, whether they believe like we do or not. We affirm the importance of serving God in one's 'secular' vocation, yet we also lift up the importance of the ministry of the Word and the critical necessity of church and Christian community. Many observers have pointed out that most churches do not combine all these emphases. But we believe these are all simply implications of the gospel itself for how we live our lives. They are "in line with the Gospel."

As in the past, every part of the future vision we are putting forth during this season flows from our faith in the gospel and our hope of seeing its power more realized in our lives and in the city than it has been before.

The sermons on John 4, "Changed Lives" and "Public Faith," were preached March 6 and 13. We believe that the gospel is not merely a set of doctrines to be believed, but a power that changes hearts and lives now.

Our aim over the next 10 years is to take both the way we do outreach and evangelism and the way we disciple people for gospel life change to levels we have not reached or even attempted before. We have plans to train lay leaders for spiritual growth and ministry and to train people to be effective witnesses to God's grace.

The sermon on Isaiah 58, "Doing Justice and Mercy," was preached March 20. The sermon on Matthew 5, "A Counter-culture for the Common Good," was preached April 3. The gospel always turns people into those who care about justice and the poor. We do not simply want to multiply just any kind of church in the city. We want those churches to have hearts and skills to do justice and show compassion to the needy. To that end we will be having Hope For New York consult with our new churches and instill this mindset in the new church planters.

The sermon on Isaiah 60, "Integrating faith and work," which will be preached April 10, reminds us that the gospel

has implications for all of life, including our vocation and life in the public square. As part of the RISE vision, we plan to double the number of Gotham fellows annually in each of the three congregations. Faith-work integration will be a central in the training of all these new lay leaders and pastors.

In the final sermons, on Jeremiah 29 and 1 Peter 2, we will remember that gospel grace comes to us through Jesus' sacrifice, and therefore we must be a church "not for ourselves" (Romans 15:1-3). We are a church for the city (Jeremiah 29), as part of a movement (1 Peter 2). Unlike past campaigns, this is not about just growing Redeemer but increasing the whole Christian community in center city. Much of the money we raise, the training we give, and the churches we help plant will not be directed to Redeemer's leaders and churches, but will belong to other congregations in the Body of Christ in the city. To raise money that will flow out to the city like that is unprecedented. But, of course, "in line with the gospel."



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RISE NEIGHBORHOOD GATHERINGS ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

other in their neighborhoods, increase our love for our neighborhoods, and personalize how each of us is called to be “in” — to pray, engage, and give for a movement of the gospel.

The neighborhood gatherings in Downtown, East Side, and West Side have already sparked new conversations and new relationships. Whether in a personal home, a neighborhood bar, or a community center the gatherings of 30-100 people

have been a fun way to come together with others at Redeemer who want to know each other and to rise and embody Christ in every sphere of their lives — where we live, work and play.

The East Side congregation will continue to focus on neighborhoods in the future. Because Christ left heaven and moved into an earthly neighborhood, we are also specifically placed and called to live in our neighborhoods with consciousness,

love, and justice toward those who are near and those who are in need. Gatherings, service projects, and increasing outward facing community will fuel both our love for our neighbors and our public faith.

What is God calling you to in your neighborhood? RISE is a vision that will ultimately affect every neighborhood in New York for the good, including yours. Don't you want to be part of it?

RISE CAMPAIGN CHANGING REDEEMER ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

we'll be asking everyone to make a financial pledge to support the campaign. Our hope is to raise money that will provide a building for the East side and for planting dozens of new churches and training pastors and lay leaders for those sites. It will help us turn into more of a church

planting church.

As it has been said, in the past Redeemer grew by bringing people in. In the future, we will grow by sending people out — out to new church plants as co-founders, out to our jobs as people who integrate our faith with our work, and out to our neigh-

borhoods as people who sacrifice our comfort to welcome in and serve our neighbors in word and deed. This is a vision worth investing in. And it's a campaign that is already changing who we are for the better.