### NEIGHBORHOOD to NATIONS





#### **VOLUME IV**

### **NEIGHBORHOOD** to NATIONS

### Missional FOCUS

In this edition of Neighborhood to Nations, we are looking at the areas of our engagement through a missional lens. At Redeemer, we strive to be a gospel-centered missional family of disciples making disciples and churches planting churches. That means that when we engage our city, we meet physical needs and labor by the power of the Spirit to see the gospel transform Lubbock. We are not satisfied with volunteerism for the sake of merely doing good things, but rather we seek to join God in his mission of transforming individuals, cities, and entire nations.



### **NEIGHBORHOOD** to NATIONS





### VISION

When we engage our city missionally, we meet physical needs and labor by the power of the Spirit to see the gospel transform Lubbock. As God's people, we are not designed to just keep the gospel to ourselves, but rather we are sent out as the light of the world, a city set on a hill (Matt 5:14). Thus, we are not satisfied with volunteerism for the sake of merely doing good things, we want people to see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven (Matt 5:16). Ultimately, we seek to join God in his mission of transforming individuals, cities, and entire nations.



The United States is uniquely positioned in the world as an educational hub, attracting students from around the globe every year. In the 2018-19 academic year, the US attracted over a million international students for the fourth year in a row. At Texas Tech alone, 500 new international students enrolled for SPRING 2022. While the opportunities this presents to followers of Jesus are nothing short of incredible, the grim reality is that an estimated 80 percent of those students will never set foot in an American home. People pray, often for years, for opportunities to enter the unreached places from which many of these students come, yet God has graciously brought them to our doorstep.

Despite the amazing opportunities God is presenting to us, many are simply not taking advantage of those chances to build relationships and make Christ known. It is tragic to consider that every year some 800,000 international students, many of them being from nations with little to no gospel access, will never be welcomed into an intimate relationship with any American, let alone a Christian. In an effort to reverse this trend, Redeemer joins with churches and others around Lubbock to welcome dozens of international students from Texas Tech every fall through the Cultural Exchange program.

Even in the midst of COVID and all of the uncertainties that came with it, including a greatly reduced number of new international students, 37 Lubbock families matched with 58 international students in 2020. Each family committed to meeting with their student at least once a month during the academic year, doing everything from eating meals together to celebrating holidays. Deep relationships were built, cultural differences bridged, and spiritual conversations held over everything from a home-cooked meal to a board game. In 2021, members of Redeemer have continued to intentionally engage international students, with 45 families signing up to be matched with the 54 international students who registered.

Cultural Exchange has resulted in countless stories of transformed lives, both of students and host families. One such story is that of Andy, a Ph.D. student at Texas Tech. After coming to America and connecting with a Redeemer family, Andy said he could begin to encounter new ideas and openly question the atheism and materialism he was educated to believe in. He also began to realize that while modern medicine may be able to cure physical cancer, we can do nothing on our own to cure the spiritual cancer of sin.

Andy recognized that God really can change people. "I've met people who have taken drugs or committed serious sin, but after believing in the Lord they still wore the same clothes, drove the same car, lived in the same house, but their spirit was different," Andy said when sharing his testimony before his baptism. "They would begin to do many good things and share God's Word. This is really hard for a person to do, only God can completely change someone." This is precisely what God did in his heart as he encountered the Bible thanks to a loving cultural exchange family.



"I haven't known about the Bible very long," Andy said. "Maybe just about a year." He reflected on how his friend from Redeemer led him in Bible study, which led him to get connected with a church and small group made up of mostly people from his home country. "I still don't know much about the Bible," Andy said, adding that he still wants Jesus to enter his life and lead him for the rest of his days.

Andy's story, while truly amazing, is not an isolated one. Countless people are deeply affected by the relationships they make through programs like Cultural Exchange every year. Will you consider committing to simply welcoming an international student into your life and home, praying that the Lord would use you to make an eternal impact on the life of someone like Andy?

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CULTURAL EXCHANGE



How do you tell a story of such loss but also share the many blessings God has bestowed in the process? I am not certain that I can, but I'll definitely try.

On Jan 2nd, 2020, I lost my oldest son, Kolter, in a horrific car accident. My husband and Kolter were driving down to the farm that morning. I literally had just talked to them on the phone, 3 minutes before the accident. I'm a Physician's Assistant and I was in the clinic that morning. I received a phone call from a stranger saying my husband was in a horrible accident and I needed to come. I immediately asked about Kolter. The man just said it was bad and that I needed to come. I instantly knew Kolt was not okay.

As my nurse and I were driving to the scene, I received the phone call that Kolter had passed. Driving up to the scene, I was hoping with every ounce of my being that they were wrong. Sadly, they weren't. What was worse was that my husband had a severe concussion and every 5 minutes he would forget what happened. I will never be able to explain how the words "God is love" began to run through my head on the scene. I definitely wasn't feeling those words to be true.



In the moment I was feeling pain, sadness, anger, and confusion. I spent the rest of that day on my parents' couch crying. The next day I woke up hearing "God is love." The day after, I chose love, and from that moment on my life has never been the same. Fast forward 6 weeks later to February 14th. On that day my family and I delivered over 500 toys that were donated in honor of Kolter to a local children's hospital and the Children's Home of Lubbock. After delivering those toys, I went to pick up my youngest son from daycare. It was then that I learned on my worst day that Jesus was right beside me.

As I was buckling my son into the car, I stopped to look at his school work. On a heart that he had made were the words, "God is love" (1 John 4:16). Through all of this I never knew the words I was hearing were in the Bible. I re-read the note and just began to cry. Why do bad things happen? Why do some walk through bigger trials than others? If you are human and lived through a horrific event then you've



probably asked yourself this. One verse that has helped is Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths."

I didn't want Kolter's story to end there and I wanted to share with others that God is love and how he changed my life because of what happened. Through this desire, God led my family to start HopeAlivel1. We aim to show every child, regardless of their circumstances, that they are loved! HopeAlivel1 meets once a week at the Lubbock Children's Home to encourage creativity through decorating potted plants, enjoy a good meal together, and share with them the love of Jesus. These fun craft days let our volunteers get to know the kids as they create their art masterpieces. Kolter loved life and people with his whole heart. His spirit remains and together we want to help every person celebrate life. We want to let them know that they are never alone!



### **HOW TO ENGAGE / NEEDS - NEXT STEPS FORM**

Click the link below if you would like to learn more about any of these ministries or see how you can get involved in our For the City efforts.

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FOR THE CITY INTEREST FORM

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### VISION

Church, with 25 churches planted since 2008 in the Redeemer Network and two more church planters currently participating in Redeemer Lubbock's church planting residency. These churches are likewise planted with a missional church planting DNA, longing to see everyday disciples mobilized to do extraordinary things. Disciples are gathered into churches not solely for their own growth and encouragement, but also that they might be sent out on God's mission, reaching their families, neighbors, cities, and even the ends of the earth with the gospel.



The most important people in a church plant are not the planter and his family. They're the team around him. The people who pick up their lives, move to a city, get jobs, buy or rent houses, join organizations, and plant themselves in the city all for the purpose of helping to start a church. These are the ones.

For the past year, there has been a group of Redeemer members who have been exploring and training to do just that in Austin. How this group came about is honestly a mystery. It was not the result of an ad campaign or any sophisticated marketing initiative, nor was it the result of constant recruiting. You've never seen a booth set up anywhere at Redeemer for those interested in joining "The Austin Team." It didn't just happen randomly out of thin air, but it did happen organically and, in my view, because of divine intervention.

Jesus says, "I will build my church," (Mark 16:18) and he has certainly built this team.

I came to Redeemer in January of 2021. It was clear from the beginning that there was a culture that valued church planting. It was in the air. For those of you who wouldn't know any better, that culture is unfortunately not normal. I knew this was the right place to prepare to plant a church. I also knew that I was in good hands when it came to the training and expertise available to me in Dusty, the Redeemer staff, and the Redeemer Network training program. But I also knew there were previous church planting residents who had gone before me and that each of their times here had looked different. So in many ways, I felt a lot of freedom to experiment and try to carve out my own way of doing whatever church planting residency is. There were two main things I knew I needed to accomplish in my two years here: find a city and build a team.

When it came to building a team, my plans were to wait until year two. I figured I'd settle in, build relationships, and see what the Lord did. Other than that, there was no strategy for recruiting (let alone training!) a team.

Before we had even landed on a location that my wife and I felt the Lord leading us to, I was invited to preach at College Gathering about the value of church planting in the United States. God did something unexpected. After my sermon, in which I mentioned that we would eventually be looking to build a team, 27 college students came up to me interested in joining us. We didn't even know where we were going yet, but God was already working in the hearts of people here.

I preached that sermon only a few months into my time here, so I was still getting to know people. I really didn't know many of the students who came up to me that Tuesday night, I was just hoping they were the right people. Then we went to an end-of-year party for college ministry leaders and found that almost all of the students we'd met were there! I turned to my wife and whispered, "We got the leaders!" There was no process of discernment or interview on my part (don't worry, we have since installed such a process). God simply gave us people qualified to go.

Later that year, God did it again. As I had gotten to know Matt Chamness and his wife Erin, I knew that he would be a good fit for the staff team I was hoping to build. Remember, however, I wasn't planning on recruiting anyone until year two. Matt, and I think God, apparently had other plans. During a coffee meeting over something completely unrelated, Matt said, "Well you know if you'll have us, Erin and I want to go with you." Again, we didn't actually know where we were going yet. I still have my doubts on whether or not what Matt said he wanted to meet about was actually it. Nonetheless, God was showing me that he was going to build this team.



A week later, Ryan Perkins called me. He and his wife, Callie, had been talking about church planting for a while at that point and God was clearly working on them. Through a sermon at their church in Little Rock, Arkansas, God spoke to them and Ryan decided to call me. The first two staff members to join our team were not recruited by me. I didn't have to make some compelling pitch to them. They came to me because they felt God was calling them to this mission. Ryan and Callie are now in Lubbock, training alongside the rest of our team as we prepare for Austin together.

The last staff member we added was Samantha Dossett. There is no dramatic "she called me out of the blue" story with Sam, but it's no less aligned with Jesus' role in building this team. The first event I went to at Redeemer was the college ministry's DNA Day in January 2021. Sam was leading a training



for the students when I texted Brandon Gilbert (the College Director and Sam's boss), "Want to send Sam?" He thought I was joking and he showed the text to her. She thought I was joking too. And maybe I was. But I'm certain that God was working on me to see that Sam would be the glue that holds our team together. And as I write this now, I'm convinced she will be. Sam was the only one surprised when I asked her to join the Austin Team. Even her husband, Dakota, says he saw it coming. Even so, I was anxious about her answer. But, again, Jesus is the one building this team.

God has given us an unbelievable core team and staff team. And I don't believe he's done with either one of those teams. We add new potential core team members every month. The group now includes college students, young professionals, single folks, and married couples. It also now includes people currently living in Lubbock, Waco, Dallas, Houston, and Austin. Our staff team is frankly the best church planting staff I'm aware of (I may be biased).

God has been so good to us and we're asking God for even more. We're praying for some young families (we've got one so far, mine!) and even some empty nesters. Right now we have a thirty-year-old guy leading a bunch of twenty-somethings, we need some wisdom. Jesus really is building this team and we believe he has big plans for building his church in Austin.

Our Core Team Cohort (those exploring the possibility of coming to Austin) now meets once a month to dream and pray about the kind of people God wants to make us into. If you're interested in attending one of these meetings or want more information about joining our team, please reach out to me. We'd love to explore alongside you whether or not God is calling you to join us in Austin.

# Redeemer Brady

Our church plant started 7 years ago and we were eager to care for people well and spread the Gospel in Brady. One of those people that we met early on was Howard. When we first met Howard, he was doing community service hours for the church. We tried to build a relationship with him but not much came of it, so we started to pray for him. Not long after this, we found out that Howard had been put in prison and would spend the next 5 years serving time. During these 5 years, the church did its best at writing to him and keeping in contact. During this whole time, Howard wasn't a believer but we continued to pray for him and keep in contact.

Fast forward to this summer when we were having the "Mission at Brady " which is something we do every year on the first two weekends of June. We pick 10-12 houses in our town that need to be worked on. The goal of Mission at Brady is to be the hands and feet of Jesus in our town by meeting practical needs. This year as we were getting ready to start, Howard showed up ready to work. Howard was a huge help and a great carpenter and he got to spend time with some of the men who go to our church. During the Mission at Brady, Howard attended our church for the very first time. We were all super excited about this and ready to get him connected and hopefully start following Jesus.

About a month later Howard got sick. At first, it didn't seem that big of a deal and maybe the doctor would just send him home. However, it turned out that Howard was having major medical issues and ended

up being life-flighted to San Antonio. He would end up having some major problems and they considered pulling the plug because there wasn't any hope from the doctors that he would live. During this time our elders, staff, and members were praying for Howard and asking God to save him. During our VBS this summer Paden our Pastor spoke to our kids about the power of prayer and how we can approach the throne of grace with confidence, asking God to heal Howard. God answered our prayers and healed Howard.

This past Sunday we got to share this whole story and show a video of Paden speaking to our kids at VBS and how God answered our prayers. Through all of these events, Howard chose to follow Jesus and now wants to be baptized! We thank God for his faithfulness and grace and for allowing us to be a part of this story!



### **HOW TO ENGAGE / NEEDS - NEXT STEPS FORM**

Redeemer's vision to be a church that plants churches has seen over 20 churches planted in the last decade.

If you would like to know more about our vision to see more Gospel-centered churches planted click the link below and fill out the form.

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CHURCH PLANTING INTEREST FORM



### VISION

Redeemer's global sending efforts have always been missional, meaning that we are first and foremost raising up disciples to take the gospel to the least reached peoples of the earth. While meeting physical needs is important, we strive to see peoples' greatest needs met, particularly their eternal destiny changed by being reconciled to God by faith in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus, we seek to be missional, a people on God's mission of drawing people to worship him from every tribe, tongue, and nation, all for his glory.



## Power of Prayer

### A Goer's Story

I am a Goer sent out from Redeemer and my family and I serve in Southeast Asia. A while ago, our house on the field was having some water issues and it was causing a lot of problems with mold. We had been working on this issue for months and months trying to get it fixed but we could not get it all. The mold started to become more prevalent, and we noticed it was causing health issues with my wife. She couldn't even walk up the stairs due to the black mold that was growing on the walls.

We started looking around to figure out what our options were, but as is a tradition in this part of the world, houses are usually rented for a minimum of two years and we were only 11 months into our contract. So, looking for a new house would mean that we would lose 13 months' worth of rent. We looked into doing some massive renovations on the house to try and stop the water leaks from the roof, but couldn't figure out an economical way to do it.

So, we started praying about it. I really didn't even know what we were praying for because there were so many different options. I finally just told my wife, "Look, I don't even know what I'm feeling right now, so you go pray about it and we'll see what Jesus tells you." She went off later that afternoon and prayed, and when we came back together that evening, she said, "Well, we're supposed to wait." And I was like, "Well, what does that mean? Wait to get the house fixed or wait to look for a house?" She told me she had no idea, but that she just knew we were supposed to wait.

So, we were waiting. Two days later I was going through my messages and saw a text from our Advocacy Team (A-Team) leader saying, "Call me when you can; I've got some news." Our A-Team knew we had all of the mold issues in the house, but they did not know that we had been praying about what to do next. They just knew that moving was going to be very expensive for us and that it wasn't something that we wanted to do flippantly because of the cost.

What we did not know was that our A-Team had been putting prayer requests out to Redeemer Gospel Communities and asking that more people would be praying for us. We were talking to them one night on the phone and they told us that at one of the GC meetings, someone walked up to them and said "Hey, I get paid on Tuesday and I want to help them get out of that house. What does a year's worth of rent cost for them?"

When our A-Team leaders told us about their generosity, we just broke down and started crying. It was so evident that the Father had told us to wait. We had no idea what the time frame for that was, but we were just supposed to wait. We did it, even though it was doing nothing at all. God came through and showed up in a way that we didn't even know was possible. We had no idea that someone was going to step forward and provide the money for us to get out of that house and find a new house. Yet we are incredibly grateful that God both provided guidance and provision for us through prayer, both our own prayer and that of our A-Team.



Disciple-Making Teams (DMTs) are 10-week groups of 6-12 people that come together to encourage one another to abide in Christ while being filled with vision and being equipped with practical tools to make disciples both here and among the unreached.

These are not just another small group, they are teams that covenant together to seek the lost and make disciples. The focus is not just on learning, it is rather on building habits that result in learning that lasts long beyond the 10 weeks.

These are some of the ways we've seen God move through the groups that just ended in April:



1,707 SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS
1,406 PEOPLE PRAYED FOR BY DMT PARTICIPANTS
683 PEOPLE WHO HEARD THE GOSPEL
PEOPLE WHO STARTED READING THE BIBLE
PEOPLE WHO PROFESSED FAITH

# Teghlight

In the fall of 2017, I was beginning my junior year of college. I went to College Gathering, like I did every month, but this time was different. The night concluded with a video about China and their need for the Gospel. I remember sitting there and feeling the weight of it.

I went home and journaled a prayer, "Lord, if this means something, you're going to have to show me, because I don't know what to do with this information and feeling." Up until that point, I had never thought about crosscultural ministry. If I heard about a missionary, I assumed they were some

kind of elite Christian, if that were possible. I thought surely that wasn't me, so I asked God to give me clarity about what I was feeling. Two weeks later, my friend and accountability partner told me she signed up to go on an eight week trip (CP8) to China the following summer. I said, "You won't believe this, but I've been praying about what God is doing in China. Can I come?"

Leading up to the trip, God began to teach me about His heart for the nations – in Scripture, through community, and with other books and resources.

I tried to fathom how I had never heard this before. I knew though that I couldn't unsee it. A mobilization coach at Redeemer took me under her wing, teaching me about unreached people groups and showing me how to pray for the nations and share my faith in the community. It felt meaningful and fun and I was ready to practice those rhythms in China.

In China, we partnered with a long-term team who were focused on reaching minority college students with the gospel. My teammates and I met some young women who expressed an interest in reading the bible, explaining that prior to meeting us they had no way to read it. We invited them to do a discovery Bible study with us and they cried as they read about how and why they were created. It blew me away, witnessing first-hand someone who wanted to know Jesus, but had no way to learn about Him. I remember thinking, "Nothing feels as important as this."

Over the course of the summer, I wrestled with what it would mean to give up the life I had imagined to pursue this full-time. "Should I still pursue a journalism internship? Will my friends think I'm crazy? Is the church going

to support me?" As I brought these questions to the Lord, my husband was having a similar experience. He was on the trip too, though we were just beginning to date at the time. He recalls sitting on the balcony of our hostel, overlooking the city and journaling, "I feel like God built me for this."

Some people on our team were experiencing culture shock and dealing with interpersonal conflict, but Pedro felt like he was thriving. In that moment, he surrendered to the conviction God was putting on his heart. That summer was super transformative for both of us! We came back and were immediately guided into rhythms that would help us discern the call to cross-cultural ministry. That fall, we took Perspectives (now Mission of God) and in the spring joined a Disciple Making Team. Both of those experiences further affirmed our convictions, so we stepped into a Launch Community in the fall of 2019.

Through Launch Community, we felt affirmed in our conviction to move overseas, but our community advised us to wait until we had been married for a couple of years. Pedro stepped into a role as a Mobilizer on Redeemer's Mobilization Team and I took a job as a multimedia specialist. For two more years, we continued to live in community that simulated life overseas. Eventually, an opportunity was presented to us to move abroad!

Pedro's mentor shared with him that his family would be moving to Southeast Asia to support the 100 UPG Cooperative and care for Redeemer Goers worldwide. He later invited us to join his family in establishing a team in the region. We were thrilled by the offer, as East/Southeast Asia was a region we



prayed we would be sent back to. Through more prayer and affirmation from our community, we took steps toward this exciting opportunity and God has been faithful to provide in every way up until this point.

We are now in a season of full-time support raising and we hope to move to our new home in September. We are so thankful for Redeemer and the Mobilization Team and all of the processes in place that have helped us feel empowered and enabled to walk in the calling God has placed on our lives.



### **HOW TO ENGAGE / NEEDS - NEXT STEPS FORM**

Redeemer seeks to be a missional family of believers who serve the nations, whether that be by sending well or going. If you are wanting to learn about different ways to serve the nations, click the link below, fill out the form that it takes you to, and we will be glad to help connect you to different opportunities in the Send ministry.

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**GLOBAL INTEREST FORM** 

