

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

SEPTEMBER 1996

REDEEMER AND THE GOSPEL

BY TIM KELLER

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What convictions make Redeemer distinctively what it is? This is the first in a series of short articles on what some would call the "Core Values" and what others would call the "Theological Vision" of Redeemer. The most foundational of all these convictions is the centrality of the gospel.

The Christian gospel is the secret of the universe, the meaning of life (Eph.3:7-10), the solution to every problem, the power of God (Rom.1:16). It is so endlessly wondrous that even the angels long tirelessly to look into it and meditate on it (I Pet.1:12). It is not simply a means for entering the kingdom, but it is also the way to all growth (Col. 1:6), the dynamic for all Christian obedience (II Cor.9:13), and the source of all "readiness" and spiri-

tual strength, joy, ability (Eph.6:15). These tremendous results only happen as we more and more profoundly believe and appropriate the gospel.

What is the gospel? "God made [Christ], who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (II Cor.5:21). The gospel says that we are so sinful, lost, and helpless, that only the life and death of the Son of God can save us. But it also says that those who believe in his life and death are now "holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (Col.1:22-23).

The gospel is therefore a "third way," neither religion or irreligion, neither moralism nor hedonism. The hedonist says, "I decide what is right or wrong for me." The moralist says, "I am a good person because I try so hard to be good." But both the hedo-

nist and the moralist are avoiding Jesus as Savior (though they may or may not revere him as example and even pray to him as Divine Helper). Both are serving as their own Savior. As a result, they actually hate God's moral law. (Yes, often the most religious and strict people do not find God's law and word to be beautiful, but burdensome and intimidating. That's why they always struggle with guilt and pride and make people around them feel condemned.) Jesus actually said that religiousness is more alien to the reception of the gospel than irreligious licentiousness (Matt.21:31).

This understanding of the gospel affects literally everything at Redeemer. It determines the way we motivate people (with the gospel, not guilt), it determines the way we seek solutions to personal problems (with the gospel, not moralistic or humanistic psychology), it determines the way we worship (by meeting God through Christ, not just educating or evangelizing). It, of course, determines the shape of every sermon.

Over the next six months, we will look at the outworking of the gospel in each area of our church's life and ministry.

HOME FELLOWSHIP GROUP SIGN-UP

SUNDAY, SEPT. 22.

*If You're Not in a Group,
You're Not in the Church*

Once you've been around Redeemer for a little while, you'll recognize that every year about this time we begin to sound like a broken record, repeating the slogan used in the headline: "If you're not in a group, you're not in the church." What this means is that for a person to enjoy the support, fellowship, accountability and ministry to and from others, he or she must become a member of a small group fellowship, because these benefits simply cannot be ex-

perienced in a large group setting.

Literally, of course, it's possible to come to Sunday services without ever becoming a member of a small group, but in that case you will remain an anonymous face in the crowd for a very long time. Though we will try our best to meet your needs for biblical instruction and oversight, in a large church people simply do not "show up on the radar" very fast unless they are members of a group. A problem with relationships, work or spiritual growth will be noticed by your Home Fellowship Group leader long before it will ever become apparent

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GROUP SIGN-UP

to the stranger who sits next to you on Sunday. Your developing gifts for ministry will likewise have scope for growth and appreciation in a Home Fellowship Group.

If you need to convince yourself further that your future lies with an HFG, get a concordance of the Bible (this is really fun on computer, but can be done without) and look up all the passages in the New Testament that have the words "one another" or "each other." See how many commands and exhortations we are give to love, help, serve, admonish, encourage, etc. one another, and then ask yourself—Can I obey these verses better in a large group setting, or a small group setting? Then turn out to sign-up for one of the many, many group fellowships that are ready to welcome you on September 22, in the East Lounge, after each service.

MUSICIANS DINNER

Anyone involved in any way with Redeemer's music program is invited to a fall kick-off Fellowship Dinner on Monday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m., to be held at the Church of the Advent Hope, 111 E. 87th Street, between Lexington and Park. A buffet dinner and drinks will be provided. There will be a brief presentation of new opportunities in the music ministry and a chance for you to meet the leaders of each ensemble, but the primary purpose of this evening is fellowship.

If you are a professional opera singer, a pop singer, an instrumentalist, a member of the Choir, Motet Singers, Men's *a cappella*, a songwriter, etc.—come and enjoy a great evening. To help us with planning, please make a reservation by calling the music office, 808-4460, ext. 25. There is no charge for this event.

FALL RETREATS

MEN'S RETREAT OCTOBER 11-13 IN POCONOS

The main Men's Retreat this fall will be held at the Mt. Airy Lodge in the Poconos. Tim Keller will be speaking to men from Redeemer and from four Philadelphia-area churches: the New Life Churches in Ft. Washington, Glenside and Philadelphia, and Peace Valley Church. These are churches that Tim worshiped at and worked in during his time in Philadelphia, and who wanted to plan a joint retreat that would involve the men in all the churches. Tim will speak on how to live with integrity as a Christian in a secular world.

The cost of the retreat will be either \$127 per person for two nights in a double room; or \$110 for two nights in a room for four (roll-a-ways will guarantee that each man has his own bed.) The price covers all meals, lodging and the use of all facilities, including an Olympic-size, heated swimming pool, private lake with both fishing and boating, bocce ball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, game room and health club. For an extra fee, golf is available.

For further information, men should pick up a registration form at the desk in Hunter following the services. Registration is limited and we would like to have the bulk of the men attending registered by September 10. So hurry!

WOMEN'S ONE DAY

IN-TOWN "REFRESHER" SEPT 28

Saturday, September 28, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Williams Club, 24 E. 39th Street (at Madison) will be the site of the women's one day "in-town retreat" entitled "Are You Ready To Go To Work?" The topic will cover weariness in well-

doing, motivation burn-out, the entitlement trap, and the need for courage in serving God, all from the parables of Jesus.

The speaker will be Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, a long-time friend and professional colleague of Tim and Kathy Keller since their seminary days. Ms. Calhoun has had a broad and varied experience of both work and ministry: she was the famous missionary Ada Lum's traveling companion in southeast Asia, leading retreats and Bible studies in Viet Nam under fire and carrying only her wok and her pillow as luggage.

She was on Inter-Varsity Staff for many years, assigned to colleges in Boston and Maine. Along with her husband, Doug and later her children Nathaniel and Annaliese, Adele served as a missionary in both Trinidad and South Africa, and the family still makes frequent trips to teach in the Czech Republic. For the past 10 years Adele has served as the only female pastoral-level staff for historic Park Street Church in Boston, leaving this past winter when the family moved to Chicago. She is renowned as a speaker and Bible teacher and revered by her friends as a writer, thinker, speaker and deeply spiritual woman whose clear insights into Scripture are both rewarding and inspiring.

The cost for the retreat will be a mere \$20 (if you bring along your own bag lunch), or \$25 (to be provided with a lunch of chicken salad, cold vegetables, fruit and cookies.) Please try to make your own child care arrangements, but if you need help, you may call Priscilla Hartokolis at 476-7329 and she will attempt to find a youth group member for you to hire.

You may pick up a registration brochure at the retreat table in the East Lounge. Space is limited to 120, so don't delay!!

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

Shirley Dryden • Yvonne Dodd

Dave Jacobs

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OFFICE • 271 MADISON AVENUE • SUITE 1600 • NEW YORK, NEW YORK • 10016
212-808-4460 (phone) 212-808-4465 (fax)

Redeemer meets Sunday at
HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM • EAST 69TH BETWEEN PARK AND LEXINGTON
services at 10:30 • 6:00

REDEEMER NEEDS C.P.R.

BY JIM OM

C.P.R. stands for Corporate Prayer Renewal. Starting this fall you will notice our monthly prayer meetings have not just a new name, but also a new look. We have restructured our monthly meetings into a time of praise, worship, testimonies, communion and prayer. We believe that God will renew us as individuals and as a corporate body as we seek his face; therefore, our theme for this year is Spiritual Renewal.

During these meetings the elders of the church will be available to lay their hands on and anoint with oil

those with special prayer needs, whether they be physical, spiritual or emotional. No, we're not "going Charismatic," but we do hope to become more biblical in our prayer life. We want to ask God for his work of healing and restoration to be poured out on his people

Our first C.P.R. will be September 30 at 7:00 p.m. at the Church of the Advent Hope. Tim Keller will lead us in the Lord's Supper this month. C.P.R. is open to all and we encourage you to bring your friends who have a heart for prayer and renewal or who have specific prayer needs.

JOIN THE WORSHIP ARTS PROGRAM

The fall is an excellent time to become involved with Redeemer's Worship Arts Ministry. For singers, there is the Redeemer Choir, the Motet Singers and the Men's *capella* singers.

A new non-auditioned Gospel Choir will begin in January of 1997. We also need both classical and contemporary soloists and worship song leaders for services, Open Forums and prayer meetings.

For instrumentalists, there are a number of regularly performing ensembles, including a string quartet, a brass quintet, woodwind quintet, jazz band, and a newly-forming church orchestra. Pianists are also needed to accompany choral ensembles, rehearsals and services.

Most of these groups require an audition. Auditions are low-key and casual (you don't have to be a professional!), but they help us to find the best place for you to serve the church with your talents. The next scheduled auditions will be held on September 14-16. To schedule a time, please call Tom Jennings in the music office, 808-4460 ext. 25.

Worship Arts at Redeemer are not limited to music. Visual artists are invited to attend meetings and exhibitions of the International Arts Movement (IAM). For information, contact Ryan Cooley at 718-4548-1150. To learn more about Redeemer's Dance Ministry, call Renee Lancaster at 864-4143.

A new ministry for actors, writers, costume designers, stage managers and any other theater personnel has just begun this summer. For more information about the Drama Ministry, call Kristi Wedemeyer at 808-4460, ext. 13.

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F.Y.I.

September 8—School of Discipleship Classes Resume Following Services

On Sunday, September 8, our School of Discipleship classes will resume after taking the summer off. School of Discipleship classes are comprised of both continuing classes (Q & A, Credibility of Christianity, Overview of Christian Theology, and Introduction to Redeemer), along with a series of electives and core curriculum offerings. Check the front inside page of the bulletin each week to see the names and locations of these classes.

Monday night, September 9—First MCM of the year

BE THERE or be square! Anyone who does anything in the church besides just keeping a seat warm on Sunday mornings should be at the Ministry Community Meetings that take place the first Monday of each month at Church of the Advent Hope, 111 E. 87th Street. If you are unsure if you belong there, check with whomever supervises you. ALL Home Fellowship Group leaders and apprentices should definitely come for the fellowship, worship, training, trouble-shooting, and support.

September 14—Home Fellowship Group Training

On Saturday, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the church office (271 Madison, 16th floor) Jeff White will conduct Home Fellowship Group Leader Training. If you are ready to lead a small group, or just want to know what's involved, call the church office 808-4460, ext. 20 and register. There is no charge and no obligation on your part (to agree to be a small group leader) or on our part (to give you a small group to lead), but you must be registered to attend (for building security reasons.)

September 22—Redeemer's Seventh Anniversary Celebrated

Sunday, September 22 will mark seven years since we began holding morning worship services. To celebrate the occasion we will hold a congregational breakfast from 9:15 until 10:15 a.m. before the morning worship service. As we did last year, this will be held in the 3rd Floor Cafeteria of the West Building of Hunter College. In response to popular demand, Tim Keller will recall "the good old days" and share his vision for the future. Tickets for the breakfast are \$7.00 per person for adults, \$3.50 for children and will be on sale in the lobby after services. The menu will include fruit, yogurt, cereal, pastries, juice and a hot buffet.

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TIME TO BECOME INVOLVED!”

OPEN FORUMS

Four times a year in place of Sunday evening service, Redeemer presents special outreach events called Open Forums, in which the claims of the Christian faith are examined through artistic presentations, lectures, and question-and-answer sessions. In the past we have explored topics such as “*What is Freedom?*,” “*Sex and the End of Loneliness*,” and “*Who is Jesus?*”

This fall we will hold two more Open Forums. On September 29, Redeemer regulars from Broadway shows such as *Showboat*, *Cats*, *the King and I*, and *Ain't Misbehavin'* will join the 6:30 Band in an evening of musical theater songs that deal with self-esteem issues (and how not to solve them!) Tim Keller will present a lecture on the Christian view of this topic and, as always, those in attendance will have an opportunity to participate in an open-microphone question-and-answer session following the talk.

Opera returns to Sunday evenings for our second Open Forum, held October 27, with a topic that affects everyone—eventually....death. Redeemerites from the Metropolitan Opera and the New York City Opera will perform arias and ensembles and Dr. Keller will lecture.

These evenings are ideal times for you to invite friends, family members, or co-workers who are skeptical, or even hostile to the Christian faith.