

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

OCTOBER 1996

This is the second of seven short articles on the core elements of Redeemer's basic vision. Since Redeemer's beginning one of the most formative influences on our identity has been our particular attitude toward the city.

JOY IN THE CITY

BY TIM KELLER

"...as the city goes, so goes a society."

First, we teach the importance of the city. It is where the seminal ideas, values, and spirit of our nation's culture is forged and from which they then spread. It is a microcosm of the world, where most of the world's races, classes, and cultures live in close proximity. So, as the city goes, so goes a society. Paul's mission to the Roman world focused on major cities and ignored the countryside. In a recent book, James Boice says that instead of just mourning loudly over social decay, tens of thousands of Christians should move back into major cities. "Not every Christian needs to live in our cities, but far more should live in them than do now. They should live in them as their mission field of choice." (*Two Cities; Two Loves*, p.166)

Second, we teach love for the city. Put negatively, we urge our people to avoid three improper attitudes. We should not despise the city for its

great sin and brokenness, as if the sin we see there is not from our own hearts. Nor should we glorify and emulate the city uncritically for its human excellence, forgetting that we make idols out of our gifts. Nor should we simply use the city for its opportunities for advancement, but remain blind to its opportunities for service. Rather we should love the city, "blessing" the city (*Prov.11:11*), i.e. rejoicing in its assets and working on its troubles.

Third, we seek the peace of the city. We serve the city by connecting people to God through Christ. But the goal of city ministry is more than the accumulation of individual conversions. Philip's urban ministry resulted in "great joy in that city." God tells his people in a pagan city, Babylon, to "Build houses and settle down...seek the peace of the city...Pray to the Lord for it, for it prospers, you prosper." (*Jeremiah 29:5-7*) We must live so as to bring the city *shalom*—total well-being, spiritu-

ally, socially, materially. We want to have an impact on the whole way the city lives. We want joy in the city.

Fourth, we teach respect for the city. Christians who are saved by grace should lose any sense of superiority or savior-complex. We need the city to challenge our cultural assumptions wrongly elevated to the same status as Biblical truth and to supplement our gifts through the insights and gifts from other types of people. We need to learn as much about faith and grace from those we serve as they from us.

Proverbs 11:10 - "When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices... Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted." What kind of church would Redeemer have to be for the whole city to rejoice that we are here? That guiding question is one of the core values which drives Redeemer's entire ministry vision. ☉

STEWARDSHIP: TRUSTING GOD

BY ANDREW FIELD

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

As the author of Hebrews reminds us, trusting God with our finances is part of the larger issue of trusting God with our whole lives. If we truly believe that our Heavenly Father is with us, watching over us with intense per-

sonal concern, then we can rightly relax from an over-absorption with our money.

Anything less shows that we fear the consequences of placing our money in God's hands: "What if he fails me? What if he looks away and I'm ruined? What if I miss a great opportunity?" This kind of self-talk for-

gets the astonishing grace of the gospel. And once the gospel is forgotten, then fear and insecurity creep in.

Our standing before God, if we are in Christ, is a gift of unbelievable proportions. We are given what we cannot, could not, ever

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE:

- NEW DIVORCE MINISTRY
- GLOBAL TAPE MINISTRY
- INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS CONF.
- VOLUNTEER FAIR OCT 6

MORE...



(continued from page 1)

STEWARDSHIP

earn—right standing before the Father—because Christ pays our penalty of sin and transfers to us his perfect righteousness (2Cor 5:21). Since we are adopted into the heavenly family by grace alone, we can trust that we are kept in God’s family by grace alone.

The same God who loves us enough to sacrifice his Son on our behalf, loves us enough to shake us free from money’s grip on our life. As the writer to the Hebrews asks, why hold onto a meager impostor when the true security stands pouring himself into your life? Why fear the temporary things of this world when the eternal, solid rock of the Lord is for you?

Therefore, our contentment with our current economic standing (good or bad), is a way that we can acknowledge that God’s mark is on our life. Christians are able to treat money differently—it no longer has the power over us that it once had, it becomes merely the means to the end of glorifying God. As money stops becoming the measure of our worth, it also fades as the key factor in life decisions. This means that both rich and poor Christians hold their money loosely. Christians are shockingly generous. Why? It’s their family resemblance to the generosity of God.

As we talk later this month about ways for you to invest your money in God’s kingdom here in the city, won’t you consider what God is calling you to trust him with? Malachi 3:10: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”



DIVORCE MINISTRY BEGINS

BY TIM PETTIT

Cindy Owens knows firsthand the feelings of hopelessness and devastation that a divorce can unleash. In fact, it’s what eventually led her to begin Redeemer’s new ministry to divorced and separated people. “I started a group for divorced people in Jacksonville (Florida) after my divorce,” Cindy said. “It was a selfish reason—I knew I needed it. I never imagined it would be me doing a ministry to the divorced.”

Cindy will lead a Manhattan home fellowship group that will be geared specifically to people who are struggling with the pain of past divorce or are going through divorce proceedings. Her group will follow Redeemer’s vision of providing primary pastoral care and nurturing through weekly, small group meetings that include times of worship, prayer and Bible study.

Some of the early discussions will focus on how group members can deal with issues of anger, depression

and forgiveness. “In that group, people need to see that God is still in control of their situation,” Cindy said. “They need to know other people are experiencing those same hurts, have survived and have seen the blessing of God.”

Cindy moved to Manhattan six months ago to become general director of the American Lung Association of New York. After her divorce, she said, “I saw God at work in all of my situations. He was with me every step of the way. I never before had such a profound experience of the Lord’s presence.”

As a result, Cindy will encourage her group to look to the presence and power of Jesus Christ in their midst. “It’s not a matter of going through it (a divorce)—anyone can do that—but, rather, growing through it. And you do that by relying on Jesus and His strength.”

For more information about this new group, you can call Cindy at (212) 639-1987.

“CHANGING LIVES” COUNSELING SEMINAR OCTOBER 26

On Saturday, October 26, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at First Reformed Episcopal Church, 317 E. 50th Street (between 1st/2nd Aves) the Small Group and Care Ministries will jointly sponsor a seminar for anyone who leads, counsels, disciplines or cares for another person. (That’s everyone, they hope!)

David Powlison and Paul Tripp from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and the Christian Counseling and Educa-

tion Foundation (CCEF) will demonstrate how God’s word speaks in life-changing ways to relationships, problems, goals, and one’s view of God and self. You will be taught how to honestly address problems that you encounter in your relationships and ministry.

More information is available at the Information Table in the East Lounge at Hunter on Sundays, or you may call Rob Lamb at the Counseling Center at 370-0475. The cost of the seminar is \$30.

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

Shirley Dryden • Yvonne Dodd

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

GLOBAL TAPE MINISTRY

Did you know that Redeemer's sermons are heard all over the world? Pastors, missionaries, seminary students, seekers, and skeptics are among the over 250 individuals from 17 countries and 32 states who have subscriptions to Redeemer's ever-expanding tape ministry. What was once a one person ministry, operated faithfully by Jim Erwin, has grown beyond all expectation. This year alone over 25,000 tapes will be distributed, with all proceeds going back to the church.

Immediately following both services, tape volunteers in the East Lounge begin duplicating that day's message. In addition to the current sermon, sermons going back to the first summer of Redeemer's existence (1989) are available. If you were not around in the pre-Hunter days and would like to hear Tim's preaching on the Fruit of the Spirit or the Gospel of John or Jonah or...well, you get the picture...consider purchasing those series. Listen as you commute to work or exercise in the park. Was there a particular message that influenced you that you would like to pass along to a friend? For ac-

quaintances who are wary of attending a church or live too far away to attend Redeemer, the tapes are wonderful tools for evangelism, allowing you to introduce the gospel message in a non-threatening manner. If you are looking for a particular topic our volunteers would be happy to assist you.

One of the greatest rewards of the tape ministry is the reminder of the power of the gospel to transform lives. Testimonies come in from all over about how lives are being changed by hearing about Christ's righteousness freely given to us. Christians are experiencing a deeper understanding of what it means to know and love the Lord. Others are coming to know Christ for the first time. Anyone who attends Redeemer recognizes that we are truly blessed by the teaching of our pastors and their ability to present the gospel in a faithful, relevant, and challenging manner. Through Redeemer's tape ministry, we share our blessing with others. Stop by after the service, pick up a catalog, ask about gift subscriptions, and check out the selection.

Out-of-towners and others who cannot get downstairs on Sunday to order tapes may call (212) 853-9331.

CHURCH PLANTING UPDATE

VILLAGE CHURCH ORGANIZES
OCTOBER 20

The Village Church, led by the Rev. Scot Sherman, will hold their service of organization as a particular church on October 20, during their regular service at 11:00 a.m. Sunday morning at P.S. 41 at 6th Avenue and 11th Street. The congregation, which numbers around 200, will also install officers.

The Village Church's fund-raising campaign to buy the Circle in the Square Theater on Bleecker Street is over halfway to its goal of two million dollars. That figure will enable them to both acquire the building and renovate it for use as a worship center, a theater arts center for Christian theater productions, a concert space for Christian musicians, and an exhibition space for Christian artists. The possibility of a school is also being considered.

For information about the organization service or to contribute to the fundraising effort, call Scot Sherman at 691-5296.

"The Village Church's fund-raising campaign to buy the Circle in the Square Theater on Bleecker Street is over halfway to its goal..."

TRINITY CHURCH IN WESTCHESTER
PLANS ELECTIONS, ORGANIZATION

Trinity Presbyterian Church, meeting on Sundays at the School of the Holy Child, 2205 Westchester Avenue, in Rye, has reached the goal of being self-supporting and will soon become self-governing as well. Officer elections are planned for late November and an organization date will be set for either late January or early February.

The church has grown to over 150 regular adult attenders. Their most important goals for 1997 are to form a building search committee to find a permanent location for purchase in the town center, and thereby to increase their congregation's visibility.

For more information you may call the pastor, Craig Higgins, at (914) 967-6247.

Ministry Field Report

from Nance and Joseph Friedman in Troyes, France...

Joe and I have been missionaries in France for eight years and [missionaries] for over twenty years and this teaching has come as a cup of cold water in the desert. We are frequently the ones who are "giving," and, unfortunately a certain dryness and hardness of heart has crept into our attitudes. The Lord has used [the tapes] so powerfully to revive us and restore us...Our 15 year old daughter also loves the tapes. Being a Christian teen in a world where so few Christians exist is very difficult. Thank you! Our colleagues on the road who are normally ministering on Sundays are so grateful to be "fed" and we get frequent requests—"Please, could you send another tape?"

Joe and I have found that we are reaching out to the poor and moral failures more and more, and we see this as a direct result of the tape ministry. We just weren't interested in those people before, but now we are "seeing" them, talking to them, and even feeling love for them as never before. Thank you, Jesus.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP OCTOBER 4

Dr. John Perkins is a nationally known leader in the Christian Community Development Movement. He and the Rev. Wayne Gordon will be in New York to lead a one day seminar on Saturday, October 4, at the Bay Ridge Christian Center, 64th and 7th Avenue in Brooklyn. This is a great workshop for anyone volunteering with a mercy ministry, particularly those with an interest in rebuilding our neediest urban neighborhoods with attention to ALL the needs—for respect, economic partnership, community leadership, and spiritual support.

For questions about the CCDM or this seminar, contact Yvonne Dodd, 808-4460 x 22.

URBANA '96 REGISTRATION

The Urbana Missions Conference, held once every three years on the campus of the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, is one of the largest missions conferences in the world. Imagine over 17,000 students and lay men and women from all walks of life considering the claims of Christ on their life and the needs of the world from December 27-31. Everyone who has ever attended an Urbana considers it one of the high points of their Christian experience. Besides the overwhelming experience of singing, celebrating communion, and worshipping with 17,000 other believers, there is also a powerful and personal encounter with God Himself.

The application deadline is November 1, which means that you need to call Marlene Hensley (799-5749) sometime during the month of October for information about cost, transportation, etc. Some partial scholarships are available.

OCTOBER 27 PROMISES HUGE SUNDAY EVENTS

Each year the leadership of the church asks itself questions like: "How can we provide fellowship opportunities for new people to get acquainted?" "How can we make sure the congregation is better informed about the real nature of Redeemer's mission in the city?" "Is there a better way to explain how our vision and strategy affects our budget decisions?" And, of course, our highest core value—"How can we present the good news of God's free grace extended to sinners to hostile and/or bored New Yorkers?"

This year we may have come up with a Sunday which promises to address each one of those questions on the same day! Sunday, October 27 may turn out to be the most rip-roaring, action-packed Sunday of the year. The 10:30 a.m. service will take place at its regular time, but that's the end of business as usual for the day. School of Discipleship classes will be suspended and the congregation invited to return to the auditorium following a brief pause

from 11:45 until noon to allow everyone to stretch, get some coffee or buy a tape. From noon until 12:45 p.m. Tim Keller will present the over arching vision which guides Redeemer's ministry decision, with updates about our particular strategy for helping the needy, planting both English language and ethnic churches, supporting believers in their career commitments, etc.

Following the Vision Presentation, there will be a lunch served at 1:00 p.m. in the Third floor Cafeteria of Hunter's West Building for those desiring to stay in order to fellowship, make friends, and/or attend the congregational meeting at 2:00 p.m. To top it all off, the Opera Open Forum night will take the place of the evening service at 6:00 p.m., followed by an open-mike Question and Answer session for the whole congregation.

Be there or you won't know what everyone's talking about when they refer to "Tsunami Sunday!"

OPERA OPEN FORUM SUNDAY NIGHT OCTOBER 27

Last year's Open Forum devoted to opera was nearly a standing room only event. This year promises to be just as exciting. Principal singers from The Metropolitan Opera Company, The New York City Opera and the Glimmerglass Opera will perform arias and ensembles illustrating various attitudes towards "Death," the evening's theme. Mark Oswald and his wife, Belinda Oswald, who sang at last year's Opera Night will return, as well as XXXXX XXXXXXX and XXXX XXXXXXX. There will also be a men's chorus for the death scene of Don Giovanni.

In addition to the *Don Giovanni*, selections will be taken from *Billy Budd*, *Gianni Schicchi*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*. Tim Keller will lecture on the subject of death and how our culture both trivializes and denies it in order to cope with the trauma. As always, there will be an open mike Question and Answer session for the entire congregation following the talk.

There is no charge for this or any other of the Open Forums.

CITYVISION VOLUNTEER FAIR OCTOBER 6TH

Come downstairs to the East Lounge on Sunday, October 6th and see where God might lead you to get involved with the less fortunate in our city. The fall "City Vision"

Fair will have displays, brochures and ministry leaders that you can talk to about what ministry will fit your time schedule and your interests.

Because Redeemer is a church

with a strong concern for the needs of the city, we ask those in our congregation to consider their personal involvement with people in need. Most of us feel a tug at our conscience when a homeless person passes through our subway car, or when we read heart-wrenching stories in the newspaper regarding the plight of neglected children — but here is your opportunity to discover how you can actually DO something in the name of Christ.

You can talk with volunteers who've actually been involved for a while — who will let you know what to expect and when our volunteer teams meet. To make sure you have enough time to do this on Sunday the 6th — we'll delay the start of the School of Discipleship classes by 15 minutes after both the morning and evening service. That will mean that there will be 1/2 an hour between the end of the service and the beginning of class — just enough time to visit the East Lounge and pick up some brochures. So come on down and help us spread the City Vision!

"You can talk with volunteers who've actually been involved for a while — who will let you know what to expect..."

URBAN MINISTRY CONFERENCE

Several people from Redeemer Church will travel to Pittsburgh, PA on November 7th for the annual Christian Community Development Conference, and you're invited to come along. This conference is the annual gathering place for about 2,000 inner-city "missionaries" from around the country — committed to re-building our urban neighborhoods in the name of Christ.

Conference fees for the whole weekend are only \$60, including evening sessions and scores of workshops on youth ministry, housing, racial reconciliation, and ministry management.

The New York group hopes to travel together and obtain some group rates, so call Yvonne Dodd at 808-4460 x 22 if you're interested.

F.Y.I.

Moscow Short Term Missions Trip Still Open

Anyone still considering being a part of the short term missions trip to Moscow in December is urged to call Carol Ward immediately at 808-4460 extension 32. Participants will aid Peter Sautov, our church planter in Moscow.

BPO Training Held October 4 & 5

Friday night, October 4 and Saturday, October 5, Business & Professional Outreach will hold their tenth training cycle. Former BPO members are invited to attend and to recruit their friends to join them. Come learn how to share your faith with your friends. For more information, call (212) 477-5992.

Men Join with New Life Churches for Retreat October 11-13

Redeemer men will be attending a fall retreat in the Poconos with men from four other churches to hear Tim Keller speak on integrating your Christian commitment with the rest of your life. Nearly 500 men are expected from Redeemer and four churches in the Philadelphia area, known collectively as the New Life Churches because they were all planted from the original New Life Church founded by Dr. Jack Miller. Although registration is officially closed, if you just have to get to this retreat, try calling Tim Pettit at the Redeemer office to see if any spots remain.

Quarterly Pre-Marital Seminar Held October 19

Redeemer both recommends and requires (for those who want to be married by a Redeemer pastor) attendance at the Pre-Marital Seminar. This quarter the date is October 19, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. at the church office. There is a \$25 fee per couple for materials. You may register by calling the church office at 808-4460 and leaving a message with the receptionist at extension 10.

Redeemer's Monthly Prayer Service on October 28

Monday, October 28, at 7:00 p.m. at the Church of the Advent Hope, 111 E. 87th Street Redeemerites will gather for an evening of prayer, praise and worship. This prayer meeting is especially good if you feel that you don't know how to pray, or would like to learn more about praying. Prayer is the real energy that keeps not just God's kingdom but the whole world turning. In addition to kingdom-centered prayer, there will also be prayer for physical and spiritual healing. Got questions? Call Jim Om at the church office.

Congregational Meeting October 27 at 2:00 p.m.

Members of Redeemer are reminded of the annual fall meeting to be held Sunday afternoon, October 27 at 2:00 p.m. This meeting will be held in order to discuss and approve the 1997 budget. Friends of the congregation are welcome to attend, but may not vote.

INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS
CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 19, 20

Prozac, Prayer, and Perfectionism: The Search for Peace in a Troubled World is the title of the seminar which will kick off a weekend of missions events. Dr. Richard Winter of Covenant Theological Seminary will lead the seminar on Saturday, October 19, from 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. at the Norwegian Seaman's Church, 317 E. 51 Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues. Cost for the seminar is \$20 and includes both breakfast and lunch.

On Sunday, October 20, Hugh Wessel, Director of European Operations for Mission to the World (our denominational international missions arm) will speak at a luncheon to be held following the morning service in the East Lounge from 1:30-4:00 p.m. There will also be audio-visual presentations by last summer's short term missions teams. The cost for the luncheon will be \$7.50.

For more details about either of these events, call Carol Ward at 808-4460 extension 32.