

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

OCTOBER 1997

THE RE-INVENTION OF REDEEMER

BY TIM KELLER

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In a book I was reading recently I came across the testimony of a woman who attended Redeemer in its early days. Her name was changed to "Judith" to protect her privacy. She was quoted as saying, "Well...I made a big mistake on the job...I expected to get the ax for what I did. But do you know what John [my boss] did? He took the blame for my mistake...I was totally blown away...When John invited me to visit his church with him and his wife, I thought 'how can I say no?' So I went.

"It was a small Presbyterian church [like I said, this was in the EARLY days of Redeemer!]. And it was just so amazing! I mean, I thought church people would be like those street preachers out there--fanatics, preachy, telling you you're going to hell, stuff like that. But the people I met were normal--people like me. I saw an advertising exec I knew, a model I had met on an assignment from the network. Then I heard someone call my name and it was Karen, a friend of mine who's a lawyer with the ACLU. I said, 'what are you doing here?' And she said, 'I've been going to church here for two years. What are you doing here?'...I am still attending that church. I'm not saying I've become 'born again'--not yet anyway.

"I'm still skeptical...but lately, a lot of what I've been hearing at church and reading in the Bible is starting to make sense. I meet with a group that studies the

Bible. I've made a lot of new friends in that group. They know I'm still inquiring, that I'm not quite ready to make a commitment, yet they accept me right where I am."

"...(if) a young professional in a major urban center is the least likely person in all of the U.S. to be found in church, the question we have to ask is, why are they coming to Redeemer?"

Redeemer has seen many hundreds of skeptical "Judiths" come into its midst and stay. But when George Gallup tells us that a young professional in a major urban center is the least likely person in all of the U.S. to be found in church, the question we have to ask is, why are they coming to Redeemer?

"Making Room" for others.

The answer, I think, is because Redeemer "made room" for them, in three ways. When Judith showed up, first of all, there was physical room for her. The word "small" for her was a positive word. She did not see an overwhelming mass of humanity when she entered; she did not have to search and hike all over for a seat. Second, there was "contextual room" for her. She immediately (to her surprise) saw peo-

ple like herself. When she saw other people from the same neighborhood and life-world, her fears were allayed and her respect for the message of the church rose. Third, there was "leadership room" in the church. Her faith began developing in a great small group where she was learning challenging truth in a loving community. It takes a skillful lay minister-leader to maintain such an environment. Unless a church has one such leader for every 10-20 seekers and inquirers, there is essentially no room for Judith, no place for her to incubate.

Many new churches welcome spiritual outsiders into their community in their early days, but they find as time goes on that fewer and fewer "Judiths" are present. Why? Because inevitably a church makes choices in the direction of stability and permanence. This is not wrong, of course. But so often the options which increase stability also decrease "room" for outsiders.

For example, churches need to acquire buildings for stability and long term witness in a community. But owning a building also makes it much harder (especially in an urban center) to quickly make physical room for newcomers. When the auditorium and rooms fill up, it is far harder to

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE:

- PRE-MARITAL SEMINAR
- VOLUNTEER FAIR & TRAINING
- MAKING FRIENDS AT REDEEMER??
- MUSIC NEWS

MORE...



THE RE-INVENTION OF REDEEMER

sell or renovate than to just move.

A second example is that churches need to acquire traditions. The worship service and programs cannot change all the time. [Think of what would happen if we tried to sing a different doxology every Sunday morning!] But people and communities change faster than institutions, and therefore churches become brittle and lose creativity necessary to continually reach new people.

Next fall we will open a new, second worship site on Manhattan's West Side.

A last example is leadership. Competent leaders need to stay in their jobs and get experience, but as a church matures this means that it becomes harder and harder for newer and less experienced people to get into leadership positions.

Re-inventing Redeemer.

Our church has come to an important crossroads. We are eight years old, and are at the time (or past the time) that most churches acquire a building. Also, this year our morning service attendance will completely fill the Hunter College auditorium in which we meet. What will we do? Over the last twelve months, the leadership has decided to go in a direction that is very radical (in the best and fullest sense of the word).

Next fall we will NOT start a second morning service at Hunter College, nor will we move to or purchase a larger space. Rather, we will open a new, second worship site on Manhattan's West Side. Then, over the next three or four years, we will open at least a third and perhaps a fourth worship location around Central Park. The purpose is not to "spin off"

daughter churches from some central "mother church." Rather, Redeemer will become a single church that worships at several locations, with each location being "equally Redeemer" and sharing the same programs, music and the very same preaching. Why would we do something so radical?

First, it will address the need for "physical room" creatively, be-

"Redeemer was planted not just to become a large church, but to become a self-propagating movement of the gospel..."

cause in this way Redeemer can get smaller while still growing larger. New services at new locations will draw more people than the same services at one location. Thus overall, Redeemer will be making physical room for many more new people, yet each site will also provide a congregation which is smaller and more welcoming than the current form of Redeemer (or the future form, should we grow all in one place). This will diminish the sense of "distance" between people that a very large church can sometimes create.

Second, it will address the need for "contextual room" creatively, because this way Redeemer will move simultaneously closer to all kinds of new communities of people. The Upper East Side is more populated with families than is mid-town; the West Side is more multi-ethnic than is the East. Redeemer will be coming to the doorstep of more and different people than before. While maintaining our

unity, Redeemer will become much more diverse, because we will provide more opportunities for any particular person to enter at one of the sites and see "people like themselves".

Third, it will address the need for "leadership room" creatively, because this way Redeemer will triple (or quadruple) the number of openings for leadership and service. Since people grow only as they become involved, all kinds of people will grow in discipleship and become lay-ministers who would otherwise sit in their seats, unchallenged and stagnant.

Renewing our heart, our church and our city.

Perhaps the most important reason for going this route is because it better realizes our original vision. Redeemer was planted not just to become a large church, but to become a self-propagating movement of the gospel that has an impact on the very life of New York City. We have grown and we have planted two daughter churches, but this new plan will catapult us into a whole new dimension of multiplication and reproduction. This certainly will be "de-stabilizing." It will make things messy and hectic and risky and sometimes frustrating, but it will move us a quantum leap ahead in "making room" for new people (and for new peoples), for creativity, and especially for prayer.

If this new stage of our life is to be realized, we will have to renew ourselves in three ways. First, we will have to **Renew Our Hearts**. That will mean, among other things, a commitment to be loving neighbors and witnesses to those around us. More of us need

(continued on page 3)

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

HOPE FOR NEW YORK VOLUNTEER FAIR & TRAINING SEMINARS

Find out how to make New York a more compassionate city on Sunday, October 5th. Hope for New York will present its fall City Vision Fair -- this time with training workshops.

The City Vision Fair will continue as in previous years in the East Lounge during the break between worship and the School of Discipleship classes. All ministry leaders will have table displays with information flyers and sign-up sheets -- and they are eager to answer your questions about our volunteer teams. In particular, our holiday-based programs like Angel Tree and His Toy Store will recruit teams to organize these Christmas events. Most ministries have special events scheduled for this fall as well, so all potential volunteers have an opportunity to visit the ministry site before settling on one particular ministry.

Not only will you be able to talk with Redeemer team leaders about our mercy ministries, but we will provide training that after-

noon so you are better prepared as potential volunteers.

Here are some of the topics featured at Hope for New York's Volunteer Training Day:

- Understanding the poverty sub-culture
- Racial reconciliation
- Art Therapy
- Understanding women caught in the sex industry
- Volunteer team management skills
- Leading an inductive Bible studies
- How to tutor a child

The Training Workshops will take place AFTER the regularly scheduled School of Discipleship classes, from 1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m. (We'll provide snacks so you don't get too hungry!)

(continued from page 2)

THE RE-INVENTION OF REDEEMER

to be like Judith's boss, whose character earned her respect, and whose willingness to invite her to church changed her life.

Second, we will have to work to **Renew Our Church**. In order to do the work we are contemplating it will not be enough to have a few, (or even a lot) of dedicated individuals. All of Redeemer will need to catch fire and prepare to make the sacrifices in time, money, and comfort level that will be necessary to achieve this goal.

As part of this commitment to sacrificial, corporate renewal, we have decided to do in early 1998 the kind of capital fund campaign which churches usually mount to acquire a building. We will need

to raise a very large amount of money, just like a building campaign--but we will be raising it in order to multiply Redeemer, not to encapsulate it. We will need to raise funds for the new facilities and new staff that this new strategy will require, as well as for the planting of other churches throughout New York City. Third, we will have to renew our prayer life before God, seeking his glory and presence in our midst. If we are to **Renew Our City**, it will only be through dependence on God in prayer.

I hope you will let this vision excite you, then humble you, then change you. That's what it has been doing to me.

FIRST (ANNUAL) BOWL-A-THON

Hope for New York is sponsoring a fun event on Friday, October 17th that is well-suited for families, singles or entire small groups. The Bowl-a-Thon will be held at Bowl-Mor Lanes on 110 University Place, from 7:30 - 11:00 p.m.. Those interested in participating must find friends, co-workers or family members to support their participation in the bowling tournament, just as you might do in a walk-a-thon or charity run. In this way, your sponsors get a tax deduction, and you get to have the (somewhat unusual) fun of bowling with your friends from Redeemer. Food, prizes and a raffle will all be a part of the evening's entertainment. If you are interested in participating, call Marjorie Mitchell at 481-0458 or stop by the Bowl-a-Thon table downstairs in the East Lounge on Sundays to pick up your sponsorship sheets. No experience necessary -- we'll all just have a good time for a good cause.

PRE-MARITAL SEMINAR OCT. 11

The quarterly pre-marital seminar for engaged and/or dating couples will be held at the church office, 271 Madison Avenue, 16th floor, on Saturday, October 11, from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Jeff White leads the seminar, which is meant to help couples think through their relationship with a view to marriage. This seminar is required for all couples who wish to be married by a Redeemer pastor, as part of their pre-marital counseling. The cost is \$25 per couple, all of which goes for materials. Please register with the receptionist at 808-4460 x10 if you are planning to attend.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

Elizabeth Grace Field was born to Drew and Donna Field on July 29, 1997.

Rene Daniel White was born to Larry and Loretta White on August 8, 1997.

Jesse Jerome Martinez was born to Joy and Ernesto Martinez on August 19, 1997.

If you know of recent tiny additions to our Redeemer family, please contact Joy Martinez, Nursery Supervisor at (201) 568-43356 so that we may welcome them and congratulate their families.

NEW MEMBERS:

Jennifer Chen
Susan Detwiler
Clifford Duncan
Alison Duncan
Irene Fu*
Heide Holcomb
Lingmei Lin
Susan Keil
Sugene Kim*
Allen Lorenz
Hisaya Naito*
Adam Voysey
Hanh Tran Voysey
Kenn Yazzie
Jan Yu

*Received by
adult baptism



MUSIC NEWS

Opera Open Forum

Perhaps the most perplexing issue that we all encounter is the problem of forgiveness. How do we balance justice and mercy? How can we forgive those who have hurt us deeply? How can we deal with the guilt for our own wrongs?

Join us for a very special Open Forum, "Shame and Grace," on Sunday evening, October 26 at 6:00 p.m., in the Hunter College Auditorium, as we examine the claims of the Christian faith regarding forgiveness. The evening will begin with a program of arias and scenes from the operas *Le Nozze di Figaro*, *Susannah*, *Don Giovanni*, *The Crucible*, and *La Cenerentola*, featuring world-renowned artists (and Redeemer attendees) Mark and Belinda Oswald, Jim Courtney, Cassandra Riddle, Kyle and Laura Pfortmiller, and Laura Lamport-Porlier.

Following the opera scenes, Tim Keller will present a lecture and take questions from the audience. As always, the Open Forums are ideal opportunities for you to bring friends who are ambivalent (or even hostile) to Christianity.

Songwriters' Night

How do we write lyrics which reflect a Christian worldview? Join us on Tuesday, October 21, at 7:00 p.m., as we kick off this year's series of songwriter workshops with this topic. The evening will feature a lecture by Jeff White, Redeemer pastor and worship leader, followed by a time of questions and answers. All those interested in the craft of songwriting are invited to attend. For location and more information call Annie Mintun at 808-4460, ext 25.

Redeemer Gospel Choir

Do you enjoy singing but lack the time to commit to regular involvement in one of Redeemer's choral ensembles? If so, the Redeemer Gospel Choir is the place for you. Rehearsals will be held for three Sundays only, October 12, 19, and 26 in Room 408, from 9 to 10 a.m. The choir will lead in worship on the morning of November 2. Everyone is invited - no experience required. Jon Bigham will be conducting the choir. The Gospel Choir is a wonderful place to make new friends and contribute to worship at Redeemer. For more info, call Jon Bigham at 718-784-2718.

➤ BAPTISMS ➤

Infant Baptism:

Natalie Rose Werking, born on July 21, 1997, to parents Jon and Rhoda Werking.

MAKING FRIENDS AT REDEEMER—IS IT POSSIBLE?

BY TIM PETTIT

Tom Scanlon calls them “the canoe people,” and he counts them as new-found friends.

The “canoe people” were some of the 90 people who went on Redeemer’s Fourth of July outing to Vermont. “I went knowing only one person and left with many new friends,” Tom said. “The first Sunday back in church, my usher was one of my (Vermont) room-mates and for the first time I had a multitude of people I could speak to at coffee hour. That trip certainly made Redeemer seem like a much smaller congregation.”

Besides its emphasis on getting people connected through small home groups, Redeemer is offering more “mid-sized” group outings and retreats (30 to 150 people) to help people establish new relationships. Not surprisingly, those outings are similar in size to most American churches (in other words, a size that allows you to get to know most of the faces in the crowd.)

Jiten Pradhan said he faced the typical frustration of trying to get to know Redeemerites, so he went

on the Missions Retreat with 40 other people last spring and then on the Fourth of July trip. “It made all the difference to me,” he said. “Before, I didn’t know anyone outside of my home fellowship group. Now I can approach more people after the worship service and feel like I belong.”

“Going on that Vermont trip made Redeemer a living church for me,” said Joerg Klepper. “It broke through the huge-church feeling, you know, great church, great teaching and you leave without knowing one person.

“The answer is, join a small group and go on these kinds of trips,” Joerg said. “Suddenly, the church, to me, is lively.”

Diane Kelley discovered that Redeemer outings also benefited her new small group, as well as creating new relationships for her. One man who attended the Fourth of July trip now is coming to her group.

Why, after attending Redeemer for well over a year, did Diane try to find new friends through the Fourth of July trip? “It sounded like a lot of fun and a setting where you could meet people. My goal

was to come back with two or three good friends, and I did!”

“On these trips, people seem less harried, more natural, more willing to talk,” said David Williamson. “The trip was programmed, but it also gave people time to do what they wanted to, a good combination and it made people relaxed.”

The trip’s ripple effect continues for Tom Scanlon. “I was away last weekend and when I got home and got out of my cab, there they were: two canoe people, right there on my street.”

If you’re looking to meet your own group of “canoe people,” here are some upcoming Redeemer trips: Missions Conference Oct. 17-19 (contact: Carol Holt Ward 808-4460, x32); Women’s Retreat Oct. 24-26 (contact: Carole Kleinknecht 751-9822); and a New Year’s Getaway to Vermont, Dec. 31-Jan. 2 (contact: Tim Pettit 808-4460, x41).

Got an idea for a mid-sized outing or event, or would you simply like to help with one? Call Tim Pettit, director of church life, at x41 or Cindra Bishop, (212) 486-1222

...It sounded like a lot of fun and a setting where you could meet people.

FAMILY APPLE AND PUMPKIN PICKING OUTING OCT. 18

The Children’s Ministry is planning a family fall fun getaway at Bartin Orchards. This will be a great way to get to meet other families and to get to know your children’s Sunday ministry teachers. You will be able to enjoy a hay ride and come home with bushels of apples, gallons of cider and a pumpkin to carve or bake.

The cost is \$1.00 per car and \$8.00/10 lb. apples or \$14.00/25 lb. apples. We will be renting a van for those who need transportation. The cost to reserve a seat is \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children. You can sign up and/or reserve a seat on the van in the C level of Hunter College (where the children’s Sunday school classrooms are.) For more information call Marie Carnivale at 212-722-8637.

MESSAGE ALERT!! MESSAGE ALERT!!

You will be hearing a lot more about Biblical stewardship this year at Redeemer than you may have heard before. Why? Because we are launching a once-per-generation campaign to gather the financial resources needed to fill New York City with churches. This campaign will be in two stages. In November we will focus how a renewed heart leads to a sacrificial church. In March, we will focus on how a sacrificial church, in turn, can create a renewed city.

We’ve entitled this campaign “*Adventures in Grace*” to express our hope that God will stir our hearts to give in substantial, bold ways toward his kingdom. Look for more articles in future Redeemer Reports, a special series of Fellowship Group studies, a School of Discipleship class, and even personal Bible study materials to help us meditate on how God is calling each of us to participate.

PRESBYTERY INVITES OBSERVERS

The New York metropolitan area presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America will hold its first called meeting on Saturday, October 11, at Christ Methodist Church at 60th and Park Avenue in the downstairs hall. Dr. Edmund Clowney will lead a seminar entitled "Towards a Biblical Presbytery" on Saturday morning from 9:30 until 11:30 a.m. Dr. Clowney is a former president of Westminster Seminary and a seminal influence on the pastors and philosophy of Redeemer.

The business meeting of the presbytery (including the choice of an official name) will take place from 1:00-4:30 p.m., followed by a worship service at which Dr. Clowney will preach. Officers, members, and interested observers from other churches are invited to attend all or part of the activities for the day. No reservation is necessary.