

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

MARCH 1998

*Part 3 - Renewing the Culture*

## RENEWING THE CITY

BY TIM KELLER

*Redeemer has always had the aim of serving our city by making a difference in the very quality of its life*

This spring we are undertaking a very unusual major capital fund campaign. Instead of raising funds to buy or build a church facility, we are raising funds to move our vision from rhetoric to reality. Redeemer has always had the aim of serving our city by making a difference in the very quality of its life—spiritually, socially, and culturally, but until now we have been able to do very little to make that a reality.

We believe that we have identified the three basic strategies which Christians can undertake which will renew our city (or any city): 1) church renewal through planting hundreds of new congregations; 2) social renewal through “church-based

community development;” and 3) cultural renewal through “public discipleship.” In the past two issues of this newsletter, I have outlined the first two strategies. The following is a very brief treatment of the third of these strategies.

In Daniel 1, the king of Babylon chose the most promising young Jewish leaders and educated them as a way of assimilating them into the pagan culture, even giving them new names (1:7). On the one hand, Daniel and his friends did go through the academic training, becoming deeply conversant with that culture’s learning, arts, and sciences (1:4). At their examination, they outclassed all other students (1:20). Yet on the other hand, these young men refused the rich and luxurious food offered to them,

even though it was not strictly unlawful (1:12). This was their way of avoiding the reigning idolatries of the culture, with its crass worship of the sensual, its materialism and selfishness. In the same way, the converted Naaman was willing to serve his country, but made it clear he

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## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN MAIN EVENT SUNDAY, MARCH 22

The main event of the *Renewed Heart, Renewed Church, Renewed City* campaign will take place on Sunday, March 22, immediately following both worship services. Make plans now to attend, because we expect that this day will be the most memorable day in Redeemer’s history. It will be the largest celebration ever of what God has done and will be doing through our church community.

Spectacular music is planned, including guest musicians and soloists, plus an orchestra and choir in the morning. The worship services will be extended with a video and spoken presentation. We will collect the commitment cards for the capital drive and finish with the Lord’s Supper. A team of people are adding many other special touches will make this truly an event you won’t want to miss. You may want to arrive early that day to get a seat because we anticipate a “full house.”

## ROUND THE CLOCK PRAYER—MARCH 7-8

“*Renewed Hearts, Renewed Church, Renewed City*” is not just a jingly advertising slogan—we’re really serious about praying for revival in our own hearts, the church as a whole and, as a result, the city itself.

To that end, there will be 24 hour, round the clock prayer for the grace of God to come down into our hearts, our church and our city. The prayer marathon will begin on Saturday, March 7, at 8:00 a.m., and last until Sunday, March 8, at 8:00 a.m. There will be a finale of praise and prayer from 9:15 to 10:15 in Room 514B in Hunter College, just before the morning worship service.

To be a part of this vital and invigorating event, you may sign up for a 30 minute prayer slot. Come to the tables marked “Prayer” in either the East Lounge or the C Level on March 1 to sign up. For more information, you may call Anita Kobayashi h(201) 445-3713.

### INSIDE:

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- MINISTRY TO NEWLYWEDS
- DIVORCE RECOVERY SEMINAR
- WOMEN’S RETREAT

*MORE...*



## RENEWING THE CITY (continued from page 1)

would not worship his country (II Kings 5:17-19; cf. Daniel 3:1-18).

In these two incidents the Bible is showing us two opposite errors to avoid. On the one hand, believers can imbibe the world's spirit and cultural values even when technically keeping God's laws, (understood narrowly). For example, we can stay sexually pure and very active in church, yet we can be very materialistic or nationalistic or driven by comfort, appearance, and status. Likewise, we can subscribe to historic Christian theology, but in our practical work be shaped by intellectual trends of individualism, consumerism, and relativism. Believers in such a condition are living in a Christian **sub-culture**, and are still being unconsciously shaped by their society.

On the other hand, believers can "ghettoize" themselves, separating themselves from any identification with non-believers as common citizens in a community. They flee from places like cities and simply denounce the broader culture or work to gain mere political power. Believers in such a condition are living in a Christian **anti-culture**.

But in the examples of Daniel and Naaman and Esther, we see another model. When the Jews went into dispersion among the nations, God expressly forbade them to form either a sub-culture or an anti-culture. In Jeremiah 29:4-7, he pressed them to be fully engaged in the life of Babylon, and to seek its full prosperity with all their hearts as common citizens, yet to keep their unassimilated distinctiveness as a witness to the nations. Christians today are living in the world in the same mod-

el—the model of "dispersion" (James 1:1; I Peter 1:1). We are not to try to be a nation-state with our own separate country. Rather, we are to be a **counter-culture**, people living out a distinctive way of being human in every aspect of life, yet engaged with our surrounding society in loving service. Our business practices, race relations, family life, citizenship, art, literature, communication, scholarship, justice, and compassion should be both lived out in distinction from and yet in service to the people around us. We are not just a club, but a holy nation, a new way of being a people (I Peter 2:9-10).

Why is the Christian way of life distinctive? The Bible teaches us that every human being is related in the totality of his or her being to either the true God or to an idol. Therefore, every aspect of life is either done as service to God or to serve objects and principles and goals that we put in the place of God, which we expect to fulfill us and to give us control of our world and save us rather than God.

Christians will find that in every field of endeavor, there are idols which distort and destroy, whether they are money or hard work or racial identity or politics or prosperity or education or national pride or privacy or individual freedom or security. The gospel is the power which enables us to avoid the idolatries common to our field, without thinking of ourselves as superior morally (and thus smug or condemning) to those still enmeshed in those idolatries.

How can Christians live out the gospel in the way in which we live? How can we enrich and renew culture? We must associate

and "network" Christians within vocational fields to do three things. They must unite a) to develop each other **theologically**, so they can do their work distinctively (reflecting and informing one another), b) to develop each other **vocationally**, so they can do their work excellently (cooperating and training one another), and c) to develop each other **personally**, so they can do their work accountably (encouraging and challenging one another)

How will the new Multi-Site Model enhance this? Redeemer has excelled in ministries of worship, evangelism, and discipling. As we become a church that meets at several sites, those ministries will be given to new directors at each location, and the senior staff will be freed to greatly expand and strengthen the "Shared Ministries" that will unite all the locations and other daughter churches in our network. As we become a whole movement of churches, we will be able to network across the city with many hundreds of people in vocational fields such as music, visual arts, dance, fashion, writing, the media, theater/film, publishing, finance, education, law, government, social services, medicine, management, science/technology, and academia.

Christopher Lasch wrote, in *The Revolt of the Elites*, that the educated and professional classes were turning their backs on the cities and society, pursuing a vision of a privatized existence of freedom and comfort. It is our job to produce a generation of Christians who see their privileges as tools for service of their Lord, their city, and the common good.

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### REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

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The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.  
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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM • EAST 69TH BETWEEN PARK AND LEXINGTON  
services at 10:30 • 6:00

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## WOMEN'S ONE-DAY RETREAT MARCH 21

### March Registration for Church-Wide Retreat in May

You've been out of grade school awhile, but we think our churchwide retreat in May can still help you with the "three R's": refreshment, relationships and a renewed spirit.

The retreat is on May 1, 2 and 3, at Tamiment, an elegant resort in the Poconos that features a 90-acre lake, complete indoor athletic facilities, an indoor pool, sauna, hot tub and steam room, and an 18-hole golf course.

You must register in person in the East Lounge of Hunter College after the worship services on March 15, 22 or 29. Package rates are \$160 per person for double occupancy and \$135 per person for a triple. Because of Tamiment's payment policy, payment in full is required at registration.

Besides teaching and discussion sessions on "Discovering God's Will," there will be a great emphasis on group activities that will help you make friends, such as a Friday night reception, a Saturday night Coffee House and a midnight volleyball game. You'll also have time to get alone with God as you wander among Tamiment's 2,200 acres.

For more information, contact Tim Pettit, director of church life, at 808-4460, ext. 41.

### Ministry to Newlyweds

If you've been married three years or less and attend Redeemer worship services regularly, we need to hear from you!

Redeemer wants to provide more regular nurture and training for newlyweds, especially in the form of small group meetings and retreats, but because so many Redeemerites get married outside of New York City, we don't know who all of you are.

So, if you qualify as a newlywed, call Tim Pettit, director of church life, at 808-4460, ext. 41. And we'd love to hear any suggestions that you have that will help us to assist you in your adjustment to married life!

### Divorce Recovery Seminar March 28

Struggling with a separation from your spouse? Wondering if you'll ever be able to forgive the spouse who divorced you? What about remarriage— does the Bible say it's okay and do I even want to consider it?

We'll tackle those issues, plus many others, at a Divorce and Separation Seminar on Saturday, March 28, from 12:30 to 4 p.m. at the Norwegian Seamen's Church, 317 E. 52 St. A light lunch will be served. You can register for \$10 in the East Lounge of Hunter College on March 15 and 22.

For more information about the seminar or our Divorce and Separation Ministry, contact Rozsa Clason, 224-3847.

The Women In the Church of Redeemer Presbyterian Church and the Women's Ministry Team of the Metropolitan New York Presbytery invite you to a one day retreat reflecting on the topic: *Intimacy with God*. When we encounter the living God, we enter a realm where human assumptions about God and ourselves are overturned. Displaced as the center of our own universe, we nevertheless find our true home, our true selves and our true purpose as God reveals Himself to us.

The in-town retreat will take place Saturday, March 21, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at St. Bartholomew's Church Cafe, 50th and Park Avenue (one block from the 6 train at Lexington Ave. and 51 St.; or pay parking is available across the street at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.)

Our speaker will be Sue Lutz. Sue will be remembered by those who attended WIC Retreat in Spring of 1996. She is a favorite of Redeemer women, because she is the kind of speaker who draws one in from the moment she begins to talk. She has a way of making the listener feel that she has been exactly where you are right now. More importantly, she assures the listener that Jesus has been there too, and His word is applicable to us today.

Sue will be looking at intimacy with God through the life of Moses, whose hopes, struggles, and experiences have many parallels in modern life. Our hope is that as we see how God dealt with this one man, we will gain a deeper understanding of how God in Christ builds a relationship with us, and how we in turn may respond in faith to Him.

Sue Lutz is a widely respected editor and writer, and has her degree in counseling as well. She

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*When we encounter the living God, we enter a realm where human assumptions about God and ourselves are overturned...*

## CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE

### *New Members*

Joerg Klepper	Elaine Muller
Stephanie Klepper	J.B. Holderness
Doris O'Neill	Susan Post
Yolanda Tolentino	

### *Infant and Child Baptism*

Daniel John Sprufero, son of Sal & Rose Sprufero  
 Samuel Tucker Carnivale, son of James and Marie Carnivale  
 David James Carnivale, son of James and Marie Carnivale  
 Jessica Joy Davis, daughter of Brad and Imelda Davis  
 John David Deacon, son of David and Fran Deacon

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## WOMEN'S RETREAT

coordinates her church's women's Bible study and serves on the outreach and retreat committees and is a deaconess.

Cost for the day is \$35 which includes lunch and all materials

Need additional information?  
Call Hannah Kim at (212)966-6294. Look for the table in the Commons level to register.

### **Schedule**

8:45 - 9:15	Registration & Coffee
9:15 - 9:45	Worship
9:45 - 10:30	Session One
10:30 - 10:45	Break
10:45 - 11:45	Round Table Discussion
11:45 - 12:00	Q & A with Sue
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 1:45	Session Two
1:45 - 2:00	Break
2:00 - 3:00	Round Table Discussion
3:00 - 3:15	Q & A with Sue
3:15 - 4:00	Worship