

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

FEBRUARY 1999

DICK KAUFMANN TO LEAD SAN DIEGO CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT

BY TIM KELLER

Dick's impact on the church in the last five years cannot be exaggerated.

Two weeks ago I sent out a letter to members and regular attenders of Redeemer announcing that our Executive Pastor, Dick Kaufmann, will be leaving after five years of ministry here to plant a series of churches in center city San Diego.

Needless to say, this is a very sad and a very exciting event at the same moment. Dick's impact on the church in the last five years cannot be exaggerated. We were organizationally 'bottle-necked' when he arrived and he restructured us and permanently reshaped our leadership culture. As a result, the church is operating smoothly with an attendance nearly three times (gasp!) larger than when he came. He has also mentored a whole new generation of leaders and officers not only by virtue of his administrative skills but through his own example and character.

But though Dick has changed us so much, he has also been changed by his time at Redeemer. Here he got such a new and renewed love for city church planting that he found himself being moved by God to return to Southern California and begin a new ministry in downtown San Diego, where he and Liz have unique connections that are strategic for a new church in that center city.

We have here another example of the uncomfortable joy of urban ministry. In cities we have an impact on the most gifted and influential people in the world, who are constantly moving to other cities, where they then spread the influence of the gospel. Early Christianity spread like wild-fire because it was planted among highly mobile urbanites. Ex-Redeemer people have already been critical to numerous new

strategic churches in many in hard-to-reach mega-cities. So we are constantly saying good-bye to people who seed new gardens for God's work. But by our losses, others live. Isn't that the gospel?

Dick and Liz Kaufmann hope to be moving to their new location sometime in late May or early June. That will begin a new chapter in our relationship with them, for our Session recently passed a resolution "sending him with blessing" to his new work. We plan to be of ongoing support to this new work, while also receiving the benefit of Dick's advice and counsel as he regularly returns to help us think through the challenges ahead. This is a readjustment of—not by any means the end of—our partnership. Be sure, however, to express our thanks to him during the next three months.

GOSPEL NEIGHBORS

BY ANDREW FIELD

Most Christians tend to put people and places and ideas into precise mental compartments. These boxes are labeled "Christian/non-Christian," or "spiritual/secular," or "mature/immature," "really committed," "Bible believing," "Calvinist," or even "supralapsarianist (!)"

Do these labels mean something? Yes. Are they even helpful at times, so that we give an appropriate response in love toward others? Yes.

One trouble, however, with this labeling process is that all of these categories have, from a human perspective, rather ill-defined boundaries. I've never heard anyone precisely define the difference between a "really committed" Christian and just a "regular Christian."

What's worse than the arbitrary

nature of such compartments is that these categories create false barriers between people. Different camps stand behind different banners of exclusivity. All of these labels become, ultimately, "us" and "them." We are the right ones, the clever ones, the really committed ones, the

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GOSPEL NEIGHBORS

suffering ones, the misunderstood ones, the spiritually mature ones. And those people, well, they are just, you know . . . not good enough.

That attitude of exclusivity and division doesn't stand for one minute in the light of the gospel. Jesus tells us that God is "kind to the ungrateful and wicked" and that we are to be equally merciful (Luke 6:35). When we realize that the "ungrateful and wicked" people Jesus talks about include "us," not just "them," then we see how our graciousness to others is a direct result of our own comprehension of God's grace. He loved his people while they were still his enemies and he promises to love them and make them like his Son, even when they stumble and fail. The free grace of the gospel tells us how incapable we are to earn our acceptance before God. Whenever Christians meet the "them" of the world they meet them as justified sinners.

Our neighbors may or may not be Christians, or they may be Christians with a confused theology. But they are humans just like us. Which means that by God's generous common grace they may be more compassionate, smarter, more fair, more zealous, even plain better than we are. God's kindness to the wicked leads them to repentance (Romans 2:4) and it displays his glory to the whole world (Romans 1:20). His kindness is shown by his people loving their enemies, or in showing hospitality to strangers, or by speaking the truth in love rather than winning debates, or by acting graciously toward people who disagree with them.

A mark of confidence in the power of the Gospel is an ability to be good neighbors. As Christians move out into the world, whether it is in the workplace, or neighbor-

hood, or networks of friends, we reflect the grace shown to us. In so doing we embody the truth that we preach. Deeds of love and mercy, done in the name of Christ, speak loudly about his glory.

Our church community has many opportunities to live this out. We live in a dense urban environment and we constantly move out into the worlds of a wide variety of people and wide range of beliefs. Nearly everyone we encounter in this city has a point of view that is different - and New Yorkers aren't afraid to tell you their point of view! Taxi drivers, waitresses, stock brokers, politicians, clients, block captains and lawyers are eager to tell people what to think and how to think it. Christians can join in the ideological shoving match or be noticeably different: committed to both truth and grace, firm convictions and deep humility.

At Redeemer, we attempt to treat people, from Buddhists to Baptists, pagans to Presbyterians, with the same level of respect. For example, the facilities that we've rented are owned by a remarkably diverse collection of faiths: we began renting in a Seventh Day Adventist church, expanded to a Unitarian building, are soon to be in a Christian Science facility, and will continue to enjoy our space in the secular humanist Hunter College. Every one of them differs with us (and each other!) about many aspects of Christian truth. Yet by remembering our call to be good neighbors because of the gospel, we've had excellent relationships with all of them. We can serve them as fellow citizens. We can make their lives better. We can even cooperate on certain projects.

Our respect for others allows us

to learn from everyone and opens doors of witness to Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. In this manner we follow Paul's example, who in Acts 17 stood at the pagan Areopagus, complemented the Athenians on their religious fervor, and then added: "Now what you worship as something unknown, I am going to proclaim to you."

OPEN FORUM

WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD LOSE THEIR RELIGION....

Our series of Open Forum programs continues on Sunday, February 21, at 6:00 PM at Hunter College with an evening entitled "Losing My Religion," a look at why Christians should drop their religion (or religiosity) in order to find Jesus. The evening band will be joined by vocal soloists in a concert of pop and rock songs that address our desire for eternity, but our frustration with "institutional" religion. Featured will be songs by artists such as Sting, Alanis Morissette, and 10,000 Maniacs.

Following the music Tim Keller will present a lecture on the dangerous idol of religiosity — whether in Christianity or in other religions and world-views. Audience members will have the opportunity to ask questions of Dr. Keller immediately following his lecture. Consider using this opportunity to bring friends who are skeptical of, or hostile to, the claims of the Christian gospel to this unique evening.

WEST SIDE EMPLOYMENT

The West Side Redeemer site Children's Ministry seeks a Redeemer member or member in process for a part-time paid nursery worker position; also, for a Sunday coordinator position. Call Amy Buckner, West Side Children's Ministry Coordinator, 808-4460 ext. 139

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

Buddy Mungo

Dave Jacobs

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Redeemer meets Sunday at

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

HOPE FOR NEW YORK: DOING JUSTICE AND LOVING MERCY

BY KATE LEMMER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HOPE FOR NEW YORK

Hope for New York is the outward-focused mercy and justice ministry arm of Redeemer. Because we believe that the Lord requires us to “do justice” and “love mercy,” our mission is to be actively involved in the physical, emotional and spiritual healing of our city’s needy and defenseless people through a variety of compassionate social ministry programs. We believe that our commitment to mercy and justice is not just a means to an end; it is pleasing to God in its own right. In accordance with the Gospel, we also believe fundamental change can only come about through authentic change of heart, in the ministers as well as those ministered to. This means that the “hope” we offer is not just material, but spiritual.

Hope for New York functions in two ways. First, we recruit and train volunteers for our 23 affiliate ministries. Last year, our 900 volunteers offered over 17,000 hours of their time in clothing and feeding the poor; peer counseling, job-skills training, and community development; mentoring, tutoring, and sports and arts-related activities for children and adults; and sponsoring one-time holiday and summer events. We also conducted Bible studies, prayer meetings and brought in preachers for a variety of groups. These expressions of our congregation’s servant leadership reached more than 3,000 people in the metro New York area.

Secondly, where appropriate, we multiply the impact of our volunteer’s efforts through granting funds to meet a variety of needs, spiritual and physical. We pay for Bibles used in many of the programs, send children to a family camp for children with AIDS, and have replaced the boiler at a residential treatment home in the Bronx. Because we are a separate

non-profit organization, we can raise funds from a variety of sources. Our current sources of funds are the Redeemer Easter Sacrificial Offering, individual contributions, corporate matching gifts, stock donations, United Way contributions (our United Way designation code is 019933) and foundation grants, plus a grant from Redeemer’s budget. In 1998 we made grants totaling \$233,000, an increase of 94% over our 1997 budget.

Our affiliate ministries are concentrated in Harlem, Washington Heights, Hell’s Kitchen, and the Lower East Side. We are also active in Queens and the Bronx. Because we believe in a holistic approach to urban problems, we work with several different ministries in each neighborhood. In Hell’s Kitchen we work with The Lamb’s Church to provide a job-start program, a multi-faceted children’s after-school program, and an artistic program for women and children called Gifted Hands. In the Lower East Side, we are affiliated with the Avenue D Transitional Center, the city’s most effective transitional center for homeless men who are trying to move back into society. As with all our affiliate ministries, the success of the Avenue D Transitional Center is achieved through both word and deed: the teaching of the Gospel combined with the actions of practical social ministry.

Hope for New York is beginning the new year with several exciting developments on the horizon as well as some already in place. We have new leadership and expanded ministry opportunities in the form of a new executive director and several new board members and ministry affiliates. In addition, we are also offering new ways for you, the Redeemer congregation, to be actively involved in our growth and outreach:

“**Doing Justice and Loving Mercy**,” a School of Discipleship class offered by Hope for New York after all services, beginning February 28th. This class will be a combination of

lecture and testimony, and is especially for those interested in learning more about the theological basis for mercy and justice ministries. It emphasizes that the entire body of Christ, not just a few elite or specialized individuals, is called to action.

The Hope for New York Volunteer / Ministry Fair, also on February 28th (a semi-annual event). Representatives from all of our 23 affiliate ministries will be available in the East Lounge for questions and interaction. This is an excellent opportunity to get your questions answered and to meet other volunteers and program staff.

A cross-cultural relations training event at Central Baptist Church, at 92nd & Amsterdam, on Monday, March 8th. The evening will feature plenary sessions with Central Baptist Pastor Michel Faulkner and Tony Dillet, a 25-year veteran of the UN, followed by volunteer training workshops. We will begin to address the challenges of crossing cultural barriers (ethnic, geographic, social, financial) as well as the vital need for Christian involvement in this facet of urban ministry.

The Redeemer Sacrificial Offering, April 4th, all services. This annual offering is a major opportunity to contribute financially to Hope for New York’s ministry.

HFNY Testimonies, in worship services on February 28th, March 21st, 28th, and April 4th. We will have many individual testimonies of changed lives from volunteers who have ministered and from those they have ministered to.

God is using Hope for New York to change individual lives and the larger city, to bring mercy and justice not just to those we minister to directly, but to surrounding communities and future generations. We are already seeing the fruits of our labor as children from tutoring programs go to college and return

Such examples are true measures of the transformative and continuing power of the words and deeds of the Gospel.

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GUIDING PEOPLE THROUGH CONFLICT SEMINAR

Redeemer will be hosting the Guiding People Through Conflict Seminar, a training service of Peacemaker Ministries, on February 27, 1999. The Guiding People Through Conflict Seminar is designed for people who have good familiarity with the principles of biblical peacemaking and now are seeking to apply those principles. Following a brief review of the basic principles, seven case studies will be presented that will challenge attendees to analyze each conflict and then prepare their counseling recommendations. The cases focus primarily on how Christians can assist others in responding to conflict biblically.

The seminar will be conducted by Gary Daniel Friesen, an attorney,

who is currently the Conciliation Director and General Counsel for the Institute for Christian Conciliation (ICC), a division of Peacemaker Ministries in Billings, Montana. Gary has advised numerous churches, schools and foundations on how to respond biblically to legal conflicts and develop conflict resolution systems that incorporate both biblical principles and legal safeguards. He is a Certified Christian Conciliator and a member of the Christian Legal Society.

The seminar will take place at the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Paul, 315 West 22nd Street, New York, NY, from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$30 per person. Please call Judy Cha at Redeemer Counseling Services for more information and registration: (212) 370-0475, Ext 131.

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CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE

Members Received by Public Promise January 19, 1999:

Katherine Bucke
Amanda W. Hullinger
Ryan J. Hullinger
Anita N. Kobayashi
Ken S. Kurpiewski
Elaine Luong
Evelia Siniscalchi
David J. Sung
Regina Flanagan
Louise Anne Davis
Elizabeth Bright Woodruff
Pater Melamed

Infant Baptism:

Charlotte Carolyn Grace Kalal, daughter of Lorraine (Potter) and Rick Kalal.

Adult Baptism:

Louise Anne Davis
Elizabeth Bright Woodruff

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HFNY

to their neighborhoods to become Christian leaders. Such examples are true measures of the transformative and continuing power of the words and deeds of the Gospel.

Hope for New York's success is dependent upon the committed involvement of the Redeemer Congregation. We need your volunteer time and services, financial offerings, and your prayers. Join with us as we enter another exciting year of ministry.