

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

APRIL 1999

GOD ON WHEELS

BY TIM KELLER

A recent popular commercial on television ended with the tag line "Change is good." Well, maybe so, but it's also hard on people like myself who find comfort in the safe, the familiar, the predictable. Like some of you, I have been challenged by all the changes which have taken place at Redeemer in the last twelve months.

In that period of time we searched for, found, and organized all the support and attendant ministries for a new worshipping congregation on the west side of Central Park. We initiated a Capital Fund Campaign in order to implement a re-focusing of our vision. We decided to turn away from becoming a 'mega-church'

and rather become a network and movement of worshipping congregations. In the first stage, which



began with the opening of the west side site, Redeemer itself will become a church that meets at several locations. We are already well into the planning stage for a center

for training new leaders and church planters who will bring congregations all over the metro area as well as in other cities of North America and even internationally.

This past twelve months has also seen pastor Jeff White leave to plant a sister church in Harlem. In addition, executive pastor Dick Kaufmann has announced that he is going to plant a network of churches in downtown San Diego. This fall Redeemer will be planting a new daughter church under pastor Jim Om, who will begin with both a morning and an evening service in two different New Jersey locations. And on top of everything else we must

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WEST SIDE SITE OPENS WITH A BANG

Redeemer began worship services on the west side on February 28th. Nearly 750 people showed up for a vibrant worship service filled with anticipation and great hope for the future. The new facility on Central Park West and 96th Street is a beautiful sanctuary in which to worship Christ and to bring neighbors. The craftsmanship poured into the structure by artists, still spectacular nearly a century later, attests to their ability to draw others into a rich worship of God.

The staff planning the new site were surprised by the great

turnout, which continued strong even in the second week. "Clearly, the new site is bringing new people to Redeemer. My hunch is that well over a hundred newcomers, mostly people from the neighborhood, are already part of the expanded site. One-third of the people in the Introduction to Redeemer class had never been to Redeemer before," said Andrew Field, associate pastor.

Setting up the facility was a difficult job. Brad Winslow, Amy Buckner and Elaine Rollo gas spend long hours moving supplies into the building, installing equipment, and overseeing renovations on the fourth floor. They were helped by volunteers, teachers, and a new set-up crew. Several volunteers from the First Church of Christ Scientist (FCCS) also helped to

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- ALL CHURCH SPRING RETREAT

- EASTER AT REDEEMER
...AND DAYLIGHTSAVINGS!

MORE...



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GOD ON WHEELS

immediately begin looking for a west side *morning* service site as well.

Every one of these categories—multi-site, daughter church, near-sister church, and

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far-sister church—is part of the new vision. Redeemer will not jealously hold on to our ‘turf’, but will become a movement of churches. Our “prime directive” [Trek fans take note] has always been: We want to create a church for people who aren’t in church, not a church for ourselves.

Exciting, right? Yes, very. But it is also dizzying. These are the questions that crowd my mind as I fall asleep at night: Where will all the new facilities come for us to keep growing as a multi-site church? Where we get all the new leaders to make each new site a warm, vibrant community of service and ministry? Where will we get the new ministers and pastors to replace all those going out to launch new works? How will we keep our unity of vision—how

will we stay ‘on the same page’ in our ministry together?

Every one of the previous questions is a very big question, and one that I confess has weighed on my mind and heart recently. There are moments when I have felt: “Why did we start such a huge, adventurous enterprise—why didn’t we just all stay together and hold on to what we had?”

Of course, I’m more than satisfied (intellectually) that we are going in the direction that God wants to take us. It is not possible to “hold on” to anything in this life except Jesus himself. Unless we are willing to give everything away, we will have nothing. If we lose our life, we will find it, but if we try to hold onto anything, it will just rust, decay, and sour. If we give away our energy, money, time, and even friendships into ministry, we find ourselves with ever increasing energy, money, time, and relationships. In the same way, if any church seeks to ‘hold on to what we have’, it will eventually lose it and have nothing but memories of a once big, great church. But if a church is willing to give away energy, money, time, and friends into new congregations and mission, it will have a growing family and movement of churches to show for it. History and experience bears this out.

But the issue of change and growth is also an emotional issue that can not be answered simply by rational arguments. A big part of the problem is an irrational fear that God may not be “with us” in

the future the way he was so powerfully “with us” in the past. We have seen God work so remarkably at Redeemer in the past ten years. How can we expect him to continue to do so in all these new places? Under all these new leaders and pastors?

My own ‘visceral’ concerns in this regard have been addressed by reading a new book by Roy Clements on Ezekiel and Daniel, *Faithful Living in a Faithless World* (Inter-Varsity Press). In particular, he discusses the strange vision in Ezekiel 1:15-21. Ezekiel saw the Lord, high and lifted up on his throne, but what was unique about this vision was that God’s throne had wheels. What

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does this mean?

The Jews at that time were devastated that they had been exiled into the foreign land of Babylon. How could they ever expect to

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REDEEMER REPORT

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

EASTER AT REDEEMER

Note: Daylight Savings Time Starts on Easter!!

Now that Redeemer is a “multiple-site church,” there will be four services on Easter Sunday, April 4. There will be two identical morning services at Hunter College (69th and Park Avenue), at **9:30AM and 11:15AM Daylight Savings Time**. That’s right — unless you want to show up in the middle of the sermon (missing all the music), you will want to set your clocks **AHEAD** one hour on Saturday night to avoid arriving late and having everyone know how forgetful you are!

At the morning services, the Orchestra of the Redeemer, the Redeemer Choir and soloists Tom and Angela Barrett will perform music by Handel and Vaughn-Williams. At 5:00 PM, there will be a service held at 96th St. and Central Park West with music by the Redeemer String Quartet, soloists and organist Walter Hilse. At 6:00 PM, back at Hunter College, there will be a service featuring the evening band and soloist Kimberly JaJuan. At all four services, a special offering will be taken to benefit the ministries of Hope for New York and Tim Keller will deliver an Easter message

(the same at all sites). Expanding our Easter tradition, there will be testimonies of how the gospel has changed the lives of Redeemer attendees at all of the services.



MISSION STRATEGY TO REFLECT WORLD TRENDS

Modern media transmit culture around the globe at such speeds that an sort of homogenization effect comes into play. No where is this more evident than in the large cities of every country. Since they are the centers of international communication, world-class cities increasingly resemble one another and relate to one another more than they do their countries of origin. Mexico City, Tokyo, London, Buenos Aires and New York City, though they retain some of their distinctiveness, share many of the problems, advantages and characteristics of each other.

That being so, what does it mean for world missions? In particular, what does it mean for Redeemer’s world missions strategy? Tim Keller will be addressing this question, and other issues of globalization and urbanization in a talk Monday night, April 19, from 7:00 until 9:00 p.m., at the Norwegian Seaman’s Church 317 W. 52nd Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues. There is no charge for the event, but you must reserve your seat by calling Cathy Dryden at 808-4460 ext 124 before April 4.

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make their facility especially hospitable.

One amazing confirmation of God’s favor came during set-up the night before. The fourth floor classroom level, where children and adult classes were planned for the next day’s worship, suddenly felt a shwoosh of hot air. Air ducts closed for decades finally opened up, warming the wintertime chill. This heating system had been

WEST SIDE SITE OPENS

one of the main sources of delays; heating experts thought that an expensive overhaul of the system was needed. The building’s super, however, fixed the problem himself late Saturday night.

Each week we are able to adapt the facility better to care for people attending worship. Several employees from FCCS are on-site every week, working with Redeemer to handle

any concerns that arise, to greet people at the door and to run the historic elevator. As time passes, more people from the neighborhood will think of the west side site as their only connection to the church and we want to make a warm, welcoming, gracious connection. Plenty of opportunities to serve exist, such as greeting and ushering, communion and children’s ministry.

SPRING RETREAT

A weekend of relaxation, spiritual refreshment and new relationships awaits you at our Spring Retreat, May 21-23, at Tamiment Resort in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania.

Tamiment's modern hotel offers a spectacular array of indoor sports and swimming facilities, plus 2000 acres overlooking a 90-acre lake. The weekend package rate is \$160 for doubles and \$135 for triples; the roundtrip bus ticket is \$25.

You'll have plenty of opportunities to make new friends during organized group activities (such as miniature golf and volleyball) or just to relax on your own. The weekend will offer three sessions of worship and spiritual teaching on "The Three Compulsions of the World" as seen in Jesus' temptation in chapter four of the Gospel of Matthew. The Rev. Tim Pettit, director of church life, will be the speaker. There will also be a coffeehouse on Saturday night with pianist Jon Werking.

Registration must be done in person on April 11 and April 18 after the worship services in the East Lounge of Hunter College or in the Fellowship Hall of our West Side worship site, First Church of Christ, Scientist. For more information, call Tim Pettit, 808-4460, x141.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES RETREAT

If the words "spiritual disciplines" conjure up images of sackcloth and ashes in your mind, then you need to consider our one-day, in-town retreat on April 17.

Using Jesus Christ as our model, you will learn that the disciplines of silence, solitude, meditation and fasting are not just for spiritual giants or strange people living alone in the desert. Rather, they are means of grace that God uses to move us toward the goal that "Christ be formed in you." (Galatians 4:19)

You'll have several opportunities to practice those disciplines, including an optional fast through the noon lunch hour. The Rev. Tim Pettit, director of church life, will give the lectures.

The retreat will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Central Baptist Church, W. 92nd Street and Amsterdam Avenue and will cost \$10.

You must pre-register for the retreat by calling the church receptionist at 808-4460, x 0.

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GOD ON WHEELS

know the glory of worship and service to the Lord in a foreign land that they had known in Jerusalem (Ps. 137:4)? Ezekiel's vision was the answer to this fear: "In a single blast of prophetic illumination, Ezekiel sees that it is not so at all, for the ark in the temple was no more than a man-made replica. The real ark...was mobile! God was not restricted to Jerusalem; he had moved to Babylon." (p.20)

This is saying much more than the trite truism that 'God is everywhere.' It means we must not romanticize the past. It means that "God is mobile. He is not the God of places [or of eras] but of people...He is always our living contemporary. Our problem is to keep up with what he is doing. He is always one step ahead of his church." (p.43).

God is a God of the future—whenever we get to it he is already there to greet us. He can and will raise up new leaders and work as remarkably in our midst as he has before. God's throne is a throne on wheels. Every time we get to a strange new place, time, or situation, he is there to welcome us into our new home.