

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

JULY/AUGUST 2000

DAUGHTER CHURCH NEAR COLUMBIA TAKES SHAPE

BY CHARLIE DREW

One sunny afternoon in mid May, as I was walking up Broadway between 96th and 116th streets, I found myself delighting in the remarkable diversity I found there. There were young parents, their children tagging along or riding in strollers. There were musicians of all ages, mostly young, packing a variety of instruments, hurrying along (presumably) to rehearsals and recitals. I saw faces of every hue and heard French, German, Russian, Korean, Spanish and numerous languages I could not identify. The homeless were on the sidewalks, as were restaurants of every conceivable variety, emerging with the coming spring. And there were students

*“ I found myself
delighting in the
remarkable diversity
I found there. ”*

everywhere, especially as I got above 110th Street.

As I was taking all this in, the exhilarating notion suddenly overtook me that one day all of this diversity will, without losing its richness, rise up in a single song of praise to Christ. And with that thought delight flooded my heart, for the Redeemer session had just recently approved my plan to seek

to plant a daughter church in this part of town.

Since that afternoon, things have begun to happen. We have held two monthly Vision Meetings, averaging 55 people each, 45 of whom have expressed strong interest in being part of the “launch team” for the project. We have secured a beautiful, ample, and inexpensive space within two blocks of Columbia for our Vision Meetings, together with a well-situated and spacious apartment for weekly Thursday evening prayer meetings (to begin July 6). Fund raising has been equally encouraging: we have raised \$237,000 in outside support

(continued on page 2)

MUSIC AND THE GOSPEL

BY TOM JENNINGS

“Welcome to the War Department!” was the greeting from a fellow staff member as I entered the office on my first day as Redeemer’s Director of Worship Arts. Fortunately, her comment, born of experience in other churches, has not proven to be true here. Mercifully, Redeemer has been mostly spared from the disputes over liturgy, music and preaching styles that are so bitter in many churches that they have come to be known as the “worship wars.” What is the cause of these “wars?” Despite the grand theological arguments that some build to defend their cause, it generally comes

down to personal preferences. Some people like worship songs, others prefer hymns. Some delight in high liturgy, others in no liturgy. Some like intellectual certainty, others value mystery.

With weekly attendance approaching 3,000, how can Redeemer reconcile the myriad tastes and backgrounds of its people without experiencing its own worship wars? It can’t, unless we use our secret weapon — the centrality and power of the gospel.

The gospel has been summarized many ways. One synopsis used often at Redeemer is “We are more sinful than we ever dared believe but, in Christ, more loved and accepted than we ever dared hope.” The implications of this simple statement on worship music are enormous. Here are four of those implications:

The gospel changes the role of music in worship.

The gospel begins with a stark-

(continued on page 2)

INSIDE:

- MORE MUSIC AND THE GOSPEL
- DIACONATE NEWS
- HOPE FOR NEW YORK UPDATE
- CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE

MORE...



(continued from page 1)

DAUGHTER CHURCH NEAR COLUMBIA TAKES SHAPE

(half-way to our March 2001 goal of three year pledges totaling \$500,000), \$14,700 in annual “inside” pledging from the core group (a good start on our goal of \$100,000), and the Redeemer Church Planting Center has committed \$115,000 over three years.

We are convinced that the Redeemer “movement” needs scores of smaller “parish” churches to complement the work of the “Mother” church. Christ Presbyterian Church (the name of the new effort) will seek to be one of those, focusing a bit less on a particular demographic and a bit more on a particular neighborhood. We will aim to be not simply in the area around Columbia but also for that area. This will involve many things: partnering with area churches and social service organizations to ad-

dress the needs of the poor and homeless, joining forces with campus ministries to bring Christ to the University (Columbia has 5,000 international students from nearly 150 countries—a staggering missions opportunity at our doorstep), helping families (churched and unchurched) to find community and gain wisdom on child-rearing, demonstrating Christ’s power to break down social-economic divisions by building a multi-cultural staff and providing multi-cultural expression in public worship, providing a welcoming environment for folks in the arts (of whom there are many on the Upper West Side) to understand and express their gifts.

My interests and experience make the prospect of Christ Church particularly exciting. I love the arts, having done a good bit of singing through

the years. For over twenty years I have served churches in university towns and relish the challenge, the creativity, the energy, and the flexibility that characterize the culture of such places. Those churches have in every case developed substantial mercy and children’s ministries, both of which are close to my heart. Family ministry, university ministry, multicultural ministry, mercy ministry, ministry to and through the arts—they are all (potentially) there, right in the same neighborhood. A great need and an astounding opportunity.

Charlie Drew is an associate pastor at Redeemer. He hopes to begin regular Sunday morning worship in March 2001. For information, contact him at Charlie@Redeemer.com or at 212 808 4460 (x 153).

(continued from page 1)

MUSIC AND THE GOSPEL

ly negative idea — the world is fallen and my life is a bigger part of the problem than I would care to admit. Immediately, this teaches us that music, like good preaching, should not merely offer upbeat sentimentality. It should disturb us with the truth of our condition and shake us out of contentment. Musical texts and their settings should accurately reflect the disorder of the world and we should resist the temptation to sugarcoat musical settings with Christian jargon.

However, the gospel also holds out a hope greater than any other worldview: the hope of a relationship with a God who would sacrifice his own life in order to call us his beloved. Such an

*“Such an
overwhelming thought
calls for art of the
highest beauty,
moments of quiet reflection
and an outpouring of joy
and gratefulness.”*

overwhelming thought calls for art of the highest beauty, moments of quiet reflection and an

outpouring of joy and gratefulness. Over the past five years, many people have shared with me that truths explicated in a sermon became personal and alive to them while singing a hymn or meditating on an offertory text. This is how great art can elevate worship. If you miss the prayers and singing before the sermon or rush out afterwards, you may, in a sense, be missing the sermon as well! Musical expression gives you an opportunity to ignite the heart and conscience with truths that may otherwise remain conceptual.

The gospel pushes us toward better aesthetics.

Many churches champion ex-

(continued on page 4)

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Buddy Mungo
Dave Jacobs

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
OFFICE • 271 MADISON AVENUE • SUITE 1600 • NEW YORK, NEW YORK • 10016
212-808-4460 (phone) 212-808-4465 (fax)

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

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST
WEST 96TH STREET AND CPW
services at 5:00

DIACONATE NEWS

BY ANDREA CLARK

We are excited to welcome nine new deaconesses and one new deacon who officially began their term in June. Their names are now added to the last page of the bulletin. Two deacons have finished their three year terms and gone on sabbatical, Matthew Mahoney and Cregan Cooke. We are thankful for their faithful service and will miss the unique contributions and gifts they brought to the Diaconate.

In preparation for Officer nomination month (November, 2000) below is a testimony from John Bigham. He shares how serving as a deacon has changed him and given him a deeper understanding of the Gospel. Please be considering if you or others you know may be called to serve on the Diaconate. In addition to deaconesses, we are especially in need of deacons for the next class of nominees.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and financial support that enables the Diaconate to serve our congregation.

A word from John Bigham, a deacon at Redeemer:

When I was asked to serve on the Diaconate my first thought was, "Where will I find the time?" Now, after serving for just over a year, my life and my walk with Christ have been transformed and enriched in so many different ways.

To understand the gospel, that I am more sinful than I ever dared believed and yet more loved than I ever dared hoped, is but half of the equation. A person who has been transformed by this Truth must then share this truth to fully comprehend the debt that has been paid by Christ.

To understand the gospel is to live sacrificially for others and to live sacrificially for others is to understand the gospel.

HOPE FOR NEW YORK

Hope For New York wishes to thank the Redeemer congregation for their generosity during the Easter Sacrificial Offering. Over \$130,000 was raised this year, a 30% increase over last year. This money, added to the proceeds generated from the "Christmas Of Hope" CD, will enable Hope For New York to financially support more than twenty affiliated ministries.

This year alone, Hope For New York has distributed \$160,000 to ministries who have committed to use the money to provide services such as:

- keeping summer camp affordable for low-income families
- repairing homes
- expanding academic enrichment programs

- providing after-care and job training to the homeless
- hiring English/Bible teachers to service immigrants

Over the past eight years, Hope For New York has provided more than \$1,000,000 in financial aid to such ministries. This year Hope For New York will provide an additional \$40,000 to support our 1,400+ volunteers, representing a total of \$200,000 in cash grants and volunteer support. Thank you again for partnering with us in this invaluable ministry.

James Leonard
Volunteer Manager
Hope For New York
271 Madison Ave., 16th Floor
New York, New York 10016
Phone (212) 808-4460 X 123
Facsimile (212) 808-4465

CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE

Membership Vows June 11, 2000

Connie Liao Chang
James Philip Chou
Janalyn Louise Froese
Daniel Lin
Rhodora Fuentes Maglasang
Michael Duane McAfee
Elliott Ilho Park
Julia Marie Schuette
Aristeo T. Tengco

Infant Baptisms:

Tyler Christian Barhydt, son of Echi & Kevin Barhydt
Katherine Kensett Lukes, daughter of Elizabeth & David Lukes

Adult Baptism:

Rhodora Fuentes Maglasang

(continued from page 2)

MUSIC AND THE GOSPEL

cellence in worship in an effort to impress God or at least their spiritually-seeking neighbors. The gospel frees us from those pressures, but gives us an even greater inspiration for composing and performing music with great beauty — the joy of pleasing our beloved. The gospel teaches that we do not offer God a righteous life, but that He has offered one to us. This basic principle of the universe is applicable to the arts. Music created out of a desire to impress can never have the depth of music created merely for the love of it.

Therefore, we should freely pour our hearts into our singing, regardless of talent, knowing that God will not accept or reject us based on how emotionally moved we may feel. Rather than dismissing the archaic terminology of some hymns or the emotional extravagance of some praise songs, we should learn from all styles so as to enrich our palates with new ways to express gratitude to God. We should call our best professional musicians to lead and challenge us, and we should exhort them to excel in their crafts. We should favor the higher art forms, but have a seri-

*“...to insist on
creating a church
for ourselves (is) in
direct contradiction to
the example
of Christ.”*

ousness of intent in the execution of all styles.

The gospel encourages humility towards other believers.

If there is to be a “war” over musical taste in our churches, it should involve fighting not for our own interests but for those who disagree with us. Consider Christ who, though he owned the whole world became poor for our sakes. The sacrifice of Christ provides the ultimate model and power for a life of service to others. To demand that worship styles conform to our own preferences is to insist on creating a church for ourselves, in direct contradiction to the example of

Christ. The gospel gives us the freedom to learn from the artistic expressions of those whom our own cultures might despise.

The gospel encourages humility towards the work of secular musicians.

The gospel deflates pride. Our sin is so great as to prevent us from ever looking down on another individual. Therefore, we should refuse to hold up the work of artists deemed “wholesome” above the work of depraved individuals. We are all depraved individuals! Therefore, if God should choose to pour out musical gifts on those who don’t profess to believe the gospel, we should simply be thankful to him for using broken vessels to glorify himself and to make this world a more beautiful place. To reject the music of Mozart, Prince, or any secular musician on the exclusive basis of their lifestyle is to miss the humility of the gospel. Likewise, we should not celebrate poor musical efforts merely because they appear on Christian record labels.

If Redeemer is ever to experience “worship wars,” may it be a fight to keep the gospel central to all we do.