

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

JUNE 2001

## A 'MISSIONAL CHURCH'

**L**esslie Newbigin was a British missionary who went to India in the 1950's and returned home to retire some thirty years later. When he left the 'western church' in Europe and North America was still in a relationship to the culture which was often called 'Christendom.' In Christendom, society's institutions 'Christianized' people, by stigmatizing all but Christian beliefs and ethical behavior. The church simply gathered in these 'Christianized' people and challenged them to personal life commitment to Christ.

Churches in the west, as one

*...they had to adapt  
absolutely every aspect of  
their church life... to being  
in a non-Christian world.*

of their varied ministries, supported 'mission' in overseas non-Christian cultures (like India). When Newbigin got to India he noticed that the churches there did not 'support' mission nor 'do' mission—they were missional in every aspect. Being in a non-Christian culture, they could not simply 'process Christianized people'

into commitment. Rather, they had to adapt absolutely every aspect of their church life—worship, preaching, community life, discipleship—to being in a non-Christian world. Since all visitors to a worship service would be non-Christian, all its worship and preaching had to address them. Since church members now had to live lives according to radically different values than the rest of society, the discipleship and training not only had to equip them to answer questions and share their faith, but had to spell out Christian personal and corporate behav-

*(continued on page 2)*

## WHERE THERE IS LIFE, THERE'S HOPE!

BY JAMES LEONARD

**H**ope for New York wishes to thank the Redeemer congregation for their generosity during the Easter Sacrificial Offering. Over \$127,000 has been given so far! These gifts have enabled us to give financially to more than 30 affiliated ministries. This past fiscal year Hope for New York has distributed over \$175,000 to ministries who use the money to provide services such as:

- Food and shelter for the homeless
- Computer and GED training
- Children's reading programs
- Rehabilitation programs for addicts
- Counseling and training for single mothers
- ESL and Bible studies for immigrants

It has been encouraging for us to see the tremendous support from the Redeemer congregation, not only financially, but also through volunteering for actual programs. Over 2,000 volunteers from Redeemer dedicated over 29,000 hours of service this past year. This sort of ministry commitment has enabled Hope for New York to develop new and exciting ministries as well as to affiliate with additional ministries. This year's additions include:

- Teen Challenge
- Arukah Medical Ministry
- Glory Zone Renovation Project

- Graffiti
- Mothers' Together
- Reading Heroes
- Bethany Christian Services
- Major's Minors
- St. Paul's JobStart
- Meals on Heels

Over the past nine years, Hope for New York has provided more than \$1,000,000 in financial aid to such ministries, but more importantly, we have seen the development of long lasting, life-transforming relationships through the power of the Gospel. Thank you again for partnering with us in this invaluable ministry.

### INSIDE:

- WHY WE SING
- CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE
- ALMOST-4TH OF JULY GETAWAY
- SPORTS NETWORK

*MORE...*



(continued from page 1)

## A 'MISSIONAL CHURCH'

ior patterns that showed the larger society what the kingdom of God was all about. In other words, on the "mission field" church members were "in mission" in every aspect of their church life and in every aspect of their public and private life.

When Newbigin returned from the mission field in the 1980's, he found to his surprise that western culture had shifted dramatically. No longer did the social institutions coercively 'Christianize' people. The culture was becoming post-Christian and in many ways as firmly resistant to the gospel any "mission field" in the world.

But the churches had not adapted to their new situation. They continued to preach in language that only 'Christianized' people could understand. They continued to create an environment in which only traditional and conservative people could feel comfortable. They continued to 'disciple' people by only training them with individual skills for their private lives (Bible study, prayer) and not by training them to live distinctively Christian lives in a secular world, in the public arenas of politics, art, business, and so on. Newbigin wrote about these things very insightfully in his books *Foolishness to the Greeks* and *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*.

[Note: Although I have learned much on this as well as other subjects from Newbigin, this should not be taken as an unqualified endorsement of everything in his works.]

Redeemer is committed to being the very thing for which

*"... we seek to contextualize and adapt every single aspect of our church to function and communicate in a culture of people who are not 'Christianized', people who have modern and post-modern sensibilities."*

Newbigin calls. We seek to be a 'missional' church. This means that we do not have lots of traditional evangelism programs. One of the things that surprises Christian visitors to Redeemer is the evidence that there are lots and lots of people who don't believe Christianity (yet!) all around the church—in its worship services, its small groups, its meetings and ministries.

I am regularly asked by others "How do you get them in here?" This question usually means "What program are you using to get people to visit your church?" We have none. The answer is that we are a 'missional' church. It does not mean that at every turn we are trying to get people to 'pray the sinner's prayer.' Rather, it means that we seek to contextualize and adapt every single aspect of our church to function and communicate in a culture of people who are not

'Christianized,' people who have modern and post-modern sensibilities.

What does this mean? This is a big subject! But here are some of the principles.

1) First, we have a positive view of the city in which we live. We appreciate it—we don't hate and disdain it.

2) Second, we apply the wonder of the gospel to the stories and concerns of the people in our culture—freedom and oppression, exclusion and inclusion, grace and identity. This means we must really immerse ourselves in the dreams, perplexities, and aspirations of our friends in the city who don't grasp the gospel. We have to read their literature and listen to their problems appreciatively, and bring the gospel to bear on their questions, not ours.

3) Third, we must be certain to speak (even when praying) in

(continued on page 6)

---

### 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

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL AND ST. ANDREW  
86TH AND WEST END AVENUE  
services at 7:00

# WHY WE SING

BY TOM JENNINGS

...without God,  
we are  
completely  
unable to  
define beauty...

God is an Artist. It is the first thing we are told about him in the Scriptures (Gen. 1:1), even before we are told of His love, power, mercy or wrath. He imagines things of astonishing beauty — oceans, mountains, galaxies — and speaks them into existence. In creating the world God never sacrificed aesthetics at the altar of utilitarianism and never compromised truth for beauty. In fact, no contradiction of the two is possible with Him. Likewise, without God, we are completely unable to define beauty or ugliness as anything other than a biochemical trick of our nervous system.

But when God made man, He went one step further: He put into man His own image (Gen. 1:26), making us creatures with imaginations and the need to create as well. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul tells us that God considers us His *poema*, or workmanship. Therefore, creativity and artistic expression are integral parts of what it means to be truly human. It is against our very nature to live predictable, unimaginative lives or to fail to constantly worship God for the complexity and wonder of the world He made. And that worship, whether personal or corporate, should itself be imaginative, truthful and artistic.

Having been raised in a Christian home, I can remem-

ber hearing stories of God's creation of the world from my parents and in Sunday School classes. I naturally accepted those accounts as fact. However, that doctrine came alive for me in a surprising way in 1992 while on tour with a musical group in Rome. With a free day to tour the city, I arrived early one morning to be first in line to tour the Vatican Museum. When the doors opened I literally ran through the museum, zipping past tour groups to the Sistine Chapel where Michaelangelo's famous ceiling fresco depicts God giving life to Adam. I reclined on a bench and spent an hour alone studying the painting and meditating on God's creation of man.

Though I am by nature emotionally reserved, at some point during that hour, I felt a tremendous sense of joy and awe. What happened? The excellence and power of the art had melted my heart so that what was once mere theology came alive to me. I recognized that not only had God created the world, He had created me,

this seemingly insignificant person, breathed life into me, and ultimately gave His own life for me. This is the role of great art and why we so desperately need it.

With this in mind, we must reject the two most common models for programming music in churches — polling the congregation and polling the community. First, if we merely try to please our own tastes, we will never allow music that challenges our sensibilities or pushes us to see the world differently. Merely catering to our own taste guarantees that we will receive three minutes of sentimentality at the offertory each week and leads to homogeneity in the congregation. From the pulpit we expect to be not only soothed, but also challenged and convicted. We should expect no less from our music.

A more outwardly focused approach is to ask what the community around us likes in its music, and to provide it. While the intent is nobler than the inward approach just described, it reduces the arts to

(continued on page 4)



## WHY WE SING

a mere evangelistic tool. If you have watched network television lately, you know what happens to art when it is reduced to a marketing device.

Then what are the standards for music selection at Redeemer? First, we do not reinvent the wheel, in this case the language of music. When one becomes a Christian, he need not change the pipes in his apartment to have “Christian” plumbing, and neither does the church need to reject the artistic forms with which God, in His common grace to man, has blessed the earth. Therefore, we eschew the Christian subcultures, both high (liturgical music) and low (much of the “contemporary Christian music” industry), in favor of music by and in the tradition of great artists. We are thankful to God for Beethoven, Miles Davis, and the Beatles, for string quartets and jazz quintets, and we champion the advancement of

the arts. God created the overtone series and called it good. We should, too.

Second, if the music contains lyrics, we examine them for both theological integrity and poetic beauty. All of God’s actions are both true and beautiful. Therefore, we should avoid the extremes of Christian propaganda — all truth, no beauty (which isn’t really truth!), and heresy — all beauty, no truth (which isn’t really beauty!) Without fear, we should employ texts that speak to the breadth of human experience, not merely blatant spirituality.

Third, we seek to have the music performed with excellence, in keeping with Psalm 33:3, “Sing to him a new song; play skillfully and shout for joy.” Of course, excellence includes not only technique (play skillfully) but also heart (shout for joy).

Finally, we provide a context for our music. Music is selected

*“...excellence includes  
not only technique ...  
but also heart...”*

which builds on the theme of a service or a message, so that the art is helping to illuminate the same truths being expounded through other media. These standards allow for great diversity of style and yet provide some framework for selectivity.

Ultimately, worship music should simply be a scale model for a life of creative praise of God. Thinking “outside the box” may be the corporate catch-phrase of the month, but it should be a lifestyle for a Christian. When we walk past beautiful parks and stunning architecture without praising God, and seeing in them reflections of the gospel, we have missed what it means to be His *poema*. God is an Artist. And so are we.

## SPORTS NETWORK CONNECTS YOU TO PEOPLE

*“the Redeemer  
Sports Network  
can  
connect you  
to people  
who have  
the same  
athletic interests.”*

**W**hether it’s touch football in the snow or summer soccer in Central Park, the Redeemer Sports Network can connect you to people who have the same athletic interests.

“The Network is a tool to get to know other people,” said Suzy Ulrich, who coordinates the Network and monitors the athletic events that are organized by people at Redeemer. “You not only meet people, but they have the same interests.”

Recent Sports Network events have included biking, hiking, ice skating, rollerblading and Rejive dancing. And if you

can’t find what you like, you can organize your own event! Over 430 Redeemerites subscribe to the Network.

The first step is to subscribe to the Network’s e-mail list by sending an e-mail to [redemer-sportsnetworksubscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:redemer-sportsnetworksubscribe@yahoo.com). Once you’re aboard, you’ll get e-mails about upcoming events.

As a subscriber, you then are able to e-mail Suzy with a description of your proposed event along with the location and date. “But only athletic events, please,” Suzy said. “Some people want to run their apartment ads.”

# ALMOST-4TH OF JULY GETAWAY

**Y**ou're invited to join us on a long weekend of canoeing, hiking, biking and inner-tubing in the Vermont mountains on June 29-July 2. There will also a mountain cookout and bonfire and an evening coffeehouse as we spend some lazy summer days at the Hotel Coolidge, a quaint, 1920s railroad hotel in White River Junction. The weekend will include three uplifting worship services and teaching by the Rev. Tim Pettit, director of church life.

Our Getaways are designed so that whether you're traveling with a friend or by yourself, you're sure to feel right at home. That was Ali Burrell's experience.

"I had been so excited to go

on the New Year's Getaway with my roommate, so naturally when she wasn't able to go, I was a bit nervous about going alone," Ali said. She went anyway and "formed incredible friendships" as a result. "I would encourage people, especially those who are new to Redeemer, to go on a Getaway by themselves," she said. "It'll rock your world."

Redeemer normally goes to Vermont over the 4th of July, but having the 4th fall in the middle of the week made that difficult this year. Although we're going for the weekend, please note that you will need to take off Monday, July 2.

You can find the registration form, pictures and more details at [www.RedeemerChurchLife](http://www.RedeemerChurchLife)

*Our Getaways  
are designed  
so that whether you're  
traveling with a friend  
or by yourself,  
you're sure to  
feel right at home.*

or by going to [www.Redeemer.com](http://www.Redeemer.com) and clicking on "Community Life." Or you can call Tim Pettit at 808-4460 x141.

## CHURCH FAMILY UPDATE

### *Membership Vows:*

Charlotte J. Lee  
Peggy K. Lo  
Tom H. Matlock  
Tricia Cox Matlock  
Margaret Else Nelson Moore  
Willard Sean Moore  
Paul Nicholas Vertucci  
Amie Lee Vi Solis  
Michelle Dawn Turner  
Linda Claire Jarkesy  
Joel Donald Treick  
Hans Erich Kehlenbrink  
Catherine Jean Corbiere  
Dylan K. Chan  
Stanley Hongshiang Yang  
Catherine Wilson Bazant  
Stell S. Lee  
Sang Wook Ahn  
Kevin Michael Curran  
Mary Kim  
P. Cade Newman

Joseph C. Rhee  
Margaret Hwa Jung Rhee  
Yong-Hui Park  
Catherine Jean Corbiere  
Kiera Marie Thebault  
Pamela Brown-Peterside  
Joshua Hung Tin Lau  
Courtney Elise Turay  
Gregory Joseph Turay  
Steven Tze-Wen Liu  
Carlana Lynn Miller  
Kyoko Takahashi  
Thomas Allan Miller  
Gwyneth Ann Phillips  
Thomas Adam Becker  
Ashley Nellums Modisett  
Joseph Neil Modisett  
Stella Yee  
Michael Whelan  
Michael Wayne Himes  
Paige Arlene Farrington Himes

### *Adult Baptisms:*

Dylan K. Chan  
Stanley Hongshiang Yang  
Yong-Hui Park  
Kiera Marie Thebault  
Joshua Hung Tin Lau  
Thomas Adam Becker

### *Infant Baptisms:*

Matthew Jesse Bigham,  
son of John & Missy Bigham  
Alexander Victor Porlier,  
son of Marc & Laura Porlier  
Matthew Joseph Rhee,  
son of Joseph & Maggie Rhee  
Ethan Joseph Rowe,  
son of David & Awilda Rowe  
Olivia Miren Rowe, daughter  
of David & Awilda Rowe  
Benjamin Ming-Wei Sim,  
son of Boon & Shiuan Sim  
Erika Christine Stang, daughter  
of Richard & Aleta Stang

(continued from page 2)

## 'MISSIONAL CHURCH'

the 'vernacular.' We must avoid 'Christian sub-culture' language that is sentimental, tribal, technical, and disdainful.

4) Fourth, we must exhibit not just personal moral behavior but surprising beauty in our communal life together.

'Conservative' people are generally sexually controlled but not very tolerant or concerned for social justice. 'Liberal' people are often the reverse. Christian community must show forth attitudes toward sex, money, and power that are surprising and attractive.

5) Fifth, we must equip Christians to not withdraw from the culture or be controlled by it but learn how to live and work distinctively as Christians in the culture, recognizing both God's common grace in it as well as sin and brokenness needing redemption.

6) Sixth, we must be non-secular. In "Christendom," churches defined themselves over against other churches. But today we must define ourselves

over against the spirit of the world. We must not condemn or 'bash' other Christians and churches, even when propound-

*"But today  
we must  
define ourselves over  
against the  
spirit of the world."*

ing our own distinctive Christian tradition.

Do you see how this works? A 'missional' small group is not necessarily one which is doing some kind of specific 'evangelism' program (though that is to be recommended!) Rather, 1) its members love the city, 2) in their Bible study they apply the gospel to the core concerns of

the people of the city, 3) they speak in language that is not filled with pious sounding tribal terms and phrases, 4) they exhibit deep concern for the poor and generosity with their money and purity and respect with regard to opposite sex, and show humility toward people of other races and cultures, 5) they are obviously interested in and engaged with the literature and art and thought of the surrounding culture and can discuss it both appreciatively and yet critically, 6) they do not bash other Christians and churches—seekers and non-believing people from the city will be invited and will come and will stay as they explore spiritual issues. If these marks are not there, it is not a 'missional' Christian community, and will only be able to include believers or traditional, "Christianized" people.

There's another, more familiar word for all this — incarnation. "The word became flesh, and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory." (John 1:14)