

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

OCTOBER 2001

NOT WITH SWORDS LOUD CLASHING

BY TIM KELLER

The world has changed, and may change again between the writing and the printing of this article. The destruction of the World Trade Center brought a kind of 'nuclear winter' to lower Manhattan. The white and gray ash from the devastation covered everything with its fallout. But in the wake of the horrible event there is also 'fallout' of many other varieties, and they are much more widespread than the original. There are a host of major unresolved questions and issues that are political, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual. In and around

*The City of Man
is based on power
and pride, while the
City of God
is the new
human community...*

Redeemer we will be dealing with all of them for some time.

In his great work *The City of God* Augustine warned against two opposite errors that Christians can make in their relationship to their culture and

society. On the one hand, Christians must not try to remove themselves from their society and city of residence. How can we be 'salt and light' (Matthew 5:13-16) in our cities if we do that? Augustine insists (contra their pagan accusers) that Christians are really the best possible citizens of any city. On the other hand, Christians must not confuse the "City of God" with the "City of Man." The City of Man is based on power and pride, while the City of God is the new human community, created by the gospel of the cross, based fun-

(continued on page 2)

HOW WE ARE HELPING, HOW YOU CAN HELP

In the aftermath of this unprecedented catastrophe it is easy to feel helpless, and we are challenged as a church and a community to do something, anything. Over the past few days since the World Trade Center was attacked Redeemer has been working diligently, sometimes frantically, to be an organized and stable source of peace, love, comfort, help and counsel throughout our the city. We want to share with you just a few of the ways we have mobilized to begin meeting this challenge in the past week and a half, and we also want to invite you to be actively involved with us in the healing and rebuilding that will be needed for months and years to come.

Prayer

After many of the staff actually viewed the destruction first hand from the 15th floor rooftop of the Redeemer offices, we began to gather for prayer. Prayer was our primary focus for helping people cope with the magnitude of suffering and pain. There were all day prayer meetings organized at the church office, and dozens of people came to pray with people from the diaconate and our elders through out the rest of the week. At the same time small group

leaders began gathering their group members in apartments across the city for prayer and to comfort each other. "God prepared us for 12 years for this," said Frances Nelson, who oversees a region of small groups. "Our groups make us a community-type church. We couldn't have ministered better to our people (even) if we'd had a building." We urge you to continue to be vigilant in prayer in the coming weeks as we see first hand the needs of so many lives that have been affected.

(continued on page 3)

INSIDE:

- GOSPEL ECONOMICS
- COVENANT RENEWAL POSTPONED
- SERVICE VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU
- OFFICER NOMINATIONS

MORE...



(continued from page 1)

NOT WITH SWORDS LOUD CLASHING

damentally on sacrificial service and love. What does this theological model mean practically for us in the present situation?

First, it means Christians have more reason to be in New York City than we did before the terrorist attacks. Augustine shows that there is no greater proof of the reality and value of our heavenly citizenship than the way we conduct ourselves as neighbors and members of our city of residence. Christians are not to live where it is safe, but where we are most useful to both the city that is and the City to Come. You can't go to places with the greatest spiritual and physical hunger—the greatest material and spiritual need—and not also go toward an overall more dangerous place. It is hard to see how we reveal the beauty of God's coming city to the world if we only live in the safe places where there are no needs or even opportunities to reach out to people who are different. Think of the incarnation. If Jesus could move from heaven into earth and from omnipotence into vulnerability, surely we can move from Indiana into New York City.

Second, it means that as Christians we do not 'fight back' with retaliation. I do not mean that the United States as a nation should not take any action. I simply underscore what Augustine said. Yes, the City of God is in a 'battle' for more influence in the world. It is 'fighting' against the power, money, and sex-idolatries of the City of Man. But the City of God does not respond to an

Christians are not to live where it is safe, but where we are most useful to both the city that is, and the City to Come.

You can't go to places with the greatest spiritual and physical hunger—the greatest material and spiritual need—and not also go toward an overall more dangerous place.

'attack' with the firepower of guns (2 Cor 10:4) but with deeper and more sacrificial acts of service in word and deed (Rom 12:21). This is the way it 'wins' over and 'beats' the world. A hymn goes like this: *For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums, but deeds of love and mercy the heav'nly kingdom comes.* Christianity is unique because its central truth is that real influence comes not to those who take but those who give, not to those who rule but those who serve, not to those who accrue power but to those who sacrifice it in the service of others. Let me give you just two practical ways in which the present moment affords the City of God a strategic opportunity to advance.

First, Arabic and Muslim people in this country are quite reasonably frightened about at worst direct reprisals and at best rising discrimination and

bitter prejudice. Our Christian identity is based on the free grace of the cross. We are *simulustus et peccator* ("simultaneously accepted yet sinful.") This makes it impossible to demonize groups or see the evil of the world as only something 'out there' or 'over there in those people' in a way that it is not present in our own hearts. Thus we have the mental and emotional resources to reach out to Arabic and Muslim people around us in our cities. We need to communicate our lack of anger toward them as a people. This is a very clear way to show the world how Jesus transforms human social relationships.

Second, Christians in the city should re-double their effort to serve the city rather than just live here as consumers. We will be working pro-actively for weeks and months to address

(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

HOW WE ARE HELPING, HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can help:

- Pray with us for the victims and their families, especially for their healing and practical needs.
- Pray with us for the rescue workers, as they are working long hours in extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances.
- Pray for our staff, counselors, pastors and especially the diaconate as they work to help the victims recover for months to come.

Volunteers

Volunteer phone operators at Redeemer were flooded with e-mails and calls from churches outside the city offering assistance. In the five days following Tuesday, over 300 churches, in addition to the PCA headquarters, called to offer help, and each day more calls come in with churches and their people ready to help Redeemer minister to the city. Some of our fellowship groups visited their local firehouse to comfort the firefighters, who lost at least 300 fellow firefighters when the towers collapsed. "They told us they know they'll need people caring about them three, four, five weeks from now," said Redeemer member Ellie Ellsworth.

On Saturday, deacons, deaconesses and fellowship group members walked through Union Square park, where hundreds gathered because they could not reenter their apartments in the restricted zone around the World Trade Center. They listened to people's stories, prayed with them and handed out cards explaining how to receive Redeemer's help. "It was an incredible outpouring of service," said Andrea Clark, an MSW staff worker who trains and supervises the diaconate in their case-

work. At last count over 250 people from Redeemer have volunteered their time, money, housing and even office space. And every day more people are calling to ask how they can help. We want to thank all those who have so readily sacrificed of themselves to spread the healing love of the Gospel.

You can help:

- Send people to the Redeemer website www.redeemer.com. It provides a phone contact list for these who need help or want to give help; a letter of encouragement from Senior Pastor Tim Keller; an MP3 file of Sunday, September 16th's service and sermon. There is also an extensive list of things to pray for and Psalms to read for encouragement.
- Consider volunteering several months from now. The city and Redeemer have had great response from volunteers in the immediate crisis, but the wounds and damage that will need help to repair will require months and years of assistance. So prayerfully consider volunteering in the future.

Donations

Normally, a total of about 3,000 people worship at Redeemer's three services each Sunday. On September 16th, 5,300 attend four services. The offerings from these services were all dedicated to giving disaster relief. Many other churches have pledged to donate support to help meet the needs of this tragedy. In the coming weeks we will realize more fully the magnitude of needs that the people of New York will have.

You can help:

Consider giving a contribution to help. The funds will be used in the following ways:

- The diaconate will be giving funds to people who have lost jobs, apartments, and have other financial needs.
- Fellowship Groups will be giving funds to people in need through the network of small groups across the city.
- Counseling will continue to offer free grief and crisis counseling to any victims.
- Hope for New York affiliates will also use funds to help those in need.
- Redeemer will be helping people in our daughter and sister churches who have needs resulting from the tragedy.



GOSPEL ECONOMICS

BY DAVID BISGROVE

Contact: david@redeemer.com

At a time when falling stock prices, unemployment statistics, and interest rate cuts are dominating the headlines it is good spiritual discipline to reflect on the topic referenced by Jesus more than (almost) any other – Money.

At Redeemer Presbyterian Church, we believe ALL of life can only be properly understood when viewed through the lens of the gospel. It is only when we understand our material possessions in light of Christ's sacrificial love for us that we can truly have a healthy relationship towards our material possessions.

Whose Money is It?

Historically there have been several views on wealth and property that influence our attitudes today. Early Greek writings reflect a view that money is community property and should be shared equally. Only in the absolute redistribution of wealth could a utopian society be achieved. In sharp contrast to this view was the Roman philosophy that individuals had absolute rights over their money and property. Echoes of this view are seen in our modern capitalistic economy, and in our tendency to bristle when the topic of 'our finances' are discussed in any kind of open forum. A third view, as taught in Scripture, is that we have a 'qualified right' over money and property. In other words, God has the ultimate ownership but we have stewardship of our money, property, and talents. This view is radical in that it teaches that we have been given personal wealth and talents, but that these gifts are to be invested in God's priorities.

Why is Money a "Problem"?

Understanding that all of our possessions are actually on loan

to us from God for his purposes is the beginning of a healthy perspective on money. But we need to dig deeper to see "why" money and possessions can be such a spiritual minefield. Why is it that we are more likely to freely talk about almost any other topic, but feel any discussion about our money is an invasion of privacy? Jesus gives us insight into the answer when he warned his followers about the dangers of money. In Luke 12:15 he says: "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

This warning assumes that we have a tendency to define our "life" (our identity, value, self-esteem) by a self-centered desire to accumulate wealth ("greed.") Therefore, it is not surprising that money often produces anxiety (i.e. fear of losing what we have, or comparing ourselves with those who have more) as we make its accumulation an end in itself. This form of idolatry, Jesus warns, can only lead to disillusion.

Jesus understood that our identity and sense of purpose is rooted in something much

greater than the accumulation of wealth for wealth's sake. We were created in God's image to use all of our gifts to bring him glory and do the work of his Kingdom. This is what our life is to consist of, a calling far more fulfilling than what Jesus describes as "all kinds of greed."

The Gospel and our Money

Therefore, as we consider our material wealth, how do we guard against this idolatry of money? The answer is found at the cross. Jesus doesn't just warn us of the dangers, but through his life, death and resurrection shows us a better way to understand what our relationship to our wealth should be. Only by seeing that Christ gave up everything so that we could inherit the riches of heaven will we be transformed into individuals who are both joyful and generous. Paul's writing in 2 Corinthians 8:9 summarizes this idea: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might

(continued on page 6)

THANK YOU TO ALL SUNDAY SERVICE MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!

*It was a fun time in the Park!
A Saturday of 3Ps—
Perfect day
Playful people
Plentiful food*

We THANK all the volunteers who serve by dedicating their time, every Sunday, every service, 52 weeks a year! Giving time on Sunday creates new friendships and the barbeque was a

time for renewing the team spirit of serving the church. Redeemer will begin a 2nd morning service at Hunter in January, and our team is always looking to add friendly people who want to help. If you are interested in being a part of our team, contact Elaine Rollogas at 212-808-4460 x121, or by e-mail at elaine@redeemer.com.

(See picture opposite)

THE GOSPEL AT GROUND ZERO

BY TIM PETTIT

Dressed in clerical collars, we are like magnets as we stand and wait around "the pile" that once was the soaring World Trade Center

One by one, firefighters, policemen, steelworkers and rescue workers sidle up to. Bold requests for prayer quickly replace small talk. Repeatedly, we are able to explain that the pain and terror of Jesus' crucifixion was a necessary prelude to the joy of the resurrection. For them the pain is acute, because underneath the tangle of steel and concrete lay over 350 firemen, police and rescue personnel, along with as many as 5,000 civilian workers.

Sean, a retired steelworker, tells me he is cleaning - around the clock - one of the only functioning office bathrooms used by the rescuers as "my penance" for things he had done in the Viet Nam war and for four failed marriages. He weeps as I tell him that the forgiveness we have in Jesus Christ requires no "penance," but he wonders, "How can I be sure?"

There are even moments of laughter. The Rev. John Eaves, a visiting pastor from Nashville, presents Challah bread to Nan, a Jewish Red Cross mental health worker for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. She laughs, then cries, as she asks us for "the blessing" of the bread.

At midnight, we stand separately around "the pile" in the blinding glare of banks of giant lamps. An FBI agent asks for prayer for protection for himself and his rescue dog as they enter "the pile." Bernie, a police sergeant, cries as he says he feels so helpless standing there, then visibly brightens as the Gospel is explained. The Rev. Charles DeWitt, another visiting pastor, is able to counsel at length with a distraught policeman standing outside a makeshift morgue, where the remains of his buddies

lay. A muscular foreman, taking a break from building a giant crane, asks me bluntly, "Can you walk over there and pray with me?"

Some rescuers break into wide smiles as they see the clerical collars and shake our hands. Others walk by stoically; one policeman paces back and forth in visible

anger. John Eaves asks if he could pray with him, but he stalks off saying, "My rage won't let me."

And then the night closes with us manning the plywood morgue, praying over the remains of rescuers and civilians alike. A firefighter says, "We need a miracle today. We need a miracle."

OCTOBER 17 COVENANT RENEWAL CELEBRATION POSTPONED

In the week after Tuesday September 11th our church, city, country and much of the free world has suffered unthinkable and indescribable grief, pain and sadness from the horror of the World Trade Center tragedy. Because the grieving and healing process is going to take a significant amount of time, Redeemer has had to rethink what it should do in the coming days as a church to be sensitive and helpful to our community.

We want to extend the love of Christ and the light of the gospel sensitively and appropriately wherever we can. But in reflection we feel it would be inappropriate to proceed with

our plans for the Covenant Renewal Celebration on October 17th. This date was originally set aside so that Redeemer could renew its vision for the city, and connect new members and attenders to the vision in an active, involved way.

So although this is an important and vital meeting for our church, it seems more suitable to postpone this special evening to a time more removed from the tragic events that took place last month at the World Trade Center. Please watch for a new date in the months to come, when we will gather to celebrate what God is doing and is going to do in and through our church to renew the city.

*Sunday Service Ministries Volunteer Appreciation BBQ
Saturday, August 25 Roosevelt Island Lighthouse Park*



(continued from page 2)

NOT WITH SWORDS LOUD CLASHING

the large number of new spiritual and material needs in the city as a result of the terrorist attack. But I think the implications of September 11 for Redeemer go further than that. As of the date of my writing it appears Redeemer has come through this relatively unscathed (at least physically). But God never blesses and protects except to make us to be a blessing (Gen 12:1-3). I don't believe that we have a warrant to expect that God protects Christians from tragedy more than anyone else (Luke 21:16-19). Therefore, if he has kept us intact, we should also see God's protection of us as nothing but a mandate for deeper service than ever.

So we have more reason than ever to re-commit ourselves to living out our vision to be a church 'not for ourselves' but for others in the city (Rom 15:3) In this newsletter there will be more information about how we will be doing that. All who read this are invited to help us become a church that seeks the peace of the city (Jer.29:4ff.)

(continued from page 4)

GOSPEL ECONOMICS

become rich. Understanding the riches we have already received in Christ liberates us from the need to make an idol of our possessions and motivates us to invest our wealth, talents, and time in the eternal kingdom of God.

Now What?

How can we apply this practically at Redeemer Presbyterian Church? On October 28th a congregational meeting will be held during which the 2002 Budget will be presented. This is always an exciting time as we celebrate what God has done in our midst, and look forward to the things planned for the coming year. In preparation for that meeting, you will be receiving a letter and a brochure entitled "Be a Part of It." The brochure includes a pledge card that we encourage all of our members and regular attendees to fill out. This information, though not binding, helps us plan on what our resources will be. Between now and October 28th, prayerfully consider how you might

invest in the work of Redeemer, both in year-end giving 2001, and planning for 2002.

Here are some principles to reflect on as you consider your role in God's vision at Redeemer:

1. Giving is a joyful response to God's grace (2 Corinthians 8:8-9)
2. Giving should be in significant proportions. The Old Testament believers were required to give 10%, which in light of God's mercy to us in Christ should be a kind of minimum guideline for giving. We are commanded to give sacrificially (2 Corinthians 8:3) and according to our ability (Acts 11:29).
3. Giving should be thoughtful and systematic. (1 Corinthians 8:10-11). Spontaneous giving often lacks the sacrifice and proportionality commanded by God, and allows our circumstances and emotions to dictate our generosity.

Thank you again for your ongoing investment in God's Kingdom in New York City through Redeemer Presbyterian Church.