

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

NOVEMBER 2002

## MANNA AND MONEY

BY TIM KELLER

“...God provided for the material needs of the children of Israel with manna.”

In the wilderness God provided for the material needs of the children of Israel with manna. Every morning the manna appeared on the ground and the Israelites went out to get it with the following instruction: “Each one is to gather as much as he needs. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent. The Israelites did as they were told: some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, he who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.” (Exodus 16:16-18)

The text tells us that some individuals were more able gatherers than others (“some gathered

much, some little.”) But though the manna was gathered unequally it was distributed equally. Every family got one “omer” for each person in the tent. (Some commentators have believed that the ‘evening out’ happened miraculously, but since John Calvin’s time the consensus has been that the Israelites pooled the manna and kept the agreed-upon ration.)

The apostle Paul makes some remarkable inferences from the manna provision. In 2 Corinthians he urges the Corinthian church to give generously to the collection for the poor in Jerusalem (cf. 1 Cor 16:1-4; Acts 11:27-30; Gal 2:1-10.) Then

he says: “Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: ‘He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little.’ (2 Cor 8:13-15) When Paul quotes Exodus 16:18 he is making a very direct connection between manna and money. What does it mean?

First, Paul means that our money should be seen to be just as much a gift of God’s grace as was the manna. God met the  
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## ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD

BY NANCY PRENTIS-BARTER, HFNY VOLUNTEER

“There is an antidote to the pervasive feeling of powerlessness brought on by the collapse of our misplaced hopes...”

Times are tough, and this city – so recently flush with prosperity – now hobbles along, crippled by rising unemployment rates, sliding stock prices, and a population with ever-diminishing expectations about what lies ahead.

There is an antidote to the pervasive feeling of powerlessness brought on by the collapse of our misplaced hopes, and we find it exemplified by God’s people throughout Scripture and history: **serve others**. In Acts 3:6, Peter, when confronting the brokenness of man in the form of a beggar, didn’t look away: “Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” He had

no great wealth or earthly power as we typically know it. He gave from what was his ‘of the moment.’ Peter used his God-given power to offer this broken man a gift far greater than a few coins, and far more than he ever could have hoped for, the ability to walk.

The holiday season is fast approaching, and with it, the line between the haves and have-nots becomes ever more apparent. Though many of us may not have the same financial resources

as in previous years, if you’re looking to grasp God’s blessings to find a deeper fulfillment in life, there’s no better way than to serve.

In a city with needs beyond any we have seen in years, there is no shortage of ways to serve. Hope for New York makes it easy for you to get plugged in by providing short and long-term opportunities to serve in faith-based charities throughout the city. Some of the organizations and events

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## MANNA AND MONEY

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physical-material needs of the Israelites by bringing manna within their reach. So God meets our physical-material needs by bringing financial income within our reach. The Hebrews had to go out and gather the manna daily, and some were better gatherers than others. So we must go out to 'earn our daily bread' each day, and some are better money-makers than others.

The reasons for the disparity between gatherers are complex. One reason you might gather more manna (or money) is because you work harder and faster. But another reason you might gather more is because of abilities (size and speed, or intellectual gifts and so on) that are natural endowments which you did not 'earn' but simply received from God. So in the end, what you gather is yours by God's grace. You could just as easily have been born into circumstances in which all your hard work and gathering would result in poverty and starvation.

Second, Paul means that the money we make beyond our personal needs must be shared and used to build up community. The Exodus/2 Corinthians connection shows that God has this standard in his mind for how we use our money. The money we gather can be spent on and consumed by us only to the extent that it supplies what we really "need." Beyond that we must share our money to meet the needs of others and strengthen the community.

But the Bible will not grant the premise that because you gathered the money you have absolute rights over it—it was

the gift of God to us. And it is evident from Exodus 16 that God has in his mind this standard whether we do or not: we are not to spend money on ourselves beyond our basic needs for a safe, healthy life. Paul not only applies this principle of manna to money in 2 Cor 8:15, but in 1 Tim 6:6-10 he tells us to "be content with food and clothing."

This cannot mean that all Christians are to live at subsistence level. There are too many rich persons (Abraham, Job, Philemon) who are not called to divest themselves of their wealth. There should be Christian communities within every human community—including affluent ones.

What this means is that we are obligated to keep our living costs down, to seek to live at the 'lower end' of the bracket of our particular socio-economic community, and to give away all the income we can. Almost certainly what Moses and Paul think of as 'basic needs' is lower than the living-standard-expectation of the average professional person in the U.S.

Craig Blomberg is the author of an excellent book called *Neither Riches nor Poverty: A Biblical Theology of Possessions* (Apollos, 1999.) Near the end of the book he shares some personal information. His full-time seminary professor salary and his wife's half-time secretary salary puts them at \$4,000 below the median income of the average household in their relatively affluent Denver suburb. However, they live in one of the 'lower end' homes of their partic-

ular town. Blomberg says that his family saves, goes out to eat, goes to sport and cultural events, and gives one another gifts pretty much like their neighbors—only they do so with considerably less frequency. As a result of watching their spending in these ways, they have been able to 'push the envelope' so that they now give 30% of their annual income away annually. He indicates that no one in his family feels that this is a major hardship—nor a particularly difficult accomplishment.

In Paul's application of the manna-principle in 2 Corinthians he tells us that the needs of others around us must be a major determinant of the magnitude of our giving. Let me give a rather simple illustration. In the aftermath of September 11th, Redeemer experienced a major influx of new people and faced a huge increase in spiritual, emotional, and material needs. But 9-11 also flattened our economy, putting hundreds of Redeemer people out of work, including a healthy percentage of our leaders and key givers. As a result, while the needs have increased enormously, our income has lagged far behind. There are more people to care for this year than last year, but many of the people who have given over the years to support the ministry cannot do so now.

Manna that was hoarded became "maggoty" and rancid (Exodus 16:20.) Would it be true to the Biblical metaphor to conclude that money that **could** be shared but which is kept for yourself will rot your soul? I believe it might.

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### REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

Buddy Mungo

Dave Jacobs

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM  
EAST 69TH BETWEEN PARK AND LEXINGTON  
services at 9:30 • 11:15 • 6:00

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

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## ALL THE MONEY...

sponsored by Hope offer help during the holiday season by providing volunteers to serve meals, donate and wrap gifts, to sponsor Christmas parties, to name a few. This holiday season, HFNY and its affiliate ministries are experiencing a shortage of volunteers and, without this most important resource, a large portion of the city's needy population will be left without care.

Please consider lending us a hand, on your own or with your Fellowship Group.

Following is a list of opportunities offered by Hope for New York this holiday season.

### Angel Tree

Saturday, December 7th  
11 AM - 3 PM  
Manhattan Bible Church  
401 W 205th St.

In association with Prison Fellowship, we solicit gifts for the children of prisoners. We then sponsor a Christmas party

**Needed:** Gift collectors & transporters, phone callers, party planners, entertainment  
Contact Joe Ricci at (212) 808-4460x114

### His Toy Store

Saturday, December 14th  
9 AM - 5 PM  
Fort George Church 1525 Saint Nicholas Ave. (at 186th St.)

We solicit donations for new & used toys to be sold for a nominal fee to poor families in Upper Manhattan & the Bronx. We then wrap the gifts for them.

**Needed:** Toy donations, toy collectors & transporters, greeters, security, wrappers, Spanish translators, child care workers, bakers.  
Contact Joe Ricci at (212) 808-4460x114

### St. Paul's House Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 17th  
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM  
Holy Cross Church 329 West 42nd Street (between 8th & 9th Ave..)

We put on a dinner for homeless men & women

**Needed:** greeters, food servers, entertainment  
Contact Albin Sadar at (212) 228-8890

## STEWARDSHIP UPDATE BY DAVID BISGROVE

In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches us to pray with these words: *"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"* The primary means through which God's kingdom is modeled is the Church, and one of the primary means by which we participate in 'kingdom work' is through the investment of the resources God has given us in his Church. To that end, this update allows you to better understand how you can invest in God's Kingdom through Redeemer.

At the time of this writing, Redeemer is approximately \$200K behind our projected 2002 income. **To reach our budgeted income, we will have to receive \$1.7M in the last three months of 2003.** If the current giving continues on this trend, we will have substantially fewer resources for ministry in 2003. This presents a great challenge given that there are 600 more people coming to Redeemer every week than we had one year ago. To help you think through how you can invest in the mission of the Kingdom through Redeemer several resources have been made available:

1. Read Tim Keller's article in this newsletter carefully and con-

sider how you can financially assist Redeemer in 2002 and 2003. Are you giving at least 10% of your gross income to the work of the Kingdom? How much of what you give is going to the Church?

2. Redeemer's Website

(www.redeemer.com) has a special section on the front page devoted to Stewardship. On the web you can find:

- a. Two Fellowship Group Studies titled "Kingdom, Mission, and Money" have been written and are available for small group discussion.
- b. A 20 day personal devotional to assist you in your understanding of what the Bible says about how our heart should relate to our money.
- c. A 12 minute video on Redeemer's approach to Stewardship.
- d. Sermons by Tim Keller on the Gospel and our money.
- e. An on-line pledge card to help you commit a certain amount of your income to the work of Redeemer in 2003.

Please pray for the work of God's Kingdom through Redeemer, and if you are a member and/or friend of our church, please consider how you can assist us in the coming months.

## NOVEMBER IS OFFICER NOMINATION MONTH

How Do I Nominate Someone?

You must be a member to nominate someone.

1. Ask the person that you want to nominate for elder\*, deacon\* or deaconess\* if he or she is a member and willing to be considered for the office.

2. Obtain a nomination form from Redeemer's website at www.redeemer.com (under the "News" menu, click on Officer Nominations) or pick up a form at any service at the information center.

3. You must FAX the form with the nominee's name(s) and your signature to the church office attention: Andrea Clark at 212.808.4465.

4. The deadline for submitting nominations is November 30, 2002.

\* See story on page 4 in this issue for officer qualifications.

## NEW OFFICER NOMINATIONS

### DEACON/DEACONESS

NOMINEES: Nominees should be Christians for at least three years and members of the Redeemer for at least one year; OR, a Christian for at least three years and a regular Redeemer attendee who has been committed to Redeemer as their primary place of worship for at least two years and a member for at least half a year of the two years that they have been attending Redeemer.

ELDER NOMINEES: At the time of nomination, an elder nominee should have been a Christian for at least three years and a Redeemer member for at least one year. Note: Elder nominations occur only once a year DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER.

**Please note that the information regarding "New Officer Qualifications" printed in the October Newsletter (Page 3) is superseded by the information printed here.**

## SEX AND THE CITY OPERA

An Open Forum

10 November 2002

2 performances! @ 5:30PM and 7:30PM

A concert of opera arias and duets about sex performed by:

Mark Oswald	Thomas Barrett
Gregory Turay	Belinda Oswald
Angela Horn	Michelle Jennings

Lecture by Dr. Timothy Keller

Senior Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Open-microphone questions and answers

86th and West End Avenue

St. Paul and St. Andrew Methodist Church

**Free Admission**

## ANNUAL DIACONATE MERCY FUND OFFERING

**A**t all services Sunday, December 8, 2002, the Diaconate will receive their annual mercy fund offering. We are currently helping more people for longer periods of time, and expect that trend to continue in 2003. If we receive the same dollar amount as last year from this year's special offering in December, and we continue to distribute funds at the current rate, we expect a shortfall that could be as high as \$100,000 by the end of next year. We are so grateful for the outpouring of generosity that so many of you have provided year after year. We look to you now to give sacrificially as we continue to help those in our midst without resources to meet their basic needs. Thank you in advance for your help.