

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

FEBRUARY 2004

## THE FIVE MINISTRY FRONTS OF REDEEMER

BY: TIM KELLER

*What is the center of your life?*

A couple of years ago a British friend of mine paid Redeemer a complement. He said that Redeemer was unique in that it emphasized such a diversity of ministry commitments: gospel revival, evangelism to the secular, small groups, concern for the poor, integration of faith and work, and church planting. Of course I was grateful for the complement of being 'balanced,' but as time has gone on I've realized how important his insight was. Let me unpack it.

### THE GOSPEL AND IT'S IMPLICATIONS.

Of course, foundational to everything we do is the gospel: God has entered the world in Jesus Christ to achieve a salvation that we could not achieve for ourselves and thereby renew the whole world. This good news is first of all *grace-centered*. Jesus lived the life we should live but won't, and he paid the penalty we owe for the life we do live but shouldn't. So we are not reconciled to God through our efforts and record (as in all other religions) but through his efforts and record.

Second, this good news is *kingdom-centered*. Jesus is not ultimately saving individual souls by removing them from the world,

but rather he is bringing the life and power of God down into the material world to eventually renew and restore it. So we do not only urge individuals to be converted, but we also seek the peace and justice in our city. Of course, these grace and kingdom emphases lead us to be very *city-positive* also, as God directs in Jeremiah 29:1-7 and as seen in Paul's urban-centered mission in the book of Acts. Grace-centeredness leads us to love the city, not despise it. Kingdom-mindedness leads citizens of the 'city of God' to be very *best* citizens of their earthly city.

### THE FIVE MINISTRY FRONTS IN THE CITY

From this understanding of the gospel flow five ways to minister in the city. First, we are a church that seeks to be highly effective in *evangelism* to skeptical people. The gospel (unlike religious moralism) produces people who do not disdain those who disagree with them. Rather than simply confront those who disbelieve, the gospel leads us to sympathetically find ways to address baseline cultural hopes and aspirations with Christ and his saving work.

Even our worship is *evangelistic* worship. We can do both

deep edification of believers and effective evangelism in worship at the same time because the gospel of grace is always the main thing that *everyone* needs. What Christians need to grow is the application of the gospel to different points of need. But that is main thing non-believers need as well. So worship and preaching must present the gospel in a fresh way each week. Our worship also models to Christians how to articulate the gospel coherently in a secular, pluralistic culture.

Second, we are a church that seeks to spiritually form people mainly through *community*. Many who get an 'A' on their doctrinal exam can still be mired in spiritual blindness and deadness unless the implications of the gospel are worked out practically through continual reflection, admonition, and modeling *in community*. Growth in grace and wisdom and character does not happen so much in classes and instruction as in deep family-relationships and in counter-cultural communities where the gospel's distinct implications for our use of sex, money, and power are lived out. There is a strong individualistic strain in American Christians. They often will drop in to church for inspiration but not give themselves

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# A HUMBLE CHRISTMAS STORY

BY: MIKE O'NEILL

*A season for giving and receiving.*

St. Paul's House Christmas dinner is an annual event that has been hosted for the past 13 years by St. Paul's Church and Hope for New York to serve approximately 300 homeless men and women a traditional Christmas dinner. They also listen to live music and an inspiring speaker followed by receiving gifts. This year annual dinner took place on December 16<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m., at the Holy Cross Church facility in the Times Square area.

When I decided to volunteer this year for the event, I naturally did not expect to gain or learn anything as my main purpose was to serve this needy community, not to receive anything in return. I was wrong. A very long line outside the gate had been voluntarily formed. When I informed some of them that the gate wouldn't be open for another hour and that we weren't even ready in transferring the food (let alone setting up), one man's answer struck me with both its wit and its poignancy; "It's okay, it's not like we can go home and come back later." The point I'm trying to make is that I finally realized how these guests have unknowingly served me more than they will ever know. Living in New York City is not really the best place to continuously be humble and have a serving heart on a daily basis. God once again gently showed me His humbleness in these people's eyes and faces. Throughout the whole night



HFNY and St. Pauls House - partners in compassion.

when we were serving them the three-course meal and distributing the gifts to the last bag, I didn't serve them, they served me. This article should be dedicated to each and every one of the more than 50 volunteers who came that day to help with setting up and decorating the hall, running errands, bringing desserts, wrapping up the gifts, caroling, serving food and beverages, cleaning up afterwards, even manning the bathroom area which was the last place anyone would want to be. I was touched, knowing how some of these volunteers had to take a half-day off from work, or when one of them still came to help out even when she was terribly ill, or when one of them had to really rush in

from work and hadn't had anything to eat all day and basically just had the worst day, or when we had to personally ask more than one volunteer who had helped out since noon to stay put until the rest of the evening finished. To the volunteers, thank you for making the homeless and the lonely feel like home when they came to our dinner party. Christmas is one of the most emotional times in the year. It is everyone's dream to have happiness, joy, and hope in their lives. Thank you for sharing yours with all of us that night. It was a privilege to serve and share the happiness that God has given us with our brothers and sisters who need it the most. Thank you for being their friends and mine.

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## REDEEMER REPORT

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Fred Liedtke

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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM  
East 69TH (Between Park & Lexington)  
services at 10:30AM • 5:45PM

ETHICAL CULTURE  
West 64TH and CPW  
service at 9:15AM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH  
Corner of West 79TH and Broadway  
service at 7:00PM

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a) to the city in service and b) to the Body in deep community. But only that kind of commitment will work the gospel into every part of their lives.

Third, Redeemer must do ministry in both *word and deed*. The Bible's basic narrative plot line shows that the restoration of the whole world—material and spiritual—is the aim of salvation. Christian churches therefore must work for justice and peace in their neighborhoods through service even as they call individuals to conversion and the new birth. Indifference to the poor and disadvantaged means there has not been a true grasp of one's salvation by sheer *grace*. A church that grasps the gospel will be more sacrificially involved with the poor than many 'liberal' churches and more effectively evangelistic than many 'conservative' churches. It will be 'holistic' in its ministry.

Fourth, our church must help its people integrate *faith and work* for cultural renewal. Most American Christians 'seal off' their faith-beliefs from the way they work in their vocation. The gospel is seen as a means of finding individual peace and *not* as a 'world-view'— a comprehensive interpretation of reality that affects all we do. But the gospel has a deep and vital impact on how we do art, business, government, media, and scholarship. Therefore Redeemer is highly committed to supporting Christians' engagement with culture, helping them work with excellence, distinctiveness, and accountability in their professions and in 'secular work.' Developing humane yet creative and excellent business environments out of our understanding of the gospel can be part of the work of restoring creation in the power of the Spirit. Bringing Christian joy, hope, and truth to embodiment in the arts is also

part of this work.

Fifth, our church must be the catalyst for *a major movement of new churches*. If over the next generation we could see hundreds and thousands of new churches in the NYC area which are committed to the same five 'ministry fronts' out of a similar commitment to the gospel, it would increase the number of active Christians living and working in the culture-forming center by 10-20 times.

## WHY THEY ARE ALL CRUCIAL

It is quite demanding to press forward on all of these fronts at once. Traditionally, churches that are very good at one or two of these emphases are weak on the others. So why should we at Redeemer try to do them all?

First, we do this because they are all required by the gospel. They are not optional. The grace-orientation of the gospel makes evangelistic worship and deep community both possible and necessary. The kingdom-orientation of the gospel makes holistic ministry and the integration of faith and work imperative. Both grace and kingdom-mindedness provide the motivation for the hard work of church planting.

Second, we do this because they are all inter-dependently necessary if we are going to have a long-term impact on the city. Holistic ministry, in which Christians work sacrificially for the common good, is the necessary context for any convincing evangelistic call to believe in Jesus. (Why should the people of the city listen to us if we are simply out to increase our own tribe and its power?) And culture cannot be changed simply through numerous conversions if Christians continue to 'seal off' their gospel-beliefs from how they work and live in public. Finally, church planting

is ultimately the only way to increase all these other ministries in the city. Only if we do all of these ministries at once will any of them be effective. They are inter-dependent and inter-locking.

It is evident to me that many Christians are beginning to move into the city after college to live and work. That is wonderful! But the city-transformation God calls for in Jeremiah 29:1-7 will not happen if Christians do not re-orient themselves once they arrive here. Frankly, most Christians are not good at speaking winsomely and sympathetically about their faith to skeptical people. Also, modern Christians are highly individualistic — dropping in to various church meetings for inspiration but not committing themselves to deep community. In addition, many come to use the city for fun and advancement rather than committing themselves to the common good and especially the needs of the poor. Finally, few have carefully thought out the implications of their Christian beliefs for the way they carry out their 'secular vocations.' Unless new Christians from New York and Christians new to New York are equipped to do ministry on all five fronts, the city will remain unchanged.

But if in New York City, the city that most influences our culture, we produce thousands of new church-communities which regularly win secular people to Christ, which seek the common good of the whole city especially the poor, and produce thousands of Christians who write plays, make movies, do creative journalism, begin effective and productive new businesses, use their money for others, and produce cutting-edge scholarship and literature then we will see our whole society changed and move toward hope, peace, justice, and unity.



## HOPE FOR NEW YORK VOLUNTEER FAIR

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*Use  
your gifts  
to give  
back.*

**H**ope for New York will hold its biannual Volunteer Fair on Sunday, February 22nd after all Redeemer worship services.

*This is your chance* to meet the directors and volunteers from our ministry partners face-to-face. Discover how you can use your talents in mentoring children. Express your artistic side in healing fellowship with emotionally struggling individuals. Participate in a building project that provides housing to low income families or get involved in a local renovation project at a church or ministry. Serve homeless men and women, or encourage teen mothers or those living with HIV and AIDS.

The ways to get involved are

too numerous to mention here, but you can meet all our partners at the volunteer fair! There are both individual and group opportunities. You can make a one-time, short-term or long-term commitment.

In addition, we continue to conduct **volunteer training orientations on Friday afternoons, from 12:00 p.m. to 12:45 p.m.** at our midtown office located at 271 Madison Avenue between 39<sup>th</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> Streets, suite 902. Feel free to bring your lunch. If you are unable to attend a midweek orientation, you may attend our Sunday class held the third Sunday of every month at the Hunter College West building on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor, room 505 from 1:00 p.m.

to 1:45 p.m. To register for our midweek or Sunday orientations, please contact Joe Ricci at **joe@hfn.org** or call **212.808.4460 x114**

Hope for New York sends out an email at the end of the month with information about upcoming special events, one-time and group opportunities, new projects and special needs. *We promise – only one email a month!*

To sign up for our monthly email update, please send an email to: **monthlyupdate@hfn.org** and put “subscribe” in the subject line. It is our privilege to partner with you to build a great city with our words and our work. Please plan on visiting us on Sunday, February 22nd or at an upcoming orientation.

### FINANCIAL SERVICES GROUP EVENT

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**February 27, Friday night, 7:00PM - 9:30PM**

Tim Keller talking about “Money: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly”

RSVP RedeemerFinance@yahoo.com

\$10.00 to offset room rental fees. Food and beverages provided.