

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

JANUARY 2005

REFLECTIONS ON FAITH AND POLITICS

BY: TIM KELLER

Post election, there has been an explosion of interest and debate about the relationship of religion to politics. Here are some things I believe Christians should keep in mind as they listen to and participate in this debate during the coming year(s).

First, we should recognize that politics is 'downstream' from culture. During this election both sides claimed to be 'battling for the soul of the culture.' But politics can only respond to major cultural trends, not create them. For example, in 1905 no politician, no matter how powerful, could have passed sexual harassment legislation. The culture had to change before such laws

could be formulated and enforced. Interestingly, even the Civil Rights movement of the 50's and 60's is now being seen as more of a religious movement than a political one. (See David L. Chappell's book *A Stone of Hope*, 2004.)

Culture changes when a society's mind, heart, and imagination is captured by new ideas that are developed by thinkers, expounded in both scholarly and popular forms, depicted in innumerable works of art, and then lived out attractively by communities of people who are committed to them. Politics only comes along later and responds to what is happening. It may resist or support cultural changes, but it can't generate them.

The current obsession with politics misses this. A particular group cannot 'change the culture' by taking power. Any group that simply goes after power without aiming to serve the common good will not win the hearts of society; the basic narratives animating such a group will not capture society's imagination. This is not to say that Christians should be less involved in politics than they are, for example, in scholarship, art, journalism, education, film-making, literature, and business. But we should not think that politics is any more central to the forging of culture than these other pursuits. It may, in the final analysis, be less so.

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A PROMISE OF HOPE

BY: JUDY CHA

"What do you suppose heaven would be like?" she asked. My thoughts about heaven had only been a fleeting contemplation prior to that night. Yet to Shu Islam, heaven was an anticipated and an unavoidable reality. She was dying of cancer and there was nothing more the medical experts could do for her. However, she didn't see death as the end. Death signified a hope of a new beginning, a new birth, a hope for a better future. This was the meaning of her question that night. I walked away being reminded and inspired by God's promise of hope.

A month after our visit, she gave an offering for the second time to Redeemer Counseling Services. She requested that the

funds be designated to provide financial assistance for couples and families in need of counseling. Her desire was for others to experience the joy and fulfillment that can be found in God-centered marriages and families. She and her husband, Shujaat, were having that kind of marriage and she wanted others to have it, too.

Shu Islam passed away January 6, 2004, at the age of 30. I imagine that there was a huge celebration upon her arrival in heaven. As an ultimate gift to Redeemer Counseling Services, she asked her friends and family to add to her donation to us. Nearly \$56,000 was donated in her memory. Since then, RCS has been able to help numerous couples and families with

much needed counsel. In addition, new programs are expected to begin in 2005, such as the Marriage Education Training to proactively care for couples and to enrich their relationships. Also, the Growing in Grace Group for women will be offered to cultivate and help maintain healthy relationships.

Shu embodied Christ in her generosity and love for others. She was a gift to those who knew her and unforgettable to those who loved her. Because of her, Redeemer Counseling Services has been able to expand our ministry and reach those who otherwise would be turned away. We are eternally grateful for the impact we were able to make in many lives on her behalf.

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LEADERS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

BY: KATHERINE LEARY

Cultivating leaders who can challenge the way things are always done and change the world for the better is not an easy process. In particular, it's hard to find individuals who are willing to accept any requirements of leadership - let alone leadership as we're called to do it as Christians. All leadership requires building follower-ship; Christian leadership requires us to do that with humility and risk-taking in ways that jeopardize our popularity and success in the eyes of the world. Kouzes and Posner conclude, "As it turns out, the world is not as difficult to change as its leaders are." (*Christian Reflections on The Leadership Challenge*)

In the Leadership 101 class this January and February, we will be addressing some of the challenges of becoming a good, gospel-centered

leader. The first week we'll tackle the subject "Why Lead?" It would be so much easier if someone would make the world the way it's supposed to be for us! We'll explore the mandates in Genesis and the New Testament to work as people made in God's image, doing the work he would have us do to renew his creation. "How to Lead?" is the most obvious next topic. Christ showed us: as a servant. "The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (Matthew 23: 11-12)

Through the shared experiences of the teachers from our own church, we'll explore how they have tried to apply "servant leadership" to our "king-of-the-hill" working environments. We'll also spend two weeks talking about the

front lines of leadership - how to create change when everyone seems to resist it and how to develop followers.

The Apostle Paul seemed to have experienced leadership challenges similar to our own. We can feel his pain when he writes the church in Corinth, to whom he devoted two years of his ministry. Soon after his departure they seemed to switch loyalties to a man with admirable oratory and wisdom. In the final class of this series, we'll look at lessons on leadership from the Apostle Paul. **LEADERSHIP 101**

January 9 - February 13

After morning worship at Hunter College; 12:05 to 1:15PM

Room 507, Hunter West

Teachers: Jensen Ko, Dave Kansas, Charlie Osewalt, Jerry Callaghan, and Katherine Leary

CENTER FOR FAITH AND WORK: INTER-ARTS FELLOWSHIP

Redeemer's Center for Faith and Work is officially launching its Inter-Arts Fellowship in January, with our first monthly meeting on January 28 at Redeemer's new offices. The Fellowship will bring together those working in the fine arts, performing arts, entertainment, media, design, and/or crafts for a monthly gathering to connect with each other and deepen our experience as artists and Christians in the city.

Gatherings will include worship, teaching, discussion, testimonies, performance/presentation, and fellowship. Visit the Arts Ministries page at www.faihandwork.org or contact arts@redeemer.com for more info. Topics and specific information about each gathering

will be posted on the website monthly, so check back often!

The Inter-Arts Fellowship has emerged out of a variety of Arts Ministry programs over the last two years, including existing ministries to musicians and dancers, our Hollywood Worldviews book group, response to the Arts e-Newsletter, and group and individual meetings with various Redeemer artists. More recent initiatives include the Threads New Works Series and artist Christmas parties held at two of our arts leaders' homes.

The Threads New Works Series held a public reading in December of a new one-act play by a California playwright.

Threads was conceived to develop plays, musicals, and screenplays of the highest caliber that embody a Christian worldview, whether overt or not. Further readings are scheduled for January. If you would like to attend a reading, please email newworks@redeemer.com to be added to our invitation list. For more info about the project, to submit a script, or to audition to be an actor in a future reading, visit the Threads page at www.faihandwork.org.

If you would like more information about Redeemer's Arts Ministries, please contact Luann Purcell, arts@redeemer.com or 212-808-4460 x158.

**Redeemer Inter-Arts Fellowship begins monthly on January 28 - 7:00 PM
the Redeemer Offices [1359 Broadway (between 36th and 37th) 4th floor]**

For more Info: www.faihandwork.org

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

Carl de Prado

Fred Liedtke

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

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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

Therefore, the level of apocalyptic rhetoric (on both sides) is very discouraging. After the election many conservatives were saying “The 60’s are over! The culture is changing!” and many liberals were saying “Our dream of a free society is crumbling.” Such talk is not only overblown but dangerous. It is dangerous because it makes an idol out of politics—it makes politics the ultimate thing. When people no longer believe in Truth, there’s nothing left but power, and then politics is everything. That’s not how Christians should see it! So culture is not changed by politics — politics only slows down or speeds up cultural trends.

Second, we must recognize that neither political party is driven by the breadth, balance or basis of Biblical ethical concerns. The Enlightenment overturned the premise on which all traditional cultures had been built when it asserted the sovereignty of the individual over the family and the community. It made individual fulfillment the ultimate good. This idolization of the individual is so dominant today that it is the bedrock assumption of both sides in U.S. political debates. Liberals think government should control and redistribute income but should leave people free to do whatever they choose in the area of personal morality. Their radical individualism comes out in their views of abortion and marriage.

Conservatives, on the other hand, think government should control and forbid personal immorality but should leave people free to do whatever they choose with their money. Their radical individualism comes out in their deep distrust of the public sector and on their understanding of poverty as mainly a failure of personal responsibility.

If you are more concerned about abortion, changing sexual mores, and the severe secularization of the public square—then you vote Republican. If you are more concerned about racial discrimination, marginalization of the poor, and the erosion of the environment — you vote Democrat. Of course the problem is that all of these things are concerns for anyone

reads and trusts the Bible. What are we to do? I think each Christian will have to find his or her own ‘tie-breaker’ among the various Biblical concerns (such as abortion or racial justice) and then choose a candidate.

But as we do that we should not idolize one party and demonize the other. The two-party system does not serve Christians well. Currently it virtually forces us to leave half our faith at the door — either personal wholeness ethics or social wholeness ethics. Our spirit toward those in the other party should be cordial, respectful, and humble. Unfortunately there are few voices speaking with such tones in the political world today. What a testimony to the gospel it would be if the great majority those speaking publicly with such a spirit were Christians!

Third, we ought to recognize new opportunities for faith-rooted reasoning in public discourse. My first two points sound pretty negative about Christian involvement in politics, so I’ll end on a more upbeat note. For quite a few years high, hard secularism dominated our public institutions under the guise of being religiously ‘neutral.’ But hard secularism is itself an alternate belief system about spiritual reality, human nature, the relationship of objective to subjective knowledge, and so on. This is reluctantly and slowly being acknowledged now in the academy. For 50 years there has been a consensus that if you want to publicly argue for a law you must use a rational or secular reason for your proposal, not a religious one.

For example, Mario Cuomo recently said that he was against capital punishment not because it was immoral (since, he said, we shouldn’t use religious-moral reasoning in politics) but because it was ‘bad, unfair, debasing’ to people. (See E.J.Dionne, *One Electorate Under God?* p.25.) That, he said, was a secular rather than a religious reason for opposition to the death penalty. But why is it debasing, in Cuomo’s view? He is assuming a view of human nature and human dignity that can’t be empirically or rationally proven. It is a faith-assumption.

The philosophers Nicholas Wolterstorff and Robert Audi debated this issue in *Religion in the Public Square* (1997.) Audi insisted that we must argue with ‘secular reasons,’ not only ‘religious reasons,’ in the public square. But Wolterstorff responded with an interesting example. He said he believes that the poor have the right to the means of basic life-sustenance — and he believes that because of his reflection on Biblical teaching. But he can’t think of a purely non-religious reason for that belief at all. Anyone who holds that belief will in some way assume views of human nature and dignity and human solidarity that are all deeply moral, faith-assumptions. Wolterstorff wins the argument. It is essentially impossible to conduct public discourse with only ‘secular’ beliefs.

Even Richard Rorty, the most prominent post-modern philosopher, recently conceded that he now sees no good warrant for excluding religious reasoning from public discourse, and he credited Wolterstorff for changing his mind. (See *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Spring, 2003, issue.) So the high noon-tide of secularism may be past. Wilfred McClay’s “*Two Kinds of Secularism*” (The Wilson Quarterly, Summer, 2000) outlines how it may be possible for both devoutly religious people and hard-secularists to listen to and learn from one another not just in politics but in public life in general.

Unfortunately, the over-heated rhetoric of some Christians right now frightens secular people and makes it hard for them to concede any ground at all. If Christians are to capitalize on the new opportunity for integrating their faith with their work in public culture we must show that, on the basis of our own theology, we can respect the wisdom and contributions of those who don’t believe as we do but are nevertheless created in the image of God.

In summary, I find many reasons for both caution and optimism about the future of Christians’ involvement in the public culture.

A ST. PAUL'S HOUSE VOLUNTEER, INTERVIEWED

BY: EMILY MCWHORTER

Recently, I caught up with Albin Sadar as he was preparing for the St. Paul's House Christmas dinner and I asked him a few questions. Albin has attended Redeemer since 1991. He is a former Deacon.

How did you get involved volunteering?

A friend of mine, Marie Carnivale, started as the liaison between St. Paul's House and Redeemer. She was there every Thursday morning and had no one else helping her out. So the first week I showed up, she was almost in tears. She was getting burned out at that point and said she needed someone to help. I said I would help so I just started coming every week. That was in the fall of 1991.

What kind of organization is St. Paul's House?

It is kind of like a half-way house. It started about 55 years ago. People come in, get cleaned up and turn their lives around to follow Christ.

How do you feel that giving your time has affected this ministry?

Especially in the early days I always felt I walked away on a Thursday morning getting more than I gave. Even though the guests have literally nothing, they are just unbelievable, amazing people. You get to appreciate them and care about them in a very deep way and realize when you have nothing, you appreciate whatever it is that you get. I give the message before the meal. A lot of times I'll share from things personally in my life because the bottom line is that everyone is very similar. A lot of the things about addiction or problems that we go through are just like it says in the scripture: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man." The results may be different but these are common things that we all have to deal with.

What are some of the programs you have implemented?

One thing I did start was the St. Paul's movie night, which has been going on for four years now. It is the last Tuesday of every month, and we have about 40 people max. The guests range from people off the street to people in low-income housing. The first movie we showed was "Chariots of Fire" because it is a great movie plus it has Christian themes. I wanted to show movies that were not necessarily Christian but had a Christian theme in them. We have shown movies ranging from "It's A Wonderful Life" to "Signs" to "Hoosiers."



The biggest reason why I started movie night and why I think it is such a cool HFNY idea is because I felt these guys could go and get a meal anywhere. They can even go to a chapel service anywhere. But they don't get a chance to socialize, and nobody cares about their opinion. So here it is just like we are having people over to our house. There is free pizza, popcorn and soda, and people come and feel like they are part of society. Afterwards we have a discussion, and people share their thoughts. Everyone wants to feel like they have value, like their opinions matter. I think the best part of movie night is that people get to share and to talk, and somebody is listening. HFNY springs for the tab, and all we need to do is show up and run the thing.

How did movie night get started?

That is what is so great about HFNY. If somebody does come up with an idea like that and is inspired to help folks in a unique way and fill a need or a void that some people haven't even thought about, HFNY would love to run with it. That's what it's there for. If you look at the list of volunteer opportunities and notice there is no one serving in a certain area, you may want to call HFNY to ask if anyone is doing anything about it. HFNY may encourage you to do something.

What does a typical Thursday morning at St. Paul's look like?

Our service begins at 7:25 a.m. exactly. I try to make it exactly a half hour service. We finish at 7:55, and then the guests go downstairs to where we serve breakfast. We are literally out of there in 45 minutes to an hour.

So someone could do this before work then?

Oh yeah. You can literally walk out of there by 8:15, and a lot of people are within walking distance of their work. It gets you up early, and you can volunteer even just once a month. It's great because you get a chance to literally share your faith like we should, and that's what is so exciting about it! I love talking to the guests about passages of scripture that mean something to me. And the more it means something to me and touches me, the more the guests know I am talking from the heart and am not just some guy giving a sermon. You are living life and struggling just like they are but in a different area and in a different way.

What do you think serving people is all about, and why should others serve?

There are so many things to do - like this movie night. You could say, "Hey, I like movies." You might not care about the

CATCH THE VISION: CHRIST CHURCH NYC

Christ Church New York City is the most recent church plant in Manhattan established by the Redeemer Church Planting Center. Because John Mason, the founding minister of Christ Church NYC, is an Anglican minister, Christ Church is being established as an independent church in the evangelical Anglican tradition.

In January, 2001, John and his wife Judy moved to Manhattan from Sydney, Australia, where John had been the rector of one of Sydney's largest Anglican churches. He had previously planted a new church in Canberra, Australia's capital, founded Trinity School, and taught New Testament at Canberra's Anglican theological seminary.

John was attracted by Redeemer's invitation to minister in Manhattan because he shared Redeemer's gospel vision. In particular he was drawn by the strategy of reaching the City with God's transforming news by establishing new churches, for this was a similar strategy to which he and other Anglican ministers in Sydney were committed.

Christ Church NYC is developing two congregations - one at 9:00AM at the Seafarers and International House, 123 East 15th Street @ Irving Place, and the other at 6:00PM at 'First Church,' 317 East 50th Street, between 1st and 2nd Avenues.

Consistent with the strategy adopted by churches involved in church planting, Redeemer encouraged John Mason to invite members of Redeemer to join this new ministry venture. A number from Redeemer have accepted the challenge, including Hyun and Anne Sim, and their baby daughter, Emmanuelle.

Hyun comments:

"I always considered myself a quintessential Redeemerite. The thought of joining a new church plant was far from my mind. However, God had other ideas! Challenged by Redeemer's gospel vision my wife and I connected with Christ Church NYC this past fall.

"I was initially apprehensive at the prospect of leaving the all-too familiar anonymity that comes with any large church. At a smaller church, would my every flaw

become obvious to the entire congregation? Was I spiritually ready for the greater responsibility and sacrifice that committing to a church plant demands?

"An integral component of Redeemer's community-based vision consists of planting churches throughout the New York metro area. Like any church plant, we need more people who share a similar vision and passion to get involved. Under John's ministry you will also be enriched and refreshed by God's Word.

"With Redeemer's vision of church-planting there comes a time when one must be ready to move on from the mother church to further God's greater glory. You too may want to ask yourself before God whether it's time for you to embrace the risk, danger and excitement inherent in Christianity. It's a new year full of gospel opportunity in a new church..."

Find out more about Christ Church NYC by visiting its website christchurchnyc.com, or by calling John Mason at 212-593-3124.

ST. PAUL'S VOLUNTEER, INTERVIEW

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problem of homelessness or feeling left out in society, but you may find that it just fits your personality. Don't get the idea that you actually have to suffer. Hebrews says, "For the joy set before Him, He endured the cross." There has to be a joy in serving. I've had volunteers afterwards say, "I did my good deed." That's not the idea either. The spirit will really lead you into

these things, and you'll feel a joy. It's okay to have fun when you are serving people because the spirit of joy - it's a fruit of the spirit - is going to come through you and reach these folks in their heart, and that is going to be contagious. They are not going to feel like you are doing something because you want to gain brownie points with God or good karma or something.

They are going to feel the spirit of God moving through you. So it's okay to have fun. You better have fun or you may be in the wrong place.

Editor's Note: If you would like more information about this, or any of HFNY's volunteer opportunities, please contact: volunteer@hfny.org

EDUCATOR'S GROUP

"Martin Luther King: Role Model for Cultural Renewal"

Event changed from January 16th to Friday, February 4, 2005, 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Main Conference Room, Redeemer Office 1359 Broadway, 4th Floor

Register online (\$5.00) at www.faihandwork.org

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Esther Ahn (center) after running 26.2 miles in the New York City Marathon to raise support and awareness for Hope for New York, Redeemer's Mercy Ministry. Esther raised over \$1,000! Thank you, Esther!

WHOSE MONEY IS IT?

A Financial Seminar on the relationship between your heart & your money

Please consider attending this interactive workshop on the principles of biblical stewardship at our new office location.

The seminar provides practical assistance in areas such as budgeting, use of credit cards, etc.

Schedule: Saturday, January 22nd (9:00AM-4:00PM)

Location: Redeemer Office, 1359 Broadway, 4th Floor

Cost: \$20 (OR \$25 at the door)

Register now online at www.redeemer.com