

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

APRIL 2005

CATHEDRALS AND TABERNACLES

BY: TIM KELLER

Church buildings can enormously enhance, rather than undermine, the incarnational shape of Redeemer's ministry.

When Redeemer first began, we make a deliberate decision not to own a worship building. As a result, today Redeemer is one of the largest congregations in the country that does not own any property. So why are we now beginning to think about owning buildings?

The Problem of Church Buildings

In 1975 Howard Snyder wrote a classic little book called *The Problem of Wineskins*. One chapter was "Are Church Buildings Superfluous?" He pointed out that the vital early Christian church had no church buildings until 200 AD. Conclusion: church buildings are by no means necessary for either numerical growth or spiritual depth.

Snyder goes on to say that church buildings can also have a detrimental effect on congregational ministry. He writes: "The gospel says, 'Go [out],' but our church buildings say, 'Stay [in].'" *The gospel says, 'Seek the lost,' but our church buildings say, 'Let the lost seek the church.'*" (p.70, 1975 edition, IVP.)

Jesus came into the world incarnated as one of us, a true human being. Our ministry to the city must therefore also be incarnational. That means we are not to expect others to learn our language, adopt our concerns, come into a dedicated 'sacred' space (of which we are the caretakers,) and patronize our programs in order to meet God.

Rather we must learn the language of our city, address their concerns, and work for the common good of the whole community. We must come into the homes, workplaces, and public spaces of the city as servants. For centuries the western church has expected the world to 'come to church' if they wanted God, and church buildings have been the symbol and the vehicle for that immobility and pride.

Three Views of Church Buildings

Snyder speaks of three categories of churches with reference to buildings. First there is "The Cathedral Church" which virtually thinks of their church as the building. When they see their building they say, 'There's our church.' It is the complete non-incarnational mindset. The purpose of this church is simply to hold services. If the world wants to find Christ, 'Well, our doors are always open—here are our service times and the schedule of our programs.' Often there is inordinate pride and attachment to the very building itself with all sorts of confining rules designed to protect the edifice from the wear and tear of ministry.

Second, there is the "Body Church" which holds no property and holds all meetings in rented facilities and homes. Such a church has fewer limitations on its growth. It puts

much less of its income into building maintenance. And the lack of a building almost forces the congregation to be 'incarnational' in many ways. On the other hand, a church without a building also has some limitations in its ability to be 'incarnate.' It tends to draw members from all over the city instead of identifying with a specific place. The residents in the neighborhood in which it meets cannot really see the church as a real 'neighbor.' Because the church has no presence in the community during the week it is difficult to do shared projects that meet needs in the neighborhood.

Third, there is the "Tabernacle Church" which owns a building but sees it as a community center dedicated to the whole city that the local congregation also uses for worship. (That is why Snyder calls this a mobile, functional 'tabernacle' rather than a 'cathedral'.) Put another way, this building is a place to meet and serve the people of its neighborhood, where it can engage in shared projects that meet the needs of the whole community. (See M.Frost, A.Hirsch, *The Shape of Things to Come*.) Our sister church New Song in Harlem is a case in point. Their building is basically a community center for the whole neighborhood that the church also uses for its own gatherings.

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LIFE AND DEATH: BARELY COPING WITH ONE AND IGNORING THE OTHER

THE CHRISTIAN CAREGIVER'S PERSPECTIVE BY: BRIAN SUMNER

We all struggle with the problem of suffering and death. We seek meaning in situations that may appear hopeless and senseless to us. For those who are in one of the "caring" professions—pastoral care, nursing, social work, medicine, and others—trying to help people in the midst of suffering and even death is part of the daily routine.

However as we work in our vocations, our faith in God and our skills to serve as His instruments in providing comfort and hope sometimes fall short. We may find our confidence in the goodness of God shaken by the calamities in which we participate as someone who is supposed to provide the cure, or arrive at the solution which will make things right.

Often though, the situation doesn't have the ending we would choose. We want to incarnate Christ in the midst of these "bad outcomes," but we are not sure we are up to the challenge because of our own fears, frustrations, and doubts.

If you are a professional caregiver and need help in working more effectively with the suffering and dying from a Christian perspective, the Redeemer Healthcare Fellowship of the Center for Faith and Work is sponsoring an evening event you may want to attend. Entitled "Life and Death: Barely Coping with One and Ignoring the Other," the event will include a talk by Dr. James Avery, Medical Director of VNSNY Hospice, a Q&A afterward, and

socializing with your colleagues in-between. Dr. Avery will share his wisdom gained from many years of working with severely ill patients both in his practice as a pulmonologist/critical care specialist, and now through his hospice work. The goal is for us to come away better informed about what the scriptures teach on this subject, and to be better equipped to provide comfort and hope to the suffering and dying.

The event will be held at Redeemer Offices, 1359 Broadway at 36th Street on Friday, April 22 from 7:00-9:30PM.

You may register on-line (\$10) at www.faithandwork.org. or call 212 808-4460 x132 if you have questions.

A THANK YOU FROM HOPE FOR NEW YORK

BY: MICHAEL O'NEIL

The board of directors and staff of Hope for New York would like to thank you for the generous response to this year's Easter Sacrificial Offering.

The funds collected will be distributed to our affiliates by June. These affiliates are committed to reaching men, women and children throughout New York City who are suffering from a variety of difficult circumstances. Each affiliate approaches the individual's need from a holistic perspective – reaching mind, body and spirit.

To learn more about the organizations we support, review our many volunteer opportunities, or make a donation, please go to www.hfny.org. Thank you.

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REDEEMER REPORT

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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

The Future of Redeemer

Redeemer has been a 'Body Church' since its beginning and that has been a huge advantage to us. But it is time to become a 'Tabernacle Church.' This Fall we will conduct a Capital Fund Campaign to raise money for church planting, major ministry initiatives, and the purchase of the first of several buildings. (Since we are a movement, and not just one mega-church, we will have to purchase two to four buildings over the next decade.) Why? Some of the reasons were laid out in the March newsletter but here they are again, in brief.

1) As *Community* centers these buildings will define discrete neighborhoods for Redeemer to serve. We must provide services to our neighbors, no matter what they believe, that make our neighborhoods good places to live, and help our neighbors to be grateful that we are there.

2) As *Family* centers they will provide a rich array of support for families that will keep people in the city long-term: Christian schools, Christian after school programs especially for children who attend public schools,

daycare and baby-sitting, and recreational and educational programs for all.

3) As *Cultural* centers they will provide full-time arts-performance space. Their location in Manhattan will enable us to engage the broader culture through the arts. Since we have such a talented and growing artistic community, it would give these individuals a scope for Christian ministry not permitted in the secular venues.

4) As *Outreach* centers, these buildings will provide space for a wide variety of evangelistic programs, such as mid-day meetings for those in the business world, arts-based and discussion-based forums that show audiences how the gospel sheds light on the 'big questions' of life. These outreach events could be readily used by other churches.

5) As *Equipping* centers these buildings will provide much needed space for an emerging program of leadership development. We will be able to train Redeemer's own leaders, as well as those within vocational fields, helping them integrate their faith with their work. It will also house a Leadership Institute—a major new program

for recruiting and training new grads in world-view.

If all Redeemer wanted to do was evangelize and disciple people who stay a few years and then leave, we need nothing more than temporary worship space Sundays and apartments for small groups. But if we want to renew the very life of NYC and have an impact on our whole society we need to keep people in the city long-term and equip and support them for cultural engagement. To do that we need these centers.

Here is the main point of this article. Church buildings can enormously enhance, rather than undermine, the incarnational shape of Redeemer's ministry. However, we must be clear on *why* we are buying buildings. It is not to 'settle down' or 'get legitimate.' God forbid. In our first Capital Fund campaign we decided to become a multi-site church and to begin the Church Planting Center. This decision propelled the church into many neighborhoods throughout the whole city, solidifying its city-vision and a movement-mindset. But having spread into many neighborhoods, it is now time for Redeemer to put down roots in each community, to 'incarnate', and to invest in the city.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT SEMINAR

Saturday, April 30, 2005 10:00AM- 4:00PM

Want to discover tools for cultivating a healthy marriage?

Come to the Marriage Enrichment Seminar led by credentialed counselors at Redeemer Counseling Services
Topics include: oneness, handling differences, the heart of conflict, the cycle of grace, and more.

Come ready to know and be known by your spouse

\$75 per couple; lunch is included!

To register contact Jenni@redeemer.com or 212.370.0475X 131

FELLOWSHIP GROUP SHARES VOLUNTEER PROJECTS: AN INTERVIEW

BY: EMILY MCWHORTER

Recently, I visited with about fifteen people who represented two fellowship groups led by PJ Woo and Seon Hwang to ask them a few questions about their volunteer experiences through Hope for New York. These groups had multiplied in January, and came back together for this interview.

When did your groups begin volunteering?

PJ: About eight years ago, Eugene and his group were doing a study on the book of James. Looking at James 2 and studying about faith and deeds challenged them to walk the talk and get out there and get involved. Somehow they got in contact with The Bowery Mission and since then, even through many multiplications, we have been going the first Wednesday of every month to The Bowery Mission. We have someone leading a time of praise, and then we all help serve the food.

Was volunteering a goal of your group as a whole or was one person spearheading it?

Carol: It depends on who is available and interested.

Jane: With The Bailey House, another place we volunteer, I saw a listing for volunteer opportunities through Ayumi with HFNY. She leads a group every month for HFNY to cook and serve dinner out there, and I was interested in going so I went one month. Then Eugene told me to check it out to see if it would be a good opportunity for us because we had been looking for an opportunity to serve.

Are the main ministries you work with The Bailey House and The Bowery Mission?

PJ: During Christmas we also do His Toy Store. Previous groups have been involved in other activities, and again it changes

with the particular group. Every time there is a multiplication, finding opportunities to volunteer has always been group focused.

How has volunteering through HFNY changed you?

Christine: I had just started to become more involved in the volunteer activities, and for me it was about, one, spending time with my small group people outside of small group, and, two, I have been here for two and a half years and I felt like all along I had been taking from the city and enjoying it and making it more about me. Finally I wanted to give back and thought this was a good way to do that. There are so many places you can go and volunteer, you just have to be willing. I felt like this would help me to live out what the Bible asks us to do – serve others.

Does anybody have a volunteer experience that stands out?

PJ: There was one time we had one guy who used to lead an awesome time of praise. I had tried to lead the praise time before he joined our small group, and I found it really difficult to get people interested who were tired and hungry and just wanted to sit in their seats. It was almost discouraging to try to lead them in a time of praise. But man, this guy just went up there, and he got everyone standing. There was one woman who was singing so loud, and to me that was awesome. First the fact that we knew they were fellow believers was encouraging. Just being there and being able to worship with them was awesome. And second, it made me see them as more than just the homeless people that we were there to feed and help out. We actually had the opportunity to sit down and talk to people, and I think I needed

that moment to have the right perspective.

How has volunteering changed or enhanced the group as a whole and your relationships to one another?

Michael: This was a good opportunity to learn how to approach someone with care and sympathy and humility. Seeing those qualities in others and learning from them I think also gives us an opportunity to practice what we learn in our Bible study and what we pray about, impacting the community by serving other people.

PJ: I think one thing is just community. As a small group we are really depending on one another. Not only in serving and volunteering, but also through life and with our struggles. It is so easy, especially at Redeemer, to just go in and come out and not really interact. There is the same thing in a small group like this when there are 15 to 20 people. It is easy to come in and take part, hear the study and walk out. But volunteering and serving forces you to work together, and to do that helps to build community.

How is serving together a different dynamic as opposed to coming together on a Friday night for your fellowship group?

Carol: You get to see different sides of everyone. To see some of the guys and how they are actually really good with kids and can play with them was kind of surprising. Just the heart that everyone has really comes out.

What has volunteering taught you about Jesus?

PJ: One thing you do when you work together in serving the community is see God at work. You can see what He is doing in the city. And it is not through mystical hands from above

showing you what to do; it is through people you know in your fellowship group sitting next to you. And like Carol was saying when you volunteer with someone, you get encouraged when you watch the person serving. For me just witnessing that really affirms in my mind and my heart that God really is serving, and He is for real. What we are actually studying right now is the book of Acts and going over effective witnessing. I think that is the next step in terms of serving – to help those served but also to witness.

Michael: One of the lessons of the Bible study is taking the time to know your audience and speaking to them at their level. I think often times when you volunteer you have to address that and take time to appreciate the differences.

Also it is important to help each other serve better because we all have different strengths. Sometimes in a volunteering situation you are not one hundred percent comfortable so knowing each other and knowing what level we are comfortable at helps us step in and maybe share that burden and share that responsibility in a different way. Obviously adapting to the audience and being able to speak to their needs both spiritual and physical at the same time is important. And that is what I think volunteering is all about.

Jane: I want to add that just living in New York is so counter to what volunteering is all about. Being in the city and the life that we live and the mentality – everything that kind of drives you about the city is so different from the heart of service. The people that we interact with through volunteering are people that we would have never met or heard their stories.

What are some of the activities you do at The Bailey House?

Jane: When we volunteered with the children it was right around Thanksgiving so we read a book, we served lunch, we gave out popcorn and we had the children make books about things that they were thankful for. Then with the adults at Christmas on Christopher Street we had a Bingo night.

What are your goals for the future in terms of your group?

PJ: I guess the easy answer is that there is just so much demand out there for community, so continuing to multiply is a goal. In terms of volunteering, to utilize more people for service and to get involved in more and more opportunities out there is a goal.

Why do you think it is important for fellowship groups to volunteer together?

Jane: In our group alone we have people who work in graphic design or law or banking or publishing, and the fellowship group volunteering brings us together for one cause. We serve together because for me it spurs me on and I get encouraged and I get energized and I get excited about serving because I have

people around me. As iron sharpens iron, each man sharpens one another.

PJ: We have been very intentional about serving, and there have definitely been some people, whether it is Jane or Eugene, who made it a priority. That has helped to reinforce it in our minds.

Something I would recommend to other groups is to be proactive about it and maybe assign one or two people to be on the lookout for opportunities and really intentionally seek after them. It seems much better to do a methodical thing where we volunteer on a certain day once a month and commit to it.

Jane: Even if it is just once a month or once a week it really does drive your group to be more compassionate to other people.

Michael: I think it helps us connect because a lot of people have very serious jobs and responsibilities and to go and play Bingo one night is a good way to remind us of what is important. You are not using all of your professional skills because that is not what you are there for, but you are being a bit more humble maybe, I think that always helps.



Bailey House Visit- November 2004

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IN SUNDAY SERVICE MINISTRIES NEWS

On February 10 and March 15, Sunday Service Volunteers from all four services poured into the new Redeemer office for their long awaited Volunteer Training Events. Guests were met by a complimentary dinner and feasted together in the conference room, overflowing into the adjoining café.

Elaine Rollogas, Director of SSM and Operations, kicked off the training by clarifying the purpose of the evening: “The reasons you are here tonight are to educate you on procedures and policies so that we can be unified in our serving roles, to encourage and support you in any way we can, and to

help you understand where you fit into Redeemer’s Vision.”

Usher and Communion Volunteer, Steve Smith, delivered a poignant speech on the biblical foundation for serving the community: “As we grow in becoming more like Christ, we grow in our desire and commitment to serve as God has gifted us.”

Volunteers later divided up into groups for more specific training, segmented first by their Ministry, and then by the individual church service they serve.

Barbara Holton, Usher on the East Side morning service, shared her experience after

attending the Training Event: “I loved meeting volunteers from the services I almost never get to attend.”

Sally Lloyd-Jones recently began Ushering on the West Side morning service, and reported: “It made me feel welcome and encouraged. I really got a sense from the training that I was a part of the church community and its Vision!”

The next Volunteer Training event will be held on Thursday, May 26, 6:30-9:00 p.m. at the Redeemer office. To RSVP, email Phoebe Kmeck (West) at phoebe@redeemer.com, or Mark Horton (East)