

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

MAY 2005

IS REDEEMER A REPRODUCIBLE PHENOMENON?

BY: KATHY KELLER

***AND
WHY
SHOULD
ANYONE
CARE?**

Redeemer is a center city, New York church. Years ago we made a strategic missions decision. What we know best is how to plant churches in cities, both in the United States and abroad. Since global cities are interconnected (thus share a common culture) and are incredibly influential in their countries, it seemed reasonable to focus on them rather than places where we had no expertise. Therefore, we decided that our mission activity would comprise primarily center city church planting around the world, (as well as short term missions trips by members

and attenders to help with crisis relief and other opportunities.) But mainly, what we know is cities, so cities would be the focus of Redeemer's contribution to the larger kingdom effort.

In the service of this vision the Redeemer Church Planting Center was created, which facilitates and resources church planting in New York City, in other North American cities, and in cities around the world. Every two years church planters from all these cities meet for encouragement, training, problem solving and vision setting. This year that meeting occurred on April 11-13 at a

Connecticut retreat center.

I was there in my capacity of Assistant Director of Communications to explain and discuss issues such as the pro (and mainly) cons of advertising, publicity, interviews and a high media profile. However, what struck me repeatedly in observing and listening to church planters from such diverse places as Amsterdam, Brazil, Berlin, Beijing, Brussels, Budapest, London, Mexico City, Rome, Shanghai, etc., talk about their challenges and satisfactions, was how well they all disproved the often repeated suggestion that Redeemer is a one-off anomaly,

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CAPITAL FUND CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCED FOR FALL, 2005

BY: TIM KELLER

Redeemer's vision from the beginning has been to serve and renew the city of New York with the gospel. We believe that the way that can be done is by multiplying a particular kind of city-loving, gospel-centered church throughout the neighborhoods of our city. In order to achieve this vision, we are planning a Capital Fund Campaign this fall.

There will be an avalanche of information about the campaign after Labor Day. The conclusion of the campaign will be during our worship services on Sunday, November

13, when we will receive offerings and pledges (which can be given over the next three years.) [Note: We need leaders from now until then to prepare for the fall campaign; contact David Bisgrove at david@redeemer.com or 212-808-4460 ext. 111 if you are interested in having a leadership or other volunteer role.]

To give you a preview I wanted to spell out what we hope to accomplish and why we think these goals will move Redeemer forward towards achieving our goal of serving the city.

First, **to increase the Church**

Planting Center's work. [See article above.] The opportunities to plant new churches here and around the world is increasing exponentially. If the funds were available, we could increase the number of new church plants to about ten new center city churches a year and 30 new grassroots NYC churches. This would mean increasing the budget by at least \$2 million per year.

Second, we need to **establish community ministry centers to resource the city.** Over the next dozen years, we plan to hold as

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many as three more capital fund campaigns, in order to purchase a total of 3 or 4 buildings, if possible one on the East Side, one on the West Side, and one or more in mid-town. These buildings will serve as family, cultural, community, and ministry centers—as well as providing worship space and a home for our congregations. Why is this necessary?

On the one hand, these ministry centers will help us establish the programs and institutions we need to resource the movement of churches. Without weekday space most of these programs could not function. 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 designed for children who attend public schools, daycare and baby-sitting, and recreational and educational programs for all. As **Cultural** centers they will provide full-time arts-performance space. As **Community** centers these buildings will define discrete neighborhoods for Redeemer to serve.

We want to provide services

to our neighbors, no matter what they believe, that make our neighborhoods good places to live and that lead our neighbors to be grateful that we are there. By only renting on Sundays Redeemer has no seven-days-a-week presence in any city neighborhood. With the purchase of space we can finally ‘love our neighbors.’

On the other hand, these buildings are critical for stability and strength in the future. The current multi-site model of Redeemer is a pre-cursor to the eventual division of Redeemer into several sister churches some 10 to 15 years from now. But it is important that the “daughter” successors to the current “mother Redeemer” continue to be strong resource churches for the city. Owning our own buildings will bequeath **stability for future leadership**.

We don’t want the next generation of Redeemer’s leaders to face the same vulnerability we experience as renters of large spaces in NYC. Venues for worship, especially those that seat over 200, are extremely hard to find, and our current leases can fail to be renewed at the pleasure of our landlords. We don’t want to bequeath that kind of

vulnerability to those after us.

Furthermore, it is good stewardship to own instead of rent. We pay nearly \$1 million annually in rent. If that money went into mortgages instead, then our movement would have the financial stability of growing equity.

This is a long-term project that we believe will require raising over quite a lot of money over the next 10-12 years. **It’s the next way for Redeemer to move from being a church to becoming a movement.** Six or seven years ago the way we moved forward was to not buy a building, but instead to break into multiple worship sites. Going to multiple sites pushed us out into different neighborhoods (made us a West Side, not just an East Side congregation) and church planting made us a growing network. But now to plan for the future and to resource the movement that has begun, we need to begin to buy buildings.

As the announcer used to say in my childhood “Stay tuned!” You’ll be hearing a lot more about the Capital Fund Campaign, but it’s not too soon to begin praying about your part in it.

MAY DAY!! MAY DAY!!

Volunteers Needed! Sandtown Trip

Over 200 homes have been built/renovated in Sandtown, Baltimore, MD, since 1986 with Habitat for Humanity. Join HFNY volunteers in bringing God’s love and support to this community. Dates: June 19-25.

Join us for an informational meeting- **Sunday, May 1 after 10:30AM East Side service**
OR **Sunday, May 15 after 7:00PM WS service.**

Questions? (718) 855-6204 or bkjoe5e@yahoo.com

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller

Carl de Prado

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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 result of a providential collision of time, place, personnel and grace that is essentially irreproducible in other locations with other preachers.

Now, as the man's wife, I'm the first to admire my husband's preaching gifts. They fall into the "high octane" category, to be sure. But to focus on Tim's gifts as the reason for Redeemer's "success" and growth is to ignore the power of the Gospel message, clearly preached, and stripped of Christian "sub-cultural" trappings that send needlessly exclusionary messages to skeptical non-believers.

That power is clearly evident in the diversity of places, preachers, denominations, cultures, ethnic groups, and social strata that were represented by the 85 church planters at the Global Conference. Chinese house churches of between 25 and 80 people are proliferating at an astounding rate, using Gospel-centered materials. Churches started in London, Washington, D.C., Vancouver, San Francisco, Sao Paulo, and other cities are all seeing secular, never-before-darkened-the-doorway-of-a-church people come to faith through the preaching of the central message of the Gospel—Christ's substitutionary life and death, credited to believers who now form a new humanity, his people, able to live in new ways.

Redeemer has begun a gospel movement that varies in its style, music, emotional intensity, size, and many other things, dependent on numerous variables, but with one central non-negotiable — the preaching of salvation by

faith in the Christ who appears on every page of the Bible, and who offers a righteousness we could never earn for ourselves, and now don't have to. This means that "Redeemer" can be adapted and contextually appropriated elsewhere—as is being done even now. To me, to assert that Redeemer is not reproducible misunderstands Redeemer's cardinal doctrine of the gospel, and assumes that we have some secret formula not available outside of New York.

A rigid "Redeemer template" could never be picked up whole from New York City and plopped down intact in Canada, California, Russia, Hungary, Brazil, England, Germany and the Netherlands with any success. Each individual church must find a way to incarnate itself in the city to which it is reaching out. However, the basic Redeemer mindset IS something that travels well, since it has lasted through 21 centuries and a dizzying variety of contexts.

What is the Redeemer mindset? It is gospel-centricity, which breaks through the categories of a 'fundamentalist' church (because of the emphasis on grace, not works) and of a 'liberal' church (because of emphasis on Christ, not human goodness). It is city-positive —concerned not just with increasing our tribe but creating a great city. It is world-view driven (not sealing off one's faith from one's work or public life.) It seeks social justice as well as conversion. It practices the richness and the goodness of the arts. It stresses community (especially small

groups) over programs. It engages non-belief with a respectful and coherent reasoning.

True, we have incarnated ourselves as a church in Manhattan, with all the distinctives that implies, but the centrality of the Gospel message can survive incarnation in many cultural situations, as I witnessed last month. I get around a bit, as Tim's sidekick, and hear about a lot of things in addition to what I see. But nothing in the last decade has been as thrilling as to worship with, eat with, and hear the stories of the power of the Gospel being released all over the world. Not a Gospel of being good or trying harder or —*quell horror!*—belonging to a particular political party (the church planters covered every base politically, including monarchist, communist, socialist, unspecified left-wing, and, of course, the odd conservative); but a Gospel of grace, holding up a God who came to satisfy his own justice on the cross, and redeem his people in spite of themselves.

*Oh, the "why should anyone care" part? We're soon to be embarking on a major Capital Fund Campaign to support Global Church Planting (as well as the purchase of a building here, and many new and ongoing programs—see article by Tim elsewhere in this issue.) If you know what God's doing with your money (actually, HIS money, lent to you and returned as part of your stewardship), then you will be as excited about the Cap Campaign as we are!!

Diaconate Q&A May 22

After each service on May 22 the Diaconate will hold a Q&A for those interested in finding out about Redeemer's deacons and deaconesses and the work they do. The Diaconate cares for those in our congregation who are experi-

encing brokenness of many kinds. Much of what the deacons and deaconesses do is behind the scenes. Hear directly from them how the Diaconate ministers as well as how to nominate someone to be a deacon/ess candidate.

- YMCA 502 10:45AM
- Hunter Auditorium at 12:00PM
- Hunter Auditorium at 7:15PM
- 1st Baptist Church at 8:30PM

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MAY DIACONATE OFFICER NOMINATIONS

Are new officers needed? YES! The needs in our congregation are numerous and have been increasing. A number of deacon/esses will be completing their terms at the end of May and we need to identify new leaders to care for those who approach the Diaconate for support.

We are receiving nominations for the entire month of May (elder nominations are only received in November.)

How can I nominate someone for deacon and diaconess?

If you are a member, you will be receiving a nomination

packet at the end of April. Only members can nominate other members to this office. Members may not nominate themselves. Please prayerfully consider and submit your nominations to Andrea Mungo at the church office - by fax (646-572-0020) or mail (the form must be signed.)

Nomination forms can be obtained over the web at www.redeemer.com or by emailing Andrea@redeemer.com

Can a nomination be deferred?

Yes, if you are nominated in May but cannot accept at that time, you may defer your

nomination for up to one year.

When is the next Officer Nominee training?

Theological and skills training for the May nominees will be held in the summer and fall, 2005. The nominees will be informed of the dates as soon as they are set.

Questions? Call Andrea at 212-808-4460 ext. 146. The deadline is May 31, 2005
Andrea U. Mungo, CSW
Diaconate Director
Redeemer Presbyterian Church
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New York, NY 10018
212-808-4460 ext 146
fax (646-572-0020)

MOVIE SUGGESTION: MILLIONS

With little publicity, this small movie has been doubling its attendance weekly through word of mouth buzz. On the surface, the story is about two young brothers who find a (literal) windfall of cash in British pounds just before the changeover to euros and must decide what to do with it. Their different choices, and the reasons which motivate them, make up most of the story, though there are subplots involving a robber trying to recover the money and their

widowed father trying to cope.

What distinguishes this movie is that it is actually about faith, and the practical choices that translate faith into action, particularly with regard to the handling of wealth. Surprisingly, the director is Danny Boyle, of *Trainspotting* and *28 Days Later*. Artie Megibben noted (in *The Joy of Movies*) that “in the hands of a lesser director, this family-friendly movie could have been reduced to your typical, formulaic Disney drivel. Instead, however,

...Boyle delivers an Oscar-worthy film that [grapples with]... death, heaven, greed, charity and, of course—that Hollywood unmentionable, God.”

Although we are left wondering what to make of the younger boy's visions, the happy (even joyful) ending sends you out of the theater feeling good in a way that few movies even attempt these days

Fun Fact: Many of the current Sunday sermons have been and are being written to the soundtrack of *Millions*.