

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

JANUARY 2006

KINGDOM-CENTERED PRAYER

BY: TIM KELLER

What is the key to spiritual renewal for a congregation? I don't know that I can put a finger on any one single factor that would be a 'magic bullet' for revival, but there is one ingredient that always seems to be there—what has been called 'kingdom-centered' prayer.

The history of revivals

Spiritual revival or renewal is a work of God in which the

church is beautified and empowered because the *normal* operations of the Holy Spirit are intensified. The normal operations of the Spirit include: conviction of sin (John 16:8,) enjoyment/assurance of grace and the Father's love (Rom. 8:15-16,) access to the presence of God (John 14:21-23; II Cor. 3:17-18,) creation of deep community and loving relationships (Eph 4:3-13.)

In the Old Testament, God

entered into a covenant relationship with his people at Mt Sinai. But throughout the history of Israel, they continually fell into periods of spiritual stagnation and cultural accommodation to the idol-worship and other practices of surrounding pagan societies. So there was a continual need for Sinai-like 'covenant renewals,' including a turning to God, the raising up of new leaders, and a restoration of spiritual

Continued page 5

VISION CAMPAIGN—A TIME TO CELEBRATE

BY: MAX ANDERSON

On December 4th, James Herring, Eddie Ryeom and Lynn Easterling, the chairpersons of Redeemer's Vision Campaign, announced that we had received pledges for more than \$18.4 million dollars. That figure has since grown to \$18.8 million, with more pledges arriving daily.

This total represents incredible sacrifice by the church, since it is above and beyond what is regularly given to Redeemer. Even more remarkable, we raised almost five times as much compared to our previous campaign in 1997, doubled the number of

pledges we received and saw per capita giving more than double. The \$18.4 million was not raised through 1 or 2 large gifts, but rather through hundreds of sacrificial gifts from the congregation.

Having worked full-time on the campaign for the last six months, I am overwhelmed by the way our church has responded to the vision. Two years ago the leaders of Redeemer drafted a brief paragraph outlining a plan to launch a campaign that would move our church's vision forward. Since then, that one paragraph has mushroomed

into one of the most exciting events in Redeemer's history. During the campaign, we witnessed several important changes in the church, including the creation of more than 100 new vision groups and the involvement of over 1000 people, a dramatic rise in volunteerism within our congregation, and a revitalization of our corporate focus on prayer.

Having read hundreds of emails sent to visioncampaign@redeemer.com I have had a unique opportunity to learn how people throughout the congregation responded

Continued page 2



INSIDE:

- OFFICER NOMINATIONS UPDATE
- REDEEMER MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE
- DIACONATE THANK YOU
- SUNDAY SERVICE MINISTRIES NEWS
- CENTER FOR FAITH AND WORK MINISTRY FAIR
- AND MORE...

to the vision. It was inspiring to hear about the creative ways people contributed to the campaign. The youth of the church raised more than \$2,000 for the campaign through babysitting. Artists contributed thousands of dollars worth of original paintings and photographs in Redeemer's first juried art exhibition. We had some runners volunteer to raise money for the campaign in the NYC Marathon.

The campaign has influenced untold numbers of people outside of New York as well. We received letters from places as varied as Des Moines, Oslo, and Beijing. People all over the world were listening to Tim's

sermons and following along with the small group curriculum and daily devotionals written by our staff. Also, a good number of bloggers linked to Tim's vision blog as well.

Now Redeemer will turn its focus to executing the initiatives of the Vision—finding, buying and developing a community center with worship space, planting more churches and launching new ministries. As we make progress with each of these initiatives, we will share the news with the congregation so we can celebrate the work we are doing together. This work will require a continued partnership between the staff and volunteers to think

creatively and strategically. In the coming months we will hold "town hall" type events to facilitate this ongoing partnership. If you have an interest in participating, look for announcements on the vision site, in these pages, or email the address above.

If you have not had the opportunity to turn in a pledge card in support of the campaign, you can still do so, as we expect to continue to receive pledges for some time. You can also make a pledge at <https://giving.redeemer.com>. Thanks again to everyone who invested their time and resources to see God's vision for NYC realized.

OFFICER NOMINATIONS UPDATE

Redeemer members have the important responsibility of nominating and electing individuals to serve our congregation as elders, deacons and deaconesses. This past October and November, 2005, the Diaconate and Session accepted nominations for the offices of elder, deacon and deaconess. The following individuals have been nominated and have begun the process of evaluation.

Elder Nominees:

Cory Cates
Victor Clemente
Kevin Kirn
Ted Morgan
Darryle Owen
Arvin Soh

Deacon Nominees:

Suneel Gil
Allen Lamb
Omar Rodriguez
Tony Vavroch

Deaconess Nominees:

Kay Bhothinard
Aimee Deeken
Heather Dials
Lolita Jackson
Elizabeth Osewalt
Priscilla Osewalt
Daisy Tung
Sajini Varghese
Jill Wooley

Please pray for these nominees as they go through training in theology and ministry skills and prepare for their interviews. They will be

evaluated on their character, Christian life and experience, theological understanding, giftedness and readiness to serve the church as an officer. The current elders will then determine which individuals will be presented for election at the April congregational meeting.

If you have questions about the nominating, evaluation and training process, please contact Andrea Mungo at 212-808-4460 ext 146 or andrea@redeemer.com or Terry Gyger at ext 117 or terry@redeemer.com.

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Carl de Prado
Heather Klein

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.
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www.redeemer.com

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

EDUCATORS MOVIE NIGHT: MAD HOT BALLROOM

January 27th, 6:00PM–9:00PM
Redeemer Offices

Redeemer Educators, including those who administer at the school (PS 115) whose children won the ballroom dancing competition, invite you to enjoy this documentary with us and meet some of its “stars.” We’re hoping it will be nominated for an Academy Award. Register online at www.faihandwork.org.

HEALTH CARE GROUP LEADERS MEETING

January 10th, 6:00PM–7:30PM
Redeemer Offices

Come join physicians and health care professionals to talk, pray and prepare to better serve the city with our lives and skills. RSVP for this meeting to healthcare@redeemer.com.

INTER-ARTS FELLOWSHIP

January 13th, 6:45PM–9:00PM
The Lamb’s, 130 West 44th Street @ Bway & 6th

Monthly fellowship and discussion for all those working in the fine/performing arts, design, media, and entertainment. For more information email arts@redeemer.com.

CENTER FOR FAITH AND WORK MINISTRY FAIR

January 29th
following all services

Learn more about Redeemer’s Center for Faith and Work and how you can contribute to and benefit from its programs and community. Meet representatives from vocational groups for people in the Arts, Education, Finance, Health Care, Law, and Marketing & Advertising. Learn how you can start a group for your profession or industry area. CFW classes will be represented, as well as the CFW new Entrepreneurship Initiative.

CENTER FOR FAITH AND WORK CLASSES

Moments of Truth in the Workplace

Sundays after the Hunter morning service, 12:00PM–1:15PM, Room 507
Runs 8 weeks from February 5th to April 2nd

Guided by the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20) this 8-week series addresses the truth that “how we live our daily work lives confirms or denies the importance of our faith” to those we work with. The objective of the class is to challenge and re-orient our thinking so that we can be culturally sensitive without losing our Christian identity, explain the benefits of a relationship with God to people who do not sense a need for His grace and mercy, and maximize the opportunities in our lives by making decisions that sync with God’s agenda.

Joy at Work

Weekday evening TBD, Redeemer Offices
Runs 8 weeks from February 5th to April 2nd

Based on Dennis Bakke’s new book *Joy at Work*, this class is aimed at people with a leader’s mindset and seeks to help bring about gospel restoration in the workplace. Come consider important questions that affect your attitude toward work. Can work be joyful? Does my work matter to God? Check www.faihandwork.org for more details.

DiSC INDR A Building Relationships Seminar

Part 1: Saturday, February 4th, 9:00AM–1:00PM, Redeemer Offices, Broadway Conf. Room
Part 2: Saturday, February 11th, 9:00AM–1:00PM, Redeemer Offices, Broadway Conf. Room

DiSC Indra is an easy-to-use learning tool that helps people understand and improve workplace and personal relationships. DiSC Indra merges the well-known model of human behavior called DiSC with the concepts and methods of a branch of psychology dedicated to the study of interpersonal relationships. We will develop a model and language through which we can more harmoniously, cooperatively, and efficiently work with others. Register online (\$79) at www.faihandwork.org.

PROFILE: OUT IN THE WORLD— REDEEMER MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

On November 8, Rebekah Marler-Mitchell, a regular fixture in the East Side Redeemer services, was profiled in *The Village Voice*. The story, written by Andrea Gabor, a reporter who shadowed Mitchell for most of her first year of her principal-ship, chronicled her controversial rise from kindergarten teacher to Principal of one of the toughest elementary schools in Manhattan (PS 50).

Rebekah, a teacher with no administrative experience, was hired to replace the school's interim acting principal, a veteran administrator, sparking teacher and parent protests that were plastered across the pages of the *Daily News*. Gabor's story sheds light on the positive impact Rebekah's leadership has brought to the PS 50 community and bears witness to God's intervention in our lives with the purpose of renewing the city.

A committed Christian, Rebekah was already engaged in serving inner city troubled schools as her witness to a loving God when she attended the "Following Christ" conference, a faith and work conference sponsored by Inter-Varsity Graduate Fellowship in January, 2003. Her approach to integrating her faith and her work took a dramatic turn because of the

profound teaching, worship, and encouragement of the Christian community at the conference. She realized that she could embody the gospel in the actual way she taught, ran her classroom, and interacted with other teachers, regardless of the school system's curriculum *du jour*. She built a philosophy of education in which "heart" carried as much weight as "mind" and "body." She found that building community in concrete ways each and every day did more to facilitate learning than any other technique, even in the most challenging classrooms and schools.

As God, would have it, Chancellor Klein stopped by her kindergarten classroom and engaged her in a conversation (she calls it a debate) about why her students were achieving so high above their grade level. On the spot he recruited her to join the inaugural class of his newly created Leadership Academy, the fast track "boot camp" for the next generation of principals. Rebekah was an active leader in Redeemer's Center for Faith and Work, and her fellow educators had a ringside seat as God launched her from the classroom to the Academy to her first Principal's job. As a result we have witnessed how our faith in a God that can and will redeem all things bears fruit even in the

places in NYC where everyone has given up hope.

The first few months were so indescribably difficult that even she questioned her ability to stick it out. However, the mission of Redeemer, expressed in Tim's sermons and the various ministries that nurture a sacrificial commitment to seeking the peace of the city (particularly through integrating faith and work) was and continues to be a sustaining source of peace, strength, endurance, and hope for Rebekah and her husband Louis. Since she assumed leadership suspensions are down, test scores and family involvement are up, and an unquantifiable positive energy permeates the school community as they seek to transform themselves into a "caring community of learners that works hard to create a school-world of love, peace, fairness, justice, fun and achievement for all." In Rebekah we've seen obedience to God's prompting, a hopefulness in Christ's power to heal and renew, and courage that comes from God's trustworthiness. Rebekah needs our prayers and support as she seeks to serve her teachers, students, and community in East Harlem.

To support Rebekah in prayer, contact educators@redeemer.com.

A THANK YOU FROM THE DIACONATE

Please accept our sincere thanks for your contributions to the annual Mercy Fund Offering on December 11, 2005. The funds provided through the offering enable us to meet the needs of men, women and children in the Redeemer congregation who

are experiencing crises of various kinds. We are very grateful for your generosity and consider you to be partners with us as we care for our clients.

If you were unable to give at the time of the offering, donations are accepted throughout the year and may

be mailed to the Redeemer office, marked "attention: Diaconate" or placed in the offering basket. Please earmark your check for the Diaconate or place cash in a Diaconate Mercy Fund envelope, which can be found at the information tables at all services.

vision and vitality. Renewals occurred before choosing the first king (1 Samuel 12) and after the return from exile (Nehemiah 8, 9.)

Less formal but crucial renewal movements happened throughout Judges (3:7-11; 3:12-14; 4:1-4; 6:7-10; 10:6-16.) Just as Israel was made God's people at Mt Sinai, so the church began by the descent and filling of the Spirit in Acts 2. But there is still a need for continual renewals. So the early church received fresh fillings of the Holy Spirit—'mini-Pentecosts' in Acts 4:31; 7:55; 8:17; 10:44; 13:9.

The common factor

What do all these renewals and revivals have in common? As we look at them, we are first struck by how different they all are—some are formal ceremonies, some seem to be spontaneous, some are led by a strong central leader, some seem to bubble out of the grassroots, some are accompanied by spectacular signs and miracles, and some have nothing like that at all.

It is very easy to get distracted by the unusual phenomena of the Day of Pentecost—speaking in other tongues that each member of the multi-ethnic audience could understand in his or her native language. Speaking in tongues occur in some of the other Spirit-fillings, but not all nor even most. The central, abiding characteristics of Pentecost-renewal are: they were together in prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:1) they were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (v.4), and therefore they "began to speak (v.4) ... declaring the wonders of God (v.11.)"

Look at two incidents in Acts after Pentecost. The incident in Acts 4:31 is like Pentecost in that there is a

period of prevailing prayer (4:24) and then a powerful shaking as everyone senses the presence of God descending. However, unlike at Pentecost, there were no tongues of fire or speaking in tongues. What did reoccur was "boldness" (an assurance of God's love and reality) and the ability to "speak the word of God."

Acts 7:55-56 is interesting because it is an individual experience. As he is about to be executed, Stephen raised his eyes to heaven (7:55) as the believers in 4:24 raised their voices to God. He was filled with the same assurance and boldness, the sense of God's reality and presence called 'the fullness of the Holy Spirit.' This allowed him to face death in a completely Christ-like way, with courage and forgiving love toward his executioners.

Although the situations and details of these spiritual renewals differ, one thing is stated over and over again in the book of Judges: "then the people cried out to the Lord." It is the only non-negotiable, universal factor that is *always* present in every revival. It is intense corporate prayer. What is that?

1. It is focused on God's presence and glory. Jack Miller talked about the difference between "maintenance prayer" and "frontline" prayer meetings. Maintenance prayer meetings are short, mechanical, and totally focused on physical needs inside the church, or on personal needs of the people present. But frontline prayer has three basic traits: a) a request for grace to confess sins and humble ourselves, b) a compassion and zeal for the flourishing of the church, and c) a yearning to know God, to see his face, to see his glory. Study the prayers for revival in Acts 4 or Exodus 33 or

Nehemiah 1 and you will find these three elements. Notice, for example, in Acts 4, that the disciples, whose lives had been threatened, did not ask for protection for themselves and their families, but only boldness to keep preaching! It is quite clear when attending a prayer meeting whether these traits are present.

2. It is focused on the corporate life of the church. In Exodus 33, Moses asks that God's presence would be obvious to all: "What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" This is a prayer for the glory and beauty of God to become a visible reality within the people of God. It is a prayer that the world would be awed and amazed by the evidence of God's power and radiance in the church, that it truly would become the new humanity that is a sign of the future kingdom.

3. It is done corporately, not just individually. This prayer is not simply done *for* the community but *in* community. Over and over again we see that renewals happen in association with groups of Christians coming together to cry out to God together.

Christians are used to thinking about prayer as a means to get their personal needs met. But the corporate aspect of prayer is not well known. We will explore some of the marks of this kind of prayer over the next several months. It is my hope that Redeemer will increasingly be marked by this kind of prayer, and the revival that accompanies it.

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SUNDAY SERVICE MINISTRIES NEWS: CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS AND A BOUNTIFUL YEAR!

BY: PHOEBE KMECK

The Sunday Service Ministries staff threw two large Christmas parties for the East and West Side Volunteers as a way of expressing our heartfelt thanks for how they sacrificially serve their community each and every Sunday by staffing the many ministries without which the church services could not take place.

“I had no idea it was going to be this lovely!” exclaimed a Volunteer upon arriving. “Who knew that you could transform Redeemer’s Main Conference

Room into a magical Christmas banquet hall?” The Christmas decor—courtesy of Mark Horton—carried guests into Christmas spirits. White poinsettias sat atop pillars swathed in white tulle and lights. Each table was decorated with Christmas ornaments, at each place setting was a prize-filled English cracker, and each centerpiece was crowned with glazed sugarplum candles. Live harp and flute music serenaded the guests as they ate. Afterwards, in a special

program, Volunteers who have served faithfully for a number of years were honored. Randomly awarded party favors included a *Christmas of Peace* CD, a copy of “*The Servant Leader*,” a Sermons CD gift certificate, and European picture note cards photographed by SSM Director Elaine Rollogas.

After hours of feasting and fellowship, guests picked up their Christmas presents to conclude a truly special evening for truly special people.

BOOK REVIEWS FROM YOUR BOOK TABLE MINISTRY

“Everything You Always Wanted to Know About God (but were afraid to ask)” by Eric Metaxas

Reviewed by Karina La Vachia, West Side PM Book Table Ministry Coordinator

Eric Metaxas is not afraid of taking on the big questions being posed by today’s skeptics—nor is he afraid of making us laugh in the process. Written in the form of a Q&A conversation, Metaxas combines his light-hearted sense of humor with straight-forward (and often profound) Biblical answers to some of the secular world’s toughest questions: How can you prove there is a God?; Does God hate gays and oppose women?; and Why pray or go to church? Other topics discussed in the book range from angels to demons, Heaven and Hell, Adam and Eve, UFOs, suffering, and more!

As one critic wrote, Metaxas’s approach “engages the intellectual while relaxing the skeptic,” making this fun and easy-to-read apologetics book a perfect gift for friends with questions about God or religion. Even for mature Christians, it is both a witty and informative read.

“Everything You Always Wanted to Know About God (but were afraid to ask)” is at all Redeemer Book Tables, which are located in the coffee hour areas following each Sunday service.