

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

DECEMBER 2006

(Y)OUR PLACE

BY TIM KELLER

Those of you who were with us a year ago during our Vision Campaign know that Redeemer has raised money for the purchase of the first of several ministry center facilities in Manhattan. As reported in the Fall Congregational meeting, we have assembled a team and recently begun an active hunt for real estate. Why is Redeemer doing this?

In the months since the Vision Campaign it has become increasingly clear that this will be good stewardship. Hospitals and colleges in major cities have learned that it is considerably less expensive to conduct programs in owned facilities than in rented ones. For long-term stability and financial stewardship Redeemer should acquire its own facilities.

Ultimately, however, the most exciting reasons for purchasing a building have little to do with

money. The most important reason for seeking secure space in the city is gospel hospitality.

Third Places

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg has shown the importance of what he calls 'Third Places.' In this terminology, our homes are 'First Places,' our jobs constitute 'Second Places.' But Third Places are informal gathering places such as cafes, pubs, main streets, town commons, and other 'hangouts.' In poor neighborhoods, many street corners serve as Third Places.

These are places you go to relax, read, eat and drink, meet people, discuss, develop and maintain relationships. Actually, the theme song of the old TV sitcom *Cheers* said it all. Third Places are spaces in which a) everybody knows your name, b) they are always glad you came, and where

you find c) your troubles are all the same.

Oldenburg and others note that Third Places have been disappearing in the U.S. One reason is the growth of the suburbs which are driven by the desire for privacy and make no provision for Third Places at all. Teenagers desperately turn shopping malls into informal meeting places, but in the end malls are designed to be massive hallways that keep people moving, not places where they sit and visit.

There is an enormous hunger for the vanishing Third Places (especially among the young) and both Starbucks and Barnes and Nobles have capitalized by trying to fill that gap. Their success is evidence of the need. Many experts believe that the fragmenting of U.S. society into 'them' and 'us' rather than 'we' is due in some
(Continued on page 5)

VISION CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Vision Statement: *To build a great city through a gospel movement that brings personal conversion, community formation, social justice and cultural renewal to New York City and through it, to the world.*

By the end of 2006, we anticipate having received a total of \$7.5 million of the \$19.2 pledged during the first phase of the Vision Campaign. Volunteer participation has increased significantly, and

there are now over 200 fellowship groups meeting regularly since the Vision Groups began last fall. Additionally, there is a growing network of those in our congregation
(Continued on page 6)



INSIDE:

- UNEXPECTED NEWS REDEEMED
- DECEMBER SERVICE SCHEDULE AND HOLIDAY MUSIC
- VISION CAMPAIGN UPDATE AND (Y)OUR PLACE CONTINUED
- THE HOPE FOR NEW YORK KNITTING PROJECT

UNEXPECTED NEWS REDEEMED

BY A DIACONATE CLIENT

Last year, I had reason to celebrate. Being an MD, I had taken some time off to take my board exam (which I passed) and then began making plans for my career. I worked temporarily in the laboratory of a colleague whom I knew from my residency, and started applying for jobs. I was invited to several interviews, but not hired. From colleagues I had heard that it took time to find something in the city. A saturated job market in New York, and my lack of experience played a role, but I was optimistic. My CV was good, and I thought it would be a matter of months before I landed a job.

Then, I was diagnosed with cancer. After the initial shock, I sat down and wondered why this was happening at this time. Was there something God was trying to tell me and I did not listen? Was I supposed to do something different with my life? I asked myself how much time I had left and whether I was afraid to die. I read my Bible in search for answers, prayed and told a few friends. They prayed, too, and I was assured God would take care of me, though I had no idea how. I always knew, theoretically, that I could trust Him, but I was never before in such dicey circumstances.

It was not all just being diagnosed with cancer, in retrospect;

there were career choices that I had made that could have been better. Who would hire me now? To make matters worse, I had no health insurance at the time. But God was sovereign, he could do anything. After one morning service, an elder anointed oil on my forehead and prayed for me. Would that take care of it, perhaps? I would love a miracle. Nothing dramatic happened though. Every morning I woke up, my body was still broken.

My family came over for Christmas in a show of support. During the days I underwent diagnostic tests in the hospital, and at nights we sat together and laughed. Inexplicably, it was one of the best celebrations of Christ's birth that I ever had. After they left and I started treatment, another problem emerged: my colleague lost his research grant and could no longer pay me as expected.

With no income, my savings was dwindling fast. So I called the Diaconate, reluctantly. They listened and told me I was not alone in asking for help, and in feeling embarrassed about it. I met with two wonderful women from the Diaconate, one of them a dear friend I turned to initially, and the other one I had known for years as well. After talking my situation through, praying and discussing

my needs, a care plan was put together for three months, which would help pay my rent, telephone and other basic expenses. With the financial stress relieved, I could work on getting better.

Not going to the laboratory as much anymore, I had time to read my Bible, talked endlessly with colleagues and friends and asked God to give me more direction. I met with the Diaconate every couple of weeks for prayer and an update about my health and the job search. The help I got made me look at the Diaconate with different eyes. They no longer are an invisible part of the church that every once in a while gives success stories and asks for donations; I know something behind the scene: how much they give of themselves and how the money is distributed.

And how did God redeem this unexpected news? My health markedly improved, and I got my dream job. I was once again reminded of the paramount importance of prayer. He is true to His word, and used unwelcome news to let me "taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him" as is written in Psalm 34. Abstract knowledge became experience. He uses His people to take care of each other and to show His goodness.

SOW GENEROUSLY: REDEEMER'S 2006 ART EXHIBITION

Reminder: The "Sow Generously" art exhibition at the Redeemer offices closes in early January, 2007, and the auction bidding to purchase artwork closes December 20, 2006.

Visit www.faithandwork.org/exhibition for more information.

REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
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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

DECEMBER SERVICE SCHEDULE AND HOLIDAY MUSIC

*Please make note of the special service times and locations for the month of December.
All four services will be affected during the holiday season!*

DECEMBER 3

Celebration of the Lord's Supper at all services

9:15AM: Ethical Culture Society, 64th St. & CPW
10:30AM: Hunter College, 69th St. & Park Ave.
5:45PM: Hunter College, 69th St. & Park Ave.
7:00PM: First Baptist Church, 79th St. & Broadway

DECEMBER 10

Special offering for the ministry of the diaconate at all services

9:15AM: West Side Morning Service of Lessons and Carols
*Music by chamber orchestra, choir and soloists, and
readings of the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth.*
Other services on usual schedule

DECEMBER 17

Note special morning service start times

9:00AM: West Side morning service
9:45AM and 11:30AM: East Side Morning Services of Lessons and Carols
*Readings of the gospel accounts of Jesus' birth and selections
from **Messiah** performed by the choir and the Orchestra of the
Redeemer, Miriam Burns, music director. Featured soloists
include Mark Delavan and Charlene Marcinko.*
Evening services on usual schedule

DECEMBER 24

Note special evening service times

Morning services on usual schedule
5:00PM: Christmas Eve Service at Hunter College
*A special combined evening service featuring music and
Scripture readings. Bring your whole family for an hour-long
service of worship and singing.*
No West Side evening service on Christmas Eve.

DECEMBER 31

Note special service times and locations

10:30AM: Combined morning services at Hunter College
5:00PM: New Year's Eve combined evening services at First Baptist Church
No West Side morning service
No East Side evening service

THE HOPE FOR NEW YORK “KNITTING PROJECT”

BY DANA LYNN SINGFIELD

Hand-knit rainbows rest in bins at Hope for New York, awaiting the December day that they will provide a tangible bit of God’s “shalom,” or kingdom peace, to some of the city’s homeless men and women.

More than 250 scarves and hats will be added to gift bags for guests at the Hope for New York Christmas Dinner, courtesy of the “Knitting Project.” This is an annual Christmas dinner sponsored by Hope for New York where 250 to 300 homeless men and women come together for a warm Christmas meal and leave with a gift bag and—more importantly—a message of lasting hope.

The project began in July, when HFNY staff asked knitter and Redeemer member Sue Pettit to organize a group to create scarves and hats to add to the Bibles, socks and gloves already included in each gift bag. Sue put an ad in the Redeemer bulletin seeking knitters; immediately 50 women responded. “Surprise is an understatement,” she said of the outpouring of interest. “More like

overwhelming, and how willing everyone was to help. It was really nice.”

So with countless skeins of washable yarn purchased by HFNY and Redeemer knitters, work began. To date, nearly 100 knitters have pledged to create enough scarves to run the length



of more than three football fields.

Sue has since moved to Nyack, where her husband, Tim Pettit, has become pastor at Living Christ Church. Redeemer member Tiffany Koch now coordinates the project. The group meets the fourth Monday of each month for a knitters’ circle at the Redeemer offices. There, knitters can drop off their creations, get more yarn and

knit together.

“We have folks who have never knit before. This may be the first time they’ve even seen knitting needles and they’re making these amazingly beautiful pieces,” Tiffany said. “And we have some more experienced knitters who have offered to knit several scarves.” The experienced knitters happily taught the initiates. Tiffany, a knitting novice, says of her own scarves, “What they lack in execution they hopefully make up for in love.”

The scarves and hats will be completed shortly after Thanksgiving in time to be wrapped and tagged for the dinner in early December. Since so many knitters want to continue to contribute,

Tiffany and HFNY staff members are trying to determine the future of the Knitting Project, which may keep knitting on toward Christmas 2007. For knitting information, contact tiffanykoch@yahoo.com. For Christmas volunteering, please contact volunteer@hfny.org.

Dana Lynne Singfield has been attending Redeemer since 2003. She became a member in spring 2005.

DIACONATE MERCY FUND: SPECIAL OFFERING

Sunday, December 10, 2006

Once a year, the Diaconate receives a special offering at all four services to fund the needs of Redeemer members and regular attendees who are under its care. Please prayerfully consider contributing to this vital ministry, which supports men, women and children who are experiencing financial, physical, social and spiritual crises.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.” — 2 Corinthians 9:10-12

degree to the loss of Third Places.

Hospitality and Third Places

In modern English, the word 'hospitality' conveys little more than the thought of 'entertaining,' but in the Bible it is something important and radical (Rom 12:13; 1 Pet 4:9; Heb 13:2; 1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8.) Contemporary western culture leads us to think of the home as a private enclosure, only to be shared with a few intimates. But the New Testament called Christians to see one's home as neither strictly private nor public space—but a place where we routinely share the safety and comfort we have to nurture others.

Hospitality incorporates newcomers into common, daily household activities—eating a meal, sharing a cup of coffee, or painting a room. The Greek word for hospitality – *philoxenia* — literally means the 'love of strangers.' Christians are called to an attitude of welcome not only to other believers, but also to those who are currently outsiders to the faith.

Why do this? The gospel is the reason. We were strangers who God accepted (Lev 19:33.) in the ultimate act of hospitality. Jesus died for us to make room in the *household* of God (a great word that combines the material idea of a

house—with its shelter, food, warmth, and safety—and the idea of a family.) In short, the gospel leads Christians to turn their homes into virtual 'Third Places.' (Someone has said that, since Christian families still need their privacy, our homes should really be 'Two-Point-Five Places.')

New York City & Hospitality

But many aspects of city life make hospitality difficult. In New York City we have very small living spaces that can hardly fit a small group. An unusually large percentage of Christians in our church live alone. For us, therefore, buildings become extremely important for not only deepening our relationships with each other but with our neighbors. Our church space must be seen as our way to be hospitable to the city. What does this mean?

Owning a building means that for the first time in our history, Redeemer as a body will have neighbors. (When we rent space on a street for several hours a week we don't really live there; the other residents of the street are not our neighbors.) But when we own a building, we finally have people to whom at last we can say, "How can we make this neighborhood a better place for *everyone* to live be-

cause we are here?" Traditionally, churches have seen their buildings as 'our sacred space' (i.e. a collective First Place and Second Place.) But we want the building to be a Third Place for the community, a place of hospitality. That's what the gospel calls us to.

In most of the neighborhoods where we are seeking property young single professionals live in extremely tiny spaces. They would be glad of an urban space that welcomes them without trying to sell them something, and that provides for them things like (perhaps) a) quiet space, b) free wi-fi, c) a place to meet others, d) food and drink, as well as family activities and cultural events. We want to say to our neighbors, "This is not just *our* place, it is also *your* place." In a place as suspicious and tough as Manhattan, that message will probably take some time to get through. But that is the message.

Jesus was constantly passing through 'Third Places,' such as the temple courts (John 2,) or the town well (John 4) or the pool of Bethesda (John 5) where he often engaged people in casual conversations which became life-changing encounters. How exciting that we have the possibility of creating our own space for that very kind of ministry.

CHRISTMAS CDs SUPPORT REDEEMER MINISTRIES

Still looking for the right Christmas gift? Give CDs of Redeemer music and support some great ministries at the same time! After all worship services from November 26 through December 17, go to the Music table at the fellowship hour. There you will find *Christmas of Peace*, which benefits New Song, Redeemer's church plant in Harlem, *Christmas of Hope*, which benefits Hope for New York, and Steve Sacks' *Look to the Sky*, which benefits the work of the diaconate.

In addition, you can purchase CDs by Redeemer artists such as the 6:30 Band, Mark Giacobbe, Walter Hulse, Annie Quick, Russ Nolan, David Bixler, James Markey and many others. Proceeds from these CDs benefit Redeemer's music department.

All of the CDs, sheet music and more are also available in the music store at Redeemer.com.

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VISION CAMPAIGN UPDATE (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

committed to prayer, which also began with the Vision Campaign. We thank God for His great faithfulness, and we continue to be amazed and humbled by the commitment and generosity of the Redeemer congregation and other faithful supporters.

This is the first of a series of quarterly Vision Campaign updates. Future issues of the newsletter will highlight the launch of new ministry initiatives, church planting activities, and progress on real estate procurement. We're eager to see it all work together to enable Redeemer to truly serve its neighbors and renew the city with the gospel.

Programs Started or Approved for 2007:

New Ministry Initiatives*

- Family Ministry is expanding with commitment to hire a full-time Director in 2007 and with plans for a Redeemer-sponsored

after-school program and Vacation Bible School in summer 2007.

- The Center for Faith & Work has expanded its educational programs and classes, as well as arts and entrepreneurs initiatives.

Church Planting Activity*

- Six new churches in New York City will receive grants.
- RCPC has expanded mentoring, coaching and training programs. RCPC is partnering with Hope For New York to assist church plants to incorporate mercy and justice initiatives into their ministries.

Investing in Our Community*

- The Counseling Center will begin assessments for children in 2007.
- The Diaconate is creating a job-training skills program for people who are unemployed and/or underemployed.
- A Special Orchestral Open

Forum is planned for 2007.

Real Estate*

- Currently in feasibility search phase for the first piece of property, the size of which will depend on the amount of money raised.
- Colliers ABR selected as our real estate broker; budget approved for in-house real estate staff person.

As we seek the good and prosperity of the city and move forward with our plans in the coming months and years, please pray that God uses us as a church community to minister to those who are in need. Please pray for His will and not ours. Please pray that we continue to rely humbly on God's faithfulness, however undeserved, and that we point people to Christ in a way that changes hearts and renews lives.

****Please note that these lists of activities are not exhaustive.***