

REDEEMER

R E P O R T

APRIL 2008

THE BIBLE ON CHURCH AND CULTURE

BY TIM KELLER

At Redeemer we encourage Christian ‘cultural engagement,’ but there are critics who say that we should instead simply work at ‘being and building up the church’ and avoid any efforts to change or renew culture. I’d like to offer a few Biblical texts that serve as a starting point for Redeemer’s approach to this issue.

Loving your neighbor

First, Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that we are not only to love our brothers and sisters in Christ but also our neighbors (Luke 19:25-37.) In Jesus’ day, the idea of ‘neighbor’ and ‘brother’ was the same thing. Love and support were to be only shown to one’s own tribe, race, and faith. By making the two main figures in the parable to be a Jew and a Samaritan, however, Jesus drove home the fact that a

Christian must consider anyone at all, *especially* those of other races and classes, as my neighbor, even if he or she is of another faith. Paul follows up with the command to “*Do good to all men, especially the household of faith*” (Galatians 6:10.) Here Paul clearly tells believers to serve the interests of their non-Christian neighbors. The word ‘good’ includes giving material benefits (as in the parable of the Good Samaritan) out of love and desire for a person’s well being in every way. Thus Paul calls Christians to consider and work for the ‘common good’ of their neighborhood and city.

It is no wonder that Christians seeking to obey Christ and Paul have over the centuries worked to abolish slavery, repeal child labor laws, and open voting rights to all citizens, as well as to begin thousands of programs and ministries

that help the poor and needy.

Working for your God’s glory

Second, the New Testament tells us to do absolutely *everything* for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31) and this includes one’s vocation and work. Work and cultural production is never neutral, but is always driven by particular beliefs about what life is all about, what people are for, what is right and wrong. In every profession, gospel beliefs will effect how we do our work. How they do so varies greatly from field to field. Sometime the differences between believer and non-believer are not very great in practice. But if we practice law and supervise our employees and do art in a ways increasingly informed by Christian faith, it will lead at least indirectly to changing social mores and norms.

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EASTER SACRIFICIAL OFFERING FOR HFNY

On behalf of its 37 affiliates that serve New York City’s poor and marginalized, Hope for New York wants to thank all of those who gave sacrificially on Easter Sunday. The funds given

will be used as direct grants to those affiliates, and also for volunteer training, program funding, and expansion of services.

If you were unable to give on Easter Sunday, but would still like

to participate in the sacrificial offering, you can visit hfny.org for information on how to donate.

Again, our deepest thanks to all of you, on behalf of all of those we serve.



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APRIL IS ARTS MONTH!

For the month of April, Redeemer is presenting a variety of programs for arts lovers—or would-be arts lovers. Many of the most influential arts institutions in the world are right here in our neighborhoods—and we'll be visiting them!

Some of the highlights of the month include:

- A performance at the Metropolitan Opera
- Classes on "Christianity Through the Arts" and "When Faith Meets Film"
- The opening of a new art exhibition, "Visual Prayer," at the Redeemer offices
- A lecture/demonstration featuring Redeemer's jazz musicians and singer/songwriters
- A new monthly book group, discussing "The Best in New Fiction"

For information about all events and to sign up, visit www.faithandwork.org/april.

The events are designed to help us think through how our faith and worldview affect the way we see and experience works of art, and to introduce us to the wide variety of arts offerings available here in New York City. Redeemer artists will lead or be featured in the events, so this is also a great way to learn more about the artists within our community, their work, and how to encourage and support them.

"April is Arts Month!" is co-sponsored by the department of Worship & Music, and the Greenhouse, a program of the Center for Faith & Work/Arts Ministries.

Because of Redeemer's desire to be a renewing force in the culture around us, we are keenly

interested in art and the artists creating it (both within the church and without). A portion of the 2005 Vision Campaign was designated to deepen this cultural renewal work, which established the Greenhouse, a program to cultivate new works of art from a Christian worldview and to build an audience for them.

Through "April is Arts Month!" we will also learn more about the kinds of arts programs that you, the congregation, are interested in, so show us by signing up! If you can't attend the event(s) you're most interested in, email us at arts@redeemer.com and tell us more about the kinds of events you'd like to see the Greenhouse host in the future.

For more information about the Greenhouse, and to join its eNewsletter, visit www.faithandwork.org/greenhouse.

THE BIBLE ON CHURCH...

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Salting and lighting your world

Third, in Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus tells his disciples they are to be *'the salt of the earth,'* and a *'city on a hill'* whose *'good deeds'* are a *light* that will lead non-believers to praise the Father in heaven. Salt dispersed into meat was a preservative. So Jesus is indicating that Christians out in the world who are living lives consistent with the gospel keep society from deteriorating, morally, socially, and culturally. In a parallel passage (1 Peter 2:11-12) Peter says that Christians living life in the world

evoke persecution in some respects and yet will nevertheless influence many pagans to *'praise God.'* In his article on 1 Peter, *'Soft Difference'* Miroslav Volf shows how this tension Peter envisioned does not fit neatly into any of the historic models of relating Christ to culture. Unlike the models that envision a *'transformation of culture'* or an older *'Christendom'* alliance of church and state, Peter expects the gospel to always be highly offensive and to never be embraced and accepted by the world. Unlike the models that call

for withdrawal from the world and are highly pessimistic about influencing culture, Peter expects *some* aspects of Christian practice to be highly attractive to any pagan culture, shaping and influencing people to *'praise God.'* The classic example of being resident aliens is in Jeremiah 29, in which the Jews are called both to keep their distinct religious identity, not assimilating culturally to the Babylonians, and yet to be deeply involved in the economic and cultural life of Babylon, seeing to

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REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller
Heather Klein

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HUNTER COLLEGE AUDITORIUM East 69TH (Between Park & Lexington) services at 10:30AM • 6:00PM	ETHICAL CULTURE West 64TH and CPW service at 9:15AM	FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Corner of West 79TH and Broadway service at 5:00PM & 7:15PM
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A CHURCH FULL OF MUSICIANS

BY TOM JENNINGS

It's early in the morning and you've managed to drag yourself to church. You drowsily stand to sing the opening hymn and as the first verse begins, you hear from all around you the loudest voices ever. Later, when the worship leader invites you to greet those seated nearby, you get an explanation—you are sitting next to one of the numerous professional opera singers who attend Redeemer!

There are several hundred professional musicians in the church, representing nearly every musical genre, instrument, voice type, and major musical institution in the city. How did they end up at Redeemer and what are we doing to capitalize on this phenomenon? From the earliest days of the church, Redeemer leaders have explored ways to reach the musician community of New York. Here are four of them:

One of the simplest but most significant adjustments was scheduling. The schedule of a musician is in many ways the opposite of typical business hours. Nights are taken up with performances and networking, afternoons with rehearsals and practice, and mornings with sleeping! That's why Redeemer offers five musician fellowship groups that meet in the late afternoon or early in the week, when theaters and concert halls are dark. In planning church-wide events, we don't assume that everyone works on weekdays and is available on evenings and weekends. Nearly all of our musician events are on Monday nights. And we take our evening services seriously, in part so that musicians can attend a meaningful service when they are, well, awake.

Second, the tone towards artists from the pulpit matters. In

many churches, artists are held up for condemnation. The problem with the world, we are told, is MTV, violent movies, and raunchy music lyrics. An artist hearing that message immediately understands what is being communicated—all would be well with society if not for the corrupting influence of culture-makers, and they feel unwelcome. Redeemer pastors have instead preached that the corruption of society comes from the sin within all of our hearts. They have intentionally made positive use of secular literature, movies and music in their presentations of the gospel message. To a musician exploring Christianity or returning to church for the first time in years, this approach validates their career path and makes them feel like an accepted part of the church.

Third, we seek to provide deep community. A free-lance musician's life is often devoid of the kind of relationships that can be found in a consistent workplace or a family-oriented church. They often work alone and travel frequently, working with different people on each occasion. It can be lonely. We are trying to address that need by offering weekly fellowship groups as well as performance workshops for classical musicians, a monthly meeting for musical theater singers, a songwriters group, and other gatherings where musicians can build meaningful relationships with other Christians. To bolster our commitment to this effort, we recently created the position of Director of Musician Ministries and hired Laura Bergquist.

Fourth, we allow them to use their gifts in a natural way. My best memory from the first time I

played piano at Redeemer was, oddly enough, not the service music or the sermon but the postlude. It was an evening service and following the benediction, the bandleader turned to us and said, "All the Things You Are" and counted off the tune. That song is a standard among jazz musicians, but I never considered that it could be played in church. In a subtle but effective way, the church was communicating to me that it was okay to be a jazz musician and that my gifts could be useful to the church. I knew instantly that this was a place I could put down roots and invite my musician friends. We don't make our musicians restrict Beethoven and Miles Davis to their "secular" work.

Just as important as reaching artists, however, is building them into disciples who serve each other and the city. In this area we have significant work to do. Some of our musicians are using their gifts to serve Hope for New York ministries, mission organizations, other Redeemer ministries and church plants. Nevertheless, the goal is not merely to have a church with many musicians attending, but one with a strong community of musicians who are growing in knowledge of the gospel, and who are building up their church and city through sacrificial service. We need them to deeply consider the implications of their faith on their day-to-day life in the music scene. Pray that the music community of New York will become even more vibrant, just, and in line with gospel values because of the influence of the musicians from Redeemer.

THE GLORY OF SINGLENES AND MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH



Sunday, April 13 from 1:30PM to 4:30PM
Hunter College Auditorium, 68th St. & Lexington Ave.

Register online at www.redeemer.com/learn
Registration fee: \$20

This one-day seminar with Lauren Winner, author of *Girl Meets God*, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, and *Real Sex: The Naked Truth about Chastity*, focuses on the meaning of marriage and singleness and how both offer something crucial to the Church.

GET TO KNOW YOUR DEACS

The Diaconate, Redeemer's mercy ministry, provides assistance to those in our community with practical, visible needs, while supporting them spiritually. We would like to introduce you to two of our "deacs" (deacons/deaconesses): Marie Sclafani and Tony Vavroch!

Name of deaconess: Marie Sclafani

Length of time I've attended Redeemer: 8 Years

Length of time I've served on the Diaconate: 3 Years

The service I attend: 9:15AM West Side Morning

Hobbies: Reading and Entertaining

The last book I read:

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini

Most people don't know: I love motorcycles and convertibles

I grew up in: New York City

My New York neighborhood: Riverdale

My favorite way to spend a weekend: Brunch after Sunday service, then home and a long nap

How the Lord has been preparing me to serve as a deac:

Through my experiences and how the Lord has always provided; through friends that walked alongside me; through a ministry in Dallas that supported those who were divorced or separated; through my professional training... and most of all through his abundant grace in giving me a passion to work with people.

One memorable experience from my time as a deac: Walking with someone in so much emotional pain that she couldn't even stand to sit with us, and seeing her progress as she attended counseling, then meeting and praying with her even when she was exhibiting some unlovable tendencies, and finally watching how she went through a heart change and became happy and centered.

Name of deacon: Tony Vavroch

Length of time I've attended Redeemer: 15 years

Length of time I've served on the Diaconate: 2 years

The service I attend: 6:00PM East Side Evening

Hobbies: Biking, listening to music, watching films

The last book I read: *Up Country* by Nelson DeMille

Most people don't know: I was in National Enquirer once

I grew up in: Illinois

My New York neighborhood: Upper East Side

The most unique thing that has happened to me in New York City: I was a bellman at the Four Seasons Hotel and checked in a lot of celebrities (Oprah, Clint Eastwood, Aretha Franklin, Tom Hanks).

How the Lord has been preparing me to serve as a deac: I have experienced loss, isolation, detachment, love, fellowship, community, joy and pain.

One memorable experience from my time as a deac: I remember praying for someone after a service who said that they felt they had nothing to live for, even though they believed the Gospel. After we prayed, I could see their countenance change from despair to hope.

***If you have a financial or other practical need, please call the Diaconate Helpline, (212) 726-1334.
To learn more about the Redeemer Diaconate, visit www.redeemer.com/diaconate***

TEENS TODAY, LEADERS TOMORROW

BY CREGAN COOKE

As Redeemer draws closer to its 20th anniversary, the youth ministry is noteworthy in light of the fact that it acts as a pipeline for developing tomorrow's leaders for our church's vision for the city. Although many in our congregation have little contact with the teens in our church, they are here every week—learning, serving and thriving in our congregation in meaningful life-shaping ways.

The church already enjoys the dividends of this energetic, inquisitive group in the form of young professionals who have captured the vision of Redeemer while they were here during their high school years and are now applying it as young professionals in their jobs after college. Over the past 10+ years dozens of graduates have passed through our youth group and some have returned from college to urban settings to be the doctors, pastors and lay leaders of the next generation serving as leaders in the Gospel movement of Redeemer.

Dr. Sylvia Kehlenbrink –
(high school class of 1998)
recently returned to NYC

having completed medical school in Germany and is now an active member of our congregation again. “Being part of the youth group and two of its mission trips to Mexico and Japan radically influenced not only my relationship with God, but also shaped one of my life's aspirations—to work internationally in the medical field. One of the most important and encouraging aspects of my experience has been the relationship with my youth leaders, who beautifully displayed the joy, love, and passion of Jesus and still to this day are important mentors to me.”

Isaac Lee – (high school class of 2002) has been working as a web programmer for a firm here in the city for 2 years and recently returned to the youth group as a lay leader for Jr. High guys.

Rev. Michael Keller – (high school class of 1998) was ordained by Southern New England Presbytery this past fall and is a pastor at CityLife

Church in Boston. “As a teenager, youth group was one of the few places I experienced genuine love that came from relationships with committed leaders. In a transitional city like NYC, the love I experienced in those relationships was foundational to my life.”

Although it is difficult to measure the future effects on his or her life from a student's participation in youth group, each of these “graduates” and many others like them had relevant Gospel experiences. Numerous conversations about their faith with leaders and peers magnified the importance of developing their personal faith and the overarching relevance of the Gospel in their lives. And now we see students returning as young professionals, realizing the vision God has for them influencing cities for His glory.

As the Jr. & Sr. High Student ministry continues to grow, it is exciting to recognize the tremendous potential it has and its significance in the ministry of Redeemer to the city.

THE BIBLE ON CHURCH...

(CONT'D FROM PAGE 2)

its peace, prosperity and common good.

Not power, but service

The commands to love our neighbor, to do all our work out of a Christian worldview, and to be salt and light, working for the common good of all city residents—mean Christians will of necessity be doing cultural renewal. People who say, “The church should not seek any impact on culture” should be

asked, “should Christians have not worked to abolish slavery?” That was a response to God's command to love our neighbor, but it also brought massive social change.

Nevertheless, looking back over the texts I am struck by the simple fact that cultural change is always a by-product, not the main goal. The main goal is always *loving service*. If we love and serve our neighbors, city, and Lord, it will definitely mean social

changes, but Christians must not seek to take over and control society as an end in itself. If we truly seek to serve, we will be gladly given a certain measure of influence by those around us. If we seek power directly, just to get power and make the world more like us, we will neither have influence nor be of service. Everyone around us will view us with alarm, as well they should.



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CENTER FOR FAITH & WORK GOTHAM INSTITUTE

David Kim, director of the Gotham Fellowship, spoke to one of an approximate 65 people who attended the Gotham Fellowship's information session. The program hopes to instill gospel-based personal transformation, world view formation and community integration.

CENTER FOR FAITH & WORK EVENTS IN APRIL 2008

DATE & TIME	EVENT & LOCATION
Friday, April 4 at 7:00PM	Finding Satisfaction in Legal Practice, Redeemer Offices
Saturday, April 5 at 8:00AM	Entrepreneurship Forum, (Invitation Only)
Tuesday April 8 at 7:00PM	Grad Students Fellowship, Redeemer Offices
Friday, April 11 at 7:00PM	InterArts Fellowship, Redeemer Offices
Sunday, April 13 at 5:00PM	Healthcare Fellowship Dinner, after West Side 5:00 PM Service
Tuesday, April 15 at 7:00PM	The A.D. Agency Fellowship, Potluck Slideshow, Cooley Studio
Thursday, April 17 at 8:00AM	Legal Fellowship Breakfast, Redeemer Offices
Sunday, April 20 at 12:00PM	Health Care Fellowship Lunch, after East Side AM Service
Monday, April 21 at 7:00PM	Entrepreneurs Fellowship
Thursday, April 24 at 7:00PM	Health Care Fellowship, Upper East Side
Friday, April 25 at 7:00PM	Higher Education Fellowship
Saturday–Sunday, April 26–27	Financial Services Ministry Retreat
Monday, April 28 at 7:00PM	Financial Services Ministry Meeting, Redeemer Offices

Please go to www.faithandwork.org for information on all CFW events.