

REDEEMER Report

Renewing the city socially, spiritually and culturally

25th
Anniversary 1989-2014

SEPTEMBER 2014
Special Edition

HOW DO YOU SUM UP 25 YEARS?

By Kathy Keller

I'm not even going to try. For one thing, my memories aren't as dependable as they used to be, and for another, looking back at our history runs the risk of leading us into a smug self-congratulation, rather than further on and higher up into dependence on God.

What I would rather do is talk about the NEXT 25 years.

Church growth experts tell us that the useful evangelistic life of a church plant is somewhere between 25 and 35 years. At the beginning, there is no one inside the church, so all the metabolism and strategy goes into thinking about reaching those who are on the outside. But as the church grows, members and families inside the congregation need to be cared for — nursery, youth groups, programs, conferences — absorbing an increasing percentage of that metabolism.

This is necessary and right, but it is also true that unless the church maintains a laser focus on their original vision for reaching skeptics and not just designing a church that is welcoming for Christians, it can slowly morph into a Christian club. The needs and the tastes of the insiders are much louder (because, after all, they're THERE) than the needs and sensibilities of those still without Christ. In time, Christians are just talking to themselves, unaware that they have become unintelligible to unbelievers.

Last year's emphasis on Public Faith and this year's commitment to prayer represent only two of the ways that Redeemer is working to stay on course, reinventing itself back to the future. We want to continually be reminding ourselves of why God has blessed us so unusually — because we were *not a church for ourselves, but a church for those who don't like church.*

We need to find new and creative ways to design what we do and say, how we communicate visually, musically, relationally, and every other way with those who don't yet believe always in mind, while not neglecting our own members and family. This is a huge challenge, but I deeply believe it is the one God has called Redeemer to answer. A tremendous balancing act, but one I am convinced is achievable — not because we are such stellar, brilliant people, but because God, having begun a good work here, in us, in the city, will not let it go to waste, but will bring it to completion.

Imagine 5000+ people in our three congregations committed to making Public Faith a lifestyle. Imagine sending out our best leaders, servers and givers to start new churches all over the city. As we consider our first 25 years as a church, we can see how God has *begun* an amazing work in and through us. It will be the privilege of the coming generation to see how he continues that work.

This anniversary marks the start of something, not the end of something.



Art by Peter Corrison, displayed on the Hunter Auditorium stage



VISION

DIFFERENTLY THE SAME

Redeemer's next twenty-five Years

By Tim Keller

Redeemer Presbyterian Church of New York City was begun in 1989, so this year we are able to celebrate our 25th anniversary with joy and gratitude for the past.

But what about the next twenty-five years?

What can we hope for — indeed, what *should* we hope for? Should we hope for Redeemer to continue virtually unchanged, the same, or should we pray that God would do something new and different? Before answering that question directly let me share something that I have learned recently in my reading.

“The gospel has to be communicated in fresh ways in order to both defy and resonate with its listeners.”

I have been reading a good deal about the history of ideas in the West. It is striking to see that the opposition to Christian belief in each age changes radically from century to century. The existentialists of the 20th century were horrified by the views of the utilitarians of the early 19th century, who in turn mocked the beliefs of the deists of the 18th century. In every generation skeptics speak of “what all intelligent people believe now,” yet it is always sharply different from that which was taken as self-evident by the same kind of people just a few decades before. The racial views and discourse of our great grandparents is offensive to us today, but almost certainly today’s reigning views of race, sex, and gender will be seen as laughable or outrageous by our own great grandchildren. That is hard to imagine, because the opponents of Christianity in each era are sure that they have finally arrived at enlightenment.

That is never the case. Non-belief is notoriously unstable. Skeptical views go out of date very fast.

What about orthodox Christianity? Have there been changes over the years to that? Yes, but nothing like the changes in non-belief. If Christians today read Augustine from the fifth century and Luther from the 16th and, say John Stott or C.S. Lewis in the 20th century, they rightly sense that these are brothers in the faith who believe the same things. Are they different, as well? Of course — and one of the reasons they are different is that they are interacting with the radically different cultures and kinds of non-belief of their time. The gospel has to be communicated in fresh ways in order to both defy and resonate with its listeners. New emphases and modes of expression are called for. Yet the fundamentals of Apostles’ Creed faith and the gospel of Christ do not change.



What does all this mean for the future of Redeemer? Should it be the same or different? As you can see, that is a false dichotomy. In some ways, Redeemer (as gospel ministry in general) must change *in order* to stay the same. If we are to continue to lift up Christ in a compelling way to New Yorkers as we have in the past, Redeemer will have to change.

Well, then, will Redeemer be something in the middle — partly the same and partly different? I would not put it that way. It is not that orthodox Christianity is an undifferentiated list of beliefs, and in every age some change and some do not. Rather, the essence of Christian belief and the gospel — expressed in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds, and in the historic confessions of the Reformation — are what binds the church together from age to age. The church is therefore “differently the same.” In its core commitments — in all the important ways — it is the same, and yet takes different forms in different cultures.

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In the same way, Redeemer has many core commitments that must be stronger than ever going forward. It is an evangelical church in the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition. It is gospel-centered rather than either moralistic or relativistic. It loves the city and is realistically committed to it — neither hostile to it nor having a romanticized view of it. It is holistic in ministry — both calling people to repentance and faith and meeting the needs of the poor and marginalized. It is culturally engaged, equipping people to integrate their faith with their work. Redeemer is outward facing, a church not just for Christians but also a place for those who do not believe to find their concerns and questions respectfully addressed in an understandable and compelling way. And it is a church seeking to cooperate with and catalyze a movement of gospel ministry across the entire city.

It is easy to get emotionally attached to many specific aspects of a church’s ministry — like the location, a style of music, the exact order of service, or the personality of a particular minister. If we have been helped and changed by a congregation or a pastor it is natural to love virtually every part of it and to want to see nothing altered. But that is to make the Redeemer of the past into an idol. We must not try to hold on to the past in every detail. Neither must we let Redeemer become another moralistic or liberal church, or another Christian sub-cultural home for insiders instead of a church for indigenous New Yorkers.

One decision we have made that encourages me is that Redeemer will become a family of congregations, not one centralized mega-church. That means there will be an exciting variety of styles and approaches and voices and leadership and forms of ministry — all, we pray, based on our “Gospel DNA” that God has given Redeemer in the past. This means we will reach more kinds of people and more neighborhoods than ever. I hope that if old-timers around 20 years from now are asked, “Is this Redeemer congregation different from the original Redeemer church?” they will say, “It’s different in many ways, but, at heart, no, it’s the same.”



DOWNTOWN

GREAT HOPE FOR OUR CITY

By John Lin

Having moved to New York City several months after 9/11, I've now been part of Redeemer for just over half of its 25-year history. During that time, my role has changed from Community Group Director to Director of Congregational Life to my current one as a Lead Pastor at one of Redeemer's three congregations. And while I don't personally recall New York City before Redeemer existed, I do remember a time before the Downtown Congregation existed.

While both New York and Redeemer have changed since I moved here, it is striking that our vision has remained very much the same, namely to work towards a city that flourishes spiritually, socially and culturally, both for our joy as a church and New York's joy as a city.

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It's this same spirit and commitment that brought me to New York and led me to apply for the role of Downtown Lead Pastor. It animates the work and life of our family, and gives me great hope for the future impact of the Gospel in our city.

In our Sunday worship services, we pray for the needs of the city, welcome those who are doubting to consider the Christian message, send people out to serve the city as those who love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and remind people that our congregation exists to see Downtown flourish in every dimension of life.

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While we are still very young as a Downtown community, it is thrilling to lead a congregation of people who serve the needs of neighbors, pray for spiritual openness amongst friends, work towards cultural and commercial flourishing in the city and, in so many ways, who desire to be a church that serves the city and not merely the needs of those who attend each Sunday.

In our Downtown congregation, we’ve heard stories from many who are considering Christianity for the first time or have recently come to faith in the God of the Bible. We’ve heard from many for whom the Downtown congregation has brought a sense of integration to their home, work, spiritual and cultural lives in ways that they hadn’t experienced before. It’s these glimpses of changed lives that give me hope that God can and will continue to work in our city for its flourishing. It’s been a tremendous joy to have been part of Redeemer’s ministry for the last 13 years and I count it a great privilege that I can be part of its ministry Downtown and throughout our city in years to come.



PRAYER AND THE LIFE OF REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

By Tim Keller


Redeemer was born in prayer. When Terry Gyger first asked Kathy and I to consider moving to New York City and planting a church in the late 1980s, I said, “No, but I’ll help you find someone who will do that.”

Even though I turned Terry down, the request rattled me. I was teaching practical theology at seminary and I had been out of the pastorate for several years. I realized I had become spiritually complacent, and I knew I didn’t have the prayer life necessary for such a ministry. It set me on a two-year quest to know God and find spiritual reality in prayer. As it turned out, the call to Manhattan circled back on us, and we ended up moving here in 1989. Without that deeper foundation in prayer, I could not have answered that call.

As we were raising support to come to New York, we were delighted to become the recipient of our denomination’s Women In the Church organization’s annual Love Gift. The annual WIC Love Gift came through voluntary special offerings from individual churches in the Presbyterian Church in America. That year, I believe, over 400 churches gave. It was \$75,000, which at the time was an enormous financial grant for a new church. In hindsight, however, the gift’s greatest power for good was not financial.

Along with the financial offering, the women in the contributing churches were asked to pray. Since the Love Gift had never been given to a single congregation before, it meant that for the first time women from over 400 churches were praying for a single church plant. (It may have fueled their urgency in prayer to imagine moving their own families to big, bad New York City, something my wife’s prayer letters did nothing to dispell!) My wife often says that she believes no single church plant in history may have had more people praying for it than Redeemer.

The effects were evident to all. In the first year or so of Redeemer’s ministry the sense of God’s presence was often palpable. The gospel seemed brand new, sleepy Christians awoke with a start, and people got converted every week. The air was charged with a kind of electricity. Every decision turned out to be wise. Everyone performed above and beyond his or her gifts and abilities. The Lord helped us.



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In the very beginning we had no officers or even any staff. Instead we had a ‘coordinating group,’ an informal steering committee, which consisted of lay leaders in the emerging congregation. We met for prayer every Friday morning. Every week nearly everyone in the group had stories of non-Christians they were bringing to or meeting at Redeemer. We prayed for all the people we saw that were being drawn to Christ, as well as for the overall ministry.

So it is accurate to say that Redeemer was born in prayer. I think it is honest to also say, however, that subsequently, through the rest of our history, Redeemer has not been known as a praying church, despite the fact that we have always had a cadre of people who both formally and informally supported the gospel work through prayer. In this coming year — and, I hope, henceforth — we will as a congregation give a new, focused attention to prayer. Our Fall Beta group and sermon series will be all about prayer, and during the year we will have opportunities to deepen our prayer lives. Our aims are to grow in our biblical understanding of prayer, our practice of prayer in private as individuals, and our practice of prayer in community as brothers and sisters. The outcomes we desire include having a renewed inward experience of God’s holy love, as well as seeing God’s kingdom work move forward in response to our prayers.

Prayer makes it safe for God to give us the many gifts he has in store for us. There are blessings God would like to grant us but he will not unless we ask for them. Further, prayer is the only way to truly know your self as well as the main way to actually know God, because in prayer we treat him *as* God. And, because the things we worship ultimately control us, prayer is the main way that we experience deep change. Why? It is how the loves of our heart are re-ordered so we love God first and everything else second. There is nothing on earth more important than prayer.

The main way we should acknowledge the 25th anniversary of Redeemer is through prayer. We should look back with thanksgiving for what he has done. We should look forward with fervent supplication for his continued presence and work among us. And overall there should be prayers of joyful praise that he is the kind of God to do all this. Come — magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together. (Psalm 34:3)



EAST SIDE

NEW YORK CITY DRAWS US IN AND SENDS US OUT

By **Melanie Penn**

New York City has a habit of drawing some of the most gifted, hard-working, loveliest, searching souls to come live here. Fourteen years ago, when I moved to New York City, I was neither among the most gifted nor the loveliest, but I was definitely among the searching.

I was raised in a Christian home by wonderful, believing parents. Throughout my upbringing, Christianity was confusing to me, but I loved church because I could sing there. I sang in church for the first time when I was 6, and many years later I headed to New York to be a singer. Vague traces of Christianity stayed with me during this time, but I was among the spiritually lost.

I had lived in the city about a year when 9/11 happened. I watched the towers fall from the roof of my 2nd Street apartment. Like many New Yorkers then, 9/11 brought on a spiritual crisis. I realized life is fleeting. I had no frame for how to deal with suffering. I no longer wanted to be spiritually lost. Redeemer was the only church I had heard of, so I went. I found myself sitting in the Hunter College auditorium in September, and by October I had met Jesus.

**“ a conviction flooded over me that the
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claimed to be, and that I was changed. ”**

You could describe my experience as a classic conversion. During one of Tim's sermons a conviction flooded over me that the Bible is true, Jesus Christ is who he claimed to be, and that I was changed. It was a bittersweet, tragic, magical time for me. The city and everyone in it reeled and grieved, and I became new.

Ever since then, Redeemer has been my church home. They let me sing here, too, and serving under Leo Schuster's leadership on the East Side has been one of the greatest joys of my life. There are frequent moments during the East Side evening service, when I wonder if someone is sitting in Hunter College, just like I did, searching and questioning. I hope you're out there and if you are, keep coming.

“ Where you go, our
love and prayers
are with you. ”

When I began writing this, I did not know that I'd get news of Leo Schuster's resignation. I greeted this news with tears, like many of you.

In 2011, God called Ellen and Leo Schuster, who truly are among the most gifted and loveliest, to New York City. They have led and loved us well.

I've learned New York City has another habit, an annoying and poignant one: it makes us say goodbye. As often as the city draws in wonderful people, the city also sends them out again, releasing them for new adventures.

So the East Side says goodbye. We also say, *Why do you have to go so soon? God must have some amazing work in store for you.* We say, *Where you go, our love and prayers are with you.*

We also say *thank you.* Thank you for serving so faithfully. And thank you for being part of the first 25 years of Redeemer Presbyterian Church.





WEST SIDE

“WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE?”

By Tom Jennings

The question surprised me. It was 1986 and I had just performed a Chopin Ballade for Maurice Hinson, a professor at Southern Seminary, as part of a visit to the school. Soon I would be graduating from VCU and was considering pursuing music ministry.

“I don’t know ... I’m here playing for you and checking out the seminary.”

“Let me ask it another way. What do you love doing?”

“Playing classical music and jazz.”

“Where’s the best place to do that?”

“New York, of course!”

“Then you should go there. There are plenty of Christians filling church jobs, but not nearly enough playing in jazz clubs in New York.”

Fast-forward three years — now married to a beautiful soprano, living in Brooklyn, working on a doctorate, and playing freelance gigs. Backstage one night before playing a concert in Montclair the bassist, Jonathan Gilley, and I start chatting. We discover that we are both Christians and tell each other about our churches. Michelle and I were attending Park Slope Baptist Church (membership: 12). Jonathan proceeds to tell me about a new church in Manhattan. What really caught my attention — “they let us play jazz.” Jazz? At church? I’m in! Give me a call if you ever need a pianist.

The first time I played at Redeemer there were maybe 75 people at a 6:30 p.m. service at 87th and Park. The musicians were pros but didn’t consider it a gig. Tim Keller (with hair) delivered a sermon from Ephesians unlike any I’d ever heard — intelligent, with no histrionics whatsoever, and yet deeply moving. For the postlude we played the jazz standard “All the Things You Are.” Afterwards a crowd gathered in the back and Tim took questions from skeptics for another hour.

In the week that followed I couldn’t get the experience out of my mind. Sure, there were things I didn’t like. The songs were cheesy, the prayers felt scripted, and the crowd was awfully buttoned-up. But there was one thought I couldn’t shake — *I could bring my musician friends to Redeemer, even the ones who think Christianity is absurd.*

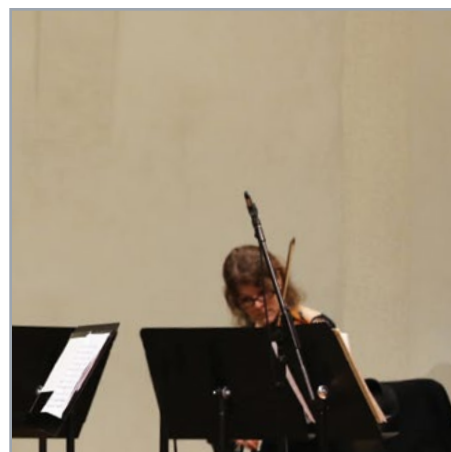
“ But there was one thought I couldn’t shake — I could bring my musician friends to Redeemer, even the ones who think Christianity is absurd. ”

Over the next 5 years, occasional subbing grew into a regular position in the band. Michelle started singing in the services. It seemed that everyone was inviting his or her friends and the church grew very quickly. We found ourselves in a rich community of Christian musicians. Redeemer was making New York feel like home.

In 1995 Redeemer began a search for a music director. I thought I had left that path behind in the seminary professor’s office. But now a new thought was planted in my mind — *Maybe I could help Redeemer remain a place for musicians (and other New Yorkers) to safely explore the gospel.*

I’m so grateful that the elders took a chance on a young Baptist pianist. For 24 years, in 15 or so different locations, I have had a front row seat to watch God at work in the lives of New Yorkers. Outwardly, Redeemer bears little resemblance to the small church that I first played for in 1990. But I can still bring my musician friends. They still let us play jazz. And there is much work left to be done.

So that, Professor Hinson, is what I want to do with my life.





CENTER FOR FAITH & WORK

WHY EMPHASIZE FAITH & WORK INTEGRATION?

*Reflecting on the role of CFW
as Redeemer celebrates 25 years*

By David Kim

Twenty-five years ago, Redeemer began in New York City with a bold vision that this fledgling church might somehow contribute towards the larger peace and prosperity of NYC. In a time when churches were leaving the city, Redeemer would decidedly be a church “*in the city for the city*,” and this commitment would be expressed through a distinctively outward-facing vision for the church.

This outward orientation was driven by the conviction that the gospel not only renews individual hearts, but also communities, as well as the larger world around us. In short, we believed that the gospel has the power to bring about a unique kind of cultural renewal in the City. For this reason, we have every confidence to engage the “world” knowing that God is not only present in every part of it, but that his grace is actively at work to address the brokenness and pain we experience daily in it. How can the church equip, connect, and mobilize her people to respond to the unseen realities of God’s renewing power in the world?

These larger questions led to the launch of the Center for Faith & Work (CFW), formed in 2003 to strengthen this outward orientation of the church. CFW would become one of five primary ministry fronts in the church, elevating the importance of integrating faith into what occupies and preoccupies most of our waking hours—work.

Those of us residing here in NYC know that while there can be a great romanticism about “the city that never sleeps,” it is our work that controls more parts of our lives than we would like to admit. Yet, it doesn’t take very long to see how broken work is and the effect that this brokenness has not only on our lives but also upon the flourishing of all the sectors in the city. Our hope as Christians is that we have a gospel big enough to address every level of brokenness, and the promises of Scripture confirm that God is indeed making *all things new*.

As Christians scatter throughout every borough each workday, the church touches thousands of organizations and workplaces. When Christians begin to see the relevance and power of the gospel at work in these respective places, the possibilities are truly amazing. Our motivations for work begin to change. Our relationships at work become more humanized, and we begin to see the purpose of our work in ways that connect the day-to-day experiences to concrete expressions of God’s glory in the world. When the gospel becomes central, hope for change in our city becomes revived.

“If we believe that the resurrection of Christ changed everything, then we’ll look at the brokenness of our industries with hope . . . ”

If we believe that the resurrection of Christ changed everything, then we’ll look at the brokenness of our industries with hope despite the massive challenges. We’ll look at the gifts we’ve been given and the skills we’ve acquired in a way that serves others. We’ll look at the hardships we face in our work without complaint but with a persevering spirit that trusts that God has not forsaken our work.

As we look to the future, we yearn to see more of the Spirit’s work in the City. We are realizing even more the importance of an imagination that sees what is unseen to fuel change, moving our world towards the “new.” Our annual conference on November 7-8 will highlight the critical role of the imagination in driving Spirit-led innovation. We want to cultivate a diverse and committed community whose sense of calling is driven and unified by a vision of the future promised to us in the gospel.

We are so excited to see how our work here in New York City has encouraged and catalyzed churches around the world to develop ministries that help people see the wide scope of the gospel’s power. In 2013, Redeemer City to City launched the Faith, Work & Leadership Initiative to help churches inaugurate effective faith and work ministries in global cities. It is our hope that more and more churches will be reinvigorated to equip, connect, and mobilize God’s people for more effective service and witness in the world. As Redeemer enters its next 25 years, CFW will continue to serve this City and the Christians living in it, exploring the critical intersection of faith and work to stimulate innovative change and renewal in our city.





HOPE FOR NEW YORK

EQUIPPING OUR CHURCH TO DO JUSTICE AND LOVE MERCY

By Elise Chong

One of the things you will notice rather quickly when you attend Redeemer is that this is a church that actively encourages its congregants to step outside its four walls. It reminds members that we are a church that exists not for itself but for the city — in particular the poor and marginalized.

Each Sunday, the bulletin highlights service opportunities with Hope for New York affiliates — like serving youth and children in the Bronx, the homeless in Manhattan, underserved families in Queens, or recent immigrants in Brooklyn. We live in a city where almost half of the population lives near the poverty line. The needs of our city are great, and from the beginning our church has encouraged congregants to thoughtfully respond to these needs.


Since the beginning, empowering our church to serve

Back in the early nineties, a small group of Redeemer staff and volunteers, led by Yvonne Dodd and inspired by Tim Keller's teaching on mercy and justice, founded Hope for New York to empower and equip Christians to give to and serve the city. HFNY is a separate 501(c)3 organization dedicated to mobilizing volunteer and financial resources to organizations serving the poor.

At the time, Redeemer congregants were already volunteering at a handful of non-profit organizations in New York City, so our model began by partnering with existing organizations serving the poor. Hope for New York adopted those organizations as “affiliates” and steered congregants to their work with the poor and socially powerless. Over time, as we identified more non-profit organizations that needed helping hands and resources, we began to provide grants and training and consulting to strengthen the work of these organizations.

Operation Exodus, an organization that serves Latino children in Washington Heights, Inwood and the Bronx, was one of our original four affiliate partnerships. Today, over twenty years later, we continue to partner with Operation Exodus as one of our 40+ affiliate partnerships.

I have been a first hand witness to their amazing growth over the past decade, and to the ways that we've been able to come alongside Operation Exodus to strengthen their work. We've matched professional, dedicated volunteers who have sacrificially given their time and talents, many of whom have become long-term



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mentors, board members, and donors to the organization. We’ve provided grants and technical assistance to Operation Exodus, which has given them the ability to expand their programs to multiple sites and provide much needed afterschool programs and college bound resources to immigrant families. We are committed to our non-profit partners for the long haul.

Looking forward with hope

As a Christian community, we ought to be known as being the most generous people with our time and finances, especially towards the poor and marginalized. Today, Hope for New York partners with all three Redeemer congregations along with two additional churches. Our volunteers (congregants just like you!) have served over 55,000 hours in the past year. Additionally, because of our donors, including countless Redeemerites, we have distributed over \$10 million in grants and capacity building support since our inception nearly 25 years ago.

I often hear from “old-timers” here at Redeemer about how they finally decided to commit to Redeemer’s vision to the city. Many of them tell me that they were deeply impressed with how Redeemer has prioritized serving the poor and marginalized even from the early stages of the church’s formation. Through the sacrificial generosity of these Redeemer supporters and volunteers, there are New Yorkers thriving today who otherwise might not have.

However, there is still much more work to be done. As we look forward, we’re excited about going deeper and wider with our work — partnering with more churches to mobilize more Christian giving and serving in this city, strengthening more local non-profits, and loving more and more of our neighbors.

Twenty-five years ago, Redeemer did more than found Hope for New York. You set in motion an entire movement of mercy and justice where Christians are at the forefront of engaging the city’s poor. I want to invite you to join our movement for the next 25 years, as we work together to build a city in which individuals, families and neighborhoods experience even more spiritual, social and economic flourishing through the demonstration of God’s love.



CITY TO CITY

THE STORY OF CITY TO CITY AND THE BIRTH OF 300 CHURCHES

By Clara Lee

Redeemer Presbyterian Church was launched in 1989 when a church planter named Terry Gyger persuaded a seminary professor named Tim Keller to move to Manhattan with his young family to start a church. The idea was to create a church for people in the heart of Manhattan.

Soon afterward, pastors in New York, Seattle, and Washington DC began to model skeptic-friendly services and gospel-centered teaching after Redeemer's. Eventually, Terry recruited some of the most experienced church planters and missionaries he knew - now CTC Directors Jay Kyle, Al Barth and Mark Reynolds - to start a church planting center in New York that would find ways to translate this gospel-centered ministry to places like London, Tokyo and Berlin.

What began as a painstaking search for like-minded pastors in some of the biggest, most secular cities in the world has become a steady stream of pastors receiving training, mentoring, funding, community, and support from what is now called Redeemer City to City. These leaders are inspired by Redeemer's ministry in New York to form their own networks and church plants in cities and countries around the world.

On September 28 we will introduce some of these leaders at all Redeemer services during City to City Sunday. We hope you can join us and meet our 8th annual class of the International Intensive, a group of 16 young pastors representing cities from Los Angeles to Nairobi who are visiting us for extensive training in our core values, church planting and ministry skills during a five-week residency in New York.

The churches they start will eventually join the ranks of over 300 churches that City to City has partnered with, trained, funded, and inspired, in 65 cities, over the past 12 years.

Thanks to a generous gift, the entire cost of their training will be underwritten. But we have committed to support these churches until they become self-sustaining and even begin to plant new churches. Will you consider giving toward launching 16 new churches that proclaim the gospel and serve their cities?

Our goal is to raise \$150,000 on City to City Sunday, September 28. You can also give to City to City online at redeemercitytocity.com/rpc.

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FAMILY MINISTRIES

FAMILIES ROOTED FOR GENERATIONS

By Brent Bounds

The vision of the Redeemer to reach skeptics has a natural corollary — the creation of a community of believers who love Jesus, love each other and love the city of New York. When Redeemer began 25 years ago, it was a church focused on the then-current demographics of Manhattan — single, young professionals. At that time there were three families with a total of six children in the Redeemer community — and three of those were the Keller boys!

While New York has always been a challenging place to live and especially to raise a family, over the years many people have caught a vision for what our city could be with families committed to living here long-term and seeing the opportunities this city provides for their children. Redeemer Moms' Groups began to spring up on both the East and West sides, providing families a community in which to wrestle with how to live out the gospel while facing the challenges of parenting in the city.

Along the way, Redeemer Family Ministries was formed. It exists to equip and support couples and families as they seek to live out the gospel in their marriages, family relationships and neighborhoods. Over 150 dating or engaged couples attend the six Premarital Seminars offered every year. Newly married couples are starting their marriages off well and building community through our monthly Marriage Lab program. Our yearly Education Forum and Thinking About Kids seminars help couples and parents navigate the many challenges and opportunities of raising children in New York City. Our church membership increases every year through our Communicants class, taught by pastors and elders.

Today there are approximately 400 families in the Redeemer community, with over 500 children participating in our weekly Sunday worship programs. We are grateful and excited to have a new generation of native New Yorkers who love the city not because of what it has to offer them, but because it is their *home*!



MERCY AND JUSTICE

THE REDEEMER DIACONATE: 1991-2014


By Jenny Chang

Three years after the Kellers founded Redeemer, women and men were mobilized to serve on our very first Diaconate, the mercy arm of Redeemer. In the first three years primarily the pastors and staff members handled mercy needs as they were brought to the attention of the church. Tim had written his doctoral dissertation on the ministries of mercy and was eager that we would live out the Gospel in both word and deed ministries.

Many Presbyterian churches around the world give their diaconate the care of the church's assets — its property and funds. While this function is very important, Tim wanted our diaconate to concentrate on the practical needs of people, and that is what Redeemer's Diaconate was founded to do. In this he especially followed the model of diaconates in the Dutch Reformed churches. Though the Redeemer Diaconate went through various phases of refinement from 1991 to the present, it never deviated from its original vision to be a ministry that focused on serving the needy.

Over the past 23 years, there are various high points that testify to how God has cared for his people through the Diaconate. Within the Redeemer family, direct financial support from the Diaconate has gone to over 1500 congregants. Over \$4.3 million has been disbursed to help people maintain a roof over their heads, to clothe, feed and transport them. In addition to these 1500 individuals and families, many more received spiritual, emotional and practical care through prayers up front after each worship service and various care groups such as divorce care and OWLS (ministry for older adults). Other aspects of the ministry such as Free Indeed Community Cupboard and Closet, the Meals Ministry and the Job Search Ministry have provided concrete help through food and clothing distribution and skills training.

How is this ministry able to provide such holistic care? Since its inception, 244 women and men have accepted the call to be trained and to serve on the Diaconate. Most completed their initial three-year term and many have served far longer. How they are able to carve out time from their full-time jobs and other responsibilities to serve on the Diaconate shows their obedience to God. Somehow he has a way of expanding their calendars. We're so grateful to God for the faithful services and the enormous contribution of these 244 deacons.



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In addition to human resources, financial resources come from generous supporters such as you. In December of 1995, the Redeemer Session allowed a special offering to be taken up during a worship service to benefit the mercy fund of the Diaconate. The tradition continues and it is out of this mercy fund that we are able to participate in God’s restoration and to bring his Shalom to this world by providing stability for members of the body of Christ.

It’s been exciting to see scripture leaping out of the Bible and becoming real in our daily lives. Acts 6 depicts how the early church leaders were appointed to the task of caring for the physical needs of the congregation. Inside Redeemer, the deeks rally around our congregants to care for our church family.

Another passage that comes alive is Matthew 22:39. We hear Tim use this sermon illustration often — that while others fled cities, Christians stayed behind in urban areas during the plague, ministering and caring for the sick. Living out God’s second greatest commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves, we have witnessed a modern day version of Christians staying in the city after disasters such as 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy to minister to our neighbors in the city. The scope of the Diaconate greatly expanded during these challenging and difficult times faced by the city.

9/11, the Great Recession of 2008 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012 caused tremendous growth for the Diaconate as a result of answering not only the needs of those in our own congregation who were affected but also many individuals and families who suddenly found themselves in crisis after losing their footing. The Diaconate was equipped to answer their needs because of the direction that God gave the Diaconate as well as an outpouring of funds from other churches.

We know that God’s mercy moves him to relieve suffering and misery, and our hearts are made generous and gracious by encountering and understanding his mercy. When overwhelmed by great vulnerability and fragility around us, the generosity from others and compassion on display is truly supernatural. We see in Acts 6 that God’s kingdom expanded as a result of mercy ministry and we long to see this scripture coming alive here in the city through mercy ministry. It’s been a remarkable ride and there is more to come!



COMMUNITY FORMATION

A LOOK BACK AT REDEEMER COUNSELING SERVICES


Judy Cha

Every once in awhile when I can take a break from the busyness to reflect, I am amazed by what Redeemer's counseling ministry has become. Only a year after the beginning of Redeemer Church, the counseling ministry began. By 1998, when I joined the staff of six, Redeemer Counseling Services (RCS) was well established as an extension of pastoral care. Not surprisingly, we experienced our first wave of growth after 9/11 and our staff doubled. Today, we are a staff of more than 30 counselors overseeing 300 individuals, couples, and families each week, and offering services that include group therapy and medical management.

It is quite remarkable for a church to house a counseling ministry of this magnitude. However, it's not surprising given Redeemer's vision. As long as I can remember, the emphasis has been on the gospel movement that goes beyond being a church for ourselves and becoming an agent of renewal for the city. So, in line with this greater vision, RCS did not remain just as an extension of pastoral care at Redeemer.

Now more than 20 churches in the city refer their congregants for counseling care at RCS. Five churches have partnered with us to establish satellite locations. RCS even launched an independent counseling ministry in Philadelphia that is modeled on much of our DNA. However, the most exciting progression has been to observe the growing number of unchurched people seeking care at a Christian counseling center. In our own way, we have been engaging the culture with a unique brand of counseling that seeks to care for the city while making the Gospel relevant in the process.

Among some people there may be a perception that Christian counseling is limited to serving only the Christian population or that it is subpar to psychological approaches that make it less than "professional." Thus, it was important to Redeemer that RCS as a Christian counseling center assert creditability as a legitimate professional service, while maintaining that we are very much Christian. In an effort to continue to engage our culture and legitimize our brand of counseling as an effective option, we are currently participating in an outcome study in partnership with Yeshiva University.



“ We spent the last few years defining our core as what we are calling the *Gospel-Centered Approach*. ”

Traditionally, there has been too great of a divide between pastoral counseling and what our culture deems as “professional” counseling. Not that I think there are no distinctions at all, but our aim for RCS is to become a context in which we can offer the best integration of both pastoral and “professional.” As I’ve shared, we have over 30 counselors working at RCS. Some are clinically trained and others are seminary trained. From our perspective, they are both professionals, as understanding humanity holistically requires that both theology and psychology be integrated.

The diversity of our staff is very much valued. Our varying backgrounds and training have enabled us to help one another expand our perspectives and sharpen our skills. However, we also recognized along the way that in the midst of diversity, there had to be a common core that makes us unique as counselors at RCS – that without this, we would be no different from any other group of independent practitioners working together in one setting.

Therefore, we spent the last few years defining our core as what we are calling the *Gospel-Centered Approach*. This is our attempt to come up with an integrative framework in which the conceptual core (our understanding of human nature, our definition of the real problem and the solution) is formed from our understanding of Scripture. In addition, we believe the process of counseling must be contextualized to the client. In order to do this well, the theories, empirical data, and interventions that psychology offers are invaluable. The work of integrating is difficult and best accomplished when we seek to do this as a team.

I believe much of our progress can be attributed to our team who are invested in our mission to restore lives with His Truth and Grace and pursue a vision to transform people from all walks of life through the redemptive power of the Gospel. Upon reflection, His grace and faithfulness is undeniable and affirms Redeemer’s vision of the Gospel Movement throughout our city and beyond.

Redeemer Then & Now

As we reflect on 25 years of serving NYC, we're comparing our first congregational survey conducted in 2004 to our most recent in 2013.

In the last ten years, we have become a more engaged congregation, doubling the rate at which attendees volunteer both with Sunday Service Teams and Hope for New York (HFNY). We've also seen a significant increase in the number of families with children who attend our church.

While growth in these areas is encouraging, there are still great opportunities for involvement, including Community Groups, HFNY and Sunday Service Teams.

2004

Church Involvement	
Avg. Sun. Attendance	3796
Members	1229
CG Participants	1442
Diaconate	
People served	190+
Financial Generosity	
Donors in a year	779

Center for Faith & Work	
Gotham alumni	0
Business Plan Competition (BPC) winners	0
BPC Funds (since 2007)	X
Staff Size	1
Hope for New York	
Non-profit affiliates	34
Funding distributed per year to affiliates	\$186K
Volunteer hours	31,838

Redeemer City to City	
Leaders trained	150
Churches planted	50
Church plants in global cities	20

2013

5342
2258
2671
500+
2131



145
28
\$275K
8
43
\$1.33M
55,253



8000
291
45



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- ▶ Complete the form, click 'Signup for Group'!



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25th Anniversary Weekend Schedule of Events

Join us September 18-21, 2014 as we thank God for what he has done in our first 25 years as a church and for his provision of people, relationships and means to serve NYC.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Faith & Work Celebration and Ministry Year Kickoff
CFW Art Exhibit opens at W83

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Founders Night Thank You (all are welcome to attend, RSVP required)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Hope for New York Annual Charity Bike Ride
Saturday Brunch Mixer
HFNY Affiliate Tours
CFW Presents Children's Show by Firebone Theatre
Redeemer Celebrates Broadway Concert
25th Anniversary Variety Show hosted by Martin Bashir

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Regular worship service schedule
Sr. Pastor Tim Keller will speak briefly at every service
Max McLean presents CS Lewis' *The Weight of Glory*
All church picnic in Central Park



To register for an event, visit redeemer.com/25weekend

REDEEMER REPORT

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Hunter College Auditorium
E. 69th St.
(between Park & Lexington)
Services: 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m.

W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(between Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30/11:30 a.m., 5 & 6:45 p.m.

Salvation Army Auditorium
120 W. 14th St.
(between 6th & 7th Aves.)
Services: 9:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.