



OCTOBER 2019

ONE ANT, ARGUING WITH ANOTHER ANT ...

BY KATHY KELLER

One of the common frustrations church planters often face is a kind of protectionist turf consciousness that they meet from established churches in their target areas. If the established church, however small or weak it may be, discovers that a new church might begin nearby, the church planter must walk very carefully in order to not arouse hostility and fear before he even begins.

Wise church planters will take their time before moving into a neighborhood, establishing relationships with resident pastors and local Christian groups, learning their triumphs and frustrations and eventually

asking for their advice. Unfortunately even this may not be enough.

Over the course of my life in ministry I have personally seen churches in Washington, DC, Boston, New York City, and even small towns reject the idea that a new church is needed. “What’s wrong with us?” is usually the unspoken question. “You’re implying we aren’t up to the job?” One pastor had to change denominations in order to gain permission to plant a badly needed church in a small college town. The already-there-church had a congregation of fewer than 100 people, and saw no need to change any-

thing to win the college community; yet they still fought the idea that another church might win people that they could not.

The truth is, the natural outward face of churches has a shelf life, or as the Brits call it, an expiry date, somewhere around 15-25 years. Unless there has been a deliberate strategy of outward facing church planting and evangelism, by then *insider* needs tip the balance over *outsider* needs, and the church’s metabolism gradually shifts to an inward facing one. It isn’t that those who are insiders — members — shouldn’t have their needs met ... youth

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EQUIPPING MINISTERS TO EFFECTIVELY WALK WITH ANXIOUS PEOPLE

BY REDEEMER COUNSELING SERVICES

To minister to the Christian today is to minister to deep anxiety. Christians are living busier, more distracted lives that require constant choices and involve many pressures. Redeemer Counseling Services is offering a workshop for pastors and ministry leaders

to address the topic of anxiety and how to help people grow through their anxiety, as well as how to handle it.

Examining the heart and soul to find the problem is often a deep source of encouragement to anxious people, but the nature of anxiety is also bound

up and perpetuated in the body. Therefore, without a proper awareness and understanding of anxiety and how it works in people’s bodies and minds, it is often difficult to get people to “just stop worrying” or to “just trust God.” This training

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ELDERS/DEEKS: NOMINATION MONTH IS UNDERWAY

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
– Philippians 1:1-2

We read in Philippians (Paul's earliest letter to the churches) where overseers (shepherds/elders) and deacons (deeks) are mentioned and separately addressed in the greeting, evidence of servant-leadership existing as part of a church community. Paul then goes on to express his thanksgiving, his intercessory prayer, and his deep affection for the Philippians. As we read further into chapter one, Paul describes with joy his "partnership" in the gospel and grace with the Philippians. This partnership seems to be multifaceted, including shared worship, prayer and mutual support and care.

Here on the Redeemer Diaconate, we long to cultivate this partnership with you. During the month of October, we invite you to partner with us in the following ways:

If you are a Redeemer

church member, please identify fellow members who are spiritually mature and who you believe might be suited for caring and supporting those in our church communities in need and nominate (**redeemer.com/nominate**) them.

Besides deeks, we also need new elders for all our Redeemer churches. As Kathy Keller once told me, Dave McCarty, an elder in Jenkintown, PA, once elaborated on the qualifications for being an elder. He said

Most churches make the mistake of electing the competent, the confident, and the successful; whereas what you really need is a man who has been broken by the knowledge of his own sin, and restored by an even greater knowledge of grace. That kind of elder can lead the congregation in being the chief repenter: repenting more quickly, more publically, more often and more deeply."

In addition to receiving nominations, we need your prayers. Paul is able to pray for the Philippians because God has begun and will complete his good work in them. We know that God is doing his good work in his children, so

pray for those whom God has prepared for the work of elders and deeks to respond to his calling, and pray that their love will overflow in knowledge and wisdom.

Lastly, we understand this partnership that Paul speaks of to have a practical, even financial, implication. The work of the Diaconate is possible because of financial partners. Please consider sharing your resources by giving a financial gift to our Mercy Fund (**redeemer.com/mercygift**) The Mercy Fund is set up specifically for the purpose of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable individuals and families in our churches.

Throughout the month of October, and even year round, you can partner with us by supporting the vehicles of God's mercy in each Redeemer church, helping to grow their ranks and providing them with the resources and prayer support needed for God's continued work through them! We thank God for this mutual affection we have for one another and the partnership we share in the gospel because of our union with Christ Jesus.

REDEEMER REPORT

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Redeemer East Side
Temple Israel Sanctuary
112 E. 75th St.
(btw Park & Lexington)
Services: 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m.
& 5 p.m.

Redeemer West Side
W83rd Ministry Center
150 W. 83rd St.
(btw Columbus & Amsterdam)
Services: 9:30 a.m.,
11:30 a.m. & 5 p.m.

Redeemer Lincoln Square
New York Society for
Ethical Culture
2 W. 64th St.
(at Central Park West)
Service: 10:30 a.m.

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

TOGETHER FOR THE CITY

BY NEIL POWELL AND JOHN JAMES OF BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

A new book by two of City to City's longtime collaborators in England has just been released by Intervarsity Press, with a foreword by Tim Keller.

Together for the City tells the story of a group of churches from a variety of denominations which decided to work together to reach their city like never before.

Pastors Neil Powell and John James of Birmingham, England, believed they could do more together than they ever could on their own. Out of that collaborative spirit, the 2020 Birmingham vision was born — a movement to see twenty new churches planted in the UK's second-largest city.

*In this book, Powell and James share their experiences, lessons they've learned, and principles they've discovered as they collaborated with Birmingham's churches to realize that vision. **Together for the City** also helps pastors, planters, and leaders learn how to work together in their own cities — and how to attempt great things for God.*

Many of us at Crossway Church knew James was unwell, but he had played it down. He looked jaundiced and became breathless quickly. Not until the Macmillan nurse began to visit did I (John) realize just how serious the problem was. I was in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, sitting by his bed, guitar in hand, trying to

sing “Mighty to Save” and hold it together.

Friendship with James was a life's ministry in microcosm. He had lived most of his adult life with the traveling community before returning to a hostel in Birmingham. It was then that an old school friend invited him to church, assuring him we were “not like other churches.” I first met James when he arrived like a whirlwind at our Sunday-morning gathering. Later we began to read Mark's Gospel together, and he became convinced of the good news of Jesus, heard the call to repent and believe, and became a Christian. He was baptized and welcomed into membership, and he threw his all into the youth clubs and the building maintenance team.

James began to grow and change. He was increasingly reconciled to his family. He was increasingly able to control his temper. He was increasingly using the gifts God had given him. And then his health deteriorated — quickly. It was eighteen months from born again to final breath.

So, picture the scene. A new creation, a beautiful child of God, rescued from chaos and darkness, saved from the judgment to come, is lying on a hospital bed during his final week on the wrong side of glory. The church pastor is way out of his depth, bumbling his way through James's favorite worship song, holding back the

tears, and attempting to speak the comforting words of the gospel.

But then zoom out, and you'll see two other church members, also recent converts, holding James's hand, quietly praying, trying to make their way through the song, too. You'll see three other church members making their way along the corridor, preparing themselves to sit and pray, to tell jokes, to shed tears.

Widen the angle again, and you'll see an entire church family gathering under God's Word. They are praying together for James in the building he helped to maintain, nestled in the heart of a large council estate on the south side of the city of Birmingham. You will see a small, multigenerational, multiethnic community that rejoices with those who rejoice and mourns with those who mourn. You will see a youth group of more than forty primary-age local children diligently making “get well soon” cards as they have the news about James sensitively explained to them.

But then pan out further, and you'll see that this church family is the fruit of a seven-year church revitalization project, with a core team willing to plant into a dying church that had given itself just a couple of years to wind down and close. You'll see a welcoming faithful remnant girding their loins for the challenges that will follow.

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HFNY IS ADDING FIVE NEW AFFILIATES!

Three years ago, Hope for New York shared our 10-year vision, which included the goal of partnering with 30 church partners and 90 affiliates by the year 2027.

Every year, we have been making progress on our goal, and — to date — we have partnerships with 14 church partners and 58 affiliates! During the previous fiscal year (July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019), we added three affiliates; during this new fiscal year, we are adding five new affiliates! (We even added three church partners last year, with one more later this year.)

We are so excited to work with our five new affiliates, and we hope you will join us in volunteering with them going forward! Read more about these five incredible organizations.

Community Connections for Youth (CCFY)

[hfny.org/ccforyouth]

Community Connections for Youth is a Bronx-based non-profit organization with a mission to empower grassroots faith and neighborhood organizations to develop community-driven alternatives to youth incarceration. CCFY embraces ways to transform youth delinquency by building community capacity for juvenile justice reform. CCFY also provides training and assistance for justice-community partnerships across the country that seek to reduce racial and ethnic disparities.

Garden of Hope

[hfny.org/goh]

Garden of Hope dedicates itself, through the love of God, to serving, caring, and rebuilding the lives of women and children who have been exposed to domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; specifically, services help the growing Chinese communities in the NYC region. Since being established in 2004, Garden of Hope has effectively provided services over three thousand Chinese immigrants through crisis intervention, counseling, legal assistance, shelters, job training, children tutoring, and more.

Graffiti 2 Community Ministries

[hfny.org/graffiti]

Graffiti 2 serves children, teens, adults, and families in the Mott Haven neighborhood of the South Bronx. Through afterschool, summer, workforce development, and community programs, Graffiti 2 meets the physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of its neighbors. As Graffiti 2 meets needs, the gospel is shared, faith is grown, and the church is built.

New Life Community Development Corporation (New Life CDC)

[hfny.org/nl-cdc]

The New Life Community Development Corporation provides relief, cultivates restoration and models reinvestment

among the poor and marginalized in Queens as a demonstration of God's love. Relief is provided through health care and food distribution operations, restoration is achieved through educational programs and anti-poverty initiatives; and change from the inside out happens by reinvesting in projects that benefit the local neighborhood.

Youth for Christ

[hfny.org/youth-christ]

Youth for Christ serves incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth by responding to their needs through programs that encourage conversation and build capacity for life success. The organization's strategy is to help the youth develop a way of faith-based living that balances the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects of life. The goal is to build valued relationships, especially as the youth re-enter their communities, that are sustained by ongoing involvement.

Please join us in praying for our affiliates, especially for effectiveness in their programs, for the people they serve so that the Lord would move powerfully in their lives and give them hope for the future, for wisdom in the organization's leadership and staff. Also, if you would like to volunteer with any HFNY affiliates, we'd love to have your support! Visit our affiliates page to be matched with a life-changing volunteer opportunity.

groups, Mom's groups, Bible studies, counseling, and more are all important. But if the members lose sight of the Prime Directive ... "Go and make disciples ..." they can fall into the habit of just "doing church as usual," thus becoming deaf to the needs and sensibilities of skeptical outsiders.

If, in the words of Alan Hirsch, we are only thinking of *red water* Christianity, this makes a certain amount of sense. If we see the vast expanse of *blue water* around us it doesn't make sense at all. [And NO, this red/blue illustration has NOTHING to do with politics, but fish blood!]

If, in the metaphor, food is

perceived as scarce, sharks and other predators will battle one another over the food supply, leaving the water *red* with blood. But if the whole wide blue ocean is teeming with life then there is no need to fight over the limited number of believers.

If all we are doing is shuffling the saints or stealing sheep, then, yes, there is reason to fear that a new church plant might lure away members (even the church shoppers/church hoppers take up seats on Sunday morning, making things seem more lively.)

But if our sights are set on winning those who don't yet know Jesus, the supply is near-

ly infinite. As Terry Gyger, former Director of the PCA's Mission to North America church planting committee said **"It's like one ant arguing with another ant over who gets to eat the elephant."**

See the excerpt from Neil Powell and John James' book on collaboration in Birmingham, England. We must remember that our mandate is to reach the unreached rather than hoard the spiritual and material wealth God has given us. It wasn't ours to begin with, and giving it away in the form of people and money to start new churches is the only way for a church to remain vital.

TOGETHER FOR THE CITY ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 3)

You'll see men and women, young and old, walking along the way of the cross through a process of costly change in order to recover a frontier for mission and begin to make disciples again.

Now zoom out further still. If you look carefully, you'll glimpse 2020birmingham, a diverse coalition of about twenty local churches collaborating in order to see this revitalization happen. You'll see other church-planting initiatives across the city, each taking a different form and reaching a different context. You'll see established churches willing to give away their best people to

join core teams, willing to give time to pray, willing to give from their budgets to get things off the ground, and willing to counsel young church leaders who are way out of their depth. You'll see churches willing to cross boundaries to partner with others in order to reach Birmingham for Jesus, believing they can do more together than they can on their own. This is the bigger picture.

We have a deep conviction that the more willing we are to find ways to collaborate, the more effective we'll be in reaching our city for Jesus. The more generous we are toward one another, the more God

will bear fruit through us. The closeup and the bigger picture of the opening scene are connected. This is life and death, and heaven and hell. It's what gets us out of bed in the morning. The need is too great to allow our vision to be too small. Without 2020birmingham, the Crossway Church described above would not have undergone revitalization. For James, in the providence of God, a bigger vision made the difference for eternity.

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EQUIPPING MINISTERS ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 1)

workshop will help participants:

- Understand how anxiety works in the body and interacts with the mind
- Learn effective strategies to help anxious people
- Gain insight into faith and heart issues that intersect with anxiety
- Practice body-based techniques to help reduce anxiety
- Offer the grace and truth of the gospel in the midst of anxiety

To find out more information and to register, visit our Training Workshops webpage: **counseling.redeemer.com/trainingworkshops**.

TOGETHER FOR THE CITY ... (CONT'D FROM PAGE 5)

reaching our city for Jesus.

With a wide-angle lens, a picture becomes a story. Imagine a snapshot of a small child on an inflatable mattress, floating on water. It makes all the difference in the world if the context is the tranquility of the shallow end of a swimming pool or the tumult of the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. The bigger picture matters. The bigger picture tells the story.

The bigger picture makes the difference between raising a smile and raising the alarm.

As twenty-first-century believers scattered throughout the world, would we describe our bigger picture as a pool of tranquility or a raging storm? Should we be buying ice creams or launching lifeboats? The apostle Paul urges us, “Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as

wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15–16). Right now, that is the wide-angle story.

We seek to raise the alarm. The needs and opportunities demand a response that will be met only under God with a bigger vision. How do we make the most of every opportunity? We must be — and we can be — together for the city.