

# REDEEMER

R E P O R T

NOVEMBER 2009

## SENDING EVERYBODY

BY TIM KELLER

In the September newsletter I outlined Redeemer's distinctive Gospel 'DNA' that has enabled us to do effective ministry in the city. In the October newsletter I introduced a '10-Year Plan' to transition Redeemer into being more of a 'movement' than we have been since our earliest days. Let's reflect more on what that means.

Redeemer has been blessed. Every week I see or hear reports of things happening at Redeemer I never thought I'd live to see. I'm especially referring to the numbers of new believers and the creative ways they are engaging the city. Yet, perhaps unavoidably,

Redeemer has become more staff and program-driven as our church has grown and the ministries have become complex and large. As a result, the church has grown into an institution dependent on small cadre of highly-skilled leaders, and especially me. In a 'movement,' everyone is united by a clear vision, and therefore everyone sacrifices, feels responsible for the church's goals, and initiates ministry.

But in a traditional institution only a minority of people sacrifice and serve, while a large percentage of people come mainly to receive the spiritual goods and services provided. This then increases

the church's dependence on the smaller number of leaders.

Is there anything to be done? Yes there is. In the mid-90s we sent out two groups of people to form the Village Church and Trinity Church in Westchester County. I remember particularly well the small group that went to Westchester—six couples and their children. The 20 or so people gathering on Sunday for worship grew to 40-50 almost immediately. Why? People who had not been able to reach out to their neighborhood began to invite their friends. Some people who, at Redeemer, had not been serving as officers

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## 150 FREE DOWNLOADABLE SERMONS TO RESOURCE THE MOVEMENT

Redeemer's Sermon Ministry has been faithfully recording, cataloguing and reproducing all of our sermons for the past 20 years. To celebrate all 20 years of our history, and to meet the growing demand for our church's teaching in New York City and around the world, we have released a catalog of 150 ser-

mons and lectures covering a broad array of Redeemer's teaching, completely FREE to download and share.

Redeemer's primary method of evangelism has always been through the planting of gospel-centered churches. The Free Sermon Core is not intended as a "broadcast ministry" which could serve indi-

vidual needs but might inhibit the listener's perceived need for community. These recordings are meant to provide resources for Redeemer's movement to plant, assist and nurture gospel-centered churches throughout the world and to bring individual listeners into a multifaceted experience of the

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# BOOK REVIEW: "CALVINISM IN THE LAS VEGAS AIRPORT"

BY LINDSEY WIERSMA

For anyone new to the Calvinist tradition or anyone looking for a reminder of how that tradition shapes us, Richard J. Mouw, President of Fuller Theological Seminary, in his book *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport* provides a thoughtful, easy to read overview, not of the details of Calvinist theology, but of why that theology matters.

Although I grew up in a deeply Calvinist community, coming to Redeemer marked my return after nearly a decade in various other Protestant denominations. I reached for this book to help me put a finger on why I had returned to the Calvinist tradition and why Redeemer, which on the surface is vastly different from the

church I grew up in, felt so much like "home."

After a brief reminder of the basic tenants of Calvinism, Mouw examines how that theology shades our understanding of issues such as justice, suffering, the sovereignty and generosity of God, and living life "before the face of God." In doing so, Mouw explains why he finds being Calvinist to be the best way for him to be a Christian, with a humility that embraces what Christians of other traditions have to teach Calvinists and acknowledges where they have fallen short in the past.

Boiling down what could otherwise become heavy theological debate into short, easy-to-read snippets, Mouw spends

most of the book sharing anecdotes and personal reflections from his years as a pastor and professor that highlight how Calvinism intersects with the big and small moments of daily life.

I opened this book to find answers to a number of questions. Does it matter that we are a Calvinist congregation? Do we understand God and the world around us differently than Christians of other traditions? Does it make a difference in our day-to-day lives? Like a conversation with a favorite professor, *Calvinism in the Las Vegas Airport* both answered these questions and left me pondering what those answers mean.

## REDEEMER DIACONATE OPEN HOUSE

**Friday, November 6 at 7:00PM**

**Redeemer Offices, 1359 Broadway, 4th Floor**

You are cordially invited to meet the Redeemer Diaconate, a ministry that carries out mercy through deeds. Come learn what the Diaconate ministry does, hear about the dynamic of giving and receiving while serving as a deacon/deaconess and find out how you can be involved.

For more information go to [www.redeemer.com/diaconate](http://www.redeemer.com/diaconate)

### REDEEMER REPORT

Kathy Keller  
Heather Klein

The Redeemer Report is a publication of the Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

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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

# “LOVE IN ACTION AND TRUTH”: SERVING THE CITY

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On Sunday, October 4, there was a “Love In Action & Truth” event sponsored by RENEW and Hope for New York (HFNY). The goal of the event was to mobilize Redeemer congregants to serve the city during the month of October as a response to the vision message on “Hope for the Poor.” According to 1 John 3, the gospel calls for involvement in each others’ lives, involvement in our neighborhoods, and

involvement in the lives of the poor.

During this RENEW campaign, HFNY reserved over 300 volunteer opportunities specifically for Redeemer volunteers. Each weekend, volunteers served HFNY affiliates by participating in renovation projects, serving hot meals, creating homeless care kits, etc. This was a timely and critical event especially as the city’s poverty rates are rising and the number of low-income families are grow-

ing. NYC’s nonprofits are still experiencing 10% to as much as 70% drop in revenue this year. The “Love In Action & Truth” event was a reminder of the great needs of our city.

Hope for New York, Redeemer’s mercy arm, mobilizes volunteer and financial resources to organizations serving the poor and marginalized of New York City. To volunteer or to learn about ways that you can support HFNY’s work in the city, go to [www.hfny.org](http://www.hfny.org).

## NOVEMBER IS OFFICER NOMINATION MONTH

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During the entire month of November Redeemer will be accepting nominations for Elder, Deacon and Diaconess. As our church continues to grow, so does our need for new leaders. If you are a member, please prayerfully consider whether you or someone you know, who is

also a member, could serve as Elder, Deacon or Diaconess.

As Redeemer’s mercy ministry, the Diaconate members provide practical assistance to those in our congregation who are facing challenging situations (Acts 6:1-4 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13). The Elders serve on the Session and provide

spiritual leadership to our congregation through oversight of Redeemer ministries, leaders and members (1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9).

You must be a member to nominate another member. For more information and to submit a nomination visit [www.redeemer.com/nominations](http://www.redeemer.com/nominations).

## FREE DOWNLOADABLE SERMONS...

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gospel which draws us into community with one another.

The chosen recordings for the Free Core were culled from classic sermon series as well as lectures and seminar addresses delivered to various Redeemer ministry gatherings, and are intended to present to the listener the full scope of teachings they would receive over several years of active involvement at Redeemer.

Navigation of the resource

was prepared in such a way as to provide depth and facility to listeners at any stage of their experience with Christianity. All sermons and lectures were classified in three broad categories: Discovery, Growth and Mission, down to increasingly more specific groupings. In addition, summaries and keyword searches have been applied to each of the sermons.

We’ll continue to grow this resource with all 8 sermons

from the Renew Campaign, as well as by introducing free monthly podcasts, scheduled to begin in January of 2010.

To begin exploring and sharing the Free Core Resource, please visit <http://sermons.redeemer.com>, and click on the Free Core Resource tab.

For more information, contact Chris Miles at [chris@redeemer.com](mailto:chris@redeemer.com) or visit <http://sermons.redeemer.com>.

*“I don’t want all that we have worked and prayed for to wither away after I’m gone, just because I lacked the foresight to raise up leaders who will carry on the movement.”*

began to serve. The finances pledged by the Westchester core group for the first year was much more than what they had been giving to Redeemer. Also, their prayer lives were profoundly enriched, because they found themselves attempting something they knew was beyond their abilities. They had been given the gospel vision, then *sent out* with the responsibility for ministry in their neighborhood, and the Spirit led them to step up and meet the challenges. Back at Redeemer (which at the time had 1200-1500 people in attendance) much of their talent, resources, and leadership ability had been untapped, but when they were sent out, they experienced ‘movement dynamics.’

So, is that it? Is Redeemer going to send some more people out? No—we are going to *send everybody out*. That’s what the 10-Year Plan means. As I wrote last month, over the next three years we will create three Redeemer congregations—east, west, and south of Central Park—each with its own dedicated pastors, staff, and lay leaders, rooted in their neighborhoods with seven-day-a-week ministry space, taking responsibility for ministry in their communities.

Although these congregations will be large, there will immediately be scores of people having to make decisions, take responsibility, and exercise leadership as they never have before. Of course, as the Redeemer congregations combined hold

6, 7, and 8 Sunday services or more, and I continue to preach four times on Sunday, this opens up space for more preachers and pastors to speak and exercise leadership. And because this will renew our movement dynamics, and will draw our more leadership gifts, each congregation will become a ‘generative base,’ spinning off other worship sites and congregations in the coming years.

I know there are many people who will do the math, realizing that, while I am not preaching any fewer Sundays nor fewer times in a day, they will not hear me as often, and they may say, ‘but we want to hear *you* every Sunday.’ Whenever I hear that, it humbles and encourages me, of course. But it is also profoundly short-sighted. I had the opportunity to preach over 1500 different sermons by the time I was 33 because my first pastorate out of seminary was as a solo pastor that gave me the opportunity to preach three different sermons each week for nine years! That kind of practice and experience was crucial for my own development. (I did not have an experienced preacher as a mentor, but I had the next best thing, a theologically trained and spiritually wise spouse.)

The only way for me to train and raise up a new generation of leaders who can be effective in New York City is if I mentor and teach those who are actually shouldering the challenging tasks of ministry here. Our plan

creates space for that to happen. If we give in to the ‘I want to hear Tim every week’ impulse, much of what we have learned at Redeemer over the last 20 will not be passed on to leaders who will sustain and grow the ministry in the future. I don’t want all that we have worked and prayed for to wither away after I’m gone, just because I lacked the foresight to raise up leaders who will carry on the movement.

Do you see why I entitled this article ‘Sending Everybody?’ I’ve occasionally heard people say, “I wish I was here in the early days, when it was so exciting.” Well, consider this. Someone recently e-mailed me after listening to a presentation about the 10-Year Plan. The note read:

*“Everyone can see the way the Lord has blessed Redeemer over the last 20 years, and now we are at this juncture where we are intentionally placing our church in a position of vulnerability, trusting that God will do something great again. For those who weren’t here at Redeemer’s founding, it in effect gives us the opportunity to be involved at another critical point in Redeemer’s development where we don’t know how things will turn out.”*

That’s exactly right. The ‘safe’ approach is just to rent bigger spaces and ramp up the programs larger and larger. We know we can do that. But that won’t renew our church as a movement, and it won’t renew our prayer lives and faith in the same way. In this plan we are  
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# HOPE FOR NEW YORK CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

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Hope for New York created His Toy Store to provide toys to low-income families in The Bronx, Brooklyn, Harlem and Washington Heights during the Christmas Season. In December, several “toy stores” are set up and run by HFNY volunteers at neighborhood churches where parents shop for toys at no cost. Through this program, families can

make lasting connections to the local church.

You can help in the following ways:

- 1) Donate Toys: new, unwrapped toys will be collected after all services November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
- 2) Donate Online: support HFNY’s toy purchases at [www.hfny.org/donate](http://www.hfny.org/donate).

(Under Gift Designation, select “Toy Campaign.”)

- 3) Raise Money: Fellowship Groups and Individuals can raise money for toys using an easy online tool.

For more details on toy guidelines and how to raise money, please visit [www.hfny.org/HTS](http://www.hfny.org/HTS).

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## JOY IN GIVING SACRIFICIALLY

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and set up some direct deposit savings accounts. At a retreat, I first heard about the concept of giving not just from your income or interest, but daring to trust God by also giving from your principle and assets.

When I opened a direct deposit tax sheltered annuity and IRA account, I decided to put the same amount into a credit union account purely for giving purposes. That account became the one I could draw from for my giving to church and other ministries, and for whatever other special needs came to my attention. I found that it was both freeing and fun to have a designated account from which I could make charitable gifts—regardless of the status of my regular checking account.

Teaching budgeting classes at Redeemer has also affected my perspective on giving. While teaching debt reduction workshops one of the things that affected me most was the heartache expressed by some of

the attendees about not being able to give as much as they’d like. For many people, that was one of the things motivating them to become debt free. I have the feeling that may be the situation for many people in our church right now due to under or unemployment. So I realize how privileged I am to be in a position to give, purely by God’s grace in how He has provided for me in leading me into the profession I have and through the other circumstances of my life.

A few years ago, when Redeemer made it possible to give on-line, I set up an automatic monthly credit card withdrawal for my tithe money to Redeemer. I felt comfortable doing this because I always pay off my credit card in full each month. Rarely have I had to transfer money from my giving account to cover it, so that has freed up more money in the credit union account to use for additional giving. It’s truly been fun to be able to respond more

quickly to needs—whether it’s to a special need at Redeemer, or a financial request for a missions trip taken by a friend, or some other ministry that presents itself, or simply for friends who have a financial need.

One of the videos we use during the budgeting classes has helped me call out to Jesus for the grace to continue. The video presents an allegory that demonstrates that everything we have is God’s—our money, our time, our talents, our stuff, basically all of us, and He’s simply loaning it to us here on earth to use as He directs. The video accentuates the lavish generosity of God towards us, and the fact that He wants us to be good stewards, or trustees, of all He’s entrusted to us.

During this season of Redeemer’s Vision Renewal, as we look forward to the next decades of service to New York, I hope that many of you will have a chance to experience the joy (and fun) that I’ve had in giving.





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## JOY IN GIVING SACRIFICIALLY

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BY SONJA KERLEN

While in training as a nurse practitioner, God taught me a huge life lesson. I lived in a YWCA in Newark, NJ, while attending nursing school and met people who were deeply poor, unlike my earlier life experience growing up in a NJ suburb. That experience profoundly changed my life, because when I went home to my parents' house on weekends, I realized how easy it would be to forget how 3/4 of the world lived. I knew I needed to either live or work in an environment that would always keep me mindful of those with fewer resources than myself.

After college, I lived in

Mississippi for four years working as a nurse practitioner in a Christian ministry in a very rural, impoverished area. While living there I worshipped in a small Baptist church consisting of about 30 families. Even though they had limited resources themselves, each month they took up an offering for the poor in their community. I was so touched by this.

Actually I was shocked. The poor giving to the poor! (Although I now know that the poor give a greater percentage of their income to charity than do the rich!) I also met many people with stories of having nothing—not even

food in the cupboards—yet they saw God provide for their needs as they trusted in Him. Similar stories have been repeated time and again when I've been on mission trips to less developed countries, and have been so blessed by the love and generosity of the people we've met, who may not have had money to give, but have given whatever they had.

When I moved back here from Mississippi my salary increased, and I noticed that as much more came in, just as much was going out. I began keeping track of where my money was disappearing to,

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## SENDING EVERYBODY...

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doing what we did at the beginning. We will need to rely on God to send new leaders, to help us raise the money, and to give people the joy and

courage to all minister in the city as we should. Everyone will have to ask, "What must I do? What sacrifice will I have to make? In what way must I

step out far beyond my comfort zone in order to see this happen?"

We are sending everybody. Come and see.