

SPIRITUAL  
LEADERSHIP  
IN THE  
GLOBAL CITY

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## DEDICATION

*Spiritual Leadership in the Global City* is dedicated to Ray Bakke, Ken Blanchard, David Bryant, Bob Buford, Wilson Goode, Frances Hesselbein, Allan Houston, Bill Hybels, C. William Pollard, and Rick Warren. Your passion for Christ and His church has molded a generation of leaders.



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## Chapter 13

# THE CHURCH MULTIPLICATION ALLIANCE: REDEEMER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CONCERTS OF PRAYER GREATER NEW YORK PARTNERSHIP

*“All the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province  
of Asia heard the word of the Lord.”*

ACTS 19:10

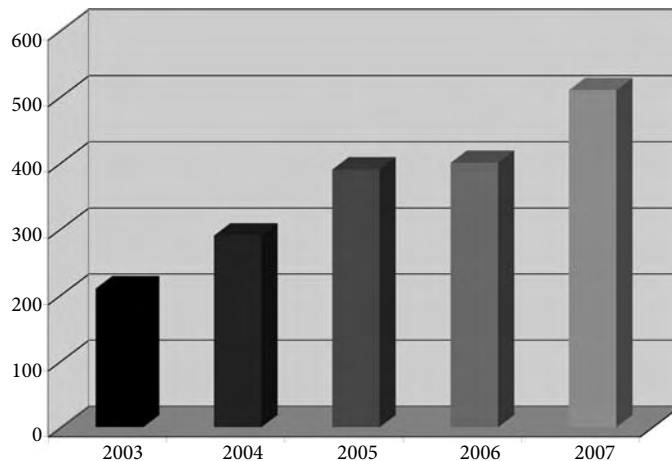
In 1999, I had a breakfast meeting in Manhattan with Tim Keller, Dick Kaufmann, and Glen Kleinknecht. Tim Keller had come to New York City in 1987 to do some initial research on planting a church in Manhattan. I remember talking to Keller from our Flushing apartment by phone when he called to introduce himself. This was about the same time we were planning the first concert of prayer with Glen’s colleagues at Here’s Life, Ted Gandy and Aida Force.

The reason for the breakfast was to share a vision that Tim Keller and Dick Kaufmann had. They envisioned a movement of churches being planted across denominational, economic, and geographical boundaries. They believed that the Concerts of Prayer network was the place to partner such a vision.

Redeemer had grown quickly in the ten years since it had begun. The church began in 1989 with a prayer group of 15 people in an Upper East Side apartment. The first service was held on April 9, 1989. By that, fall a second service was added and attendance was already at 250. The church moved to its worship location at Hunter College by spring 1993. The initial congregation clearly sees the early days of Redeemer as a time of revival as all kinds of diverse people were being added to the church.

By 2000, Redeemer had begun to plant churches in other parts of New York City, and eventually in other global cities. Over the next ten years, Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) churches were planted in Greenwich Village, Rye, Harlem, and Oyster Bay. In New Jersey, churches were started in Teaneck, Hoboken, and Montclair. Beyond the metro area churches were started in Palo Alto, California; Toronto; Budapest; Sao Paulo; and London.<sup>1</sup>

### Church Multiplication Alliance Meeting Attendance



\*From 2002–2007, nearly 1,700 have attended church planting meetings, 180 have participated in Church Planter training programs, and nearly 100 new churches have been planted in Greater New York.

## Before Redeemer

Terry Gyger, current director of the Redeemer Church Planting Center, was a founding committee member for the PCA. While sitting in a home missions agency meeting for the PCA, it dawned on the leadership that the only way to do multiplication church planting would be through flagship churches. Across the country 75 percent of all PCA resources came from 50 churches. Terry Gyger came every quarter to New York City to help lay the foundation for the church planting center after Dick Kaufmann relocated to plant a church in San Diego. Gyger recruited a Brazilian colleague, Osni Ferreira, to come and lead the center.

The PCA had been effective in suburban church plants but was ill equipped to plant churches in the large cities of the Northeast. Terry Gyger then approached Tim Keller about coming to New York from where he was teaching at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

Manhattan is largely composed of single professionals, and there was at that time few churches to which they could bring their nonbelieving friends. According to Terry Gyger, the secret to Redeemer's rapid growth was Tim Keller's articulation of the gospel to a secular mind-set. Keller had developed an apologetic to secularism.

Another foundational building block for establishing Redeemer Presbyterian Church was a denomination-wide commitment to pray for its success. When Redeemer launched in 1989, there were few healthy and growing churches in Manhattan. The investment to establish a healthy congregation would be substantial.

It is not coincidental that Redeemer's growth paralleled the rapid growth of the New York City prayer movement. Thousands of people and hundreds of churches were praying on a monthly basis for the rapid expansion of the gospel in the region. There seemed to be a convergence of focused spiritual attention on New York, even as God attracted gifted thinkers, leaders, and evangelists to Redeemer.

Redeemer's vision is to spread the gospel, first through its own congregation, and then through the city by word, deed, and community. Redeemer's vision is to bring about personal changes, social healing, and cultural renewal through a movement of churches and ministries that change New York City and, through it, the world.<sup>3</sup>

Redeemer aspires to be a church for the city that seeks the welfare of the city more than its own good. The transcendent aspiration is not to build a great church but to build a great city.

This has expressed itself in a balanced approach to ministry in an outworking of the kingdom through evangelism, social ministry, cultural renewal, corporate worship, and decentralized small groups. Efforts like Hope for New York were started to mobilize volunteers to assist the poor through partner agencies.<sup>4</sup>

Redeemer expanded to a multisite model by 1997. While the Hunter College site remained the larger of the congregations, other sites developed on the west side of Central Park. By 2007, a fifth service was added to accommodate the 5,000 regular attendees.

Currently, 225 small groups meet at Redeemer on a regular basis. This is the primary strategy for Redeemer attendees to experience community. The incredible pace of Manhattan life makes this an important lifeline to the church.

Redeemer's commitment to mercy and justice is expressed through Hope for New York led by Mike O'Neill. Volunteers spend thousands of hours annually to assist agencies and sister communities serving in poorer communities. Hope for New York helps to make that vital link.

Katherine Leary leads the faith and work dimension of Redeemer's outreach. She oversees seven full-time coordinators. Specialized groups lead entrepreneurial efforts to help marketplace leaders integrate their faith and work. Part of the vision for faith and work is to incubate small business ventures.

Demographically the church is 45 percent Asian, with the majority of the rest Anglo. The church is also 70 percent single young adults, though more families have become a part of Redeemer life.

The preaching and worship at Redeemer continue to be its foundation. The church has a carefully articulated commitment to be outward-faced. Redeemer has been extraordinarily effective in providing a safe place for people to come and consider the reasonableness of faith.

## The Church Multiplication Alliance

The partnership in building the alliance was rooted in Redeemer's credibility as a rapidly growing church committed to the good of the whole church. The partnership was also rooted in Concerts of Prayer's commitment to knit together as many diverse traditions in the Bible-believing church world as possible. As the alliance began to take shape in the 2000–2004 time period, the alliance committed to identifying, recruiting, training, and funding church planters.

Mark Reynolds came from the Philippines in 2003 to become the associate director of the Redeemer Church Planting Center. Mark has overseen the training of the center for a number of years. He also leads the day-to-day operations of the Church Multiplication Alliance (CMA) on Redeemer's behalf.

Lauren Moy, chief operating officer for Concerts of Prayer (COPGNY), has been the day-to-day liaison for COPGNY for more than five years. She has given primary leadership to coordinate the quarterly meetings, mobilize prayer for planters, maintain communication with the denominations, write and send the enewsletter, and write foundation proposals. Together, the leadership of Redeemer and COPGNY found some initial partners in the foundation community that financially supported the vision. The idea was to provide small seed grants to church planters that would motivate other funding sources to help launch these church plants.

The National Leadership Forum that Concerts of Prayer cohosted with Mission America in 2003 was a turning point for the alliance. Tim Keller did three expositions from the Book of Acts for the leaders attending from 50 cities. Keller drew largely from Acts 8 and Acts 16 to address the necessity of contextualizing the gospel. He highlighted six major themes:

- ***Knowing the importance of the city***—The early church was both multiethnic and international. The Apostle Paul's strategy was to go to cities of major cultural influence.
- ***Knowing the centrality of the gospel***—Understanding that the gospel is neither license nor legalism. We are in desperate need for the Holy Spirit to change us and articulate the gospel in a clear way.
- ***Relating Christians to culture***—Christians should live long-term in the city and create a dynamic counterculture in the city.
- ***Having a church planting mind-set***—Apostle Paul planted churches everywhere he went. For 200 years, all churches were house churches. New churches are the best way to reach new generations, new residents, and new people groups.

- ***Knowing how to contextualize***—The necessity of articulating the gospel in a way that those who hear it can understand it. We need to learn the difference between essential and nonessential.
- ***Practicing the fullness of ministry***—The gospel must express itself in word, deed, and community to be heard.<sup>5</sup>

One thousand leaders attended the forum from 50 cities, including more than a dozen denominations. The church planting track motivated new interest on the part of denominations and organizations to join the alliance. In February 2004, we had a follow-up meeting with denominational leaders to map out the structure of the alliance.

Jared and Ann Roth emerged during that time period as national champions for the CMA. Jared Roth had a national vice-presidential role with the Foursquare denomination while Ann was the national church planting coordinator for the denomination. They helped to form the structure around which denominations could join the alliance.

By 2007 numerous denominations and organizations participated in the alliance:

- Assemblies of God
- Baptist General Conference
- Brethren in Christ
- Christian Reformed Church
- Concerts of Prayer Greater New York
- Evangelical Free Church of America
- The Foursquare Church
- Grace Brethren North American Missions
- Missionary Church USA
- Nazarene Church
- The Orchard Group
- Presbyterian Church in America
- Reformed Church in America
- Southern Baptist

These denominational partners have shared best practices, recruited planters, assisted with strategic planning, and mobilized prayer for planters.

## The Components of the Alliance

### *United Prayer*

We are very deliberate in promoting a united prayer theme around church planting. Beginning in January each year, we gather nearly 100 pastors and ministry leaders to pray for new church plants. Every quarter an eprayer letter is circulated to our database, asking for specific prayer for church planters, church plants, and communities they reach.

In June we ask the approximately 8,000 participants in Pray New York! to include church planting efforts in their prayers as they walk. We want every ZIP Code and every block in our city to be prayed over, asking God to bring laborers as well as to soften the hearts of people in the city toward Himself. A church planting prayer guide by borough and ZIP Code is developed and distributed to nearly 300 participating churches to mobilize prayer for church plants.

### *Vision Casting*

Four times a year, the alliance convenes 100 to 200 leaders to cast vision for church planting. We host different presenters to come and share their stories in church planting. Speakers also present the theological and methodological rationale for church planting. This has been a powerful place to connect like-minded leaders. One year, a Foursquare leader told the story of how his church plants a new church every year. He was convinced that churches that are less than ten years old are eight times more effective than churches ten years and older in planting new churches.

### *Training and Assessment*

Prior to the initiation of the training, a thorough assessment takes place to determine the match between the temperament of a church planter and the demands of planting a church. This helps to assure the likelihood of a long-term fit.

Redeemer Church Planting Center provides one-year training modules for church planters in both English and Spanish languages. The church planters agree to attend for half-day training ten months per year. At the end of that period, church planters are trained in doing

demographic analysis, core-group development, and creating both strategic and business plans to successfully launch and sustain their new church plants.

### ***Funding***

The alliance provides a small grant once a church planter has successfully demonstrated that he or she has a viable strategic and business plan to launch the church plant. Often the grant will assist the church planter in securing rental space and other out-of-pocket expenses to get started. The funding also provides credibility to church planters who need to attract other sources of support.

One of the remarkable legacies of the alliance is to see a Presbyterian church and a parachurch organization funding church planters from denominational and independent church backgrounds. It is a sign of the kingdom.

### **The Impact of Redeemer Church Planting Center and the Church Multiplication Alliance**

- **New Church Plants.** Combining the efforts of Redeemer Presbyterian with the Church Multiplication Alliance, nearly 100 churches have been planted. Of those churches, 60 percent are from metropolitan New York and 40 percent are from other national and international sites (the national and international churches are Redeemer church plants). Redeemer has assisted new churches in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, Vancouver, and Philadelphia in the United States. Globally new cities/nations include Belgium, Paris, Amsterdam, and London.
- **Vision Casting.** Vision has been cast in the past five years to more than 2,000 leaders, at such venues as the National Leadership Forum and the quarterly meetings.
- **Intercessors Mobilized.** More than 100 churches have been praying for church planting through the monthly Lord's Watch newsletter and more than 8,000 have participated in prayer through Pray New York! and the eprayer letter.
- **Training.** Redeemer Church Planting Center has trained more than 100 church planters.

- **Funding Given.** More than \$1 million has been raised and given to church plants in the alliance. This does not include funding given to the PCA church plants.<sup>6</sup>

### Leadership Reflection Questions

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1. What would it look like to see churches and denominations in your community collaborate to start new churches?
2. Are there leaders you know who could be brought together with whom this vision could be shared?
3. What would it mean for the gospel to completely permeate your community and city?