

# A STRATEGY FOR BUILDING THE CHURCH

Redemption is not preaching a new message. Unwrap the contemporary packaging, which is obvious to the casual observer, and you will find the rich treasure of Jesus' 2000 year old Gospel. We have no desire to alter (as if we could improve!) our Savior's message. We only want to translate it into the everyday language of our world. As someone who is committed to Redemption Church, you need to know this important truth: Redemption's theology is not new. We stand firmly in the historic Christian faith "once for all delivered" to the church (Jude 3). The teaching transmitted by Jesus through His apostles contained in the Bible governs our individual beliefs and conduct. It is our full and final authority.

We do not claim that our five part philosophy (described below) is the only approach a church could take to reach the lost and make disciples. We certainly don't think it's THE biblical formula, though it is supported by biblical examples and principles. It is no more or less than a pragmatic approach that we think will help build our church. It will be effective in reaching the lost primarily through supporting the individual evangelistic ministry of our church members and the unified proclamation of the church. Going beyond reaching people with the message of Christ, it also guides them to maturity in Christ. In short, it's the track we follow for cultivating authentic followers of Christ.

The following is Redemption's Strategy for accomplishing our mission of "helping everyday people wake up to deep, meaningful life in Christ."

## **1. Building a Real Relationship with the Unchurched**

We seek to build authentic, credible relationships with unchurched friends and acquaintances. This requires integrity, honesty, and sincerity on our part. We seek ways to express Christ-like love and concern in simple ways. This is the foundational step to our strategy. If we fail to complete this step, we cannot accomplish God's plan for our church. To keep this goal in focus, we encourage every member to keep a "First 5 List" of people they prioritize relationally and regularly pray for to trust Jesus.

## **2. Sharing a Verbal Witness**

Once we build a credible relationship with our unchurched friend, we then seek opportunities to share a verbal witness of the difference God has made in our lives and how He can make a difference in theirs. This does not mean we force our message on our friends, but rather we are simply available to verbally point our friends toward Christ when opportunities arise. We are open and honest about our faith; we do not hide our relationship with Christ. Real friends talk about the things that are important to their lives, so we obviously want to talk about Jesus. Most unchurched people who hear our "Verbal Witness" do not immediately trust Christ as Savior and begin following Him. It is at this point that believers need a place to bring their friends so that they can investigate Christianity.

## **3. Inviting a Friend to Church**

The church partners with members to provide them with a supplemental tool for evangelism. We view Sundays as the Great Room of our church family — the first introduction people have to *who we are* and *what we are like*. As Lesslie Newbigin points out, sharing the gospel in the New Testament almost always begins with the question, "What is going on with you people?" So, we want them to come and see what is happening in our community. Your friends are welcome to join us on any given Sunday, and we hope they will always experience an honest, friendly, excellent, winsome and non-threatening worship gathering. We also want you to know that our "Big Days" are weekends especially planned to help members introduce God to their friends in a welcoming environment where they can get to know Redemption as they consider the claims of Christ. These days are strategically placed on the calendar around key holidays or at times when we are beginning a new sermon series and starting new small groups. We typically have 6 Big Days a Year:

- Back-to-School Sunday (in August)
- Fall Kick-Off (in September)

- Christmas Eve
- New Year Kick-off Sunday (Superbowl Sunday in February)
- Easter
- Summer Kick-Off (in June)

Our hope is that you would see these days as key components of your strategy for sharing Christ with your friends.

#### **4. A Worship Gathering for Believers that is Accessible for Unbelievers**

Our Gathering is built for believers, but it is also intentionally crafted to be accessible for people who are not used to going to church. We try to explain each element of the service in a way that someone who is new can understand what is happening, even if they are not ready to fully participate. We want our unbelieving friends to be able to consider faith in Jesus *alongside us*, so that we can answer questions and encourage them as they seek to know more. After a person trusts Christ as his or her Savior, he or she is then encouraged to commit to worship our Lord along with the church as a part of our normal gathering. In our Gathering, our members and attenders come as participants, not spectators, to celebrate God's love, respond to His Word, and commit to live out our faith in life-changing ways.

#### **5. Participating in Small Group**

Groups are vital to building a strong body of believers. Members and attenders are urged to join a Group as soon as possible. Groups exist to provide individuals and couples the opportunity to develop their spiritual life – to grow in their relationship with Christ, establish meaningful relationships with other believers, and serve God through Redemption in a ministry that fits that person's gifts, passion, abilities, personality and experiences.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

This year, we are inviting you to become members of Redemption Church by attending a membership workshop, completing a bible study for personal reflection, and having a follow-up membership conversation. To become a member of Redemption Church is to commit to this community of faith that as you grow in your personal devotion to Jesus you will share the burden and joy of executing our God-given mission. *Our mission drives our membership!*

“...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

- Romans 12:5

Redemption Church is dedicated to being both a safe place for people to explore what it means to have a living relationship with Jesus and a challenging place where people can grow up as disciples of Christ. The only way we can fulfill our mission is if there are people who are investing their lives in doing the day in and day out practical tasks that must be done to enable our services to happen, our children to be cared for and taught, our groups to meet, and our people to live on mission serving our city and our world.

The Bible says in Romans 12:5 we are “members of one another.” That means we are dependent on each other for the survival and success of our mission and our church. And, it means we need you to be growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ and actively helping other people do the same.

Members at Redemption Church are people who have lovingly and obediently accepted the responsibility to help others to become authentic followers of Jesus. Remember, we are not looking for “perfect Christians” who live struggle-free lives. We are looking for those who are committed to Christ, to His church, and to ongoing growth. We hope you'll come with us!