

IT TAKES A MOVEMENT TO REACH A CITY

[CASE STATEMENT]



Dear Friend,

Three books have profoundly affected my understanding of Christian mission in the world today. Saskia Sassen's book *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* makes the case that the great global cities, not nation-states, are the key players in determining the direction of the world's culture. Wayne Meeks' book *The First Urban Christians* and Rodney Stark's *The Rise of Christianity* link the phenomenal success of the Christian missionary movement in the early centuries to its focus on the great cities of the Roman Empire. >>

In short, as the city goes, so goes the world. The large, global cities of the world forge the cultural, economic, and social realities of most of the world's citizens. In particular, the influence comes from the "center-city," the core of the metropolis, where the main cultural institutions—as well as the centers of business, media, and the arts—are located.

I discovered this when I moved with my family to New York City twenty years ago to launch Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. Throughout the past two decades, Redeemer has grown to be a local community of more than 5,000 people and has helped start 175 new urban churches of many denominations, of which 75 are located in New York City.

Our experiences in New York and the similar experiences of our colleagues in other countries confirm the need we see for similar kinds of ministry in the other great cities of the world. Despite the fact that global cities represent the missional priority of the 21st century, we know of no Christian movement reaching the residents of urban centers on any kind of major scale.

We believe the best way to start similar ministry movements in other global cities is by supporting the planting of new congregations and by producing resources to support leaders as they live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in the 21st century. That is why we have launched Redeemer City to City, a sister organization of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, designed to partner with and resource these leaders around the world.

We hope the pages that follow will encourage you and draw you into this exciting vision for the gospel's reach in the global cities of the world.

In Him,



TIMOTHY KELLER

*Senior Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church
President of Redeemer City to City*

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BIG IDEA: IT TAKES A MOVEMENT TO REACH A CITY

Gradually but unmistakably, something has been happening in New York City in the last twenty years: *a movement is underway*. The gospel of Jesus Christ is changing the way people live, think, and participate in their communities.

Thirty-nine percent of the nearly 200 evangelical churches in center-city Manhattan were started in the last decade, and fully half of them opened their doors in the last twenty years. During that time the estimated Christian population of center-city Manhattan has tripled from less than 1 percent of the population to over 3 percent, underscoring the presence of an unmistakable gospel movement in New York City unlike any other in well over a century.¹ Clearly God is at work here.

Church planting—the launching of new churches—has been a major impetus behind this gospel movement. What began as a collaborative effort among several churches and denominations has turned into a vibrant ecclesiastical partnership throughout the boroughs of New York City and has resulted in new and revitalized churches of all traditions and ethnic compositions. With these unexpected blessings and measurable results, we see that the kingdom possibilities of further penetrating this great city with the power of the gospel are incalculable.

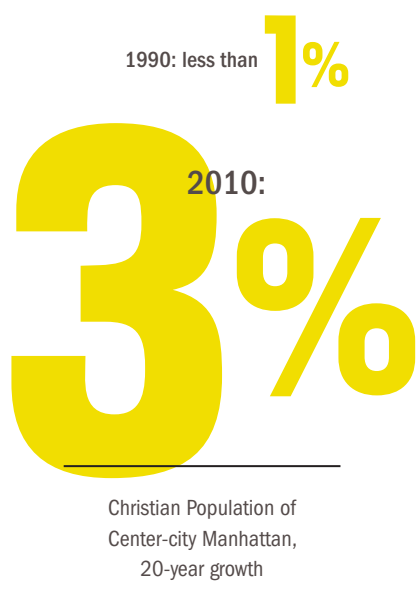
Furthermore, from São Paulo to London and from Amsterdam to Hong Kong, thousands of pastors, artists, professionals, educators, parents, and students have become deeply committed to the gospel, in part because of what God has begun here at Redeemer and in New York City, and continued through hundreds of like-minded churches in cities around the world.

We are passionate to help other urban Christians to love and serve their cities as Redeemer Church does in New York City. Not necessarily in the same style or with the same programs but with a similar passion and a consistent commitment to three core values:

1. **The *gospel* changes everything.** At the heart of the gospel is the world-upending message that Jesus did for us what we cannot do for ourselves, that his death brought life to the world. Only Jesus Christ can renew individual hearts and only his message of eternal life can renew communities, cultures, and the whole world.
2. **The *city* is one of the most strategic places for gospel impact.** When you reach the interconnected global cities of the world, you disproportionately shape the world, serve the lost, help the needy, bring about justice, influence the culture, and replicate leaders.²

1. According to a survey by the Values Research Institute.

2. For more on why cities are strategic, please see Appendix H.



REDEEMER CITY TO CITY'S MISSION IS TO HELP LEADERS BUILD GOSPEL MOVEMENTS IN CITIES.

3. **It takes a *movement* to reach a city.** A sustained gospel movement in the city requires an integrated ecosystem of churches, institutions, cultural leaders, and networks throughout the city center. Such networks then reach across all racial, socioeconomic, and denominational categories, creating a self-propelling movement much larger than a single influential church, leader, or denomination.

With these three building blocks as the foundation—gospel, city, and movement—Redeemer City to City (CTC) has been formed to help leaders build gospel movements in the cities of the world. With its focus on church planting and content resources, CTC provides a platform for leaders in New York, London, Hong Kong—and all the cities in between—to learn from one another how to practice the gospel so that lives are redeemed and communities are renewed.

INSIGHT: WHAT MAKES A MOVEMENT?

To reach a whole city with the gospel takes more than a handful of effective churches, more than a single leader or institution, more than a burst of revival energy and new converts. It requires a self-sustaining, naturally growing movement of ministries and networks around a core of new church multiplication.

In our observation, a gospel movement in a city consists of the following elements³:

1. **A core of new and reproducing churches** that are gospel-centered, city-positive, missional, evangelistic, and balanced in word and deed ministries. These churches must be growing within every tradition and denomination, every class and racial group.⁴ Newly formed, vibrant, and reproducing churches are the heart of gospel movements and provide the spiritual oxygen needed to support the communities of Christians who do the “heavy lifting” in the calling of urban renewal. New churches best reach new people and are therefore the single most critical component for the numeric growth of the body of Christ in any city. They are often the catalyst for stagnant churches to turn around, and they make good partners with existing healthy churches. Moreover, they are often the financial engines for many other parts of the movement.
2. **A compelling theological vision** that articulates how the gospel is to be lived out in the city. It translates orthodox Christian doctrinal commitments (such as the goodness of creation, the pervasiveness of human sin, the truth of the resurrection, the gospel of grace, the Great Commission, the doctrine of the kingdom) into a shared view of mission and faithful presence in a particular

3. Of course we speak here in human terms. The ultimate cause of a gospel movement is the work of the Holy Spirit.

4. For more detail, see Appendix B.

place and time. This vision must be articulated and embodied through key leaders and captured in communications, so that the ideas and vision can be understood and adapted.

3. A dense “gospel ecosystem” of entities and initiatives that serve the city interdependently. This ecosystem includes as evangelism efforts, leadership development programs, providers of theological education, university ministries, faith-and-work initiatives, ministries of mercy and justice, institutions that support family life, coordinated prayer efforts, etc. This ecosystem includes overlapping networks of leaders and practitioners working in all spheres of culture. Such a community, built through personal relationships and gatherings and often reinforced through electronic mediums and networking, encourages the movement to become more decentralized, as leaders self-organize, support one another, and create their own content.

OUTCOMES: TIPPING POINTS IN CITIES

We’ve described the *elements* of a gospel movement, but what are the outcomes?

Sustained trends of any kind move toward *tipping points*, the point at which the growth curve inflects dramatically upward. There are two critical tipping points for gospel movements in global cities:

- + **Movement tipping point.** This occurs when a movement becomes *self-perpetuating*. All three movement elements are in place, and most of the churches have the vitality to plant new churches within five to six years of their own beginning. In turn, the collective body of Christ in the city organically produces new believers, leaders, congregations, and ministries such that the number of Christians and churches doubles every seven to ten years.
- + **City tipping point.** This occurs when a movement becomes *disproportionately effective* in the culture. When the number of Christians in a city grows faster than the city’s population at large, the Christian influence on the civic, cultural, commercial, and social aspects of the city is recognizable. A common rule of thumb is that this kind of presence becomes possible when a group reaches ten percent of a population and has visible leaders in the community.

MOVEMENT TIPPING POINT = SELF-PERPETUATING

CITY TIPPING POINT = DISPROPORTIONATELY EFFECTIVE

What does it look like when Christianity reaches this kind of city tipping point? It begins to look like a different city altogether.

Christian citizens live in a posture of service. New businesses and non-profit organizations are launched with the goal of restoring and renewing the city. Believers integrate their faith with their work so that every vocation becomes a kingdom activity. Campus ministries and other evangelistic agencies raise up Christian leaders who move into their own leadership positions in the city. Influential leaders use their power, wealth, and influence for the good of those on the margins of society, to advance ministry, and to plant new churches. Christians and churches support and commission the arts. In the long run, the city will consist of healthier communities with less crime and corruption, with more committed families, with enlarged respect for human dignity, and with more God-honoring cultural expressions.

Although we cannot predict exactly when these tipping points will be reached, data indicates that we may have reached a movement tipping point in Manhattan, and that each year we get closer to reaching a city tipping point there. We know that the growth of early Christianity was almost exclusively an urban phenomenon, providing compelling evidence of how God uses the gospel in cities. Furthermore, the Great Awakenings and revivals of Europe and America in the last three centuries give us hope that God can use cities to change even the trajectory of contemporary Western culture.

Nearly every global city is dramatically under-reached by Christian ministry, as much if not more than the “unreached people groups” to which Christian missionaries have traditionally been sent. So even if a city never reaches a tipping point, it represents a huge mission field. And because global cities include transient and mobile people of every culture, a gospel movement in a city affects the spread of the gospel to other cultures and cities.

CHURCH PLANTING
+ THEOLOGICAL VISION
+ GOSPEL ECOSYSTEM

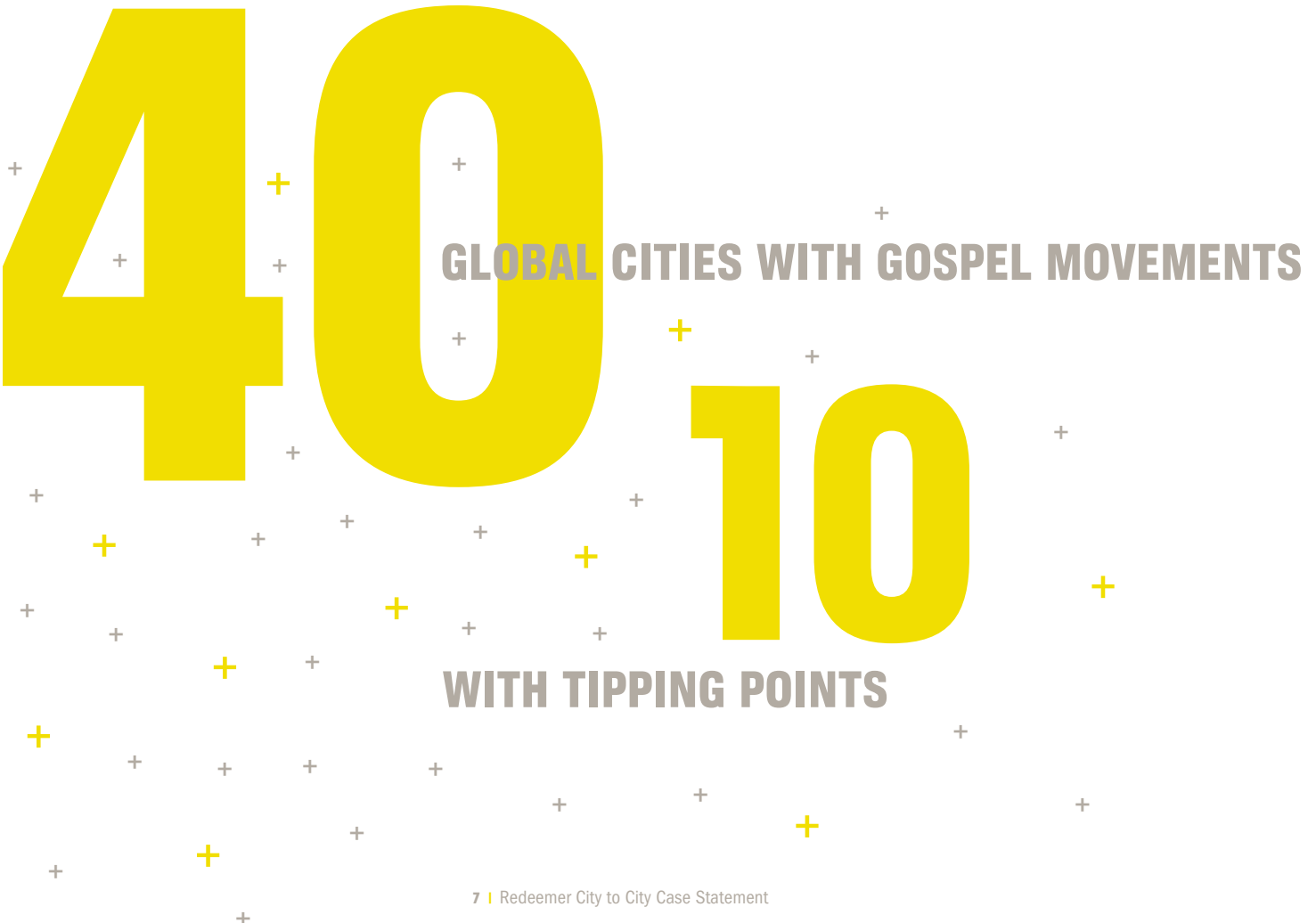
GOSPEL MOVEMENT

VISION: GOSPEL MOVEMENTS IN 40 GLOBAL CITIES

The vision of Redeemer City to City is to cultivate the flourishing of gospel movements in 40 global cities by 2025. Moreover, we desire that 10 of these cities will experience movement tipping points that indicate self-sustaining spiritual revival and cultural renewal, and we pray for New York City to be among the first of these cities to reach a city tipping point.

This bold vision is both scriptural and strategic. It is scriptural, because the city, with its dense concentration of individuals in need of salvation, is so vital to the biblical vision of God's purposes. And it is strategic, for as the city goes, so goes the world. As such, it requires formidable planning, resourcing, and prayer.

BY **2025**



CHURCH PLANTING IS THE MOST POTENT CITY RENEWAL STRATEGY WE KNOW.

STRATEGY: CHURCH PLANTING + CONTENT RESOURCES

Redeemer City to City will focus on two core strategies to pursue its mission.

1. CHURCH PLANTING

Church planting is the most potent city renewal strategy we know. The most effective way to bring the gospel to bear on a city is to form new congregations within it that are fundamentally evangelistic, outward serving, and part of the long-term fabric of their communities.

Where there are few churches, CTC directly recruits and places local leaders to plant pioneering churches there. In cities with a more mature presence of like-minded churches, we support the existing networks and encourage promising “free agents” or non-affiliated churches whose gospel-driven vision may not fit perfectly into any of the existing camps. In each instance, our strategy rests on two organizational competencies:

- + **Developing Leaders.** We identify and resource church planters through a series of training and coaching programs.⁵ These programs range in duration from two days to two years. They are rich with Redeemer’s content, contextualized to their particular audience, and are sometimes accompanied by grant funding.
- + **Building Networks.** We facilitate the growth of city and regional networks of church planters, pastors, and other movement leaders. Our unique approach involves helping local leaders create a “city journey,” an actionable and comprehensive vision for how a gospel movement can become a reality in their city. CTC works with likeminded local partners across many denominations and does not maintain its own operating or organizational presence within the host city.

2. CONTENT RESOURCES

Because transferable content is the fastest and most efficient way to propagate and create traction for ideas, CTC creates content resources to accompany its church-planting endeavors and equip far more people than we can reach through our training programs.

We have found that although pastors throughout the world may create and lead churches that look very different from Redeemer in their *expression*, their gospel-infused theological *vision* is strikingly similar. (We sometimes refer to this theological vision as “gospel DNA,”⁶ and it is the common denominator in all the

5. For more detail, please see Appendix D.

6. The transferable theological, philosophical, and practical commitments flowing from Redeemer’s understanding and practice of the gospel in urban ministry and contemporary life. See Appendix B.

content we produce, whether for professional ministers, lay people, or those exploring Christianity.)

CTC focuses on two main categories of content:

- + **Publications.** The Content Labs division of Redeemer City to City is developing a catalog of books and curricula that explore aspects of the “gospel DNA.” These include Tim Keller’s books with Penguin/Dutton, a new Redeemer book imprint (also with Penguin/Dutton), as well as curriculum projects with Zondervan. By the end of 2010, Tim Keller and CTC will have published seven works, with a plan to publish three to four works per year for the next several years.
- + **Platforms.** In addition to its publications, CTC builds platforms that help facilitate city gospel movements. These include digital content, branding, websites, online community, online conferences, content distribution partnerships, and other elements that grow and serve our global community of church planters and their congregations.

These strategies—church planting and content resources—are interdependent. Content resources spread ideas broadly, but they are also essential to training church planters. Church planting is focused on specific leaders and cities, but the experience and input of these practitioners helps to make the content more credible and broadly applicable.

VALUE PROPOSITION: WHY REDEEMER CITY TO CITY?

Redeemer City to City has three main audiences:

1. **Practitioners.** Our core audience is the current or aspiring global city church planter, whom we recognize as a rare composite of entrepreneur, evangelist, community advocate, pastor, and culture maker.⁷ These unique individuals may number a few thousand worldwide. We have built our organization and brand on our experiences with them and our understanding of their needs, realizing they represent a much larger audience of city-minded, action-oriented, urban dwellers.
2. **Supporters.** Supporters include donors, foundations, partner churches and other like-minded organizations, prayer partners, and others who want to be aligned with our vision for gospel movements in global cities but are not themselves church planters or pastors.
3. **Customers.** These are individuals with a particular interest in Redeemer’s content, from sermons to books to curricula to other digital offerings.

7. See Appendix C for more detail.

7

works published by the end of 2010



3

more in the active pipeline

CITY TO CITY'S UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION:

- + Transferable theological vision
 - + Multi-denominational partnerships
 - + Urban center focus
 - + Practitioner orientation
 - + Proven record of success
 - + Tim Keller's leadership
-

Our desire is to strengthen our relationship with the committed core of each audience group; grow each of these groups in number; and “convert” customers into supporters, practitioners into customers, and supporters into practitioners.

We believe that Redeemer City to City's unique value proposition to these audiences can be summarized under the following headings:

- + **Transferable theological vision.** Redeemer City to City emphasizes a theological vision and commitments, or “gospel DNA,” that is gospel-centered, city-positive, and movement-oriented.⁸ Church planters, pastors, and cultural leaders can adapt this vision broadly across many orthodox Christian denominations, worship styles, local cultures, church sizes, and leadership gifts. Each church we work with is unique and may have no visible affiliation, denominational ties, or stylistic similarity to Redeemer Presbyterian Church; however, the presence of a shared underlying “gospel DNA” is usually strikingly evident to those who know Redeemer.
- + **Multi-denominational partnerships.** Such a focus on transferable elements has allowed us to partner with over a dozen denominations to plant churches. Another result of this approach is that Tim Keller's and CTC's content has also reached an unusually diverse audience across the Christian spectrum.
- + **Urban center focus.** Our sensibility and approach to the gospel appeals to urban citizens as well as anyone affected by the globalization and urbanization of culture.
- + **Practitioner orientation.** Our training and resources, while seasoned by academic insight, are ultimately expressions of what really works for urban ministry in global cities. The senior staff members of the Church Planting team have all pastored churches and mentored pastors in urban settings and, in most cases, both inside and outside the United States.
- + **Proven record of success.** Redeemer Presbyterian Church is an unusually successful church planting story — an outlier. Yet the experience gained at Redeemer has proven helpful in building a track record of successful church plants throughout the world.
- + **Tim Keller.** Tim is a gifted practitioner-teacher who has providentially been given a platform beyond a single church. This heightened profile affords CTC greater credibility, reach, and access to talent.

These strengths allow CTC to create significant leverage and efficiency from its operating capital, to reach more strategic leaders and help plant more churches in more cities.

8. See Appendix B for more detail.

GOALS: THREE-YEAR OUTCOMES AND FUNDING TARGETS

Goals	Actual as of Jan '10	Target as of Dec '12
Total churches planted	175	300
In target global cities	30	35
Cities with self-sustaining church-planting networks	2	6+
Total church-planting network leaders served	35	60
Total leaders trained in depth	250	450
Published works (books and curricula)	4	12

Funding Targets

Average per year, 2010–2012	\$4.6m
Total, 2010–2012	\$13.8m

PARTNERSHIPS: CONNECTING WITH REDEEMER CITY TO CITY

Redeemer City to City is seeking partners to join in this vision for gospel movements in global cities. As you will read below, partnership with Redeemer City to City can be tailored to specific interests in a targeted city of the world or area of ministry, or may involve more general funding of our infrastructure and content. Whatever your particular interest, we invite you to consider partnering with us in this work in one of the following ways:

Adopt a city. Invest in the first stage, usually two to three years, of a long-term strategy for a target city or region, such as Berlin (or Germany), London, São Paulo (or Brazil), Hong Kong (or Southeast Asia), Tokyo, or southern Europe. As a partner, we encourage you to journey with us to see the work on the ground. Connect with local leaders and forge cross-city coalitions. Depending upon the needs and maturity of the city or region, this sponsorship could fund any or all of the following:

- + Visits by International Directors to these cities to build coalitions and find the initial church planters;
- + Training one or two church planters in New York through our International Intensive program;
- + Creating and delivering one or more Immersion events in the city or region;
- + Grants for a limited number of church plants;
- + Adapting our training and content for more church planters and movement leaders in the city.

Join a church planter. Underwrite the assessment, training, coaching, supervision, and financial grants for a specific church-planting project. As an investor, we urge you to get to know your church planter and to join a group in praying for him, his family, and the needs of his city.

Create or leverage a program. Invest in a training or content program, such as the development, delivery, or local adaptation of resources listed in Appendix D, as well as the development of any other desired resource (book, curriculum, website, etc.)

Advance the movement of Redeemer City to City. Get involved in all of the above through the most flexible type of partnership, a general gift to the organization. This kind of sponsorship allows CTC to direct the funds to the greatest need across the movement.

All donations to Redeemer City to City are tax-deductible. For more details, please contact Terry Gyger at 917.206.1458 or Howard Freeman at 917.206.1459.

WAYS TO PARTNER WITH CTC:

- + Adopt a city
 - + Join a church planter
 - + Create or leverage a program
 - + Advance the movement of Redeemer City to City
-