

CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER CONGREGATIONAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

This report presents the results of an independent assessment of Church of the Redeemer. This work was conducted by Mike Bonem of Kingdom Transformation Partners, under the authorization and direction of the vestry of Redeemer. The assessment was conducted in June and July, 2005. The objective of this evaluation was to create a snapshot of the parish's "current reality." The process was designed to allow for significant participation by members of the parish and to provide constructive insights about Redeemer. My hope is that this report will provide a productive platform for healthy discussion and needed renewal at Redeemer.

OVERVIEW

Redeemer is an incredible church with a rich heritage, but it is also a church that seems to have been stuck at a crossroad for several years. As attendance and financial resources have continued to decline for more than a decade, there has been a growing sense that "we need to do something." But defining that "something" has been elusive.

The analogy that has come to mind as I have worked on this assessment is one of a campfire. Once you get beyond the starting phase, the fire seems to have a life of its own. As long as there is adequate wood, it can continue to burn with relatively little maintenance. If it is left completely alone for several hours, the flames will disappear and the fire will seem to be dead. If you poke around in the embers, however, you will find the heat and the life that is needed to restart the fire.

From the outside, Redeemer may look like a dying fire, but I discovered a strong spiritual vibrancy within the congregation that was encouraging and refreshing. The embers are still hot – the question is who is going to stir them back into flame again. Certainly this will ultimately be dependent on the Holy Spirit, but it will also require the willing and enthusiastic participation of church members.

It is beyond the scope of this project to discern how Redeemer should "rekindle the fire," but this report does point to some essential elements to be addressed. As such, the body of this assessment focuses on six key findings. I believe the most significant issues for Redeemer to recognize and consider are its:

- Numerical decline
- Spiritual depth
- Lack of vision
- Outreach challenge
- Undercurrent of tension
- Powerful culture

Each of these is discussed in detail below after a brief description of the project approach.

PROJECT APPROACH

The project involved the collection, analysis, and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data from a written survey and from interviews and focus groups with parish members. This approach allowed for widespread participation, a broad look at all aspects of the congregation, and an opportunity to focus on specific issues in greater depth.

In early June, members were asked to complete a “Congregational Self-Assessment” survey, which was taken from *Leading Congregational Change* (Herrington, Bonem, Furr; Jossey-Bass; 2000). This survey consisted of 50 statements about the congregation. Each statement was rated on a 1 to 7 scale, with 1 representing “strongly disagree” and 7 representing “strongly agree.” The survey also included demographic questions and a space for respondents to offer additional comments. In total, 74 surveys were submitted. The surveys were tabulated by the church secretary and then forwarded to me.

The body of this report only focuses on the major findings; the complete survey results are included in an appendix. In the appendix, you will find survey results sorted by statement number and by ranking, segmentation analysis from the survey, and a summary of the additional comments. Survey results for the 50 statements are always shown as averages on the 1 to 7 scale (1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree).

Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted in late June and early July. These sessions were designed to allow members to voice their thoughts and concerns, and to enable me to probe deeper into specific issues. Sessions were open to anyone who wanted to participate. Individual sessions were held with the interim rector (Craig Morgan), the previous rector (Steve Capper), and the current senior warden (Dick Bird). Approximately 53 individuals participated in a focus group or individual interview.

Selected documents related to the history of the parish were also reviewed. These provided additional context and background for understanding the written and verbal data.

The key findings identified in this report were selected based on my review of all of the information from the assessment. While this process is somewhat subjective, a number of common themes have clearly emerged. Part of the methodology of the project is to look and listen for recurring issues. This provides confirmation of the topics that are most important and screening of ones that are less critical. No congregation can tackle every problem and opportunity that it identifies. I believe that the six findings that have emerged in this process are the most critical for Redeemer’s future.

NUMERICAL DECLINE

The quantitative picture provides an important starting point for this assessment of Redeemer. In particular, the steady decline in membership and attendance and the financial strain that the church currently faces have become urgent issues. In the church’s “glory days” in the 1970’s, Sunday worship attendance averaged close to 1000. For the past 20 or more years, the attendance decline has been gradual but steady. As recently as 1999, Redeemer still averaged over 250 in attendance. However, average attendance was 136 in 2003 and dropped even further to 110 in 2004.

The financial implications of this decline are very significant. Redeemer’s 2005 budget anticipates a loss of \$95,000. This deficit exists even though the congregation is only paying for

a part-time interim rector this year. While Redeemer has had savings that have allowed the church to continue operating with a deficit, this source of funds is nearly depleted. In the next fiscal year, Redeemer will potentially be forced to make some very difficult financial decisions.

This quantitative picture raises two critical issues, which the remainder of this assessment will only begin to address. First, many declining congregations in circumstances similar to Redeemer enter a kind of hopeless downward spiral. Members become demoralized by the numerical and financial decline. Some leave the church, which results in more work for the remaining few. The financial squeeze forces the congregation into a constant cost-cutting mode, making it difficult to maintain the same level and/or quality of programming and staffing to which they have become accustomed. The one thing that would best reverse the decline – new members – is most difficult to obtain because of the low morale and the inability to initiate new, attractive programming.

This raises the second issue: what is the relative strength and health of the remaining core at Redeemer? On this issue, in particular, I found reason for hope as I reviewed the results of the survey and conducted the various focus groups. Redeemer's members are tired and concerned, but many have a strong faith in God and a deep commitment to the church.

SPIRITUALITY DEPTH

My strongest impression in this assessment has been the spiritual depth I have seen at Redeemer. Of course, this is the hallmark of the congregation's heritage. In systems thinking language we say that "the past is always present," and this is certainly true in many positive ways for Redeemer. The spiritual depth that was defined by the revival in the 1970's continues to be visible in Redeemer today.

Some indicators of this can be seen in the survey results:

Statement 4: Our worship services are inspirational. (5.4 out of 7; with 7 representing "strongly agree")

Statement 22: Our leaders regularly encounter God in life-changing ways. (5.1 out of 7)

But the stronger indications came in the focus group meetings with members of the congregation. The majority of participants described the presence and life-changing power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. For many, the ministries of Redeemer were where this had first occurred. This was not just a "past tense" expression. Church members seem to have a strong commitment to spiritual growth, Bible study, and prayer that is not found in many churches today. They truly want God to be active in their lives and in the life of the church body. Many remain deeply committed to Redeemer and are actively involved in one or more areas of service in the congregation.

The framework that I use for assessing congregations and their "change-readiness" places a high value on "spiritual and relational vitality." Why is this so important? If the congregation is not experiencing God's presence and power in its corporate life, healthy and effective transformation is impossible. Without the Spirit's guidance, decisions about the future can be driven by self-serving motives and personal agendas can quickly erupt into divisive conflicts. The good news is that Redeemer is starting with a strong spiritual foundation. The critical question is where that will lead in the future.

LACK OF VISION

If spiritual depth is the most encouraging and important characteristic of Redeemer, then the congregation's lack of future direction is the most troubling and complex. The lack of a clear vision was readily apparent in the survey results:

Statement 39: Our church clearly understands how God wants our congregation to be different three years from now. (3.3 out of 7)

Statement 29: The members agree on how we are going to achieve God's vision for our church during the next few years. (3.5 out of 7)

Statement 40: Most of the members share the same interpretation of God's vision for our church. (3.5 out of 7)

These three statements were among the lowest rated on the 50-item survey, and my experience with the focus groups confirmed these rankings. Redeemer's members know that change is required and that the congregation needs a fresh sense of God's direction for the future. However, they did not express consensus on what the direction should be. This was true despite the fact that the congregation conducted two different "visioning" processes under its former rector (Steve Capper), and has begun a new process under the current interim rector (Craig Morgan). One would expect this type of process to lead to clarity and focus that would last for multiple years, but it is evident that the visions and plans that were produced in these exercises have had little real impact or "staying power." Some programmatic changes have been made, but these have not led to the overall transformation of Redeemer nor have they reversed the numerical decline. And even the changes that have occurred are not connected to a sense of overall vision in the minds of most members.

Why has this been the case? What are the factors that have caused past efforts to be less fruitful than desired? Several different factors appear to have been at work:

- Change in leadership – the most extensive vision discernment process was a lengthy exercise that concluded shortly before Steve Capper announced his resignation. Visions often do not survive transitions in the senior leader unless there has been extensive buy-in from the congregation's lay leaders.
- Lack of real buy-in – the survey and the focus groups clearly indicate that the congregation never really "caught" the vision. Some blamed this on past leadership and on the lengthy process that was involved. Whatever the cause, ownership of a vision is lacking.
- A change-resistant culture – Redeemer has a very strong culture, owing to its unique history and dynamic spiritual revival in the 1970's. This appears to have produced a culture that is resistant to change (discussed further below), and is therefore resistant to a new vision.

The survey provided one other interesting note. One of the highest rated statements relates to Redeemer's future:

Statement 42: The best days of our church are in the future. (5.6 out of 7)

Redeemer has experienced significant numerical decline and is at a major crossroad where a clear, new vision is needed, but the congregation has not lost its sense of hope. Is this

hope misplaced? When I asked about this rating in the focus groups, several people were quick to point out their belief that the God who birthed the revival of the 1970's is still active and alive and is able to do a powerful work in their individual lives and the life of their church. Redeemer's members love each other and love the Lord, and they expect God to do a great work in their church in the days to come.

OUTREACH CHALLENGE

A critical factor underlying the lack of vision and the congregation's decline is the challenge of reaching new members. Outreach, as used in this report, means the strategies and programs (formal or informal) for reaching people for Christ and for membership in the church. Redeemer's location, the age of its membership, its dissimilarity with the surrounding community, and even its heritage work against it in this respect. Simply stated, Redeemer faces a sizable challenge in attempting to draw new members into its fellowship. The lack of clarity in the church's vision is a reflection of this challenge, and is also exacerbating the problem.

Even though Redeemer experienced explosive growth in the 1970's, this was not due to an organized, formal outreach program. Rather, it was the result of a powerful, Spirit-led revival in the congregation that drew people in by word of mouth and the invitation of their friends. In some ways, the congregation seems to be waiting for a fresh visitation of the Spirit to begin to draw people in again. But if God does not manifest himself in this way a second time, how is the church to reverse its decline?

The outreach challenge is captured in two of the lowest rated statements from the survey:

Statement 34: Our church is aware of the needs of the persons we are called to reach. (3.6 out of 7)

Statement 18: We work enthusiastically to reach people. (3.6 out of 7)

Based on the comments in the focus groups, a corollary to the low rating on statement 34 is, "our church is unaware of who we are called to reach." There is a definite lack of agreement on who Redeemer should be reaching, and therefore on how the church might conduct its outreach. The specific challenges are multi-faceted:

- Reaching the residents of the surrounding area will not be easy because of the differences in the predominant ethnicity and socioeconomic status. (The church's past programs seem to underscore this difficulty.)
- The "hidden" location of Redeemer makes it difficult to cast the net more broadly for potential members who come from more similar backgrounds.
- Some of the programming options that the church might consider are infeasible because of the tight financial picture.
- The most effective outreach is always a personal invitation. However, when morale declines or tensions rise, people are less likely to invite their friends to church.

One other statement in the survey suggests another aspect of the outreach challenge:

Statement 21: We try to keep member from "dropping out." (3.3 out of 7)

The low rating on this statement suggests a "hands off" attitude toward membership in general. It might be a fatalistic attitude – "God will bring those He chooses into our fellowship

and He will lead others away in His timing.” Redeemer will clearly need to address its outreach challenge and develop a culture that is more proactive in the future.

UNDERCURRENT OF TENSION

Redeemer’s recent history has caused some underlying tension that is still present. Two of the statements on the survey highlight this concern:

Statement 26: Our congregation deals with conflict effectively. (3.7 out of 7)

Statement 45: Our congregation has healed from past conflict among the members. (4.0 out of 7)

The focal point of this tension seems to be a debate over the effectiveness of the last rector (Steve Capper). In my various conversations, some individuals spoke very highly of him and others were extremely critical. Some people blamed him for the church’s numerical decline and its lack of vision. While it is not unusual for a leader to have supporters and critics, I was concerned that these sentiments were still strong two years after his departure. This seemed to manifest itself in some lingering factions within the congregation, but it does not appear to be the kind of crippling division that can occur. The church secretary was also the subject of some criticism. It is unclear if this is a related or separate issue. The bottom line is that the vestry needs to be aware of these tensions and should be diligent in fostering reconciliation if/when it is needed.

Another implication is the importance of increased communication. In times of organizational stress, the established means of communication are often inadequate. The survey and the focus groups indicate that Redeemer needs to improve its communication with the congregation.

Statement 9: Communication in the church is effective. (4.1 out of 7)

The reality is that an information void will be filled with rumors and unfounded hypotheses, especially in difficult times. Improving communication is not a “cure-all” for tension, but it can stop some small issues from growing out of proportion.

On the positive side, the survey showed a high level of trust and respect for Redeemer’s current leaders.

Statement 23: Our leaders display a spirit of humility and service. (5.8 out of 7)

Statement 28: Our church is guided by a group of trusted leaders. (5.5 out of 7)

While the survey was not specific in defining this leadership group, it can be assumed that it includes collectively the interim rector, the vestry, and any other key decision-making bodies at Redeemer. This trust will be a very important factor as Redeemer faces important decisions in the future.

A POWERFUL CULTURE

Every congregation has its own unique culture. Some cultures are strong and well-defined, while others are weak or diffuse. The culture shapes the congregation’s values, priorities, and behaviors. Redeemer’s revival in the 1970’s produced a congregation that is unique within the Diocese of Texas (and beyond). As stated earlier, “the past is always present.” The resulting culture is truly unique and entrenched, as evidenced by the fact that it has survived

for thirty years. Many aspects of Redeemer's culture are admirable – the congregation's spiritual emphasis, its reverence for God and His Word, close-knit community, life transformation, and more. But a strong culture can make change very difficult. The survey highlights this:

Statement 30: The church continually changes the things it needs to change in order to be faithful and effective. (3.9 out of 7)

Statement 32: We habitually learn helpful new ways of thinking and acting. (3.7 out of 7)

Some of the things that have served Redeemer well in the past may be hindrances in the present and the future. Several focus group participants expressed recognition of the need for change and a willingness to do so. But the overall climate is one in which change will not come easily.

Many aspects of Redeemer's core culture should not change, but most congregations' unspoken definition of their "unchangeable core" will broaden over time. For example, no one would debate that a dynamic, Spirit-filled worship is integral to Redeemer's culture. Over time, however, people may further define (and restrict) how the Holy Spirit can move in a worship service. Must certain songs (or styles of songs) always be sung? Does it always require flags? Redeemer will need to evaluate what are the core, unchangeable elements of its identity and what must it be willing to modify in order to achieve the vision to which God is leading the church.

One other aspect of culture should be noted. A variety of denominations will attempt to merge two struggling congregations to create a critical mass for programs and ministry and to achieve a renewed sense of hope. Given the strong and unique culture of Redeemer, this would be a very difficult option. Suffice it to say that no other church in the diocese is a cultural "match" for Redeemer, and any attempted combination would require significant, careful attention as the inevitable conflicts arise.

CONCLUSION

The six issues described in this report should focus the dialogue on how Redeemer can fan the fire into flame again. The first (numerical decline) highlights the urgency of the situation, while the second (spiritual depth) affirms that hot embers can still be found at Redeemer. The other four issues should set the stage for the important discussions that will shape the congregation's future.

One challenge in this discussion is the fact that Redeemer is in an interim period. Many congregations find it difficult to make bold, strategic, Spirit-led decisions in the absence of a rector. In fact, the survey hinted at this issue:

Statement 10: Our congregation makes decisions effectively. (4.0 out of 7)

I encourage the church to seek God's guidance for the future of Redeemer. This will require wise leadership by the vestry. It may require outside assistance from the diocese or others. It will require healthy dialogue and communication throughout the congregation. And it will require focused, intentional prayer by all who want to see "the best days of our church ... in the future" as God leads Redeemer to a new place of ministry in His Kingdom.

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APPENDIX

Congregational Self-Assessment (Survey) Results

Notes on Congregational Self-Assessment

- This appendix contains:
 - Congregational Self-Assessment results, in the original survey sequence
 - Congregational Self-Assessment results, sorted from highest to lowest rating
 - Congregational Self-Assessment results, by segment, selected questions
 - Comments from the Congregational Self-Assessment and selected quotes from focus groups
- A total of 74 surveys were completed.
- The 50 statements (with 1-7 ratings) and the demographic questions were tabulated by the church’s secretary.
- Survey results are presented as “average ratings.” These ratings are an arithmetic average of all responses for the statement.
- The “standard deviation” was also calculated for each statement. Standard deviation is a measure of how narrowly or widely distributed the answers are for a given statement. The lower the number, the more narrowly distributed the answers. As an example, the distribution of responses for two of the survey statements is shown below:

	Number of responses by rating (1-7):							Average	Standard Deviation
Statement:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
14	1	1	1	3	12	31	24	5.9	1.2
15	8	5	3	11	17	15	14	4.7	1.9

Statement 14, which most people rated as 6 or 7, has a low standard deviation (1.2). On the other hand, responses to statement 15 varied much more widely and resulted in a standard deviation of 1.9. Simply stated, standard deviation is a measure of how much agreement (or disagreement) there was on a particular question.

- The survey included several questions that allowed for identification of sub-groups within Redeemer, based on demographic information. This allows an assessment of whether certain segments have significantly different opinions. Results of the segment analysis are shown in a separate table. The average rating for all statements (1-50) gives an indication of the overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction of the segment. The averages for 10 “marker” statements are also shown.

Congregational Self-Assessment Results

Average	Std Dev	Statement
4.5	1.5	1. Our church facilitates many ways for people's lives to be changed by God.
4.6	1.6	2. The church has improved the quality of life for persons in our community
4.5	1.6	3. Our congregation develops faithful disciples of Christ who develop other faithful disciples.
5.4	1.5	4. Our worship services are inspirational.
4.4	1.6	5. The church has high-quality ministries and programs.
3.7	1.7	6. The congregation offers effective ministry with persons who aren't members.
4.3	1.7	7. We clearly define the responsibilities of church leaders.
4.6	1.7	8. Authority in our church is appropriately distributed.
4.1	1.7	9. Communication in the church is effective.
4.0	1.6	10. Our congregation makes decisions effectively.
4.6	1.6	11. The church provides many forms of small groups and organizations in which people participate.
5.8	1.1	12. Church members are good stewards of their resources.
5.4	1.2	13. Members of the church serve as leaders in areas for which they are gifted.
5.9	1.2	14. The church's facilities are adequate for its activities.
4.7	1.9	15. Our church's location can be reached easily.
5.1	1.6	16. Our church understands how its personality is different from other congregations or denominations.
5.2	1.5	17. We are usually able to keep undesirable practices in our culture from influencing our church's way of doing things.
3.6	1.5	18. We work enthusiastically to reach people.
3.6	1.4	19. Our church clearly describes what it expects of members and participants.
3.9	1.5	20. New members become actively involved in the life of the congregation.
3.3	1.7	21. We try to keep members from "dropping out."
5.1	1.4	22. Our leaders regularly encounter God in life-changing ways.
5.8	1.2	23. Our leaders display a spirit of humility and service.
4.8	1.7	24. We cultivate a strong sense of unity in our church.
4.9	1.6	25. We demonstrate Christian community in ways that contrast with the world around us.
3.7	1.6	26. Our congregation deals with conflict effectively.
5.1	1.4	27. Our leaders demonstrate readiness to make personal changes in their lives in light of God's vision.
5.5	1.5	28. Our church is guided by a group of trusted leaders.
3.5	1.7	29. The members agree on how we are going to achieve God's vision for our church during the next few years.
3.9	1.9	30. The church continually changes the things it needs to change in order to be faithful and effective.
4.0	1.7	31. Our short-term plans are aligned with long-term goals.
3.7	1.6	32. We habitually learn helpful new ways of thinking and acting.
3.8	1.7	33. Our congregation responds appropriately to changes in its community.
3.6	1.6	34. Our church is aware of the needs of the persons we are called to reach.
4.1	1.6	35. The congregation understands the social changes in its community.
3.9	1.7	36. Our ministries take into account the cultural changes affecting people's lives today.
4.4	1.5	37. Our congregation cooperates with other Christian groups.
5.2	1.4	38. Our church knows and affirms its biblical mission.
3.3	1.8	39. Our church clearly understands how God wants our congregation to be different three years from now.
3.5	1.9	40. Most of the members share the same interpretation of God's vision for our church.
4.2	1.9	41. Our congregation displays a strong sense of urgency about achieving God's vision for it during the next few years.
5.6	1.6	42. The best days of our church are in the future.
5.4	1.5	43. We celebrate the ways that God has blessed our church in the past.
5.1	1.7	44. Our church has asked God to forgive it for specific acts of unfaithfulness in the past.
4.0	1.8	45. Our congregation has healed from past conflict among the members.
5.2	1.5	46. We affirm specific strengths that the congregation has displayed in the past.
4.4	1.6	47. What we have learned from our history as a congregation has helped us to become more effective.
4.5	1.5	48. We have a good reputation with our community because of our interaction with it.
4.2	1.8	49. The church regularly gathers information about our progress toward God's vision for it.
4.4	1.7	50. The congregation gives leaders on-going feedback that affects their actions.

Congregational Self-Assessment Results, Sorted by Ranking

Average	Std Dev	Statement
5.9	1.2	14. The church's facilities are adequate for its activities.
5.8	1.1	12. Church members are good stewards of their resources.
5.8	1.2	23. Our leaders display a spirit of humility and service.
5.6	1.6	42. The best days of our church are in the future.
5.5	1.5	28. Our church is guided by a group of trusted leaders.
5.4	1.2	13. Members of the church serve as leaders in areas for which they are gifted.
5.4	1.5	4. Our worship services are inspirational.
5.4	1.5	43. We celebrate the ways that God has blessed our church in the past.
5.2	1.5	17. We are usually able to keep undesirable practices in our culture from influencing our church's way of doing things.
5.2	1.4	38. Our church knows and affirms its biblical mission.
5.2	1.5	46. We affirm specific strengths that the congregation has displayed in the past.
5.1	1.7	44. Our church has asked God to forgive it for specific acts of unfaithfulness in the past.
5.1	1.4	22. Our leaders regularly encounter God in life-changing ways.
5.1	1.6	16. Our church understands how its personality is different from other congregations or denominations.
5.1	1.4	27. Our leaders demonstrate readiness to make personal changes in their lives in light of God's vision.
4.9	1.6	25. We demonstrate Christian community in ways that contrast with the world around us.
4.8	1.7	24. We cultivate a strong sense of unity in our church.
4.7	1.9	15. Our church's location can be reached easily.
4.6	1.6	11. The church provides many forms of small groups and organizations in which people participate.
4.6	1.6	2. The church has improved the quality of life for persons in our community
4.6	1.7	8. Authority in our church is appropriately distributed.
4.5	1.5	48. We have a good reputation with our community because of our interaction with it.
4.5	1.6	3. Our congregation develops faithful disciples of Christ who develop other faithful disciples.
4.5	1.5	1. Our church facilitates many ways for people's lives to be changed by God.
4.4	1.7	50. The congregation gives leaders on-going feedback that affects their actions.
4.4	1.6	47. What we have learned from our history as a congregation has helped us to become more effective.
4.4	1.5	37. Our congregation cooperates with other Christian groups.
4.4	1.6	5. The church has high-quality ministries and programs.
4.3	1.7	7. We clearly define the responsibilities of church leaders.
4.2	1.9	41. Our congregation displays a strong sense of urgency about achieving God's vision for it during the next few years.
4.2	1.8	49. The church regularly gathers information about our progress toward God's vision for it.
4.1	1.6	35. The congregation understands the social changes in its community.
4.1	1.7	9. Communication in the church is effective.
4.0	1.7	31. Our short-term plans are aligned with long-term goals.
4.0	1.6	10. Our congregation makes decisions effectively.
4.0	1.8	45. Our congregation has healed from past conflict among the members.
3.9	1.5	20. New members become actively involved in the life of the congregation.
3.9	1.7	36. Our ministries take into account the cultural changes affecting people's lives today.
3.9	1.9	30. The church continually changes the things it needs to change in order to be faithful and effective.
3.8	1.7	33. Our congregation responds appropriately to changes in its community.
3.7	1.7	6. The congregation offers effective ministry with persons who aren't members.
3.7	1.6	32. We habitually learn helpful new ways of thinking and acting.
3.7	1.6	26. Our congregation deals with conflict effectively.
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3.6	1.5	18. We work enthusiastically to reach people.
3.6	1.6	34. Our church is aware of the needs of the persons we are called to reach.
3.5	1.9	40. Most of the members share the same interpretation of God's vision for our church.
3.5	1.7	29. The members agree on how we are going to achieve God's vision for our church during the next few years.
3.3	1.7	21. We try to keep members from "dropping out."
3.3	1.8	39. Our church clearly understands how God wants our congregation to be different three years from now.

CSA Segment Analysis

	Avg	Count	Stmnt:	1	4	18	24	26	32	38	39	41	42
				Average	Std. Dev.	4.5	5.4	3.6	4.8	3.7	3.7	5.2	3.3
				1.5	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.6
Gender:													
Male	4.4	31		4.7	5.2	3.6	4.7	4.0	3.7	5.0	3.1	3.7	5.3
Female	4.6	37		4.4	5.6	3.7	4.7	3.5	3.8	5.5	3.6	4.5	5.7
Age:													
14-24	4.3	6		3.8	5.0	3.3	4.3	4.0	3.2	5.2	3.8	3.7	3.8
25-34	4.1	5		4.6	5.4	3.6	4.2	3.0	3.3	5.0	3.3	3.8	6.5
35-44	4.7	3		4.3	5.3	4.0	4.7	4.3	4.3	5.3	3.7	4.0	6.3
45-54	4.7	16		4.7	5.4	3.6	5.2	3.7	3.9	5.3	3.7	4.7	5.1
55-64	4.2	19		4.4	5.2	3.4	4.3	3.5	3.1	5.1	2.8	3.4	6.1
65-74	4.8	13		5.1	6.2	4.0	5.2	4.1	4.6	5.3	3.1	4.7	5.5
75+	4.5	4		4.0	4.5	3.8	5.3	3.7	4.3	5.8	5.0	5.5	5.0
Marital Status													
Single, never married	4.4	13		4.5	5.4	3.3	4.5	3.5	3.2	5.7	2.8	3.8	5.5
Married	4.3	39		4.2	5.0	3.4	4.7	3.8	3.6	4.9	3.4	4.1	5.4
Separated/divorced	4.9	14		5.1	6.4	4.3	4.8	3.6	4.5	5.8	3.6	4.6	5.6
Children													
<4 yrs old	3.5	2		3.5	6.0	3.5	2.0	2.0	3.5	5.0	4.0	2.0	7.0
5-12 yrs	3.4	6		3.2	3.8	3.2	2.5	2.5	3.0	3.4	2.2	3.0	4.8
13-18 yrs	4.1	9		4.2	4.5	3.6	4.3	2.8	3.3	4.3	2.2	4.2	5.2
None at home	4.8	38		4.8	5.9	3.8	5.2	4.2	4.0	5.5	3.8	4.4	5.4
Education													
HS/Trade	4.1	8		4.0	5.5	2.8	5.0	3.4	3.7	4.9	1.9	3.8	6.1
Some college	4.7	9		4.8	5.7	4.0	5.0	3.7	3.8	5.2	2.9	4.4	4.3
College degree	4.5	20		4.5	5.1	3.4	4.8	3.4	3.8	5.6	3.9	4.0	6.1
Post grad	4.6	11		5.0	5.0	4.0	5.2	4.2	3.9	5.7	3.4	4.9	5.3
Grad/professional	4.1	15		3.9	5.7	3.2	3.8	3.3	2.7	4.6	2.8	3.6	5.2
Employment													
Retired	4.5	13		4.2	5.1	4.1	5.2	3.7	3.8	5.5	2.5	4.2	5.2
Homemaker	4.9	3		5.3	6.0	5.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	5.7	5.0	4.3	6.3
Student	4.4	4		4.8	6.5	2.3	4.8	4.0	4.5	6.3	3.3	2.8	6.5
Part-time	3.9	8		4.4	4.4	3.7	3.0	2.5	2.2	5.0	2.7	2.6	5.1
Full-time	4.6	34		4.5	5.7	3.3	5.0	4.0	3.7	5.3	3.7	4.7	5.3
Membership/Tenure													
Visitor/Non-member	4.8	5		5.0	5.6	3.6	5.0	3.5	4.2	6.0	2.8	4.5	5.5
5 yrs or less	4.8	4		3.5	5.5	3.0	5.0	3.8	4.0	5.5	3.0	5.3	4.7
6-10 yrs	4.1	6		3.7	5.2	2.5	5.2	3.7	3.5	4.6	2.6	4.8	5.2
11-20 yrs	4.1	7		4.8	5.0	4.0	3.5	3.2	3.3	5.6	2.7	3.8	6.2
20+ yrs	4.4	38		4.5	5.5	3.6	4.7	3.5	3.5	5.1	3.3	3.8	5.4
Prior Church Background													
Episcopal	4.3	27		4.3	5.2	3.4	4.7	3.7	3.4	4.8	2.7	3.8	4.8
Other denomination	4.7	25		5.1	5.8	4.0	4.8	3.8	4.1	5.3	3.4	4.7	5.7
Non-denominational	4.2	6		3.5	6.3	3.3	3.0	3.2	3.7	5.0	3.2	3.3	5.7
Various	4.0	4		4.5	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.5	2.5	5.0	2.0	2.0	7.0
Not active	5.0	6		4.3	6.0	3.8	5.3	4.5	4.3	5.3	4.8	5.5	6.5
Never member	4.8	6		4.7	5.8	4.2	5.5	3.8	4.3	6.0	4.7	4.2	6.7
Attendance Frequency													
Once/month or less	4.3	3		4.0	5.7	3.0	4.7	3.0	3.5	4.3	2.5	4.0	6.0
2-3 times/month	4.5	11		4.8	5.3	3.7	4.3	4.0	4.2	4.8	2.9	4.3	5.9
Weekly	4.4	49		4.3	5.3	3.4	4.7	3.5	3.5	5.3	3.2	4.1	5.4

CSA Segment Analysis (continued)

			Stmt:	1	4	18	24	26	32	38	39	41	42
Travel Time to Church													
<5 min	4.4	19		4.3	4.9	3.6	4.8	3.6	3.5	4.9	3.1	4.4	5.0
6-10 min	4.4	8		4.6	5.9	2.9	5.0	3.6	3.8	4.7	3.0	3.9	5.7
11-20 min	4.6	17		4.6	5.6	3.5	4.9	3.4	3.7	5.3	3.3	4.4	5.8
21-30 min	4.2	10		3.9	5.5	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.8	5.0	3.7	3.6	6.0
31-45 min	4.6	5		5.8	5.2	4.6	4.0	3.0	3.4	6.0	2.4	3.4	6.0
45+ min	4.2	3		3.7	4.0	3.0	4.3	4.0	2.7	6.0	2.5	3.5	4.0
Level of Involvement													
Significant increase	5.1	7		5.2	5.7	4.7	5.7	4.5	4.7	5.3	4.3	4.2	6.5
Increase	4.4	15		4.1	5.3	3.1	5.3	3.9	3.6	5.5	2.8	4.4	6.2
No change	4.1	25		4.2	5.2	3.3	3.8	2.9	3.3	4.9	2.8	3.7	5.0
Decrease	4.9	11		4.8	5.9	3.6	5.4	4.4	4.2	5.5	4.2	4.5	5.5
Significant decrease	3.8	3		5.3	4.7	4.3	3.0	2.3	2.3	5.0	2.0	2.7	5.7
Number of Organizations													
0	4.5	13		4.5	5.7	3.4	4.5	3.7	4.0	5.0	2.7	3.8	6.0
1	4.4	8		4.6	5.5	3.0	5.1	3.7	3.4	5.9	3.6	4.0	5.7
2	4.5	18		4.5	5.3	3.8	4.9	3.6	3.8	5.1	3.6	5.1	5.5
3	4.3	13		4.0	5.2	3.7	4.7	3.4	3.5	5.4	3.5	4.2	5.1
4+	4.2	11		4.5	4.9	3.2	4.0	3.4	3.1	4.7	2.2	2.7	5.7

Ethnicity segments not reported. All but 4 were Anglo.

Comments from the Congregational Self-Assessment

In an attempt to be unoffensive the service is void of any passion, one service is the same as another, it is devoid of hearing or experiencing anything new, you could stay here and recite the whole service to yourself and not miss anything.

We need ministries to reach the broken and those in hardship. Old leaders are not open to newer ones coming in. Too narrow minded, but so orthodox. We do not address conflict No sense of unity, some are staunch in old habits.

As a visitor, my answers are uncertain, but I believe I feel an attitude of inclusiveness and love untriumphed by cultural, political or economic concerns. Redeemer's past may have been sufficiently "glorious", but I believe there is a spirit of humility, genuineness, and love here that I seek.

I do not think the members are involved as they should be. The secretary is very rude and unproductive. She has sent many members away.

We will turn to Him and follow.

Gifted leaders - it's scary to offer gifts with so little back-up. If you start something, it's yours to carry out. I'm not sure the leadership is in the leaders. We're on survival mode. There are still some who hold strong grudges.

To grow again might mean separating from the Episcopal Denomination as it is now.

Need better child care This is a barrier to new people.

Personally, I do not enjoy hymns as much as I enjoy contemporary worship, but I love it when we sing in tongues as the Holy Spirit visits. The LaRoca children do not enter youth group so that is not good. Probably could not handle their integration to youth group because there are too many. As long as "people" are not controlling the direction of our church. I do not sense strong leadership. I feel we lack vision. Are some against being Episcopal and some for it? As long as leaders know with all their heart they are in the right position of service. As long as they are not trying to influence the church's direction for their own personal wishes. God should have complete control. I feel because of the church's location the church should be more of a Spanish culture.

I am grieved over the treatment of Steve and Karen when Steve chose not to be full time. Many times he stated that he would like to worship with us, but apparently that has been denied them. I feel Steve should be listed in those we pray for as well as Mission Houston. Just as we pray for those sent out as missionaries, and continue to pray for them. We should pray for Steve and embrace what he is doing in another area of God's kingdom. I just cannot understand why Steve's being here seem to be a threat. I was very blessed and challenged by Steve's sermons and Karen was a wonderful servant of God using her talents with the children. I don't understand what I perceive as the coldness of this church.

It is very hard for newcomers to figure out what is going on in the worship service, maybe we need more explaining from the front. Possibly printing a handout of the responsibilities of the church leaders would be helpful. We are not so good at following up on people when they don't come for awhile. We have a strong sense of unity and this is impressive given the diversity of voices present. I am very impressed with the desire to reach the local community. We lack leadership, sense of purpose, sense of direction, cohesiveness

There is something about Redeemer that is unique-pulls you into worship in a way I have not found anywhere else.

The church seems to be moving toward being a traditional Episcopal church (ironically) which I think will finish it off. Anyone who wants a typical Episcopal church can go anywhere in Houston and someplace where their car won't be damaged or stolen, where there's parking, children and youth programs, and vitality of ministries. There has to be a reason for people to come over here, I see none. The one ministry God continually seems to be blessing is LaROCA, which focuses on needy kids. There are many of them in the neighborhood, and I think that is who we're called to (besides every, of course!) We do little to nothing to attract or be attractive to young families, and all the while we're getting grayer and grayer. I think we

don't know who we are, why we're here, or what to do about it. Not with a bang, but a whimper, hollow men.

Don't give up.

It is hard for new members to get involved. What is the vision? Old ways are hard to change, slow to change. Who are we called to reach? We see the social changes but are slow to understand, I sense confusion/disunity.

I think we have some difficult times ahead before it gets better.

Ineffective communication between paid staff & members, church secretary/admin asst.

Selected Comments from Focus Group Meetings

We expect people to come in and adjust to our community.

I absolutely believe there's a future for this church. The answer may be hard.

Redeemer is the core of my life.

We have been talking about vision for 20 years, but we don't have much to show, and I'm not sure why.

We reject people who don't fit our mental template.

People who aren't hungry [spiritually] don't stay.

I have to go other places for deeper [spiritual] meat.

I want this church to be a magnet for everybody, but we send signals that some are not welcome.

People are good at saying "hi" and "bye" but not at going deeper.

Our slogan is "Redeemer: A Healing Place" but it's not acted upon. The church doesn't own this.

We're in favor of lots of good stuff, but we're not so good at it.

We need some kind of venue for evangelistic outreach. We must reach the next generation.

There's an "acceptable vision" that really doesn't fit anymore.

We have too strong of a culture. Things have to be done the Redeemer way.

We are struggling with our identity.

The church is unwilling to follow the vestry's decisions. We have a general problem with authority.

I long for a leader.

Someone needs to strike a match, and someone else needs to blow on it.

Our tendency is "pray, pray and pray" rather than "prayer and action."

We lack the skills and institutional knowledge of how to bring people in.

I want to feel the Holy Spirit again in the service the way I used to ... to sit there and cry because the Holy Spirit was so alive.