

A Sneak Peek at 2009

Reconnect – January 25, 2009

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 1:3-6

Key Thought: With God working in us and through us, Reconnect will more and more be a source of hope for Barrhaven in 2009.

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace. We are all one body, we have the same spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all. (Ephesians 4:1-6, NLT)

Intro: Hope - it's catching (Obama inauguration)

- *[play video - hope is catching series - Obama ads]*
- Hope - it's what the world needs now, isn't it?
- Global economic meltdowns, fears about the environment and jobs, political games and bus strikes, bankruptcies and bailouts, supersize deficits, and us in one of the coldest Januarys I can remember - everyone could use a little Hope
- (Coincidentally, I have one at home)
- Hope has been a recurring theme for President Obama, and this week saw a world moved with Hope as they watched his inauguration
- He has shown an incredible ability to inspire and bring together - to tap into the innate hopefulness of people - and in times like this, that says a lot
- "Hope springs eternal in the human breast" - Alexander Pope said that more than 250 years ago, in his "An Essay On Man", and it's as true today as it was then
- We WANT to hope - we want to have something to be excited about, we want to have a reason to get out of bed in the morning other than a demented alarm or whiny children, we want to have meaning and purpose to our lives and feel some measure of success, of progress, of getting ahead
- But hope can be muffled - it can be stifled by the world around us - by the situations we find ourselves in, by the circumstances of our lives, by the problems we face

Paul in the joint:

- Paul the church-starter, after travelling all over the Mediterranean - speaking, debating, organizing, caring, teaching, running away from angry mobs and putting his neck on the line - after all of that, Paul had been arrested and found himself in prison in Rome, awaiting trial
- He was tired, feeling his age and resisting the temptation to be depressed, as he twisted in the wind
- But whenever he thought about the people whose lives he had touched, the people who were praying for him, sending him support and messages, people who had been changed because of his courage and obedience to God - well, that gave him a boost every time

- It was in jail that Paul wrote his letter to the church in the city of Ephesus - in modern-day Turkey, at that time it was a multicultural centre, famous for its variety of religions and its level of religious devotion - in fact, its devotion to religion was fanatical - its economy was based on it being a centre of religious pilgrimage, and so people held onto those customs at all costs
- But Paul had come into town speaking about a god who was different - who had come as a man and who had died to right the wrongs of the world, a god who was real, who mattered and who cared, and who offered his love with open arms, not based on legalistic rituals or the rulekeeping achievements of the religious
- The people of Ephesus had resonated with that message - so much so that the whole city was thrown into an uproar at people rejecting the religious systems that were their bread and butter
- Paul hasn't seen his Ephesian friends in a long time - so he writes this letter to them and to the rest of the region, to encourage them in their faith - to stoke their hope
- Part of what he said to them was read this morning - I'd like to read it again to look at it briefly:

Read text: Ephesians 4:1-6, NLT

Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Always keep yourselves united in the Holy Spirit, and bind yourselves together with peace. We are all one body, we have the same Spirit, and we have all been called to the same glorious future. There is only one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and there is only one God and Father, who is over us all and in us all and living through us all.

A closer look:

- community - serving each other, committed to helping each other and being there for each other - family - he says that they are "one"
- U2 would reflect on this section and others like it in the Bible almost 20 years ago when they wrote "One":
 - One love, one blood, one life, you got to do what you should
 - One life, with each other - sisters, brothers
 - One life but we're not the same - we get to carry each other, carry each other - One
- Paul says "make the right choices, and live with hope" - they are called to the same "glorious future", as they have this incredible relationship with God

We stand on their shoulders:

- I find it incredible to think that the faith that I have, the relationship that I have, the understanding of God that I have, has come to me from them - in a direct line, person to person, generation to generation, as people have discovered him afresh and been changed by the hope they find in him
- And it is the same for everyone here - we all stand on their shoulders, so many generations later

We can be part of bringing that hope to Barrhaven...

Through remembering who we are (refer to Locke in the video - our stories) and being true to our DNA

- **Our Vision:** Love God, help people, build community
- **Our Values:** Real, Relevant, Responsive, Reproducing, Reliant
- **Our Process:** Belong, Believe, Become

Through what we dream of doing this year

What we want to do this year

Living Rooms - more of them

First Vegas

What's this whole church thing about, anyway?

And still more...?

Kids

A team of workers, loving our kids as they grow and "multiply"

A kids week-long summer day camp - safe, fun, and beneficial for kids and parents alike

Sundays

We're limited to one Sunday a week ;)

Community

Helping people

Letting people know we're here

Advertising

Block parties

Adopt-a-park

Helping families and those in need

It can only happen as you are a part of it

(we have to "die" - strong, even shocking words, but as we "die" to the things that distract us, the things that hurt others, the things that would pull us off track from our message of hope, we are more and more effective

Giving

Serving

Living

(Inviting)

Key Thought:

With God working in us and through us, Reconnect will more and more be a source of hope for Barrhaven in 2009.

Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished... Philippians 1:3-6, NLT

Conclusion: "Enjoy Your Life"

Atheist bus slogan - in Ottawa, we don't even believe in buses, either - conclusion?

"There's probably no God - now stop worrying and enjoy your life"

(how very agnostic of them)

The dream - working midnights, typing, praying, crying, laughing, but not sleeping - could there be a way to love Jesus and have a life, too? Was there a possibility of being a good husband and father that could exist alongside being a minister? Was there a way to follow in the steps of Jesus and not exist inside a cloistered bubble of only like-minded people?

From those questions, Reconnect was born, and here we are, entering our third year (already!)

Is the dream alive in your life? Are you living the dream, with all the hope that comes along with the freeing, life-giving relationship that you can have with Jesus Christ at the centre of your life? The peace, the joy, the freedom, the hope...

Response: I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For