

# The Life

We have a dream to build the church. The most powerful way to build is through life. We are here to lift other people up into life. The life of Christ. How much fun does God want you to have in your life. LOTS.

In The house we have a life. It's a great life. We have three words which describe that life. Vibrant, relevant, and contemporary.

## 1. Vibrant

Alive. When something is alive it is not dower. It is moving, planning, attempting different things

1 John 4:4 Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world

John 10:10 The thief comes to steal kill and destroy but I have come that you might have life and life abundantly.

### **Not just melancholy but full of sanguine and passion.**

The melancholy in us does not lift us up it holds us in a place for reflection. We all have melancholy unfortunately some of the 'church' believes that God only moves when we reflect. Or reflection is the big move of God. God moves mostly through action. When we get off our proverbial rear end and step out to do something God moves with us. God always responds to faith.

### **Vibrant means we take a stand of faith.**

Often I say to the musicians and leaders when they get into the pulpit that 'let's go up'. I have a strong conviction about this and it is straight from the bible. The bible constantly tells us to Put on, lift up, shout out, speak to, declare aloud.

Going up is taking a stand of faith in God's ability no matter what. I wonder what the church would look like if all we did was navel glazing or soft, deep reflection. It would be a church of inaction, never getting anything done. It would be a church that is always looking for the faults within. We come to church to get inspired, motivated, and filled with the spirit of God. We want to be lifted up, not left to wallow in our own problems.

I love having fun so today we are going to have a little bit of fun in the house and I need three volunteers. We are going to play a game. Its called 'Peaches and cream'. The idea is to guess who is saying this to you.

Can you imagine with me a 'Young old Group'. I want our 50+ group to be known as the youngest old group in town. That's because its alive. Its not boring. I don't want a 50+ group that just meets. I want them to have fun while they are doing it. That's Vibrant!

Be Alive! Be Vibrant.

## 2. Relevant

### **We are in the world not of the world.**

John 17:14 'Because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.'

### **God has given us a mandate to be relevant to our generations.**

He placed us here. God placed us in the world. We are meant to live in this world. The church by and large needs to embrace this more.

Being relevant should not change the message.

But like everything the answer is not in another program. Programs usually end up being lifeless, non relevant to society groups because they have outlived their use by date or have passed their best before date.

- ◆ The answer is always in a person.
  - You.
  - God in you.
  - God in you in your world.
  
- ◆ When you are relevant you are fresh.

So how do we live in the world and not be of the world. Good question

To do this we need to connect with it not just through programs but through people.

### **How do we connect?**

- We connect with God through intimacy
- We connect with the church through unity
- We connect with the world through acceptance

Can you imagine with me something? Can you dream with me a little today? Lets dream about Caleb's. Let's dream together of a place that is very nicely presented. It's contemporary. Its got new chairs. New tables. New paint on the walls. Its got a new front serving bench. New stainless steel benches in the kitchen. New floors. We use this great place to reach out into the community to change it. We offer discounted meals and food for the less privileged. They come in, sit down and enjoy the atmosphere of a place that shouts at them, acceptance. That calls out to them that they are valuable in God's sight. That doesn't just fill their stomachs but reaches in deeper to place a seed of acceptance and love. God's acceptance and love. Church our dream is big. It's a five year plan to totally remodel Caleb's into a first class coffee shop with outreach as its focus.

As we do that we accept the world. We don't want to condemn it. So let's stay connected with it. The further we isolate ourselves from the world the more the finger gets pointed. God doesn't want us to just be finger pointers but hand reachers.

### **3. Contemporary**

#### **A good way to describe contemporary is THE FLOW.**

Sometimes in our church we experience a real flow. It's easy. We don't have to push for it, it just happens. This 'flow' can come through worship, but it is not and should not be exclusively limited to worship. The 'flow' is happening all around us. It's easy, it's relaxed, its embracing, its warm, it's the big hug the quiet walk, it's the open door, it's friendly. It's an atmosphere that surrounds everything about our lives. Being contemporary is about having a certain atmosphere. We create atmosphere through a number of important elements

1. through look – colors, tones, styles
2. through feel – cool, warm, welcome
3. through smell

We have a flow in the church. We work a certain way. Other churches work in different ways. God does not expect us to all work the same because we all reach out to a different part of society in a different way.

#### **Everything that other churches do is usually good.**

By that I mean it has value because it has at its core the kingdom of God. But let's understand something we can not embrace everything that presents itself to us. Some events within the kingdom, i.e. other churches, although awesome in there inspiration and focus do not culturally fit into our church. We can embrace some of them but it would be wrong of us to embrace everything that comes our way as if it is God speaking to us. Sometimes having to say no to something is important. I believe that strong Christians know how to discern between the good and the important for their lives. They have learnt when to say no to other churches meetings or gatherings so that they are fully fresh for the vision of their local house.

#### **Being fresh is part of the flow. Its life.**

#### **The Life – It's worth Living**

In three weeks time we all have an opportunity to invest in the future of this church through 'Rise and Build'.

It's a special offering above and beyond of tithes to build the church. Basically there are two ways to give

1. Through a special offering on the day
2. Through faith pledges throughout the year.

Today you received a pledge sheet. Take it home, Ask God what he would like you to give on the day. Ask God what he would like you to believe for.

It's our life. Let's live it.

# The Truth

Didn't we have fun last week playing the game of 'Peaches and Cream'.

The real truth is that the life we talked about last week is at the very centre of our message. Our message is the truth. At the House we have a message. It's simple. Its faith, hope and love.

All that we build, all that we dream about is surrounded and enthused with the truth.

Faith is belief. Living life with a positive mindset.

Hope is expectation. Living life out of positive expectation in God.

Love is life. Living life while enjoying it.

Faith says 'we can'

Hope says 'we will'

Love says 'lets do it together'

The truth is that which is our message to the world in which we live. It is the message. The House has at core the gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Grace of God. Everything we do comes from the Grace of God.

Our desire is to continually discover God's favour and grace upon our lives.

If you were to describe our message in whole terms it would be GRACE.

The message of grace must be preached through three enduring qualities from 1 Corinthians.

**1. Faith** – God in us, God through us

**How do you see God toward you?**

Are you sin conscious or grace conscious? Do you look at what you can't do or what you can do in God?

Are you frustrated by past failures or are you motivated by future dreams?

Are you caught in the pain of past relationships or are you walking in the freedom of the future friends?

Pain can and does dictate our actions. Sometimes for good and sometimes for bad. Pain is a part of life and a teacher. It is meant to help us make decisions, but it is never meant to control our destiny. God's grace is our foundation not our own pain. God's ability is our lifter of our head. Trust in him.

Make a stand and ask God to help you move on.

**Faith is not just a position we take it's the position we take with the person.**

Our faith is evidence that God is on the inside of us. Hebrews 11:1  
When we live a life according to God's grace in us, we give other people evidence that God exists. How good is that!

How would you like to see your friends know about God's grace? We all would, well the evidence is in you. Christ in you in all your life. This is not an overly religious thing but a truth, a revelation. It's not overtly an action, it's an attitude, a default we have in our life.

The Bible is full of the journeys of men and women of faith.  
Abraham left his homeland to go to a place he didn't know of, yet he believed God was going to show him a land he and his seed would inherit.

The Israelites embarked on a journey across a wilderness believing they would enter their promised land.

Eleizer took a journey believing he would find a wife for his masters Son, Isaac, and he did.

Jonah took a journey away from God that was enormously unsuccessful.

Nehemiah journeyed back from Babylon to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, which had been destroyed.

Paul was on a journey to Damascus where He met Christ, who stopped him from taking that path any more and set him on a succession of new journeys that built the church all around the world.

Two disciples were on a journey to Emmaus and found that as they walked Jesus drew near and talked with them.

The journey of a dream demands faith. Every step we take makes up a walk. This walk is a walk of faith.

2 Corinthians 5:7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. NKJV

**2. Hope** – Being positive about life  
Because of Him who is able

Faith is the substance, the evidence, of things hoped for. Hebrew 11:1

Hope is an enduring quality that in times past has been despised by the church. But without it, faith is none existent.

### **Hope is a stance we take whenever a situation comes our way.**

It is our face whenever a challenge confronts us. It is our foundation when the storms of life stroll across our TV screens of our minds.

Dr. Phil Pringle recently said, 'Challenges are not troubles they are process'. The process of knowing who we are and whose we are.

What are you hoping for? For what you hope for you believe for.

Hope gives us reason to believe God for the impossible.

### **3. Love – Enjoying people, life and yourself**

Because of God's love for you.

Love is not some concept we talk about just in relation to service. It is about people. Love is what overrides everything we do. Do you love being around people? Do you love just hanging out with people?

If you have a look at 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 you see a list. That list is actually a list of characteristics. These characteristics are of people we want to be around. It is these sorts of people that we want to hang with.

Let's dream together today? Let's look at the future through the eyes of God. Let's dream big about the people.

Imagine an 817 service were every week we have fun around and with God. Imagine a service that responds to God through action. Imagine a place that is so excited about God that it takes the message to its generation. Imagine 'Liquid' being just that. The presence of God flowing in such a way that every time we meet people's lives get changed and people come to know Christ. Imagine this place full of passionate people whose first priority is God not themselves and they love it so much. It's just so fun, so lovely that you wouldn't miss it for all the tea in China.

Do you enjoy life or find it a bore? In a movie called Groundhog Day, Bill Murray plays a character who is stuck in a particular day. Every time he wakes up he is back at the beginning of the same day. In this movie a couple of lines stand out, Bill Murray is talking about this unusual, to him unbelievable occurrence, to some people he says, 'I am waking up everyday to the same day, the same garbage, the same events and same hassles. It never changes'. The other person comments "that sounds like my life."

God wants everyone to have a life of adventure. That adventure is always wrapped around other people. People we love to hang with. I don't want 'the same old same old' its life, its love.

In two weeks we collect our Rise and Build offering. Get ready to invest in your future.

We give because we believe. We believe in the message. We are united around the vision and we are focused on our strategy. Next week we will have a closer look at the strategy for this church.

The truth is undeniable. I encourage you to choose to live it.

## **The Dream I – Build the church**

We have shared about 'the life' and 'the truth'. Its fun being in the House of God. Its joy. It's joy.

As we build the church, living out our dream there are three things which are important for us to recognize.

Building through

**Service** – having a heart and head for the vision

We are saved to serve.

We don't have to serve but we want to.

- ◆ Service starts with seeing. Seeing what needs doing.

***If you are looking without seeing, you are only seeing yourself.***

One problem with the modern generations and it is one we constantly have to look at is the 'ungrateful spirit'. What's in it for me! I want to be with my friends. I want it my way. How unrealistic is that. How selfish is that!

Imagine with me for a moment. Imagine a generation who are willing to stand in the gap for another generation. Imagine a group of people who want to stand up and see another generation reached with the word of God. How good would that be? Imagine that generation being willing to give up some of it's time, its precious time with its own generation for the opportunity to serve another generation. Now that's being a Christian. Imagine them standing in the gap. Imagine a group of leaders who say we don't just want to talk about standing in the gap for someone through prayer, we want to put our words into actions and be the bridge across the gap between generations. Now that's Christianity. This year that is happening in the life of the church. How good is that! How good is that! The Gap is about one generation reaching another.

**Today, we have Christians who aren't interested in 'standing in the gap'.**

Standing in the Gap is not just about prayer or praying countless hours in intercession. It's a stand. An inner resilience to do whatever it takes to win the lost.

These people might say all the right things at conferences and events but when the rubber hits the road, they run from the gap. We have people who attend churches who do nothing other than the weekly observance to attend, sing and give a small offering to the work of the Lord. They may raise their hands, get lost in worship. But that's not all we are here for. We have all eternity to worship God.

My heart grieves and aches for a church that will put aside selfish ambition to build the kingdom. Servants are not ungrateful; they want to serve no matter who they serve with. They don't care where they serve or who they serve with, just as long as they serve. I wonder where you will serve.

In the house we have many areas that need service.

Here is a couple

Welcoming team

Communion preparation team

Deacons

Sound

There are lots more, you only have to look.

Can you imagine with me for one moment? I want us to dream together for a moment or two. I want to imagine an amazing morning tea. Special cakes brought in.

Cheesecakes, cheeses slices and not just day old ones from coles. Real coffee and its aroma wafting through our service. I want you to see that occurring once a month in the life of the church. Imagine bringing a friend along to that service. Imagine their look of astonishment as you lead them out their and get them a free cup of coffee for all visitors. Imagine the warm fuzzies you will put into their lives. Imagine this overwhelming hospitality actually changing peoples perception and acceptance of church. It's the dream. WE want to build this. Will you join us?

## **2. Vision** – Having and being part of one.

Everyone needs something they can attach their lives too that is much bigger than them.

This is where the power is

The power to transform lives  
The power to change the status quo  
The power to enjoy life

Without a vision the people perish.

With a vision the people prosper.

We have vision. It's big. It's enormous. It's constantly growing and changing as we grow and change.

I see a church that builds people that loves life, which embraces each day with fresh strength. It's growing, it's a moving mass of enlarging vision. It's you. It's me. I see a church that knows their God and does great things amongst their generation. I see a church whose influence is not limited by its proximity, not bounded by its size but has unlimited potential to change the destiny of countless hundreds, thousands down through the course of time. The Vision is to build that church.

Everything we do should build the church. If what we are doing is only building our ministry we are outside of the vision. We build. We build the church.

## **Faith** – having a stance of faith.

This is ultimately a decision. God gives us so much it's up to us what we do with it.

Living life according to hope not doubt or fear. Living life up not down

Living life in not out. One of the key aspects of faith is 'sight'.

It is about overcoming through the power of God inside of us, the physical sight and seeing something far greater.

Ezekiel 1. He saw a raging fire engulfing itself and he saw brightness around it.

The question is do you see the fires that will come or even are coming towards you or do you see the brightness. The glory. God is always there when the fires burn, when the world closes in. Where is your sight? On the fire or the glory.

Next week we build. Next week we will take an offering called Rise and Build. Today you have received a copy of a pledge sheet for the rise and build offering. Church we have an opportunity to put God's House in first place in our lives.

I encourage you to plan and bring your offering. How much do you value the House? How much do you want the House to grow this year? Remember, what you sow is what you reap? Let's get ready for a great year and bring your Rise and build Offering and pledge sheets in next week. Lets open the door to a miracle year. Let's bring an offering worthy of our God.

## **The Dream II – Build the church**

### **What are we building?**

1. 817 –
  - a. 817 service – what can you do? Who can you encourage?
  - b. 817 youth
  - c. The Gap – a untouched generation. These young people are not children, but not adults. They are in the gap. We need people who are willing to stand in the gap both physically and spiritually for this age group. There is a gap. A hole that needs filling. Don't say that's not for me. I don't want to hang around them. Don't isolate yourself off to your own desires and purposes. 'STAND IN THE GAP!'
  - d. Liquid – Video clip of past Liquid
2. 50+ - I see an oldies group that is not old, it's young. Not because of age but because of mindset. They might not move as fast, think as quick, but they won't let go of the vision. Within this church I see that group. At times they put the youth and the mid aged people to shame by their willingness to push past obstacles. I say to them. Live young.
3. Caleb's – the new is coming.
4. Burma/missions – Video Clip

### **How are we building?**

1. Through Strategy
  - a. Events cycle
    - i. We have four Liquid's a year. One at the end of each school term.
    - ii. The 817 band will visit Hamilton High once a semester. That's twice a year.

- iii. Our leaders meetings are quarterly
    - iv. Our services weekly
    - v. There are certain months when we chill back a bit, while in other months we extend ourselves.
  - b. Specific planning – ‘if you fail to plan, you plan to fail’.
  - c. Adhering to the building code for this house
    - i. VRC
- 2. Through Giving
  - a. Let’s Build
    - i. Every year we have a special offering. This offering is called ‘Rise and build’. This year our catch cry is ‘Let’s build.’
    - ii. How can you be a partner with us in this?
      - 1. Bring a special offering next week. Something you want to give.
      - 2. Make a pledge to give some extra each month and commit to seeing that given.
      - 3. Ask God for faith to give something and believe for that to come in this year. In this area, we advise the 125 principle. E.g. You could say above my other giving in Rise and Build I want to give \$100 somewhere in the year. You may want to pledge an extra \$1000 but you don’t have the faith muscle for that so start smaller and build.
      - 4. If you gave \$100 last year ask God to go bigger. God responds to faith.
- 3. Through Service
  - a. New way to serve
    - i. The ‘Home team’
      - 1. Deacons – We are always looking for new people to put their hands up to help
      - 2. Welcoming – This is a new team. We need couples and individuals who want to help us build by welcoming people. Remember a welcoming spirit is a contemporary spirit.
      - 3. Hospitality – SMT
        - a. Once a month we want to have a special morning tea. We need someone to own that responsibility. Is that you? Or can you be part of a team here? You can build the vision here.

Psalms 102:13

You will arise and have mercy on Zion,  
 For the time to favour her  
 Yes, the set time, has come.

Luke 4:18-21

God has decreed this year to be a year of favour. He has set the ball in motion. Favour is ours. It’s our time. It’s this year.

God has given us a strategy

Today we begin to implement the strategy for 2006. Today we start building. Today we start by investing in the future of this church. Every year we have this time. It's a day to step into the churches future. It's a day to step out and believe God for yourself, for the church for the vision. Today we have a time of sowing into our season of favour. What is your favour? How are you sowing? What are you sowing today?

As we sow we reap. If we sow we are planning to reap. It's going to be great year in the house. The best one for many years.

Let's build.