

Bridge Street House of Prayer



1055 BRIDGE STREET, GRAND RAPIDS MI
info@bshop.org • www.bshop.org
www.facebook.com/bridgestreethouseofprayer • twitter.com/B_S_H_O_P

OCT. 2011

THE BSHOP IS A MISSIONAL COMMUNITY SURRENDERED TO THE LOVE OF JESUS WORKING IN US AND THROUGH US TO BRING TRANSFORMATION TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WILL MULTIPLY IN THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS THROUGH COMMUNITIES OF PRAYER.

RECONCILIATION

II Cor. 5:16-21 - From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Last month I was invited to speak at a college ministry down at Western Michigan University. I had the privilege of speaking with them last year and was asked to come back and speak about the ministry of reconciliation this year. I have never preached on this topic before, however, being involved in urban ministry and being connected with others in this movement, I have often heard people talk about the ministry of reconciliation. Most often I hear this idea applied to a social setting... racial reconciliation, economic reconciliation, social reconciliation, etc. All of which can be valid applications of Scripture, however, before too quickly jumping to application, I wanted to start with induction. In other words (perhaps I am spending too much time in seminary!), before making claims on what the ministry of reconciliation means in a social context, I wanted to first find out what it means in a biblical context.

As I studied for this message, I was not all that surprised at what I found. The idea of reconciliation in the Bible is used primarily by Paul and most famously used in II Corinthians 5. And wherever Paul uses the imagery of reconciliation he is always talking about the same thing. Jesus! When Paul talks about the ministry of reconciliation, he is not primarily talking about social reconciliation, he is talking about something infinitely greater. You see, before he says that we have been given the ministry of reconciliation, he first tells us that we have been reconciled. Reconciled to God, through Jesus. This implies that in every Christian's life, there once was a point when we were incompatible

with God, completely unable to earn the righteousness that He requires us. This is where Jesus fits in. Paul tells us that Jesus not only took on the weight of our sin, but he actually *became sin*. Why? So that we can become His righteousness. Oh my goodness! So that we could become compatible with God.

This is the ministry that we have been entrusted with. The message of Jesus. And I fear that many are losing sight of the full depth of this message and are preaching a watered-down version of the Gospel that is no Gospel at all. Many will tell you that Jesus will make your life so much better. That if your life is not going how you want it, just follow Jesus and He will fix it. The problem is, that's not the Gospel. That is not the message of reconciliation. Jesus did not become detestable to God (sin) so that you can have a better life. The message is so much more magnificent than that. He became sin so that you can have *life itself!* The message of Jesus is not one of bad to good. It is death to life. Once I was dead, now I am alive!

This is the message of reconciliation. This is the message that Paul tells us that we have been entrusted with. This is the message that we preach here at the Bridge Street House of Prayer. In our ministry to the poor, we do minister holistically, believing that Jesus cares about the whole person. However, we want to do so much more than simply point people to a better life. We want to point people to the Giver of Life. This is reconciliation. This is our message.

This is *your* message.

Ryan Waalkes



a few of our Pavilion regulars

HOPE IS RISING

"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor..." Isaiah 61:1a

This past month has been a full month of opportunities and God-sightings! There have been days when my heart has been extremely heavy because of the bondage of my friends here in the West Side and then there have been days of wholehearted rejoicing over transformation in people's lives.

Where a dear friend from the West Side is spending some time in jail, he has recently been in a place of crying out and weeping. As a young woman had her newborn child taken by Child Protective Services, she is now experiencing desperation and immense need for hope. A teenage boy that has argued for years about atheism has now shared his openness to there being one Creator. Two couples that were brought to the Pregnancy Resource Center were able to receive information and resources for maternity and parenthood.

While witnessing the great need within our neighborhood, I, too, am becoming more aware of my need and weakness without Christ. So, not only is the LORD actively pursuing each individual that makes his/her way into the Pavilion, but He is also pursuing my heart and humbling me.

Below, I have given you a list of exciting stats that share more about the abundant work that the Lord has done during September:

Pavilion Full-time Staff: 3

Volunteer Applications Submitted: 18

Trained Volunteer Staff: 14

Trained West Side Volunteers: 4

Colleges/Churches Visited: 4

To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Lindsay Sisson

RESPONDING TO THE CALL: MAKE DISCIPLES.

God is moving in a powerful way among the youth, and the Bridge Street House of Prayer is responding to the call to gather, empower, and send out young people with the purpose of advancing the Kingdom of God. Here are a few ways that will happen this year:

IMMERSION: Immersion is at the heart of this youth initiative. It is a 9 day mission trip with the Bridge Street House of Prayer for high school students who want to be stretched in their faith, go deeper in their relationship with Jesus, and put their faith into action. The trip starts out with 3 days of backcountry camping for a fun adventure, team unity, and preparation for the week. Our main activities for the rest of the trip are teaching and work projects, meeting practical needs in our neighborhood. Students not only paint fences, landscape yards, and play with kids, but learn to genuinely meet people where they are with the tangible love of Christ. We are planning for 5 Immersion groups in summer 2012.

WEEKENDS @BSHOP: As an easy way for students to get their feet wet at the BSHOP this spring and put their faith into action, we will be offering weekend trips to youth groups to join the ministry of the BSHOP. This will feel much like one day of Immersion including worship, teaching, and first hand experience in loving the poor around us.

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING COURSE: This initiative will be kicking off in the fall 2012 as a follow-up to Immersion. Many students, including those who go through Immersion, receive a call to live out their faith in incredible ways, but are left with few practical resources to do so. We are currently developing this 5-8 week Saturday course that will be available for any high school students who are serious about their faith, and want to take it to the next level. It will offer practical tools like how to study the Bible and lead a small group, along with core teachings on prayer, discipleship, the character of God, our identity in Christ, and living with purpose.

SATURDAY NIGHT WORSHIP: This is a worship gathering that has been happening weekly for the last 6 years at the BSHOP. Young people join together from many colleges, universities, high schools, churches, and youth groups for 3 hours of worship, teaching, and intercession. Saturday Night Worship is another way we are gathering, empowering, and sending out a generation of young people who are on fire for God and being used to advance his Kingdom.

As a BSHOP community, we are anticipating God doing great things in this young generation. We have been sensing that this is a new season of increased growth and renewal. Pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers into his harvest field -- especially the youth!

Derek Sterenberg

prayer

Thank you for praying. Here are some things you can be praying for.

- Pray for grace and wisdom as we steward these ministries.
- Pray for BSHOP staff as we move forward with ministry.
- Pray for grace over our community life.
- Pray for protection of our minds, bodies, and hearts.
- Pray for our neighbors and our relationships with them and for real transformation in our neighborhood.

**The Pavilion @ 1056 Bridge is open from
noon - 5 pm Monday - Friday**

**Our Saturday Evening Worship
Gatherings begin at 7 pm every Saturday
in the Tabernacle @ 1054 Bridge**