

REASON FOR HOPE

I met a man the other day. His name is Walter. He is 78 years old, has traveled the world and fought in a World War. He married the “woman of his dreams,” they had kids together and Walter has buried that same woman. Walter has lived in the same flat that he was born in his whole life across the street from the church where he was dedicated, baptized, sang in the choir, got married, had his wife’s funeral. Every week, he makes the “trek” across the street to shine a brass plate on the bench outside of the 300-year-old building that is dedicated to the servicemen who lost their lives in the war...his friends.

But Walter no longer enters the building. He has given up on God. He told me that he had seen too much and didn’t know how to believe anymore. He didn’t know what to believe anymore. “When you have seen as much as I’ve seen, it is hard not to lose hope.”

“...always be ready to give an answer for the hope you have...” 1 Peter 3:15

These last few months, I have been struck by what it means to live your life in such a way as to make people ask what I hope in. Am I hoping in the same things as everyone else, or am I hoping in Christ and His kingdom? What does it look like to live a life that proclaims loudly, “I am not hoping in this world!” A life that everyday looks to what will come for real joy, not what is. What I have begun to see is that my life is only the first step.

“...looking for the blessed hope and the great appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” Titus 2:13-14

What I have begun to learn is that one of the reasons that we, that is, His Church, have been saved and purified is so that we might bring glory to His name through being zealous in good deeds. This is not just about being a good person. This is about being passionate about acts of kindness to all those around me, but in such a way that makes the name of Jesus Christ look really, really good.

This is one characteristic that we have been developing in our NieuCommunities participants. As we spend time as missionaries and as disciple-makers in Scotland, we have become passionate about creating young leaders with a zeal for making the name of Christ look great every time they interact with their neighbors, the students at the gym, and Laura the young homeless woman up the street.

We must be the kind of people (here in Scotland and around the world) who actually look like they are "...looking for the blessed hope...the great appearing of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus..." We must be the kind of church that shows Christ to be great through being zealous for goodness and good deeds.

As Walter and I were parting ways, I told him that God is still present and that He loved him very much. Walter's response betrayed his heart, "I know...I know." Then I asked him if I could pray for him, and he said yes.

And so I ask you now: Will you pray with us and for us as we try to reach back into this hopeless environment with the hope and name of Jesus Christ? Will you pray for Walter and the thousands of other disillusioned church-goers in this country? Will you pray for Laura and the millions of other people in this country who far away from God?

Finally, will you pray for the next generation of young church leaders who desperately need to have the courage to stand for Christ in a dark age with hope and zeal? That we would show Christ to be great in everything we do and say...and that people might ask, "What is the reason for your hope?"