

Connect09 Progress Report

(A report from the Connect09 Management Committee.)

Connect09 Prayer

Father God, we praise you for your love for all people
and for sending Jesus to be the saviour of the World.

Help us to share this love with others.

We pray for the people of our city and beyond.

By your Spirit prepare their hearts to respond to your
Word and put their trust in you.

As we connect with them, may they connect with you,
and find the joy of sins forgiven and life eternal
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Vision of Connect09

1. As the Diocesan Mission continues to be applied in many and varied ways across the Diocese, under God, Connect09 has the potential for mobilising and uniting all of our people for a concentrated period of time to continue the work of turning the vision of the Diocesan Mission into action in all our communities.

A Particular Practical Aim: Reaching everyone with the Word of God

2. The Gospel is the power of God for salvation. God's Word will do its powerful saving and life changing work. Getting that Word, in various forms, into the homes and hearts of everyone in the Diocese is the simple aim. This is a straightforward and simple aim, and every congregation can participate to whatever level they choose.

3. Importantly this is not an impersonal scripture distribution at people's doors or letterboxes but rather an offering of scripture through an actual personal contact whether through parish door knocking or some other "connection" with people.

A General Missional Aim: Reconnecting the churches with the wider community

4. General observation and some statistics suggest a "disconnect" between local churches and their wider communities. Many people do not personally know an active church-going Christian.

5. We want churches to be bold and creative as they seek many ways to reconnect with people in the wider community. The result will be many more connections between Christians and people in the community. Many such connections will be simple casual acquaintances, but some will develop into friendships.

6. We do not know what opportunities God will bring through all kinds of connections.

A Cultural Mindset Change Aim: Refocussing the local congregation on the parish and the wider community

7. We have concentrated on nurturing, loving relationships, developing ministries, welcoming new people and planting churches – these things must continue. However the focus is on ourselves, the local church.

8. We need to spend significant time, perhaps even equal time focussing on the wider community if we are to reach them with the gospel. This will mean changes in our church programs and how our paid staff and others spend their time. In fact such a mindset will touch every aspect of our church life.

9. Changing internal “culture” is very difficult, and we trust Connect09 will be a help and a catalyst in this. Connect09 is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a new horizon.

What is Connect09?

10. In summary then, Connect09 is a campaign to make Jesus known. A campaign to help churches connect with communities in a way that will connect people to Jesus.

11. It is not a program or a system. Every parish is different, so Connect09 will be done in different ways. But by doing it together, right across our Diocese, under one “umbrella” we will all benefit from a unity of purpose, the encouragement of learning from others, and many other advantages of scale.

Connect09 Objectives and Priorities

12. The following Objectives and Priorities have been summarised from the Connect09 Strategic Plan. There is a limit to describing a spiritual campaign like Connect09 in objective terms, but like any major project it is important to describe what Connect09 is aiming to achieve by the thousands of people from our parishes, schools and organisations.

13. Priorities have been included to indicate the more significant areas of focus under each objective but obviously are not exhaustive. We expect that there will be many more initiatives implemented across the Diocese as our people attempt to do things that have never been tried before. We expect to learn very much from this great campaign in how to connect and reconnect with our communities; and share our lives and the Word of God.

14. The more important outcomes for Connect09 will be the qualitative achievements. These are generally less visible and measurable. They will often involve our people praying together, the one-to-one connections and conversations and the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming the lives of people. This transformation may also include ourselves as we seek to love the people of Sydney, connect

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with them and share the love of Jesus with them so that they will have the opportunity to connect to Jesus. Stories collated from across the Diocese and shared in Southern Cross and on the Connect09 website as the Connect09 campaign unfolds will provide substantial qualitative feedback.

Prayer

15. To encourage, facilitate and co-ordinate Diocese-wide, earnest prayer and sacrificial compassion for the people in our neighbourhoods, communities and cities that enthuses, equips and mobilises thousands of our people, in parishes, schools and organisations, to pray for the people of Sydney during 2007 to 2010.

16. Priorities are focused on including Connect09 prayers in prayer diaries; expanding a Diocesan-wide Prayer Network; developing prayer for use in churches and meetings; and developing new prayer strategies and media.

Planning and Research

17. To encourage and support parishes in researching their parish area and to develop plans that focus on connecting and reconnecting with their communities; and sharing the Word of God with all residents.

18. Priorities are focussed on supporting parishes in conducting parish community research; identifying disconnected people groups and deserts; and conduct internal and external marketing research.

Preparation

19. To encourage and support all people at all levels as they prepare their community for contacting and connecting; welcoming and nurturing; and to pursue new partnerships and collaborations to both assist and be assisted in the task.

20. Priorities include encouraging collaboration and partnerships between parishes; collaboration and partnerships with organisations and schools that support parishes; development of effective internal communications and parish resourcing; training, equipping and mobilising lay people; ministers reviewing and developing their ministry strategies and operations; and training and equipping new lay leaders.

Connection

21. To encourage and support our people and our churches to genuinely contact, connect and reconnect with our communities as we share our lives and the love of our Lord Jesus with them.

22. Priorities include, within parishes, the development of plans to make new contacts within their communities; deliberate, planned and genuine connection with people; partnerships and collaboration in new ways of connecting; and developing plans to move beyond connection.

Sharing the Word

23. To encourage and support our people and our churches to share the Word of God in whatever form is appropriate.

24. Priorities are focussed on sharing the Word of God; providing easy access and contact by enquirers; and partnerships and collaborations in sharing the Word of God.

Integration

25. To encourage and support parishes to ensure that strategies and programs are implemented in order to welcome, follow-up, nurture and integrate new Christians and those returning to their faith and church.

26. Priorities are focussed on effectively welcoming, following-up and nurturing newcomers; and being prepared to change as newcomers are integrated.

Growth

27. To encourage and support parishes in ensuring that strategies and programs of Connect09 are incorporated into the on-going life of the church, in order to support the growth and discipleship of new Christians and the building up of current congregations and the establishment of new ones.

28. Priorities are focussed on the discipleship and growth of new Christians; establishing new groups; and training and developing leaders to support on-going growth.

Action taken and planned as at July 2008

29. The Connect09 Management Committee has been co-ordinating the development and implementation of many strategies and plans and a summary of key activities undertaken and those planned are listed below. However as Connect09 is a locally-based campaign it is recognised that parishes, organisations and schools have also been engaged in, and currently planning for, many activities in preparation for 2009.

Prayer

30. All people in our churches, schools and organisation have been encouraged to pray for the people who live in Sydney, Blue Mountains and the Illawarra. Prayer diaries in regions and some organisations included Connect09 specific prayers and Connect09 Prayer Co-ordinators are co-ordinating Connect09 prayer in organisations.

31. 160 people, most representing parishes or organisations, have signed up to receive the weekly Connect09 E-Bulletin via connect09.com, which includes weekly Prayer Points and a parish profile.

32. Prayer is being promoted in Southern Cross and on connect09.com along with encouraging stories from across the Diocese. A Prayer Forum which exchanges prayer points and answers to prayer is operating on the website.

33. 65,000 Connect09 bookmark and prayer cards were distributed across the Diocese with a further 50,000 "Your Quick Guide to Connect09" brochures, including a timeline and prayer bookmark were also distributed.

34. Prayers for formal and informal church services, Bible study and prayer groups and meetings have been written, distributed and posted on the website.

35. All parishes were invited to join together for a Connect09 Prayer Day on 1 June 2008. Focus was on praying for the people in our communities and those living in the area covered by the Sydney Diocese.

36. The second Prayer Day is planned for 2 November 08.

Planning and Research

37. Parish Community Profiles for all parishes were developed in consultation with Diocesan Research Office and National Church Life Survey (NCLS) providing Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and NCLS data for each parish, to assist with a general understanding of our communities and neighbourhoods. Parishes were also encouraged to get out and about and talk with and survey people in their local area in order to understand specific areas of need and potential areas on which the parish could focus their connection strategies.

38. Internal research was conducted by a professional researcher, including in-depth focus group interviews, across a range of congregations and ministers attempting to understand the attitudes and concerns of conducting the campaign. The feedback concluded that we are positive and optimistic, we are aware of the difficulties, we believe in evangelism; but many parishes lack an evangelism plan, many people do not engage in evangelism, we have many good ideas but there is little sharing between parishes, time is a big problem but it was agreed that it was a matter of priorities, fear holds us back – we need to identify and address the fears. The following quotes highlight common feelings –

"Evangelism is to a Church like breathing is to a human being"

"I know I should but I never seem to get the time"

39. A number of churches established Connect09 Committees and contact people to pray and plan for, and promote Connect09 in their parishes.

40. The Mission Board has been attempting to identify the "deserts", areas where few people attend Anglican churches, in order to develop strategies and partnerships for reaching out and connecting with those communities.

Preparation

41. In the first half of 2008 over 100 Senior Ministers attended a two-day workshop at Bishops court with the Archbishop and input from the Connect09 Management Committee as they prepare their parishes for the Connect09 campaign. It is planned to have a further 100 attend the two-day workshop by the end of 2008.

42. All Senior Ministers who had not yet attended the Bishops court workshops were invited to attend a special briefing session at the Chapter House in May, with approximately 110 attending. All Assistant Ministers were also invited to a special briefing session at the Chapter House, with approximately 60 attending in July.

43. A special briefing session was held with Chaplains in July.

44. Ten Diocesan organisations have met with the Archbishop and Bishops to discuss how organisations might participate in Connect09 and in particular how they might facilitate innovative partnerships with parishes.

45. Additional briefing sessions were held in Sydney and Parramatta in May with the Archbishop and over 160 managers and staff of organisations and schools.

46. Discussions and briefing sessions have been held with parish ministry teams, Deaneries, regional conferences, AFES national conference and staff from organisations by Andrew Nixon and the Management Committee.

47. Connect09 internal website, connect09.com, is developing as the key resource for people and parishes by which they may access resources, ideas and provide feedback. Over the three months to mid July, the website has been receiving an average of over 48 visits per day, with over 50% of those new visitors.

48. A number of Connect09 Ambassadors are being appointed in each region who will promote Connect09, be a key local contact; and liaise with, encourage and brief churches, organisations and schools. Vince Williamson has been appointed as Ambassador Co-ordinator, on a volunteer basis.

49. Senior lay people, experienced in business and the public service, have been briefed and mobilised to lead and participate in teams across a number of projects on a volunteer basis. The generous contribution of their time and energy has been a great encouragement.

50. Approximately 300 people from over 50 different churches, attended the five regional lay briefing evenings in July. Ministry staff and staff from Diocesan organisations also attended and it was encouraging to discuss the opportunities and challenges that Connect09 will bring with such enthusiastic people.

51. The Archbishop has been communicating various aspects of Connect09 via videos, articles in Southern Cross and on the website. "Pray. Connect. Expect" DVD from the Archbishop was distributed at the end of May.

Connection

52. Encouragement, challenges, stories and ideas are being published in Southern Cross and on Connect09.com website as to how we might connect and reconnect with our communities.

53. It is planned to develop Local Media kits for each parish, which will provide guidelines for parishes to use their local news outlets effectively and prepare and connect with the community. Strategies for local media impact and background noise are also being developed.

54. Background media communication plans, subject to final costs and funding, includes the placement of a number of large billboards in strategic locations within each region; and medium sized banners and posters available for churches to purchase.

55. Anglicare has been contacting parishes seeking to offer help with strategies to connect with their communities and have published ideas for connecting with the community in Southern Cross.

56. Further internal research on overcoming the blockages to connecting will be conducted in order to assist ministers with the development of local strategies; and the preparation and training of people.

Connect09 will be launched with a Big Day-In on Sunday 8 February 2009

57. Following feedback from across the Diocese it was agreed that Connect09 will be launched by way of a live, multi-site, television hook-up and web TV in every church. This will mean that most of our 70,000 people who attend church will have the opportunity to be linked together at the one time. It is planned to have a number of live sites, with high profile speakers and music etc.

Sharing the Word

58. A sample survey of ministers provided feedback on the estimated type and number of resources that may be required by parishes. This has assisted budgeting and logistics arrangements. Parishes will provide firm orders later in the year.

59. The following resources for use by parishes, organisations and schools are being arranged, subject to final orders, costs and funding arrangements –

- A printed Luke's Gospel in English. This is a modern Australian translation, specially revised by scholars to be suitable for unchurched people, 198 x 128 mm. A printed John's Gospel in Chinese and is in revised Chinese Union. A printed Luke's Gospel in Arabic. A printed Mark's Gospel in English and in a contemporary English Version, magazine format, 240 x 165mm.
- Luke's Gospel in audio CD and MP3 formats will be produced, including downloadable text. It is designed for non-readers, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, commuters and MP3 users.
- John's Gospel, movie length on DVD in Contemporary English Version and word for word.
- Gospels in other languages will be available to download from the website.
- A special children's DVD for pre-school to year 4, with Colin Buchanan will be available to be distributed through pre-schools and schools initially.
- Youth resources will be downloadable, social network-based virtual resources.

60. Arrangements are being made to also provide, for purchase by parishes, at a special price a variety of formats of Bibles, New Testaments and Gospels, including those in other languages.

External Website will be launched in January 2009

61. All materials will direct people to an external, user friendly, website, designed for external enquirers, including directing them to a Connect09 participating church, congregations or fellowship and other helpful information.

Jesus All About Life Campaign

62. The Connect09 Management Committee is represented, along with other Sydney Anglicans, on the Sydney, Jesus All About Life (JAAL) consultation Committee. This will assist in the co-ordination and integration of the September 2009, JAAL program into the Connect09 campaign.

Fundraising

63. The Archbishop's Mission Partnership Fund (the Fund), is the vehicle through which people may donate to directly to support the Connect09 campaign. The Archbishop launched the Fund at Synod 2007, and it is being promoted throughout 2008 and 2009 as a way for people to assist parishes who have few resources but are situated in a

parish with big needs to address through the Connect09 campaign. It is proposed to attempt to also raise funds to meet the costs of some of the Connect09 initiatives, such as the Children's DVD, which has an upfront development cost and has huge potential to reach many thousands of children with a gospel message.

Connect 09 Timeline

64. Key milestones planned in implementing the Connect09 campaign are listed below.

Late 2007 to end 2008	Pray, Decide, Communicate and Plan Consultations with and communicate vision and concepts to key people, plan and prepare. Senior Minister Two-day workshops with Archbishop.
Early 2008 to September 2008 May 2008	Pray, Research and Plan All Senior Minister briefings. Diocesan organisation briefings. Prayer Day.
1 June 2008	All Assistant Minister briefings.
1 July 2008	All Parishes to receive Community Profiles and data to assist research and understand community. Connect09 Ambassadors strategy. Lay briefing evenings in each region.
August 2008	Parishes to survey their communities, plan strategies and decide resources.
September 2008	Order Resources.
October 2008 to January 2009 Oct 2008 to end 2009	Pray and Prepare Training key lay people and new leaders. Prayer Day.
2 November 2008	Parishes to communicate plans for 2009.
December 2008	Resources available for Parishes.
January 2009	External website goes live.
February 2009 to December 2009 February 2009	Pray, Contact, Connect, Share the Word and Welcome Big Day In – An all Parish launch of Connect09 with live video/TV hook-up on 8 February. Individual parish connecting and sharing of the Word strategies launched.
February to December 2009	Local media, banners, posters, billboard campaign.
September 2009	Jesus All About Life program integrated into Connect09.
2009 and Beyond	Pray, follow-up, establish new groups and ministries, welcome and integrate newcomers.

Recommendations

65. Connect09 is one of the greatest make-Jesus- known campaigns ever seen in Australia. It is audacious, difficult and challenging but as we seek to press ahead to pray for, contact and connect with nearly one quarter of Australia's population, so that as we share our lives many will be connected to Jesus through his Word, we know that our great God goes before us and through His Spirit His purposes will be achieved.

66. It is recommended that Standing Committee request the following motion be moved at the Synod –

“Synod gives thanks to God for –

- (a) the vision, drive and commitment of the Archbishop in leading the Connect09 campaign and in encouraging our ministers, leaders and people across the Diocese to pray and persevere in turning the vision for Connect09 into action;
- (b) the commitment of our Diocesan leaders, ministers and people who are working hard at turning the resources of the Diocese toward this great campaign and who are implementing strategies for Connect09 at the local level; and
- (c) the energy and commitment of the Connect09 team members, volunteers, Connect09 Ambassadors and Parish Co-ordinators who are helping to turn the vision of Connect09 into a reality;

and calls on all ministers, leaders, parishes, fellowships, congregations, Anglican schools and Diocesan organisations to remain committed –

- (d) to praying for the people of Sydney, Blue Mountains and the Illawarra;
- (e) to reaching out and genuinely connect with their communities as they share their lives and the Word of God;
- (f) to developing innovative and generous partnerships with parishes and organisations as together we expect lives to be transformed by the Word of God; and
- (g) to driving the Connect09 campaign at the local level.”

Standing Committee's response

67. The Standing Committee has agreed that this motion should be moved "by request of the Standing Committee" at the Synod.

For and on behalf of the Connect09 Management Committee

LES GRAY

Mission Executive

29 August 2008