

Flowing with life, moving in God's power

December 2009

Last month we told you a bit about the vision the Circuit Leadership Team is developing for our churches based on discussions at the Circuit Meeting and with people in our churches and about the role we want to have in bringing people together to make things happen in our churches and in the community we serve. You will now have heard about the launch event we are planning for 17 January and we hope lots of you will come along to share in an act of worship at the start of a new year and hear more about our vision.

This month we want to share with you some thoughts about what we are calling “agile location”. The words are not very “churchy” but they are meant to convey the idea which many people have expressed in different ways that we spend a lot of our time on our churches looking inwards and thinking about what we do in our buildings. Increasingly, we are also having to spend time thinking about the buildings themselves – whether they need renovation, whether we can afford them, whether they are right for what we want to do. Amongst the challenges of our vision of a river are the ideas that a river changes the landscape and that it moves and changes – we want to start being more of a river in the communities we serve and less of a collection of buildings.



A river changes the landscape

So we have given a big challenge to a group of people led by Jacky Griffith. We have asked them to look at a whole series of big questions – what would we do for the community we serve if money was no object? – where are the places where people need us? – how could we witness to what we believe in new ways in new places? – what would we do if we had to start a new Methodist witness here?

At the end of November they came back to the Leadership Team with the results of a lot of work they have done, with lots of exciting ideas – and

some more questions! There is more need in the area we live in than we can possibly hope to meet. There are particular areas of alienation and deprivation on council estates in Timperley, Broadheath, Oldfield Brow and Hale Barns. Other churches and Christian groups are doing things, but there are still areas where nothing is happening. The recession is affecting the lives of people who have never needed help before and the need for advice and care is ever-growing. Issues of fair trade and proper stewardship of the earth's resources affect everyone. The recession is creating opportunities too – there are significant, high profile buildings in Altrincham we could buy or let cheaply if we wanted to and if we had a vision for them. The group had also identified some inspiring examples of what other churches in other areas are doing. The good news is that there is so much we could do; the challenge is how we decide the right thing to do.

The next step is for the group, helped by some more input from the Leadership Team, to develop three specific proposals so that a decision can be made whether to pursue them. We only made two decisions at the end of November:

- budget should not be a limiting factor on the group's thinking: if we find the right thing to do, we will have to find ways of doing it;
- all of this will take time and the group should not be under pressure to produce a proposal before it is ready to do so.

We will therefore be sharing more thoughts with you all about this over the coming months. In the meantime, we are also looking at other ways in which we can be more “agile” and more like a river by taking worship and witness out into the community, building on the success of Café Sundae and Diversity Space at Timperley. More on this too over the coming weeks and months.

If you have ideas about any of this, please don't hesitate to contact me or e-mail me or Jacky (kevjq@aol.com; jacky.griffith@btinternet.com)

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