

SUPER'S SOAP BOX

‘A healthy looking Circuit Vision 2020’

Dear Friends,

Change is never easy, and yet it is a necessary part of growth. We know from the study of Natural History that in nature creatures which can adapt to a changing world prosper, whilst those that do not usually become extinct. Why should the church be any different to the rest of God's Creation? In fact, Scripture tells us we much change, for that is what repentance does for us, and we are called to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Are we as a Church therefore open to what God is saying to his church, and are we able to adapt and change according to what God is doing in his world?

During the next 24 months the Romford Circuit of which each churches are a part is carrying out a consultation and review to prepare for future Team Ministry. This will profoundly affect what the Circuit does when it prepares for this exciting and challenging mixed Team (Lay & Ordained) Ministry under two clusters from autumn 2018. Each churches will be asked to consider a few related questions.

First, what is your vision for your church? What are the Hopes & Dreams of your church (people as opposed to building) over the next five years? Where do you want the church to be in five years' time? Scripture says where there is no vision the people perish, so what is ours. If we are able to express that then the Circuit will be able to direct resources for mission and ministry towards that vision.

Second, what kind of ministry do we require to achieve that vision. Note that I said what kind of ministry, not what kind of minister. This is because over the last decade patterns of ministry have become much more flexible and various, so that resources can be targeted towards need. Only when we can answer what kind of ministry do we require to achieve over vision can we answer the question what kind of minister do we need.

So what are these patterns of ministry that we might consider? The traditional one minister (Presbyter) per section of church is still an option, and this may meet our needs, but increasingly this has been a failing model. For one it ignores the ministry of the whole people of God, for ministry is something we all do, not just the person in the collar. It also can lead to ministers being called upon to do things which they are not so good at. We all have our strengths and weakness, and one may be a good preacher whilst another is a good evangelist and another a good pastor. So many Circuits are now abandoning the old patten of one minister per section and turning to team ministry. Here the ministry team targets its members to work to their strengths across the whole Circuit with two clusters.

Add to this the range of new kinds of mixed Team Ministry with Lay and Ordained working together side by side are spreading across the Church and proving very effective, leading to growth and a new life. This includes the growing mission enablers and they serve the church in whatever special needs it has in the field or mission and evangelism. Add to this the variety of paid lay workers who also work in very specialist areas such as youth work, families work, and community outreach, including the elderly. For the price of one Presbyter or Deacon a Circuit can employ several part time lay workers. I myself have been involved in employing a few lay workers from a families' worker to Community Outreach workers in my last Circuit and their work have gone from strength to strength, leading to real growth in churches.

To explore the way forward a group will be convened at Circuit level on which will serve the current Ministers, the Circuit Stewards and a representative from each of the circuit churches. I hope that your church will show vision and courage, not changing for changes sake, but showing the flexibility an adaptability which is in the DNA of Christianity and which has enabled the Church to speak to every age for over two thousand years.

Finally, may I take this opportunity invite you personally to attend **COMEFLY –TWO** which is to be held on Saturday 17th September at Collier Row Methodist Church from 9.30am to 12.30pm followed by bring

and share lunch. It is open to everyone however we would like each church to send at least a minimum of five people to it, with no maximum so as many people as possible can return back to their church equipped with ideas and enthusiasm in order to implement ideas on how to do mission and reach out others for Christ to be a healthy looking Circuit churches.

Every blessing

David Jelds

Superintendent Minister

