

The Methodist Church – Nottingham Trent Valley Circuit

Report to the Beeston and Chilwell Methodist Churches on the responses made by the Churches to the “Commitments” document of 13/9/2010

Dear Friends,

Each Church Council was asked to respond to the “Commitments” document by Ash Wednesday and on the following day the Review Group met to consider the responses. I write now on behalf of the Group to let you know the outcome. You will remember that Churches were asked to consider three commitments: (1) committed Churches to collaborative working and resource sharing; (2) supported the creation of a single Methodist Society and (3) expressed a commitment to the building of a single new Church building, preferably on a new site, possibly with satellite premises. The Churches devised their own methods of consulting within their church community, and voted on the commitments in different ways. Tabulating in full the details of all the replies would take several pages, but here is what I hope is a fair summary:

Chilwell Road voted on each one in turn, and reported votes for, against and neutral, strongly supporting all the commitments, with votes for of 83%, 70% and 75% respectively.

Clarke’s Lane voted on each commitment and resolved that each could be signed up for now.

Queen’s Road asked Church Council members to vote for one commitment as their personal choice, recording votes of 3, 3 and 5 respectively.

Rylands did likewise, recording votes of 8, 0 and 2.

Wollaton Road unanimously endorsed a resolution approving commitment 3 in principle, indicating that its vision is for a new combined society in a new church building on a new site.

It seems clear that we have support from all the Churches for more collaborative working together. While much joint work already takes place, this has not previously been formally endorsed by the Churches. To take this further, the Review Group proposes the setting up of a **Co-ordinating Group** to take forward commitment (1), helping the Churches to *“work collaboratively and creatively with their sister Churches, developing and encouraging joint activities, sharing resources, mutually supporting each other, and worshipping together from time to time.”* While this is being considered by the five Church Councils, the Review Group will be working on possible terms of reference and ways of working for this new group. The work at Inham Nook would also be considered by the co-ordinating group.

Three Churches – Chilwell Road, Clarke’s Lane and Wollaton Road – strongly endorsed the principles of commitment (3). The Review Group is requesting the approval of the Church Councils of those Churches for the setting up of a **Development Group**, working towards *“the goal of there being a single suite of premises – preferably new or ‘new to us’ – to be the ‘home’ of the new united Society, possibly augmented by ‘satellite’ premises, located as close as is practicable to the heart of the area, designed to equip the Church most effectively for its mission.”* Again, the Review Group will be drafting some terms of reference for this group, which would act entirely under the authority of the relevant Church Councils. Should another Church subsequently endorse commitment (3), then they would, of course, join the project. Once the new Groups are formed, the work of the Review Group will have been completed, and it will disband.

So where does that leave us? For the first time, we believe, all five Churches have committed themselves to working collaboratively together. Now we need to ensure that such co-operation brings real benefits to our mission in the area.

Three Churches have strongly supported the idea of a new Church on a new site, not as an end in itself, but rather to make possible new and more effective ways of mission to the people of Beeston and Chilwell. It may be that such an aspiration is not possible at the moment. It may be that people’s dreams come to nothing. But it may be that God has in store for us new ways of being his people in this area, based in premises far better equipped for the missionary needs of the 21st century.

Having talked informally about such matters for several decades, we now know how the different Churches see their future. God is, I believe, calling us on a journey. Precisely where that will lead, I do not know. But at least we’ve packed our bags, and are ready to go where he will lead. May God continue to bless and guide us as we move forward in faith.

Stuart

(Revd Stuart Bell, Superintendent Minister)