

## A few words from the Vicar ....

*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? (Luke 14:28)*

Last month I had intended writing about our new Mission Strategy but by the time I sat down at my PC, my plan had been overtaken by events. Our financial need was urgent (and still is) so I just had to write about that instead!

This reminds me of an important lesson I learnt from working as a manager for many years; no matter how good the planning process, things will rarely, if ever, go exactly to plan.

Nonetheless, I also learnt that planning is essential if I wished to achieve my business targets but that planning on its own was never enough; a lot of hard graft was required between planning and completion.

The same is true of our Mission Strategy.

We plan because we're unlikely to achieve the growth we desire as a church if we don't set ourselves targets and work to achieve them. We plan because Jesus tells us we should (Luke 14:28) and experience teaches us that it better to do so than not.

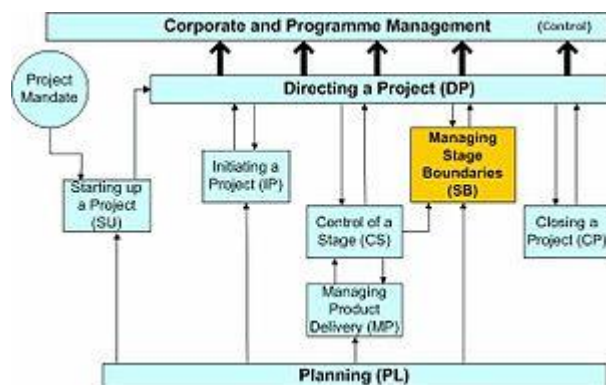
So, after months of prayer and discussion, the PCC has set some priorities for mission and has agreed 15 deliverables (with deadlines) to go with them. Through implementation of the Mission Strategy the PCC is seeking to grow this Church by:

- reinforcing our existing strengths e.g. our justified reputation for being welcoming;
- introducing some additional building blocks for growth e.g. we would like to grow the ministry team, enhance our prayer life and nurture discipleship through house groups and an enquirers' course; and
- enhancing what we offer children (and their parents) and teenagers and making the best use of the contacts we have in the community through baptisms, weddings and funerals.

So far we've only done the easy bit; the planning. Now comes the hard work of delivering against plan and monitoring progress to ensure we achieve what we have set out to achieve. Without hard work our Mission Strategy will remain nothing more than wishful thinking, a pipedream! If we want to see results, we have to put the work in.

Why bother?

Well, mission is hardwired in the DNA of the Church. According to a Church of England report *'The Church is both the fruit of God's mission – those whom he has redeemed, and the agent of his mission – the community through whom he acts for the world's redemption.....*



*Apart from worship, everything else is secondary to this.* (p85, Mission Shaped Church, Church House Publishing, 2004.)

As a parish we are obliged to engage in mission. When we do so we answer Jesus' call (Matthew 28:18-20) to join with God the Father in his mission as redeemer, to restore and reconcile creation (including humanity) to himself (Colossians 1:20).

I don't think anyone on the PCC, least of all me, would claim that the Mission Strategy is 100% accurate in all respects. That would be naïve! So, it won't surprise me if things don't go entirely to plan and if we don't achieve everything we set out to.

But we'll achieve more than we would do without planning and without engaging in mission.

Indeed, as the PCC monitors progress, we shall continue to fine tune the Mission Strategy; we will add new tasks as some are completed or as yet others are found to be irrelevant or just not feasible.

This means, as one member of the PCC wisely said many months ago, our Mission Strategy will always be work in progress. Spot on! The fact is the mission of the Church goes on until Jesus returns! And until he does, we shall continue planning and grafting to fulfil the mission he has set before us.

Every Blessing

*Dave*

P.S. Thank you to those of you who have responded with generosity to news of our financial difficulties. Although it's early days yet, I must admit I am gently encouraged by the response so far.

Also a reminder; as is our tradition, September is our Gift Month and this presents yet another opportunity to contribute generously to Church finances and to review the level of your regular giving.

The special white Gift Aid envelopes will be in Church throughout this month. Just put your contribution in an envelope, complete your details and pop it on the collection plate. Nothing could be simpler!