

# Parish Vision for 2014

People will react differently – some will think that we have been too conservative, others too radical. There may be some who will laugh - inside and outside the church. There will be some, my self included, that wonder if in seven years time we will be embarrassed by what we have said in 2007.

## **Mission Impossible...**

Think about God's vision for his people Israel, "...I will bring you up out of the land of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites...a land flowing with milk and honey." Exodus 3.17. Think about Jesus' words as he started his ministry – "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*"...he began to say to them, 'Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" Lk 4.18 -19, 21b. Read on to see how the people reacted, in both cases!

God's Vision is rarely an extension of now, it's not a plan or map to an end. Most often it is a picture of where his people will be if they listen to him.

## **We need to be cautious!**

Cautious in two ways, there were those who tried to build the tower of Babel, their pride caused them to think that they could equal God, and as a consequence their work was destroyed, and they were scattered and divided. Equally, we need to be cautious that we do not fail to trust God. It took the Israelites forty years before they entered that Promised Land and not because it was a long journey. They actually got there quite quickly, but once there they thought only of their own weakness, and did not believe that God could or would act to fulfil his promise, so they ran away. It was forty years before they were brought back to inherit the Promised Land.

## **Struggling to hear**

The very reason that this process has taken nine months is because the PCC and those who have been charged with completing this work have poured over this and wrestled with it, struggling to hear God and one another. At several stages we had a result, but we went back and almost started again, we discussed and re-wrote again and again, and in its later stages, we postponed a decision in order to spend the month praying about it.

## **Getting under way**

It is better for a ship to be sailing in the wrong direction, than to be stood still; simply because, a ship has to be moving before you can steer it. We move forward then as an act of faith. We know that our vision is limited, we make mistakes - conservative, enthusiast, even realist can get a warped picture of what God intends.

So we get under way, trusting that this God who did not hold back his only Son, who gave his life for us in order to restore us to God's love, will steer us in the right direction. So we continue to wrestle and to pray and to work together as we seek to be guided by God; and to respond to his call.

Best Wishes

Chris