



Thursday, April 14, 2016

I have been asked to write a letter to the congregation in order to stamp out any rumours being spread without all the facts. It has been a privilege to serve God in as Holy Trinity's Churchwarden and the job has been very satisfying. There is however one side to being Churchwarden I was not prepared for.

To say that this year has been difficult would be an understatement, but thanks mainly to the ministry team the vacancy has not been the problem. It may come as no surprise when I say that there is a small group of people at Holy Trinity that see themselves as the un-appointed Sanhedrin of the church, ruling with an iron fist and bullying anyone who does not see or do things their way. This group of individuals have made being at Holy Trinity - HELL.

I have had to deal with upsets over plates, plate warmers, freezers and cookers, all extremely spiritual problems and critical to the growth of God's kingdom. Not to mention that after Peter left, finding out that in the past church officers have been allowed not only to verbally abuse members of staff, but that an instance of physical abuse towards a member of staff was allowed to go unpunished - the church officer even being allowed to continue in post.

Bringing this out into the open in going to be an outrage and make me very unpopular. but for me the bigger outrage is the very unchristian attitudes of some of the members of the church. Holy Trinity is being allowed to die spiritually, and it is due to the unchristian manner that some members have against anyone who does not see that their way is the only way. This has in my opinion been an attributing factor to the lack of growth. The declining congregation and the subsequent declining funds are also huge evidence of this fact. If nothing is said and the bullying and unchristian behavior is allowed to be swept under the carpet and not be addressed, then this would just allow Satan's grip to further destroy the church.

The church needs to stand vigilant against the desire to be the church people want, when it should be the church the Lord needs.

I have to apologise for being pretty ineffective this year. This has been due impart to the aforementioned bullying problem - which I along with others have been victims of. This has left me without any energy for the job and without any love for the church.

It is because of this that I have made the decision not to stand for re-election, but instead leave Holy Trinity all together and have zero involvement as of the date of the AGM.

I pray that whoever takes up the role of churchwarden is able to lead from the heart and be as passionate for spreading the word of God and growing the church as I once was. I also realise that the small group of vipers will not miss me and the callousness in their hearts and souls will see me leaving as a victory. These vipers are blind to the poison that they are to the good the church could and should be doing.

For some the Church has become a possession, something which is theirs just because they've been there X numbers of years, this length of time is what makes them believe they have the right to rule. No-one should take the place of the Lord. No-one should have rule over the Church but God. Without God what's the point in Church. Holy Trinity is dying because God has been taken out of the equation. I constantly hear from members of the congregation "I want" and "I need", never do I hear "what does God want?" or "What does God need?".

Initially I had hoped that the church was able to be saved, but a few are unable to let God in to save it, and unfortunately these few are the ones with the loudest voices.

I started this year asking HTKDCC to allow me to disband any groups previously established so that in their place an official Buildings Committee could be started, this was passed and since being officially formed in November has met on no less than 4 occasions. out of these meetings two fantastic clean-up days were arranged and several jobs got done. I hope this group in my absence is able to continue in some form and that HTKDCC fully embraces their input. I would like to take this time to thank all those who helped on both clean-up days.

It has also been nice to see the back of the Church become a nice comfortable place to hold meetings, we also had a fantastic Easter period, which was started with Palm Sunday and the Procession from the park. The Holy Saturday Service of Light (although lacking in support from the congregation) definitely deserves to be mentioned. The highlight has to be our Easter Sunday Come-together Service which was graced by a visit from Bishop Lee. It would have been nice to have used this as a time for the parish to come together, but unfortunately it was not to be - although it was great to have Gilbert with us. It is not every week that you get to have a Bishop in the parish.

It Does sadden me that the word "Team" in Kingswood Team Ministry is only a formality, there is no team other than the shared clergy. There are only two separate Churches barely getting on and All Souls who wisely have chosen to keep out of the way. Any new priest arriving for their first day of work will find a congregation divided, two churches divided and two parishes divided. In short a mess.

The parish is not just failing the current congregation, along with any future congregation - more importantly the parish is failing God. I am reminded by Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, early in the letter Paul calls the people of Corinth not to be divided by leaders, he reminds them that no one but Christ was crucified for them. If the church is not following God, who is it following?

When it boils down to it, the church is being ripped apart due to all the cliques. Unless the cliques stop fighting each other and unite under one banner, that of the risen Lord, then the church will always be struggling. It is absolutely okay to like traditional services, but it is also okay to like more seeker friendly services. That is one of the greatest things about following God. As long as you are worshipping and being filled with spiritually then you are worshipping the right way for you. The only wrong way of worshipping is not to worship at all.

I would like to thank all those who have supported me this year. Mike and Helen House, Fiona and Jonathan Brown, Sue Hannant, Matt Belsten, Andy Mason and Chris Evans,

though the list is a lot longer than that. A huge thank you needs to go to my family - especially Bernadette, who supported me as I pondered what to do at this awkward time (near 34 years of association is a lot to just throw away), I would like to end this report with a passage of scripture:

Hebrews 12 4-15

God Disciplines His Children

In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

*“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
because the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.”*

Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined

us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. “Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Warning and Encouragement

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

I pray that the church listens to the discipline which the lord is issuing and that the cliques are quietened so that peace can reign and the holiness return to Holy Trinity. My only regret is not seeing the vacancy to the end.

Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord.

Yours in Christ



Robert Elliott