FUTURE TRAVELLERS GROUP – 21 June 2017

1. **Review Purpose and what we’ve done so far.**

* Seeking a common understanding of what the church is ‘for’ (why it exists?)
* Seeking a common understanding of how we might live together/structure our common life/do that will help us be that church in our context.
* Identifying what needs to be kept, strengthened and changed about our current church life in light of this.
  1. Identified a need for self-reflection and possible change
  2. Considered how the patterns of church life that are inherited from the past are questioned by the fact that we are in a post-christian context
  3. Thought about some aspects of our current church life
     1. A number of ‘gatherings’ dominated by the Community Centre Congregation
     2. Little that we do together that might be considered ‘mission’
     3. An emphasis on the mission/faithful living of individuals
  4. And thought about some aspects of the character of our current church
  5. Thought about what the church is “for” or why it exists in terms of continuing the work of Jesus in the world by following Jesus together.

1. **Feedback from the last Future Travellers Weekend.**

The weekend was focusing on issues of discipleship and leadership. Significant questions were raised:

* How does the church currently help people grow as Christians?
* How does the church structure itself to do that well?
* What is the culture of the church and how does it affect these things?
* What is the current leadership structure in the church and how effective is it?
* How does the context the church is living in affect these things?
* How would you know the gifts, calling, etc of people in the church? How are people being equipped and enabled to take their place in the church?

During the weekend we were given a very specific way for the church to be structured and led which we found to be unhelpful. However, it did highlight that when individuals are given the opportunity to discover the calling/role that God has for them and are helped to develop and take up their role – everyone benefits.

1. **Feedback from Conference.** Thinking back to the church conference, and to all that we’ve been talking about over the past year, have you any reflections or thoughts.
2. **Input from Ian – creative tensions and practical questions** (see over)
3. **Small Group Discussions**
4. **Feedback and large group discussion.**
5. **Prayer**

Four ‘Creative Tensions’.

**The important thing about the church is how it helps people follow Jesus**

**V**

**The important thing about the church is how it helps me**

* Our current set up ‘works’ (to some extent)
* It might contain the ‘seeds of its own destruction’!

Questions:

1. How can we do what we do better?
2. How can we be more deliberate in what we do?

**Emphasis on discipleship**

**V**

**Emphasis on mission**

Questions:

1. How can we focus on discipleship in a way that results in people continuing the work of Jesus?
2. How can we increase what we do in the community without becoming an organisation which does things for our community (as opposed to a community of disciples)?

**Our church works – we don’t want to lose what we have**

**V**

**There are 4000 people in Stockethill who deserve the chance to be part of the church**

Question: How can an increasing number of people be part of a small church?

**Ian/Sarah and/or the roles that Ian/Sarah have are at the heart of our church**

**V**

**Ian/Sarah and/or the roles that Ian/Sarah have cannot be at the heart of ‘everything’**

Questions:

To what extent is it “Ian and Sarah” as people that has been/is important, and to what extent is it the roles that they play?

How can we structure/facilitate the church in a way that is not reliant on Ian/Sarah (or their equivalent) and is therefore ‘reproducible’?

How do we help those people who are called to ‘lead/serve’ *in* the church to discover their calling, and equip and release them into it?

What is the role of ‘the minister’ in the sort of church that we’re talking about in all of the above?

**There are lots of questions raised by all of the above, but it also leads to two important conclusions:**

* Is there an emerging ‘vision’ that we can get behind: something to do with a community which develops disciples who continue the work of Jesus – a community which is deliberately small, inclusive, together, etc – and a community which is committed to creating new communities with the same character so that more people can be part of such communities?
* Are there practical steps that we might now take in light of that vision? Such steps would need to be small (so as not to freak people) but deliberate and clear (so that people feel there is momentum); owned (so that people are willing to take them) and are clearly taking us in the direction of the ‘vision’ (so that people know why we are taking them).