

Minister's Musings – February 2020

Dear Friends,

There is a hymn that we sing at every Methodist Ordination service – and rarely at any other time – which speaks of ministers as a “bright succession”. One of our tutors looking over my year group was heard to utter the words “some hope”!

But I’ve been thinking about that bright succession recently following the sad news of John Ansley’s death, the good news of Bekkie Wright’s appointment as our new minister from September and the continuation of Sarah Lamb as our student minister. How blessed we have and will continue to be by their life and their presence among us. But as I’ve done so I’m reminded of the words attributed to Oscar Romero, the former Archbishop of El Salvador, murdered in his Cathedral as he was saying mass forty years ago next month, and I offer them to you as those who are also called to share in the ministry of the whole people of God.

*It helps, now and then, to step back
and take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of
the magnificent enterprise that is God’s work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying
that the kingdom always lies beyond us.*

*No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No programme accomplishes the church’s mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

*This is what we are about:
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything
and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for God's grace to enter and do the rest.*

*We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders,
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own.*

So as we give thanks for John's life can I ask that you continue to pray for Sarah and begin to pray for Bekkie as ministry is passed on in succession from one generation to another, and for yourselves as a part of that – and if you have any prayers left, for Charlotte and me as we explore what ministry will look like for us in the coming months.

And talking of ministers do put in your diaries now the visit of Revd Dr Howard Mellor to speak at both services on our World Church Sunday - **March 1st**. Howard was minister of The Methodist International Church in Hong Kong and made regular visits to China so will have a fascinating story to tell of God's work and the church's growth there in challenging and turbulent times.

With love in Christ

Leo