

TAKING STOCK – HHH – Making Headingley our Home and our Hub

As I have rehearsed with you several times over the last 3 years we, the community of faith that is Leeds Vineyard, believe that we have been called to Headingley. Many of us don't live in Headingley so we also have a calling to be great neighbours where we live and work, to build bridges into our local networks and communities. But the church has to be based somewhere and that is Headingley. Not just as a convenient spot (it isn't very convenient) but a place which we are to win for the Kingdom.

I believe God wants to continue His mission - through other churches in the past and present - and I believe that He has given us our part to play in that mission. To see Headingley transformed into a place where people see God at work every hour of every day and in every way.

Where there is always a bright light shining and chasing away the darkness. A place in which people choose to live and work because it feels different, better, safer – shalom. A place where people are forever encountering the love of Jesus.

We are called to Headingley. It might take 10 years, it might take 50 years, but we are committing ourselves to this mission.

If we were able to translate that call into GPS coordinates I believe it would place us right here, in this room, the sanctuary at Headingley Methodist Church. God has miraculously given us this building to use. An amazing story recorded elsewhere.

I know that in some ways this building isn't ideal (although no building is ideal). But it is here and it is God's gift to us. We have a flexible, welcoming landlord in the Methodist congregation, we have access to space, we are in the right place.

Our goal is not to grow an enormous church – it is to join in God's mission of winning Headingley for the Kingdom – and if He builds a large church so much the better to get the job done.

The Lord did say to me two years ago, "I filled this building before and I will do it again". He is going to build the Vineyard church here with people who, although it won't be easy, commit themselves to this vision and to making it work here.

What's particular about 2016? This is the year we will start to invest in property in this area. Having spent two years making relationships, building bridges, thinking, praying, waiting – now is the time to make Headingley our Home by buying property.

This is the year we will move our centre of activities from the Vineyard Centre in Sheepscar into Headingley. We won't replicate it – I think the Lord has given us a

different strategy to pursue henceforth.

We will make increasing use of this building – Headingley Methodist Church are keen to help us use it more. But in the long run I think we will own several properties around this building, from which we will reach out into this community. Through which we will provide a way for people to discover who Jesus is without having to go through the doors of what maybe a scary building.

This is perhaps an upside down strategy – I expect God to direct us first of all toward a building, and that we'll then discern the purpose to which it will be put. For example:

We may purchase a residential house (or two). Places in which we can house homeless asylum seekers for example, or provide housing for those struggling to get a roof over their heads. Or maybe a house where we can host small events like the youth groups, welcome dinners, marriage courses etc.

Or we may purchase an offices or business building of some sort from which we can run our administration but also run training and equipping facilities – parenting classes, English classes, small conferences – or a foodbank, maybe a storehouse.

Or we may purchase a shop fronts/retail outlet – which could provide a mid-week access point into the church, a community centre, a café, a venue for Alpha courses, toddler groups, a centre for creative arts, maybe a Street Pastors' base.

Or something else entirely!

I'm inviting you to be part of this vision for Headingley – whether you live in Headingley or in Alwoodley or in Hunslet. What can you do?

- Carry on doing what you are doing as a part of this church;
- Walk around Headingley, shop here, keep your eyes open;
- Be prepared to make a financial gift/loan when the time comes;
- Pray for the right properties and opportunities to come along;
- Pray and ask the Lord to show us what He wants us to do in these properties;
- Think about what you would like to see in Headingley – and then ask the Lord for it!

Having spent two years preparing, this is the year in which we are going to make Headingley our home.

David Flowers

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