

What do I see for HBC in 2017?

In January 2014 it will be 20 years since I became the Pastor/Team Leader here at HBC. Reaching a milestone like this causes you to reflect on what have you have done with your life & ministry, What kind of life am I living? How is my marriage? Is my personal faith alive & growing? What kind of church have I built? How effective is this church at fulfilling Jesus' command "to go and make disciples". It's also a time to look ahead and if I/we could get some binoculars to see into the future, what would Hoole Baptist Church look like in 2017 (as I turn 50)? Would it be much the same with us all looking a few years older? Maybe there would be a few new faces and a few new songs, but essentially would we be doing what we're doing now?

In many ways the present situation is pretty good. The church has been growing and most of us feel encouraged to grow in faith and discipleship through our life together. We have a prominent place in the Hoole community and numerous visitors come into the church building every week.

So if it ain't broke, why try and fix it?

Our church is not broken. But we're not reaching the full potential God has given us. Nowhere near. Jesus says this: 'From the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.'(Luke 12.48). HBC has been entrusted with a huge amount in terms of people, resources, premises, spiritual gifts, maturity, enthusiasm, wisdom, experience.

I believe Jesus is being true to his word and asking us for more.

Jesus has called us all to be disciple-makers. He sends us out to fish for people (Mark 1.17). He calls us all to 'Go and make disciples...'(Matthew 28.19).

HBC has become quite good at attracting and resourcing Christians & developing mission minded projects. Now it's time to discover together how we can become good at making new disciples.

When I imagine HBC in 2017 I see something quite different. I see a church that is seriously good at making disciples. I see us praying for a harvest. I see us committed to reaching our city and not just Hoole with the good news. I see us serving and seeking the lost together in all kinds of imaginative ways. I see a network of (missional) communities (MC's) across Chester, a movement of disciple-makers committed to bringing healing, wholeness and freedom to broken lives and communities as we expect great things from God and attempt great things for God.

I see HBC as a movement of disciple-makers with structures designed to send us out rather than keep us in.

I see dozens of baptisms every year. I see a church that is known for bringing salvation and hope because it is in amongst the hurting people in our city. I see a church that is seeing people freed from the curse of the enemy's lies and discovering the liberty of being sons and daughters of God. I see a church that vividly reflects Jesus.

I see a "minster church" at the heart of all the mission – a church with a heart that beats with five core elements; a house of prayer and worship, a mission base, a community of healing and renewal, a place of learning and equipping, and a centre of creativity. A core resource community that enables the movement of disciple-makers to be focused on the main task; "to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples"

In short, I see us starting to reach our potential.

