

Devotional Blog – Sunday 6th December 2020

Any project that is undertaken, whether it is large or small, domestic or industrial needs a certain amount of planning and preparation. Over recent years our family home has been transformed. Firstly, it was a loft conversion, then a rear extension and more recently a major garden make over.

Each project needed to be carefully planned with the help of experts, like architects and designers, before even the preparation work could start. Planning and preparation generally take a lot more time than the job itself.

In this country major infrastructure projects seem to take forever. For example, Crossrail, HS2, a potential 3rd runway at Heathrow and many major road developments. Some ideas never actually get off the drawing board, because of cost or objections to the potential environmental damage the work may cause.

All projects have an end goal. For example, the HS2 project's aim is to cut the travelling time from London to Birmingham and beyond. To achieve this goal the pathway for the track needs to be cleared. Now I am not going into the pros and cons of this thorny issue but, clearing the pathway for this venture has affected many people as well as the environment. This had to be done so that the track could be as straight as possible.

When the project is completed all the preparation, planning and waiting seem worthwhile. This is certainly the case with our home improvements as the extra space has proved to be a real benefit to us as a family. The work on our garden now means that maintenance is so much easier.

During this season of Advent, our minds turn to God's project of saving mankind and the coming of the Messiah. The project was announced by the prophet Isaiah about 700 years before the birth of Jesus – that is a long time even by UK standards!! The work of preparing the way for the coming King was to begin by a voice in the desert crying "Make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God" (Isaiah 40:3)

Mark, at the beginning of his gospel quotes the passage from Isaiah. What does it mean for you and me to "make straight paths for Him" (Mark 1:3)? Think again about the HS2 project for a moment. If the project was to be successful it needs to take the shortest route possible, so all obstacles need to be removed out of the way. There have been some tough decisions to make.

Trees have been cut down and homes bulldozed and only time will tell if the action has had the desired effect.

We need to remove the obstacles that block the straight path that allows God into our lives. Obstacles of unconfessed sin, pride, self-sufficiency and.....

Of course, God's project is far from being completed. We are waiting for the return of King Jesus, which he promised around 2,000 years ago. Is God running behind schedule? No, I don't think so as He is not bound by time and He is the master planner, architect and designer.

As 2 Peter 3:8 states "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

These words from Graham Kendrick may help us in our Advent preparations.

Make way, make way
For Christ the King
In splendour arrives
Fling wide the gates and welcome Him
Into your lives

Paul Barker

Hampton Mission Partnership