

FROM PRESENT TO FUTURE

Reflections as we moved away from Moggerhanger to Sandy in 2013

Anniversary

October 2013 will be the 20th anniversary of the decision by Harvest Vision Trustees that Moggerhanger House was the place that God had chosen as a Ministry Centre. It gives an opportunity to reflect upon the original vision and to remember that Moggerhanger Park had a special place in the purposes of God. It was to be a place of prophetic significance – a place of prayer where many would come to seek the Face of the Lord and to know what he is saying to his people and to the nation today. This is desperately needed at a time when the Christian foundations of the nation are crumbling, and the witness of the church is weak.

Unique Model

But Moggerhanger Park was not intended to be just a base for Ministry. It was intended to be a unique witness both as a model of community and of economic sustainability, in an age of financial crisis driven by greed and corruption. It was to show a different way of living and working based upon 'Kingdom principles' as practised in the Early Church, derived from the New Testament and historical records.

A Beacon

Can Moggerhanger Park still be a beacon to the nation transmitting the word of the Lord at such a time as this? The answer to this question needs to be sought by considering the present situation in the context of the original vision. This was set out in 1994 as –

1. a place of prayer and seeking the Face of God
2. a place of teaching and declaring the whole word of God
3. a place of refuge and community of believers

These were never intended to be the sole responsibility of any one ministry but rather the shared vision in which each part of the body plays an essential role (as per 1 Corinthians 12) – with all working together as one family towards the fulfilment of the vision.

1. Prayer: The 'place of prayer and seeking the face of God' is linked with the prophetic ministry which was carried out by PWM/*Prophecy Today* and today the responsibility for taking the lead in this lies with Issachar Ministries. The trustees of Issachar Ministries need to be consulted on whether or not they feel called to develop this Ministry at Moggerhanger Park, if they are now too involved in national affairs, who will develop this?

2. Teaching: The 'place of teaching and declaring the whole word of God' has been the purpose of the Centre for Contemporary Ministry since its foundation as an educational charity, but

in the past 3 years CCM has been almost fatally run down. Today it has no Ministry projects, educational or otherwise, apart from an indirect interest in the farm. CCM should be taking the lead in encouraging the proposed Christian University with a linked library which would undoubtedly be of national significance at a time when the Judaeo-Christian heritage of centuries is under attack. Moggerhanger Park could play a significant part in revitalising this heritage. If CCM cannot pick up this challenge, who will develop this?

3. Community: The 'place of refuge and community of believers' was not just one of the founding principles of Moggerhanger Park it was the essential core of the whole vision. Clearly, the house as an upmarket weddings venue could not be a place of refuge for those on the battlefield of mission. The present MPL policy of outsourcing franchises leaves no place for a community of believers which was the cornerstone of Moggerhanger Park. Unless this community is revived there is no possibility of fulfilling the vision. If MPL cannot pick up the challenge, who will develop this? MHPT and MPL directors need to face the fundamental question, "If you accept that Moggerhanger Park belongs to the Lord, are you prepared to face the necessary changes in policy to allow God to fulfil his purposes?"

Repentance

Clearly Moggerhanger Park is not at present fulfilling its original purpose. But our God is a loving Father who delights to forgive our faults and failures and is only too ready to transform even the most desperate situation where there is repentance and turning to him. The prelude to repentance, however, is always the recognition of wrongdoing. This does not have to be an exercise in allocating blame, but simply a recognition that things have gone wrong, that Moggerhanger Park has departed from God's original purpose.

A Sign?

There appeared to be a remarkable demonstration of this in a billboard advertisement in Bedford in April 2013 when the wind blew away a section that revealed a daemonic figure from the previous advert. See below. This was not vandalism, but the result of a strong wind. Who sent the wind? Obviously God knew it would happen. Was he saying something through this?



Was it a sign from the Lord saying, “My house should be a place of prayer, but you have made it a place of commerce”?

Crowds of Visitors

The current advertising features empty rooms, not a person in sight, which is a sad reflection of the truth – beautiful rooms, fine architecture, tastefully furnished, but no people. Compare this with 5 or 6 years ago when the policy of ‘commercialisation’ began. There were hundreds of visitors to Moggerhanger Park every day! You had to book a table to get a meal in the dining room. People queued for tables at lunchtime and on fine hot sunny days all the tables in the courtyard were crowded. Thousands came to walk through the woods in the Snowdrop season and the Bluebell season. To cope with the crowds, food had to be served in the Garden Room as well as in the tea rooms in the house.

Sharing the Faith

So many people wanted to see the house that there were two organised tours on a daily basis through the summer months. The Visitors’ Book was filled with complimentary comments and there were many opportunities for the staff and volunteers to speak about their faith and to get into conversation about the spiritual heritage of Moggerhanger House, the work of the Clapham Group and Thornton and Wilberforce, and state of the nation today, and the need for the Gospel.

All this has been lost through the attempt to run Moggerhanger Park on a ‘fully commercial basis’ instead of the way in which it was intended by God with a community of believers trusting in him. The house was actually financially viable in the time it was run by the community as is demonstrated in the paper by Simon and Jenny. It began with no big start-up funds – just faith and prayer – they actually refused a loan from the bank; and the Lord translated faith into financial success. The small annual surplus was increasing and today it would have been a thriving business as well as a living testimony to what God can do with a community of believers.

Shaking Everything

The Lord is now shaking everything at Moggerhanger Park and exposing things that are not in accordance with the vision. Anything which is not quite right is coming to the light. Harvest Vision was informed by Companies’ House on 16th July 2013 that they had been struck off the register because they had not submitted accounts despite repeated warnings. This is the second consecutive year that accounts have not been sent in on time. CCM was in a similar position earlier this year with its finances in considerable disarray. It now has no staff, no office, no telephone number, and no website.

Dry Bones

Today, the house stands empty on most days; the courtyard, even on fine sunny days, has no tables and chairs filled with the laughter and chatter of visitors. The dining rooms are unused, the

empty corridors echo with the silent grief of those who have been driven away. Day after day the pristine Grade 1 listed rooms stand empty like the disused morgue at the end of the stable courtyard buildings when we took over from the hospital. The trustees are looking to wedding receptions and B&B to provide financial success. But the house is now losing tens of thousands of pounds a year; a monument to the failed commercial policy. Like the prophet Ezekiel standing in the Valley of Dry Bones we have to ask the question, *“Can these bones live?”* And the response of the Lord is the same – Prophecy! *‘Prophecy to these bones and say to them, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.”’*

New Life

It is our prayer, as Founders of Moggerhanger Park, that this is what will happen; and that the future glory of the house will be far greater than the former. New life will again flow through the house and the grounds where planned prayer places have never been created. We pray that once again sheep may safely graze in the grounds (three sheep have been killed this year by drivers speeding across the parkland) and that great crowds will come to the Bible Weeks to hear the word of the Lord, and children and young people and families will delight in all the activities that are offered and the beauty of the gardens, the parkland and the woods; and above all that everything will be done to the honour and glory of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.