

## A New Circuit

### Bible Reflection

*“Forget about what’s happened: don’t keep going over old history.*

*Be alert, be present. I’m about to do something brand-new.” Isaiah 43: 18-19a*

Despite the clarity of this phrase, Isaiah spends a lot of time referring back to past events. Clearly the things that have gone before *are* important because they have made us what we are, but that does not mean we have to be constrained to do things the same way.

**What does it mean to “..be present”?**

### Fresh Expression of Circuit

As we reshape our circuits to make them fit for Kingdom work in the present age, we must remember that there is more to this than simply size. A larger circuit will probably bring greater flexibility in use of resources, but it is just as important to rethink how we *run* our new circuit. To carry on working in the same way, but on a larger map is clearly a missed opportunity. From the beginning the Methodist Church has been looking for “not simply larger circuits, but fresh expressions of circuits”.

### “The baby”

Obviously there are many things in our present circuits which are valued, and still have much to offer the future. It is important to identify these treasures in such a way that they can be continued and, hopefully, shared wider.

### “The bath water”

There are some things which are a real obstacle to carrying out Kingdom work, and this is a chance to shed them! Be creative and prepared to try a new way of doing things.

### “Church Lite”

If we spend less time and energy *running* our church, we should have more time and energy for *doing* church. Look for simpler ways of doing things, with less people or less often. We should be fostering a culture which encourages and enables people to do the things that matter, not creating structures that control or restrict.

### What about CPD?

It worries some people that The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church is bigger on the shelf than a Bible, and has to be replaced each year! CPD says much less about how we run our circuits than people think: our customs are much more restrictive than the rules require. If you need to work in ways beyond CPD then keep District officers informed, but be confident that mission is more important than rules.

### New Ways

Delegate, and trust people to do the job.

Use new technology to consult, record and report.

Keep people focussed where they can achieve the most.

Exploit the skills and gifts of the people you have.

Never hold a meeting just because the calendar (or CPD) says you need it.

Ask “who is the best person to do this?”