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On Wednesday 10th January, 2018 at 4 pm, two Deacons, our Treasurer, Secretary and I signed the Development Agreement, by which we shall hand over to the development company, this plot of land, in return for a temporary space, until they complete and hand over a new building, built to our specifications. Pictures of signing of the agreement, are posted on the back wall.

The following day, Thursday 11th January, 2018 the Baptist Union received the documents, signed their agreement to the development and returned the documents to our solicitors, Anthony Collins of Birmingham. We shall exchange on Monday or Tuesday, the latest.

This is a significant moment in the history of our church. I have said this before, and feel the need to underscore it again, I do not know of any church (and there might be but a very few), which has surrendered an tired and crumbling old building and land, and acquired a new building and land, with **ZERO DEBT !**

This is God's blessing to us, but this blessing does not come without responsibility. In the next year and a half, before we move into our new building, let's prayerfully explore opportunities God may show us, to meet the needs of the community around us, and to whom we shall declare the goodness and glory of God.

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus of Ephesus (500 BCE) said, *Life is Flux*, meaning everything in life changes, life cannot exist without change; only change makes life possible.

Yet, all over the world, people fear change! My career was built on managing the process of change, and I know first-hand, the force of resistance to change. The arguments in favour of change fall on deaf ears, and I have often wondered why people of all nationalities and cultures, feel threatened by change and resist change with every ounce of energy

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in their being, until several years ago, I read a leading East African newspaper<sup>1</sup>, in which a journalist *"was reflecting on a recent conversation that I had with an elderly retired, but far from tired, public figure whose wisdom is as deep and rich in texture as his voice. I asked him why he thought people were so afraid and so resistant to inevitable changes in their lives. He paused for a second and said that whilst many people know how to live for today and a few plan for tomorrow, most people can never contemplate the fact that there will be a day after tomorrow."*

It is a fatal disease which society spreads among its members, by which people are concerned only with today, and how to preserve **today**. Today is reality; tomorrow and every tomorrow thereafter, is based on hope, and the disease we spread around is, hope is futile because we cannot control it. It is a fatal disease.

On the first and third Sundays of every month, we celebrate Jesus' last passover meal, remembering Him, His life, death, resurrection and ascension, in the food of bread and wine, that as we tear the bread, we remember His body **was** broken, and as we drink from one cup, we remember His blood that **was** shed, because of which we have hope of His coming again and taking us into the safety of God's eternal kingdom. This positive hope is an integral part of our Christian faith; our hope is real, only because the person who offers us this hope is real, and His Word can be trusted!

The lack of hope is a powerful deterrent to accepting change, but accepting the Hope God gives, is very liberating; hope releases us to accept change.

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<sup>1</sup> ["Embrace change: It is the only constant in life"](#), by David F. K. Mpanga in The Daily Monitor (Uganda) of Saturday 19 April, 2014

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The life of Moses is a wonderful study of how a person with all kinds of problems, accepted the hope God gave, and acted on it, despite personal feelings and evidence to the contrary.

We know Moses as the baby in the basket, floating in the bullrushes along the river Nile, saved from the Pharaoh's order to kill all Hebrew children, by Pharaoh's own daughter!

We know Moses of the burning bush, where God said to him, *I will deliver from slavery under this Pharaoh, my people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and take them to the land I promised their forefathers, and **you** Moses, will lead them there.*

Moses argued with God, offering 5 objections not to make him leader of the Hebrew people, yet God had his way; God used Moses' weakness to display His strength.

Moses was bought up in the Pharaoh's palace by his daughter, he knew the palace inside out, and could go into the presence of the king without appointment! And so he did, as God inflicted Egypt with unimaginable plagues, Moses pleaded with the King, **Let my people go!**

We know Moses the leader who led them out of Egypt, through the parted waters of the Red Sea.

Moses' obituary reads like this, *There has not arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord God knew face-to-face, none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the Lord God sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land, and for the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.*<sup>2</sup> So intimate was the relationship between God and Moses, when Moses died, **God buried him** and no one knows where God buried him, to this day!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10-12

<sup>3</sup> Deuteronomy 34:5-6

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Before he died, Moses did two things. One was to bless each of the 12 tribes of Israel<sup>4</sup>, but before that, God told him, *write this song and teach it to people of Israel. Put it in their mouths (make them memorise it), that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel.*<sup>5</sup>

Let me draw your attention to two verses in this song, and a third verse from an earlier time in Moses' life, each of which conveys messages for us today.

***Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations***<sup>6</sup>.

Moses instructed his people to remember their history; go back to ***the days of old***, go back as far back as Creation, and remember the events of this part of God's universe, from its very beginnings.

The history of the human race begins at creation, and we would do well to remind ourselves regularly, we are part of God's history on earth. We do not struggle alone; we are a part of a very rich history of the human race, which God has planned with great detail.

Moses then tells them, ***understand the years of a generation***; think about, reflect and get a deeper understanding of events, of people, their actions and the consequences of their actions.

If we do not spend time understanding our past, our present will not make sense. If we don't understand the ways of God from the time of creation, we will not be able to grasp our role as human beings, and will fall short of serving God, the way He wants us to serve and worship Him.

The second verse I find meaningful today is, ***But Jeshurun (a name for Israel) grew fat and kicked... then he forsook God who made him.***<sup>7</sup> When

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<sup>4</sup> Deuteronomy 33

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 31:19

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 32:7

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 32:15:

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life is good and blessings are abundant, when we feed on God's blessings and grow strong, it is easy for us to forget God, to forget that the source of our blessings is His generosity. When we are in trouble, it is natural to cry out for help. But when things are good, we tend to brag and attribute our success to our efforts alone. We forget that it is God who has directed us, God who blessed us, God who created us, and to Him we owe our deepest gratitude, for all of life.

The third and final verse which strikes me as significant for us today, takes us to the time when Moses was in the middle of his journey through the wilderness, leading the people of Israel out of Egypt. The people had just sinned by worshiping the golden calf. Not only had the people created an idol and worshipped it, by they used the wealth of Egypt which God gave them as recompense for the hundreds of years of slavery during which they were not paid!

Moses interceded for them and God spared them their lives. Moses then talked one-on-one with the Lord God. He knew he could not lead this stubborn people without God's presence. *"How will anyone know that You are pleased with me and with Your people unless You go with us? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*<sup>8</sup>

The question is singularly important. Moses did not want to move farther without the assurance that God was moving with him. He knew it was a life-and-death situation. He sought the Lord with his whole heart on this one matter.

***Moses said to God, 'If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.'***<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Exodus 33:16

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 33:15

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God must be in the mist of everything we do, if we are to be “successful”, which is to be obedient in what God directs us to do.

We are embarking on an exciting journey. This journey will challenge us, require us to consider and re-consider all that we hold dear. But we shall not fear change, as long as God is in our midst, journeying with us. The world around us needs to see God's power at work among us.

The world around us needs to see, we do not fear change; and when they ask, **WHY?**, we can say with firm assurance, **God is directing His Church.**

We can declare this with utmost confidence:

When a church builds a building,  
a community comes together.

When a community comes together,  
God grows His Church.

When God grows His church,  
**ALL** Heaven rejoices!

**AMEN.**