

Frequently Asked Questions about “A Regional Vision for the United Church in the Lougheed Corridor”

Imposed by Presbytery?

Q: Is this an idea that came from Presbytery? Are they forcing us to join together or close?

A: No. In fact, Presbytery has not even been consulted at this stage. This document has come out of a discernment process amongst the eight ministry personnel serving the churches in the Corridor. Nothing is being imposed on anyone. The vision document is meant to offer the congregations the fruit of the ministry personnel's discernment and to serve as a starting place for the congregations' discernment.

Ministry Personnel making decisions?

Q: Are the Ministry Personnel making the decisions about the future?

A: No. Ministry Personnel cannot make such decisions for a congregation. However, their job requires them to provide leadership in matters such as these.

What has been decided?

Q: I heard that we are selling off all eight churches and building one big church. Has this been decided?

A: No. We are only at the discernment stage. No decisions have been made about anything. The first question to be answered is, “What does God want?” Only after we feel that we have a clear answer, can we move into discussing how that might come about. In the mean time, we need everyone's participation to discern God's vision for our churches.

Is this a vision involving selling off churches?

Q: Are the Ministry Personnel suggesting that we sell all the churches in the Lougheed Corridor?

A: No, but they are suggesting the pooling of resources. The Ministry Personnel have discerned that the current structure of our church does not allow for a discipleship based approach. As such, they envision a larger church with multiple staff in order to provide the worship and faith development programs needed. This does not preclude the continuation of some of the current churches. However, in order to facilitate the building of such a regional church, a number of our eight churches would need to be sold and the resources pooled.

Is this a vision involving selling off churches?

Q: Why doesn't the document talk about amalgamating churches?

A: The experience with amalgamating churches indicates that it presents a whole host of problems. It can be difficult to “blend the families,” to bring different together different congregational values and practices, and the like. A new, regional church is about beginning with a new vision. In many cases, amalgamations involve other

churches moving into one of the existing churches. In that situation, we find that some resent what they have had to give up while others continue on with little sense of loss. It would be preferable for the participating congregations to formally close and then begin a brand new church at a new location.

Are there other options?

Q: Are there other options besides selling off churches? Could we split up the task and each of us specialize in one type of ministry?

A: There are always other options. However, every option must be evaluated against whether or not it meets the vision of providing a discipleship focused church.

How many congregations?

Q: How many congregations would have to participate to make this vision viable?

A: The reality is, we don't know. Obviously, the more that go in, the more resources there are to work with.

How urgent is this?

Q: How urgent is this proposal? Can we not wait another 5 years to see what happens? Is the impetus for this that a number of our churches are in financial trouble?

A: The current reality is that a number of our churches are looking at a very limited time (2 to 5 years) before they are in significant financial difficulty. The concern is that if we let those congregations close and disband, and their resources redistributed through Conference, we will lose this opportunity to put together significant resources to build a regional church.

Who would be the ministers?

Q: Who would be the ministry personnel at a new church?

A: Again, we have no way of knowing at this point. Much would depend on how many ministers would be called, what specific ministries they would be asked to do, how long this process takes, and who God will call to be a part of this ministry.