

10th December 2021

Better

“I want to lay out a far better way for you.”

St Paul, 1 Corinthians 12:31 (from ‘The Message’)

The Lee Valley Park velodrome in the Stratford area of London is a remarkable place. Built to house the track-cycling for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, it won a host of architectural awards in 2011 and was opened to the general public in 2014. The arena is known locally as *The Pringle* because of its distinctive shape. The velodrome has a 250m oval track, and seats over 6000 spectators.

At a recent UCI cycling event, there were 72 competitors. But when we looked down from the upper tier to the centre of the arena, there were clearly *many* more people there than that, *hundreds* of folk milling around and busy at their various tasks – fitness coaches, organisers, TV people, sound engineers, lighting operatives, medical personnel, and, of course, the inevitable cycle mechanics. For one race, the start was delayed because a cyclist had a mechanical problem. Within seconds, a host of people were running around, the result being a mechanic sprinting across the arena with a spare wheel. The problem was swiftly rectified, and the race began.

At the end of the evening, the winners received their accolades and awards, and rightly so, for their efforts gave us our enjoyment. But what of the rest? No accolades or applause for them, yet without their dedicated efforts, there would have been no pleasure for the rest of us.

It's only a small step – or a short cycle-sprint – from *The Pringle* to St Paul's description of the early Christian Church. This is how *The Message* puts his instruction to the Church in Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 12:

It's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts. But now I want to lay out a far better way for you.

If Paul had been at *The Pringle*, might he have said, "It's not all trainers, or cyclists, or medical personnel, or bike mechanics."? And if he had, would we have grasped more readily the "far better way" he laid out for us?

A prayer for today

Whatever I do today, Lord, may my contribution fit into your Better Way. Amen