



Adapt to flourish

Mones Farah, Archdeacon for New Church Communities, considers ministry of the future

One of the often-quoted focuses of the Darwinian evolution theory is ‘the survival of the fittest’. When this is fully analysed, I believe it to be a description of those who are able to adapt best to their environment so that they will survive and flourish. Maybe we always need to keep the slogan ‘The survival of the most adaptable’ before us and allow it to influence our decision-making and actions.

Looking at the vigour with which our churches adapted to the lockdown, and the closure of our church buildings, is extremely heartening. All possible means of keeping our congregations and, in some instances, others who found that they could consider church, plugged in were used, with the distribution of printed material, phone calls, social media (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram) and business platforms (Zoom, Skype and MS Teams).

All types of churches, churchmanship and spirituality rose to the occasion in a relevant and consistent way – thank you. Above all thank you for discovering and living out the fact that you are Church, with or without the buildings which you love and care about.

As time marches on, the lockdown is slowly easing. Gathering in our church buildings is beginning to be allowed and, with scientific development, we will get to a world beyond Covid-19 restrictions. But what then?

It will be too late to ask the ‘what then’ question when restrictions are over, the question needs to be considered now; many are already doing so, with much discussion and learning taking place. Most are talking of a mixture of spiritual and liturgical expression emerging, but often we are talking of our churches continuing their online ministry alongside returning to church, in person, for worship and liturgical expression.

This is a great and wonderful idea. However, we also need to consider tailor-made digital ministry, produced in such a way as to attract those yet to join our communities and church families. Therefore, many of us have been thinking about developing different church expressions, in line with the theological spectrum within our diocesan family, birthing an online showcase church in each of the traditions. These would inspire others within the same tradition but ultimately be attractive to those presently outside our church families and congregations.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss this further. It is a period of learning and pooling our thoughts and prayers so that we can come out much stronger on the other side.

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