

Changing Times

When I grew up children knew everyone by their surnames, family friends were Uncle and Aunty. Today we know each other by our Christian names, whatever age we are. The spread of computer has changed our working life and our home life, and the fact that the organisation we use now are using computer changes the way that they deal with us.

Change is often seen as bad, because change is stressful. Even good changes are stressful - getting married, having a baby, a change of job. It's as if we all have a little pot inside for holding stress, and if it starts to get filled up we being to feel a bit panicked, to feel that we cannot cope.

And then someone starts talking about change in the Church - the one place people hope to find things comfortingly familiar. Surely God is the one constant in our lives, the one who always loves, who is always just, who is always strong. In the bible we hear it said "I am the first and the last... who was, and is, and is to come"; "I, the Lord, do not change".

This is true, but this God is also the God who transforms darkness into light, the God of resurrection who changes death into life, the God of reconciliation who changes disintegration. Christians everywhere find themselves call day by day to change the way that they live, so that their lives more faithfully reflect the love of God to the world.

What is true of Christians is true to the Church as a whole. The Church is called to minister change in the world; to be renewed in itself so that it can better do the work God has called it to do, to be an agent of change bringing about positive change in society, and to be a carer in the midst of change, looking after those who change has left damaged and adrift in society.

This may be true, but it doesn't help my stress levels. Change is most stressful when we have no control over it. When we have the power to direct change and be involved in it, we feel less out of control and therefore the stress levels are reduced.

Change is inevitable, we can dig our heels in but all that will happen is that we get left behind and become irrelevant. Alternatively, we can take control of our lives and positively minister change to bring about good in society. The choice is ours.

Chris