

Simpler, Humbler, Bolder

I recently joined a 'Webinar' (now that's a new invented word we've learnt in Lockdown!) from the Church of England launching their new mission strategy which was discussed last week at General Synod. It was good, but I can't remember it all – you can look it up on the CofE Website – but what I did remember was these 3 very simple words to challenge us as a church for the future: Simpler, Humbler, Bolder.

We do have a very simple but vital message! God loves us all, and because of Jesus we can be forgiven if we believe, trust, obey and Him. But sadly, the church seems so complicated with our listed buildings, canon law, churchyard regulations and restrictions. We long to be a welcoming church that first of all says 'yes'!

We should be a humble people as we know our weaknesses but that God still loves and calls us. Our traditions and history can make us feel arrogant. We are high profile for royal and civic occasions which can add to this feeling. We need to recognise that we are no longer at the heart of society, or first in peoples' minds for how they mark their family rites of passage, or how they celebrate Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday, Remembrance Day etc. We are more on the edge of society. Jesus operated in this way mainly out in the countryside, and even died and rose again outside the city of Jerusalem.

We should be bold and not ashamed of the great message that we have for all! People need and want - and seek – hope! Not just for this life but for the life to come. And this is what we are here for! Sadly, we are seen as irrelevant, and even in the pandemic many have asked for some hope and message from the churches, but then most haven't listened to all that has been said and been offered by our church leaders nationally as well as locally.

Our churches are often reported for negative reasons. Just occasionally a good story like a Foodbank or other community project might give a mention to a church or cleric involved or a glimpse might be seen of a church building. Jesus' profound effect on the world is His message. Yes, people marvelled at His miracles and healings, but they flocked to hear Him teach and the amazing stories and parables He told.

Simpler, Humbler, Bolder. Sounds a bit like Jesus. And like Mother Teresa, and the great saints and others down the centuries including living today. These people change the world by their lives and their message. Could we as churches be Simpler, Humbler, Bolder? Do we still believe that people would hear the good news of Jesus and respond to Him if these words were seen as signs of our churches and us as individual people?

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