



Hello Everyone

I had a conversation just before sitting down to write this letter to you during which I discussed arranging a Zoom meeting with Bishop Richard. Bishop Richard has been with us several months but I have not met him, yet I mentioned during my conversation that I seemed to know him very well. I have watched him most weeks of the Spring, Summer and Autumn as he delivers his weekly talk over the internet on the diocesan website. I have seen him preach during services on an internet link and have spent an interesting Saturday morning at a workshop with him (via Zoom) which replaced our Readers' annual AGM get together. I have had conversations with him and spent what must be many hours by now listening to him but have never been in the same building with him, and I find him an interesting and knowledgeable person who is teaching me a great deal about my faith and Jesus.

Before Covid19, BC, I probably would not have spent so much time in the company of my bishop. I was very fortunate in that I met and had several conversations with Bishop Richard the first, but I did not receive the insight into faith or receive the explanatory teaching that I have received from Bishop Richard the second. In a perverse way the separation and social distancing resulting from the pandemic has actually provided me with the means of spending more time with my bishop. It is a benefit that is unexpected but welcome, and without the intervention of the corona virus would not have happened for me.

As a church we have also enjoyed welcome unexpected positives from such a negative experience. BC, our daily morning prayer had a regular congregation of made up of members of the ministry team with one or two others. We have a daily morning prayer on Zoom now and the numbers who regularly attend have grown and we have coalesced into a congregation who enjoy fellowship every morning albeit via an electronic means. In a similar way, we have a regular congregation who attend the Zoom service on Sundays, including friends from Germany, and enjoy fellowship together which would not have happened without the pandemic.

However, the fact that I am writing this letter to you shows that a negative effect of the pandemic is the physical separation of our 'church building' congregations. When we have been able to worship in our churches there have been restrictions placed upon how we worship, and some of you have not been able to come and join us because of your individual circumstances. It has resulted in our reaching out to you by means of these letters, and I know that I have got to know some of the members of our churches better than I would have done by keeping in contact with them by telephone. In this way we have drawn closer.

Even when things seem black and events seem to be damaging us as a church, God is still working through us and giving us the opportunities and means to build and work towards bringing his kingdom into our world. The darkness is never strong enough to stop the light of Jesus shining out and it will never stop us seeing a way to work with and enjoy Jesus in our lives.

May God bless you, Stuart