

Mike's message

Christianity 2.1

Most of the time we take computers for granted. I suppose. That is until things go wrong!

There have been two examples of that on the national news recently. Firstly some parts of the NHS came to a halt because of a "hack". Someone with criminal intent had taken advantage of the out of date systems. In the second British Airways was grounded because of an error that occurred when someone had turned the system off and then, a little too quickly, back on again. The out of date components couldn't stand the shock of the power surge. Outdated hardware (the parts of the 'machine' itself) and software (programmes that computers use (word processing for example) are common reasons for failure.

A letter in 'The Methodist Recorder' newspaper recently suggested that some of the problems the churches, and Christians as individuals, face is because we haven't updated our own 'software'. He wasn't talking about computers. He was referring to the formal belief structures that we often expect people to believe. Beliefs that are often stranded in the language and ideas of 2000 years ago. He suggested we need to update our theological 'software' (thinking) for the present age. God's revelation, through the work of the Holy Spirit, didn't stop when the New Testament was compiled. If we think of the Word of God being The Bible, it becomes closed and dated, but The Word of God is alive, engaging with us, ever present from before time, through time and beyond time (John's Gospel Chapter 1).

Café Church has been looking at some of the ideas of American Bishop, Jack Spong who, in the 1980s, started offering new, radical theological ideas. Many, such as former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, think that Spong's ideas themselves are now tired and outdated and themselves need updating. We need to keep ourselves attentive to what God is saying to the churches. We've already seen that happening over the years in the role of women in the churches, in ordained ministry for example. The issue of same-sex marriage is a current area of discussion too. These are examples of how our churches are updating theological 'software'.

If theology is our software what's the parallel as our hardware? That's surely our buildings and the way we use them. The Cotteridge Church building was updated in the 1980s and now needs us to look at it again so that it will be ready to provide a base for vibrant and updated Christian mission and service here in Cotteridge.

