

'What in God's name are you doing?'

This or something similar has become a test-stone for me recently. I realise that it is very near to the bone and is the sort of phrase that people come out with in exasperation or crisis.

However as I drive around the diocese, sit in various meetings, or whatever my daily toil leads me to, this nagging question of how what I am doing relates to my faith in God returns.

Sometimes it is easy to reply, worship begins with 'In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'.

Other times of Christian service, 'feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick' there is clarity. But most of the time, in the ordinary day to day matters, how much am I actually living out my Christian faith.

Indeed even in worship or service, other factors might play their part and whilst the initial intention was right, maybe I have been distracted by my ego or my needs and am doing things more in my name than his.

Management speak and strategy often entails much talk of 'outcomes and impact'; the Christian life is more about intention and commitment. Yes there is an outcome of the kingdom of God coming closer if we deliberately seek to always work motivated by our faith and its impact is complete.

But this is not always quantifiable in the terms that consultants would like. This raises again the question of motivation. Are we motivated by the ways of the world, or by our relationship with the living God who gave us life?

The same living God who rescued us from all that is destructive and who breathes his life giving spirit into us to enable us to be what was intended from the start: Children of God.

Everything that we are about, both as an individual person and as a community of faith in the church must be formed in this relationship. It must be 'in the name of the Lord'.

The opposite does not bear thinking about, for the opposite of what God gives is death and destruction. So if what we are doing isn't in God's name, then we need to repent, to turn around and make it so it is and then the kingdom of God will come closer.

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