

September 25th, 2011



Dear Friends

I'm afraid that I am one of those doodlers who must be fidgeting while supposedly listening to a sermon or discussion. Is it multi-tasking? I doubt it, but it depends on the ability to separate the engagement of body, mind and sometimes soul. Coming to my rescue is an editorial in Ministry journal which celebrates Vicars who are able to read i-phone Bibles and intensely reflect on the content while jogging through a nature trail. No time to smell the roses here then?

Following a week of meetings, it is further confirmed that being on-line while in conversation is unavoidable. All that discipline to concentrate in school is becoming unravelled?

During a break in the South England constituency meeting, I took the opportunity to visit the University of Warwicks bookshop which was next door to our hall. Mark Gerzon's "*Leading through Conflict*" jumped off the shelf as the rescue manual for the day.

Gerzon contrasts demagogic and managerial leadership, then highlights their inadequacies before advocating mediatorial leadership as a mode for conflict resolution.

Among the qualities highlighted was the importance of **Presence**

In essence, when we show up, all of us shows up, our bodies, minds and soul, our heads and hearts harmonised and focussed on the situation in hand. Here multi-tasking is a no-no! Emotional and spiritual detachment is out of order.

Presence is about internal alertness, it is about who we are rather than what we know, it is being alert to the safety experience of those we encounter, being appropriate in every gesture and point we make, about pace, directions and the conclusions being drawn. In describing the 'how' of 'soul presence', Gerzon correlates skills learned in business school including: effective action, commitment, leading and hard learning with respective requirements learned in the seminary: stillness, detachment, following and clarity of sight.

On reflection presence is quite a significant virtue to the inspired. Paul suggests that we **present** our bodies wholly acceptable to God, the Bible speaks often of being in the **presence** of God. Is this a multi-tasking event?

I can't speak for others, but I clearly need to re-learn the ability to concentrate, of paying full attention to the situation in hand, more importantly hearing to the still small voice in whose **presence** reverence and honour is due.

May we more often be able to say, 'speak Lord, for thy servant is wholly concentrating on what You say'

Thank you again for your attentive service.

Victor Pilmoor