

WiFi Zones and beyond: The evolving landscapes of our connections to God

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Like our telecommunication services, where we go for religious and spiritual practice and how we 'get connected' to God is changing. Evolution is occurring in both area of human communications and the shifting landscape underlying these developments may be within our minds and way of thinking.

When I was a teenager in the nineteen seventies, the only way I knew of connecting to God was to go to our village church: a Christian service in a Christian building, on a Sunday. By the nineteen nineties, as my exploration of other faiths deepened, I had found that I could also feel connected to what I'll call the divine, in a range of locations and times: at dawn on May 1st, Beltane, the Pagan celebration for the start of summer; in a gathering of Buddhists to meditate together; in a circle of healers. In twenty years my options in location and way of connecting to God had opened out significantly. Now, another ten years on, and I'm aware that religious, spiritual or mystical experiences can take place anywhere: whilst watching the sun play on the sea's surface whilst walking on Bangor pier; whilst giving myself Reiki healing on the 11:06 Arriva Cymru train service to Chester; whilst singing on Wednesday nights in the Bangor Community Choir. As I have grown up, become more aware, so my spiritual landscape has extended.

By taking three snap-shots in time and focussing on my own, personal, means of connecting to the divine, this paper will compare the trends in tele-communications with the shifting landscape of divine connections. How, in the 1970's, options in both were limited to a single 'service provider' but by the 1990's I had a choice of suppliers of phone . . . and of religious services. Now, as WiFi enables high speed internet connection from almost anywhere, my options to feel connected spiritually are equally open and diverse.

Clearly, from the point of view of our phone (and now internet) services, the change has come through a rapid development of the technology and related physical infrastructure, but what's happened to bring about my 'WiFi to God'? Is it 'the technology' or landscape of religion that's changed . . . or me?

What determines where we go to feel a divine connection? In this presentation, resulting from a reflection of the last thirty years of my own spiritual practices, I suggest that the primary consideration is our own beliefs and attitudes.