# OF THE MAKING OF CONFERENCES THERE IS NO END

*Posted on August 23, 2017 by Eddie*

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**Category:** Observations

When I was a lad, I wasn't aware of their being many Christian conferences. I knew about the Keswick Convention, because our church organised a day trip to it, but that was all. Â Back in my student days, I remember some friends who were well connected telling me about plans for a new conference called Spring Harvest - whatever happened to that?

These days, you cannot throw stones between Easter and September for fear of hitting a marquee full of Christians in a field somewhere. Whatever your position on the theological spectrum or your churchmanship, there will be a "week" or a "festival" that will suit your taste.

Not only that, there are day conferences of every shape and size too. Judging by my inbox and my Facebook feed, I could attend a Christian conference every weekend if I wished (and if I had an unlimited travel budget). There are mission conferences, technology conferences, apologetics conferences, counselling conferences and so on. You name it, and there will be a day conference somewhere in the country to look at the theme.

Now, don't get me wrong. I have benefitted greatly from some of the teaching and inspiration that I've received from different conferences over the years. I've also helped organise a good few in my time and I've spoken and given seminars at a good few more. I don't think conferences are a bad thing.

But...

This morning, as I looked bleary eyed, though my Facebook feed, while inhaling my morning cup of tea, I was struck by the number of invitations to different Christian events that cropped up. All of them promised to revolutionise my life, or to change the church for the better. Yet, when push comes to shove, I don't see much change happening. We are multiplying events, but is there any evidence that these are actually having a long term effect on the life and growth of the Church in the UK? Perhaps there is, I don't know.

I'm not attacking conferencesÂ *per se*. I know people who really benefit from their week at Keswick, New Wine or whatever and I have other friends who put a massive amount of their energy into making sure these events happen. I certainly don't have any particular event in mind in these thoughts. What I am concerned about is the multiplication of events and the amount of time, energy, finance and emotional capital that goes into them. I'm also concerned at the way in which conferences can serve to divide rather than unite us. Those who go to conference X are unlikely to have much to do with those who go to conference Y. Is this the right way forward for the church in the UK at this point in our history? I'm not entirely convinced.

Perhaps someone could organise a day conference to discuss this issue.