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The Archbishop of York has encouraged cathedrals to continue to ask the "hard missional questions" about how to transmit the good news of Jesus Christ in a world suffering from confusion and uncertainty.

Speaking on the closing day of the National Cathedrals Conference, Archbishop Stephen Cottrell praised the "precious and important" contribution of the cathedrals, emphasising their role of service and teaching to their communities.

He said cathedrals had a mission to show the "heart of Jesus" in world of "so much hurt and so much confusion and so much uncertainty." "The heart of Christian teaching and mission is to open the heart of Jesus to everyone, he told the conference.

"Our primary vocation is to be the place that serves and teaches" to be the Church which is aligned with that which is basic and obvious to our Christian faith, which is to show the heart of Jesus to others both from our teaching and preaching and evangelising and through the service that we offer," he said.

In his speech, the Archbishop urged cathedrals to see themselves as a "work in progress" and to continue asking the "hard missional questions" about how to transmit the Christian faith in a changing world.

"That is always an issue for us., that we settle for what we have got, rather than asking those hard missional questions about how do we constantly translate both the Gospel we have received and this expression of it, set in stone, in liturgy, in music and art - how do re-express it to our constantly changing cultures?" he said.

Drawing a parallel with the stonemasons yard tour of York Minster, which allows visitors to see stonemasons at work, he said: "What that tells me very, very clearly is this building is a work in progress" it also tells me something else, which I think is hugely important, which is that in order for York Minster to be itself, it has to constantly change.

The Archbishop, who preached and presided at a service of the Eucharist in Newcastle Cathedral, was speaking at the close of the four-day conference. Speakers at the event have included the former Prime Minister Sir John Major and the [Church of England's lead bishop for the environment, Graham Usher.](#)

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