

Rector's Letter - Rev'd Jeremy Trew - March 2022

Dear Friends,

Do you agree on everything with others in your Church? I hope the answer is no. It's not that I want us to be disunited. After all, Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane was for the unity of his followers, his Church. But unity, and uniformity are different things. Of course, we all know the world would be a better place if everyone saw things the way we do. But we also suspect that's not really true.



We realise that a world of clones would be a dull and unimaginative place because creativity and cultural wealth come from diversity. We need difference, not only to be us, but to provide the challenges that we need in order to flourish as spiritual beings.

To aid us in our Living in Love and Faith discussions the Church of England came up with what have been called Pastoral Principles for living in a community of diversity. These Principles can be applied equally well to any area of life where there is diversity of belief, which means almost every aspect of being human. They are:

Acknowledge prejudice: No one is unconditioned by their experience of life, positively or negatively. All of us must reflect deeply on our attitudes and behaviour. All are loved children of God. The cross of Christ is for all. The journey from prejudice to hatred is a short one.

Speak to silence: Silence can provide a shelter to abuses of power. People must be given space, permission and opportunities to speak if they want to, so that those who are vulnerable can hear and be heard and thus not feel that they are alone.

Address ignorance: Ignorance is inevitable, but can and should be addressed. Taking Scripture and our tradition seriously should not necessitate ignoring pressing pastoral issues.

Cast out fear: There is fear about breaking ranks and speaking out; Fear that if personal circumstances are known we may face rejection or validation; Fear of how we may be held to account if we attempt to care. Perfect love casts out fear.

Admit hypocrisy: Christ died for all, yet we are still sinners, works in progress. Hypocrisy is inherent in any pilgrim faith. It should not, however, be blindly accepted, but questioned and challenged.

Pay attention to power: Inequalities of power contribute towards abuse and will continue to do so unless all who exercise power reflect on their use of it. Power should always be acknowledged.

I commend these Principles to all our Church communities. I believe them to be Godly and a good basis for Christian living.

Yours

Jeremy

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