



# into the Melting Pot

*the question is more important than the answer*

**Sunday 10 January 2021**

**'People Like Us' – Notes** *(a collection of things said during the Zoom session)*

'People Like Us' is divisive as it implies a 'them'.

Zoom worship good but it is just for us, the in-group; we must be careful going forward to become inclusive again.

Could we stream to a screen on the Grove? We should visualise what we want rather than letting technological difficulties deter us.

Some are accessing a variety of internet worship services, without having to identify themselves, who would never come into a church building.

A church with glass doors and a low light on was noticed – welcoming. Can we have lights on in our building?

A Blackpool church puts up a gazebo at a local Car Boot Sale – meeting people who are happy to talk but would never come into a church building.

It's not about getting people in – we must go out.

Our market stall is much appreciated by 'ordinary' people, who wanted to talk and share and have prayers said. Had it not been interrupted by Covid, we would have grown in confidence. People surprised that everything was free – a gift from the church.

Difference is positive: it challenges us. Not just meeting folk who have the same likes and viewpoints; are we prepared to open up to accept difference and that we might have to give up something with which we are comfortable?

We need to recognise that we are 'not all the same' and not like the Methodist hymn that says "we all cordially agree" – we don't!

We know there are differences; society is layered and for example, those who are paid less have a shorter lifespan (and mostly work in 'caring' situations). We should be concerned about that; everyone should have respect and opportunity and not made to feel 'less than'.

Recent BBC Radio 4 series called 'Rethink Fairness' looking at wealth, regions, education, health and generations – worth a listen.

Ilkley has less diversity than Harrogate.

MJ meets a wide range of people on his Friday nights out in the town.

Some of us will have neighbours who have different views, and I sometimes have to 'bite my tongue' to maintain good relations – not always easy to call it out in such circumstances. Perhaps find a later opportunity.

Why do I want difference? A chance to refresh ideas. The church needs a completely fresh set of ideas. Lockdown has shown us we don't need a building, so when we are able to fully return will we allow old attitudes to re-establish or will we bring a different set of ideas along?

With our weather, a building is useful.

Difference makes you reconsider; it's a challenge for re-assessment.

Having traditions can be a barrier – we should be prepared to re-evaluate before simply re-instating them. “We’ve always done it like this . . .” – perhaps not!

Difference in human sexuality, moving away from a binary perception, is challenging for some, but progress is being made. “If we are secure in the love of God”.

It's all OK if you have security in your own roots; be proud of your own 'tradition' but accept others' differences equally. There is so much intolerance and unfairness.

It's fun being with people who do life differently, even if conflictingly. How can we have 'fun' in church? The Market stall is fun.

We live so near to Keighley and Bradford; interfaith meeting is fun learning.

Race is a social construct – we've chosen to categorise on physical characteristics. These are arbitrary pre-conceptions. Are younger people more open-minded? Possibly, but it is still possible to find racism, homophobia, . . . just ask a young black or gay person.

We must stop categorising, stop assuming that there is a collective viewpoint, stop generalising (not a boy, an American, a Brexiteer, black, . . .) – but be inclusive.

Who has advantage? Slaves were treated as cargo, enabling some to become very wealthy.

There has been a recent apology by the Australian government to indigenous peoples.

We need to be fair systematically.

The Bible has racism built into its culture (race and culture are linked); some would argue it is entrenched in human sociology.

To categorise and therefore judge is almost Darwinian. The New and Old Testaments though both have strong elements that are counter-cultural, protecting the weak, the alien, the widow.

There is altruism and compassion. In some work situations (eg NHS) people of all races and generations work together positively, putting differences aside. How can we foster that at Christchurch?

We can have opportunities to help support others through the Food Bank, St Georges or Wharfedale Refugee Response.

Marcus Rashford has called out the unfairness of hungry children, using his privilege. We can, and should, do the same in our own privileged contexts. We should be revolutionary (like Jesus). We can campaign; we can volunteer.

The NHS was born out of the WWII experiences where all social layers joined together for a common cause; a better society was possible. Can something come out of Covid? It needs Government to intervene to ensure fair distribution.

We need to stop thinking about 'them'!