
Responding to Flags and Christian Nationalism

There is an increase in the use of the St George's and Union flags and the promotion of Christian Nationalism online and through public marches. There are also many instances of the red cross of the St George's flag being painted onto roundabouts, zebra crossings and bus stops, amongst other things. While some aspects of these campaigns may attempt to affirm positive values and purport merely to promote patriotism, others are accompanied by rhetoric that has caused distress and fear for many and created divisions in communities. Coventry has a clear call to reconciliation rooted in the story of our cathedral and expressed through the [Community of the Cross of Nails](#) which seeks to heal the wounds of history, learn to live with difference and celebrate diversity, and build a culture of justice and peace.

Bishop Sophie writes: "The Christian faith carries at heart a message of God's love for all people. Here in the Diocese of Coventry our churches are communities that seek to offer compassion, support and care for the people they serve, in all their diversity. The use of Christian symbols and flags to promote messages that exclude and promote division and hostility, has no place here. Please join me in praying and working for our communities to be places where all can flourish and none live in fear."

This resource is offered to help Christians engage thoughtfully and faithfully with these complex issues—and with those who promote them—rooted in Christ's call to love our neighbour and seek truth with compassion. **(1 John 4:7 & 8)** It is hoped they will help promote understanding and reconciliation.

Myth-busting Facts

- In the year ending June 2025, the majority of arrivals to the UK (56%) were British nationals. Of the non-British arrivals, most were short-term visitors, with smaller numbers arriving for other reasons such as work, study, family and humanitarian. Check the latest statistics here: [Summary of latest statistics - GOV.UK](#)
- Refugees and asylum seekers currently make up around 0.5% of the UK population.
- Unauthorised migrants are not permitted to access jobs, housing, benefits, and most free public services in the UK. (See: [No recourse to public funds - House of Commons Library](#))
- Find more facts about refugees and Asylum seekers here: [Facts about refugees - Refugee Action](#)

Resources & Reading

These resources are a mixture of articles and explainers, bible studies, a service outline, courses and educational resources. We hope that they will help inform and aid you to reflect and act around these complex issues, as well as enabling you to assist others in their understanding.

- [Larger Us](#): a non-profit working to bridge divides using links between politics and psychology. Its executive director, [Alex Evans](#), is especially interested in ways of responding to Christian nationalism and the far right, and wrote a recent essay on how churches are responding to both, entitled [Blessed are the Peacemakers](#). He has also written a [case study](#) on what churches are doing on the ground in Seacroft, Leeds where anti-migrant protests are taking place weekly outside a hotel housing asylum seekers.
- Nine [Bible Studies](#) from the Baptist Church on Migration and the Bible
- A [prayer service](#) for Refugees from the Jesuits
- [Fact sheet](#) on Migrants and Refugees from Praxis
- An [explainer](#) on Christian Nationalism and [article](#) from the Evangelical Alliance
- A free “[Difference](#)” course from the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Reconciling Leaders Network (5 session adults or 7 session youth
- Various courses are available through our [Reconciliation Ministry Pathway](#) including sessions on Active Listening, Difficult Conversations and Unconscious Bias.

Resources for Schools and Young People

- Collective worship resources from the CofE’s [National Society for Education](#) and from the [Sanctuary Foundation](#), with a helpful short video by Krish Kandiah: [How to talk to children about the St George's Flag](#).
- [Educational resources](#) from the Red Cross for Key stage 2-4 on Migration

Blogs and articles

- [Professor Anna Rowland](#)
- Hope Not Hate [article](#) on the co-option of Christianity by the Far Right
- [Canon Ned Lunn](#) at Bradford Cathedral
- Bishop Graham Tomlin on “[thin](#)” religion
- [Rev Al Barrett](#)
- [Peace and Conflict - Corrymeela](#)

Guide to engagement & dialogue

Do speak directly with the person if you're concerned, seeking to build understanding and avoid assumptions. Anchor your conversation in Christ's message.

Don't speak to the person directly if you feel that would increase the risk to yourself or others. If you are concerned that a person poses a risk to others, please speak with your parish safeguarding officer.

Don't engage without listening and expect to change anyone's mind – gain an understanding of their perspective foremostly.

Do engage in respectful dialogue using the theological resources (see below) to support your conversation.

Don't start an argument or resort to disrespectful behaviour to make your point.

Do trust your instincts and escalate your concerns to council community safety teams, church leaders, and/or parish safeguarding officers if you are worried about signs of extremism or radicalisation.

Don't minimise the impact of hate speech or the promotion of harm to others whether in person or online. For example, verbal abuse, intimidation, threats, harassment, assault, and damage to property. Such behaviour is not only a sin, but also a crime and should be reported to the police.

Eph. 4:32:

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you".

Prov. 15:1:

"A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger".

Matt. 18:15

"If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over".

Gal. 6:1:

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore them gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted".

Quick Theological Reflections

- **Creation** – God created all people, and the image of God is found in everyone (Gen. 1.27). God’s image is not confined to any one group of people.
- **Jesus was a Jewish teacher.** As a child he was a refugee who fled to Egypt with his family (Matt. 2.13-15).
- **Jesus teaches us** to call those we find in need our neighbours, even if they belong to communities outside of our own. (Luke 10.25-37).
- Those who **treat the most vulnerable with care**, feeding the hungry, visiting prisoners, clothing the naked will be commended by God at the day of judgement. Those who do not will be condemned (Matt. 25).
- **The Holy Spirit sends those who follow Jesus across borders** to share good news with others (Acts 11.1).
- **Paul teaches that Christians are a people of ‘one humanity’** strangers and foreigners become family and are made together into a place where God can live (Eph 2).
- Revelation offers a vision **of heaven as “a great multitude from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages”** worshipping God together (Rev. 7.9).
- Hate and xenophobia are rejected by Christians (Eph 4.31). **We are commanded to love our enemies** (Matt 5.44) and to care for the stranger (Lev 19.33-34). Intimidation and scapegoating are sinful and have no place in our communities.
- **Some of the most prominent places of Anglican worship are in Africa.**
<https://www.anglicansonline.org/world/africa.html> The Church of England is part of a worldwide communion with Christians around the world. They teach us much about what it is to follow Jesus.
- **St George was born in Cappadocia, in modern-day Turkey, to a Palestinian mother and a father of Syrian heritage.** He served as a Roman soldier and was martyred for refusing to renounce his Christian faith under Emperor Diocletian’s rule. Today, he is honoured as the patron saint of England.
- **The most repeated command in scripture is “Do not be afraid”**—appearing 365 times across the Bible, one for each day of the year. For some - fears for the future, for communities and country, are real and pressing. But they are met by the God who calls us to live with courage, trust, and hope.
- **We are to bless all those we come across and welcome them in Jesus’ name.** Our immigration status, personal background or loyalty to our country should not surpass our dedication to Christ’s message. While we may not always agree with each other. We should always treat each other respectfully and demonstrate God’s love for all.