

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

By Revd Kit Gunasekera

After the recent horrific attack on a mother and her two daughters in Clapham, there has been some talk, about the genuineness of Asylum seekers who convert to Christianity. Accusations have come from some quarters of some sort of conspiracy among Church of England leaders to be complicit in playing the system with questionable 'conversions'. If so, I didn't get the memo!

I am not denying that abuses of the system sometimes may take place and of course no one really knows another's heart. However, it is also my experience, that many people do genuinely come to faith, at a time of crisis, when they encounter welcome and care from Churches. Whether it be at a time of bereavement, struggling with the cost of living crisis, isolation, relationship breakdown, ill health etc. The love they experience from the church community is often how they meet with Christ. And that should not surprise any of us, because that is precisely how Christ said people would encounter him.

That is how I came to faith. From the time I arrived back in the UK just before my 13th birthday, until a few months short of my 18th birthday, I was effectively cut off from the outside world, apart from when I went to school. I had no friends, I was isolated, sheltering inside my bedroom, in the darkness with the lights off, listening to music, drinking coca cola (Its a wonder I still have any teeth left!) and feeling my pain. I had no idea what I wanted to do, I choose my 6th Form courses the night before the deadline with no thought at all, and not surprisingly I didn't do very well and dropped out of college. Even though I wasn't diagnosed as such, I was suffering from depression, and was directionless.

I then started going to church, and received a warm welcome. A lovely couple Neil and Jenny took me under their wing, introduced me to more lovely people, joined the church youth group, was then given some tasks to do in church (operating the Over Head Projector) and I felt so valued, found a purpose, and I decided that this Christian thing and Jesus thing was real, and so became a Christian, a few months before my 18th birthday. And now, almost 34 years on, I am still here!

I thank God for the welcome and love and care of Churches. Let us pray for all those who were injured in the attack in Clapham, and also for the alleged perpetrator, that he will come forward and for true repentance. And let us not give up seeking to be warm, welcoming, inclusive, caring and loving people and Churches.

BIBLE VERSE:

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." - John 13:35

QUOTE:

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582)

Christ Has No Body

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.