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For whom do Christians care? “Who is my neighbour”?

Is the Christian Church just a cosy club for like-minded people, for our friends and neighbours?

Unwittingly we too often put up fences to say “This is where I live” - Stay out !

To be a Christian means that we believe in Jesus Christ and so that is what the word “CHRISTian” means. So any Christian needs to see what Jesus Christ says.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not really support the idea that we all form little groups of cosy people, just our friends, and people like us. By contrast, everyone is “our neighbour”.

The real truth here is that everyone is your neighbour.

Jesus told everyone the story that we now know as the story of the GOOD SAMARITAN and it matters to know why our Lord Jesus Christ told the story:

We find the story in the Gospel according to St Luke at chapter 10.

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. ‘Teacher,’ he said, ‘what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ ²⁶ He [Jesus] said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What do you read there?’ ²⁷ He [the lawyer] answered, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.’ ²⁸ And he [Jesus] said to him, ‘You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.’

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he [the Lawyer] asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbour?’

³⁰ Jesus replied, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.



³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii [coins/money], gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend."

³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' ³⁷ He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

In this story "Samaritans" were understood by the crowd as "mere foreigners", as "lesser people" so the crowd of listeners would not have expected our Lord Jesus Christ to raise up a "mere foreigner" as the Hero who did the more Christian thing than the Priest or Levite.

In the Christian view we are all created equal and we care for others and welcome others including strangers and foreigners. Christians do, however, expect people to become better (to constantly change for the better). We are not perfect people and do not always get everything right. That is what makes Christianity so accessible to everyone because it offers forgiveness for getting things wrong. In fact it offers anyone forgiveness no matter who they are.

Right at the very beginning of the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 at verse 27 we are told:

*So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God He created them;
male and female He created them.*

That fundamental concept, that we are all created in God's image, is then used throughout the Bible. If we are all created in God's image then we are all equal and all equally valuable.

God's caring love for us isn't just in the New Testament but even right at the beginning in creation have you ever noticed that when God has to expel Adam and Eve from out of the Garden of Eden it is then that God gives them each a coat to keep them warm? That is how much God cares for each of us – God cares for us, all of us, always. So it is that we, as Christians, are likewise to care for others.

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