

Worship: Sharing worship with our global neighbour

“And who is my neighbour?” asked the lawyer in the gospel. He was looking for a definition. Instead, Jesus told him a parable that took him way beyond his own community and his own immediate responsibilities. Not just to the Samaritans, but to all who were different, alien, unknown, perhaps even feared.

And if our neighbourhood is to be the whole world of God's people and God's creation, then we too are going to need some help to extend our vision. One method used by industrial missionaries is called 'three-gear mission'. Everything we do has significance at a personal, corporate and global level.

If I buy a packet of coffee in the supermarket, that is an individual transaction between me and the assistant on the till. But it also represents corporate organisations, packaging and transport, logistics and warehousing. At a global level it involves trade agreements, pricing policies that may support people overseas or cripple them financially.

The choices we make, the things to which we assign worth and value (which is what worship is about) may affect the life and livelihood of our neighbours far away, sustaining or destroying whole communities that we may never see or visit. Whatever gear predominates at the moment, individual, corporate or global, the other two will always be there.

For in bringing together references from Deuteronomy 6: 5 and Leviticus 19: 18 about loving God, neighbour and oneself, the lawyer in Luke 10: 29, with the evident approval of Jesus, set the pattern for the future. And especially for our time when worship, if it is serious, has to encompass a universe that extends from the confines of a private world to the immediacy of a global village.

The easiest gear to get into may well be the individual. But which is the hardest to change?

**Elizabeth Goodridge and Ian Yearsley of Southwark Diocese
continue a series on worship.**

O Lord, fulfil thy Will
Be the days few or many, good or ill:
Prolong them, to suffice
For offering up ourselves thy sacrifice;
Shorten them if thou wilt,
To make in righteousness an end of guilt,
Yea, they will not be long
To souls who learn to sing a patient song:
Yea, short they will not be
To souls on tiptoe to flee home to thee.
O Lord, fulfil thy Will:
Make thy Will ours, and keep us patient still
Be the days few or many, good or ill.

Christina Rossetti