

Dear Friends,

Some days ago I asked someone if they had heard a particular item on the news, their reply was that they never listened to the news nor watched it on television, and they certainly did not buy a newspaper, because they did not want to hear of the dreadful things that were happening around the world. I don't know how widespread this attitude is but I suspect that there are many who do not want to hear what is happening, not only in other parts of the world, but also in Britain.

I feel very sad about this because although the news in general is rather negative, unless we are aware of it then things can get worse and eventually affect us, our family and the community. No one is an island unto himself, we cannot live in isolation. What affects others will eventually affect each of us.

With the advance of technology, and especially with the internet the world is, as it were, getting smaller and we are fast becoming a 'global village'. Britain led the world in 'equality before the Law' and in 'freedom of speech' and she tried to influence the world especially through her Empire. With sinful human beings nothing is ever perfect and mistakes were made but she did try, and did improve the lives of millions. The freedoms which British Subjects have enjoyed are the consequence of Christianity, but although they are based on the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, they did not come easily and had to be struggled for.

There is always the devil trying to undermine and destroy. As a nation, often through ignorance of our history, we are turning our back on that which made us what we are and fast returning to be a pagan society of hatred, greed, envy, revenge, sexual immorality and selfishness. Many of our so called Christian leaders are silent, and given what some seem to believe, we wonder if they are really indeed Christians.

There are thousands of Christians in others lands who are being persecuted for their Christian Faith. Many are being martyred, their wives and daughters raped; and their church buildings and homes and schools burnt to the ground.

Many of our fellowmen take refuge in their common saying: 'we are British, it could never happen here,' without realising that because of their ignorance and apathy, it is beginning to happen here, and in some quarters there is real persecution.

Almost every week now we hear of someone losing their job, especially in Government institutions, because they profess to be Christian, and wish to continue to wear as they always had done, Christian symbols, especially the cross. It is easy to blame immigrants but the majority of them are not the cause, indeed many came here because they wanted to enjoy our freedoms and opportunities. A number of them are from our former Empire where some of these freedoms are now being undermined or lost. It is the solemn duty of every Christian not only to practise their faith, but also to be aware of what is happening, as far as they are able, both in the outside world and in their own country.

We are to pray about what we hear, and where possible to help those in need. We must try to know our Faith better, by reading our Bibles under the guidance of Christ's Church, whose book it is, so that we can share the Gospel - the Good News - with others, and lovingly bring those who know not Christ to His full revelation of God, and to membership of His Body the Church.

Especially at this time of hardship, and despair among many in the workplace and consequently in their home, caused by the financial crisis and the lack of good leadership, we need to proclaim the hope of Jesus Christ at the centre of our nation, and in the government of our land.

Your friend and priest

Fr. Brian

In sickness, while we pray for the restoration of health, we know that it very largely depends on the skill of the doctors, who have learned, by observation of the laws of nature (which really are the laws of God), to apply the proper remedy.

Sometimes people speak of "faith healing," as though it were more religious to pray than to consult doctors and use medicine. This is not faith, but infidelity. It denies That God can, and generally does, use means. True faith recognizes that doctors and nurses are ministers of Christ, the Good Physician, and that medicines are to the body what sacraments are to the soul.

Father Cyril Bickersteth CR

Priest & Anglican Religious

From his book Letters to a Godson, 1902

