



## Reflections

# We are here to love, not to hate

THREE thousand years ago Kaniyan Pungundranar, a Tamil poet, wrote a phrase meaning 'All citizens in the universe are our relations and friends'.

This insightful proposition promotes respect and peaceful cohabitation and shuns discrimination in the face of many possible differences. This maxim invites us to examine conscientiously the recent statistics on hate crimes, where difference is met with hate rather than love.

The official statistics on hate crime in England and Wales are released by the Home Office and reveal an alarming rate of increase

in offences, from 42,255 in 2012/2013 to 94,098 in 2017/2018. Among the five hate crime strands used for research (race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender), offences against race are disproportionately high, with 71,251 occurrences in 2017/2018 — doubled from 35,845 in 2012/2013. Brexit is understood to have fuelled this sharp increase in recent years.

Among many blessings of democracy, the term 'minority' remains a curse, since some politicians and individuals belonging to majority groups use it to win votes and favour through hate

campaigns. They capitalise on a human's natural limitations as, neurologically, it is easier for humans to hate than to love. That is the reason why in mass gatherings, driven by feelings of hate, participants can engage spontaneously in protest, riot, looting and hijacking.

To love needs effort and engaging of higher cognitive and emotional functions. Love can become effortless and spontaneous only if conscious effort and practice has been made over long periods of time. A civilised society is built on this. My perspective is that most people in this country

are clearly part of our civilised society and I have experienced lots of love, expressed in various fine forms during my eight years in Okehampton and Chagford. Yet I know there are some selfish, ignorant and bad individuals who take pleasure in harbouring hate for their own survival and success and foster division between the majority and the minority. I have heard sad stories from a few of our parishioners of how they became victims of hate crime and also from one of my academic tutors in London. We need to stand united in spite of our differences in order to defeat the evil forces that divide

and harm us. As a civilised society we must cast out hate.

The beauty of Britain, and its success, has rested on its ability to live and let live, to respect various ethnic, racial, linguistic, sexual and religious minorities. In order to continue this, we need to encourage and promote individuals, organisations and systems that sow seeds of love and unity. 'Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good' (Romans 12:9).

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