

God calls us to be ourselves

I grew up in churches where there were often bible verses up on the wall.

'Repent ye, and believe the gospel' or 'Holiness unto the Lord' would be writ large to encourage us to 'holy living'.

I had friends, who for a time lived across the road from quite a fundamentalist church and they opened their curtains each morning to a cheery billboard proclaiming that 'the wages of sin is death'!

These proclamations do tell us a bit about what these churches see as important and where they focus a lot of their time and attention. But a month or two back, I was in a church which had something quite different adorning their walls.

Not scripture, but a quote from Dr Seuss:

'Today you are you, that is truer than true. There is no one alive, who is youer than you.' Initially, taken aback, because it is not what you are used to seeing in a church, but after a little bit of thought, it seemed incredibly apt. God calls us to be ourselves, not to put on a front or to be someone else.

This statement told me what this church saw as important. They were a church that was hospitable and inclusive, and they wanted everyone who walked through their doors to know it.

Everyone was welcome, just as they are. There would be no need to conform to a mould or stereotype. I whole-heartedly wish that many other churches would strive to be as welcoming as they are.

Sometimes the bible can be used as a tool to beat us with; to make us conform to a pattern that does not suit who we are. This can make us uncomfortable and anxious, always trying to live up to an ideal that we can never attain.

This is not the way it should be. Jesus welcomed all. He ate with those who wouldn't have been considered 'polite company' and criticised those who thought themselves flawless.

Jesus wants you to know this: you are you! He wants you to be the best you that you can be.

You are not meant to be anyone else than you. You are known, you are loved and you are welcomed by him.

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