

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Be all the colours God made you to be

I was thrilled to hear that Lancaster University was recently named 'International University of the Year' by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020.

This is on top of being ranked 8th overall in the national league tables. Lancaster is the only university to have a presence in sub-Saharan Africa, having opened a campus in Ghana: just one of many partnerships with leading universities in 24 countries.

On this international theme, Lancaster House in London, managed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is a venue of international reputation, purchased by Lancastrian Lord Leverhulme (who also founded my school – Bolton Girls; Division) in 1913.

I can take no credit whatsoever, but I am encouraged by the international reach of our city.

In the book of Revelation, at the end of the Bible, there's one of many visions of heaven: "I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and the Lamb." (Revelation 7.9).

Deep inside we long for our world where 'labels', where our self-constructed dividing walls, are a thing of the past. Heaven is infinitely colourful. If Jesus was fully man and fully God, then the more we are filled with God, the more ourselves we should be. I look forward to that heavenly day when we find ourselves fully, alive, in all our colours – the people God made us to be.

Catherine of Sienna (a 14th century mystic) said this: "Be who God called you to be and you will set the world on fire."

Are you hiding your colours? Are you playing safe?

A bishop friend of mine was visiting his elderly neighbours. 'Take care' he said as he left, only to be soundly upbraided: "At our age, we don't want to take care, we want to take risks!"

Big visions thrive in the soil of risk. How about we take a leaf from Lancaster University's book? Reach out across the divides, take risks, be all the colours God made you to be. May you glimpse a taste of heaven in all its colours today.

**Rt Rev Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster**

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