

JEP Talking Point: November 23rd 2013

There is a shocking truth lurking in your box of Christmas decorations. Amidst the lights, tinsel and left over crackers many of us will unpack a crib. There we see something so subversive that the Roman Empire sought to eradicate it. The dynamite is the Shepherds and Magi. They represent very different parts of ancient society. The Magi were powerful enough to speak to King Herod and rich enough to offer expensive gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, yet they share equal space with the shepherds who lived at the opposite end of the economic ladder. The Shepherds were often considered disreputable to the point that their evidence was inadmissible in a court of law. To add yet another layer of disturbance, the two groups represent different nationalities. The scandal for the Roman Empire was of an emerging faith that valued all equally. The crib scene is part of a process that would cause St Paul to write, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus". That spirit of egalitarianism would also inspire some of the greatest movements of liberation within history. So when we unpack our Christmas decorations the crib reminds us that irrespective of age, background or economic circumstances all can belong, all are welcome and all valued. That is a shocking truth to be celebrated as we gather around the crib, and through every season of the year.

Rev'd Tony Morling: Minister at St Helier Methodist Centre, Halkett Place.