

Tony Thinking Aloud cxi

Every Sunday I watch 'Songs of Praise'. I think of a clergyman friend of mine who never watches and speaks against it. So why? He says – 'look at the congregation singing the hymns, they are all wearing their very best Sunday clothes. Some even look as if they are dressed as a guest at a wedding. It gives the impression that everyone who goes to church is upper class!'

I have thought about this. It is not entirely true, and things change in different circumstances.

Think, if you are going to the Cathedral or Saint Chad's Church, Burton upon Trent (both have been the venue for Songs of Praise), what would you wear? You would be pleased to go, be seen on nationwide television, everyone singing hymns in a place you respect. You are hoping others will enjoy with you proclaiming the Christian message through the 'Songs of Praise' programme. Well, would you wear your gardening clothes?

My first thought is that this gives the impression that being a Christian you must come from one certain group of people. But when 'Songs of Praise' is from the beach at Llandudno then people look very different. They dress differently for a different occasion, yet they are singing hymns with gusto. Singing hymns in your beach wear, God does not mind!

We have to be as the phrase goes – all things to all people! Think...Grandma loves her grandchildren as she plays with them on the floor, she is great at baby talk. Grandma is the same person but expresses a different personality when she invites her friends around for a meal! We are all things to all people.

Living is like that – 'Songs of Praise' is like that – expressing faith is like that!

I think we should give thanks for the broad personalities we all are and how we can adapt to people and situations, still showing care and meaning.