

Mon 19 January 2015



Please forgive me starting the new year on a sombre note. There has been so much grief and tragedy over recent weeks. Some of it within the Anglicare family.

Perhaps you are also like me in being affected by some of the horrible events brought into our lounge rooms by the TV News.

In difficult times, it is important to remember the values we share at Anglicare. They can help us get through the challenges of the year ahead, whatever they may be.

Loving Muslims

One important value at Anglicare, is that we offer loving service, care and support to all people regardless of their faith (or none).

Reflecting on the recent terrible tragedy in Paris, it felt appropriate to want to stand in solidarity with the victims of such barbarism. However on deeper reflection I concluded that I could not honestly say *Je Suis Charlie*. My reasoning was similar to **Justin Glyn in Eureka Street**.

Freedom of speech doesn't give us a right to insult other people and their core identity.

One of our organisational values at Anglicare is to "respect the intrinsic worth of every person". Part of respecting someone else is to respect their identity, which includes their religious beliefs.

This doesn't mean you have to agree with them. But as St Peter said in his first letter to Christians in what we would call Turkey, the Christian way is not to provoke disagreement but to "have an answer for anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect."

Of course, no right thinking person would condone murder, whatever the provocation. Yet, wars begin with words (or images) of hate. Disregarding other people's sensitivities is not the way of peace and at Anglicare we are called to be agents of peace. Showing love to Muslims means respecting their objection to visual representations of their prophet Mohammed.

By **Jeremy Halcrow**