

I'd always had my suspicions about him.

My foster son very kindly went to pick up the five 'Point of lay' hens I had bought over the phone from the farmer. All 'teenage' chickens look a bit weird but he really stuck out. I was immediately sceptical that he would ever be 'point of lay'.

As he grew it became clearer and clearer that he was in fact not a hen but a cockerel and this was finally confirmed when we caught him copying our other cockerel with a feeble, 'my voice has just broken' crow.

Now what happens? Can we keep two cockerels? Will they fight? Will the neighbours finally say; enough is enough?

Time passed and actually the two cockerels seem to get along fine. The neighbours have not complained. Maybe they haven't noticed. So I began to think I could follow the principle 'live and let live', with regards to our gawky new cockerel.

Then a few days ago when I went to feed the chickens and put them to bed, the new cockerel seemed to rush at my leg and collide with it. I turned around to see if he was OK. He flew at my leg again, his feathers puffed out and his claws extended.

It didn't hurt but it was a bit of a shock. And now he does it on a regular basis, launching these little attacks on me and Marian. This is a bit awkward. The chicken flock are part of the way in which I engage with the parish community. People like to watch them over the fence. But if people calling at the vicarage are going to subject to attacks from a teenage tearaway cockerel, well that could be a deal breaker.

So I have tried to be firm with him, treating him roughly when he 'attacks' me. This hasn't worked. He responds to aggression with more aggression. I am beginning to realise that I may have just been making it worse.

And so now I am stuck. How do I communicate to this bird, whose brain is wired up completely differently to mine, that I mean him no harm; that I just want us to live together in harmony and peace; that I will continue to feed him and care for him, even if he never lays me any eggs? How will we ever get ourselves onto the same wavelength?

I am reminded here of the lovely verses from Isaiah 55 (8-9):

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Is the chasm between the way that I think and the way this young cockerel thinks a way for me to understand the chasm between the way I think and the way God thinks?

And as I struggle to see a sustainable future for me and my cockerel until our ways of thinking are brought into harmony, is the future of all humanity also uncertain until we too can adopt the ways of thinking that God uses?

Paul believed that this is exactly what has happened. We have been given the way of thinking that God himself uses. The future of humanity has been secured.

You must read the second chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. He sets it out more powerfully than I can here.

Paul says that by giving us the gift of the Spirit, God gives us all His way of thinking. He has given us the mind of Christ.

We can now think his thoughts. We can now be guided in the paths of peace. We can now live reconciled with God, through Jesus Christ.

And Paul makes it clear that to accept this astonishing gift of God, we have to be ready to cast aside what we used to consider as wisdom; the wisdom we used to take pride in.

I pray we can cast aside the false wisdom that gets in the way of us accepting the gift of the Holy Spirit; the gift that enables us to think a bit like God thinks.

Just as I hope my young cockerel will cast aside the wisdom he has which is that if he attacks me, the hens in his coop will regard him as their protector and they will lay eggs that will hatch out his chicks. I pray he will cast this wisdom aside and embrace the way that I think and be reconciled to my plans to care for him.

God, the King of Glory,

You have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom  
in heaven,

We beseech you, leave us not directionless, but send your Holy Spirit to guide  
and renew us, giving us the mind of our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who is alive and reigns with you

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever.

Amen.