

## Tyndale Thought for the Day

20th May 2020

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Last night our youngest son delivered a week's shopping, placing it on a shelf in the porch of our house and withdrawing two metres away – all good social distancing – and we had a conversation. Clearly we must not do anything to put our health, or more importantly that of others, at risk, but the concept of social distancing seems sub-Christian if not anti-Christian. Were not the socially distanced in the gospels the lepers on whom Jesus had compassion? As then it is a two way process: both the sick and the vulnerable are socially separated. Ephesians 2 is rich in making a very different declaration: Christ, through his death on the cross, has destroyed all social barriers, so that we who were far off, separate from Christ, are brought near, “for he himself is our peace. Gentiles and Jews he has made the two one” [Eph 2, 14]. Not unreasonably we could talk about Jew and Arab rather than Jew and Gentile – what a change is there spelt out! And then think of the many divisions in our own society, “barriers of enmity”, or just walls of suspicion, that need to be broken down. The question for us thus remains as to what we have done to fulfil this gospel mandate. Are we still building, strengthening, protecting, those all pervasive barriers, or are we seriously engaged in removing them?

*John Briggs*