

Thursday 4th June 2020

### Welcome again to our weekly FOCUS.

Life under Lockdown has recently been full of surprises. After weeks of careful living, caring for each other in our communities, being entertained online by the creativity of others, suddenly one issue has galvanised thousands upon thousands of people into demonstrations out on the streets. And the flash point was the 8 minutes 20 seconds of an American policeman's knee on the neck of George Floyd—a murder captured on video and then viewed all over the world. The issue is, of course, racism.

Who would have predicted what we have recently seen? And where will it take us? It seems the internet will take over as the main vehicle for ensuring this issue remains high in our consciousness. And within all of our western, European societies, profound questions will be asked about our relationships across races, and about how we have been in the past.

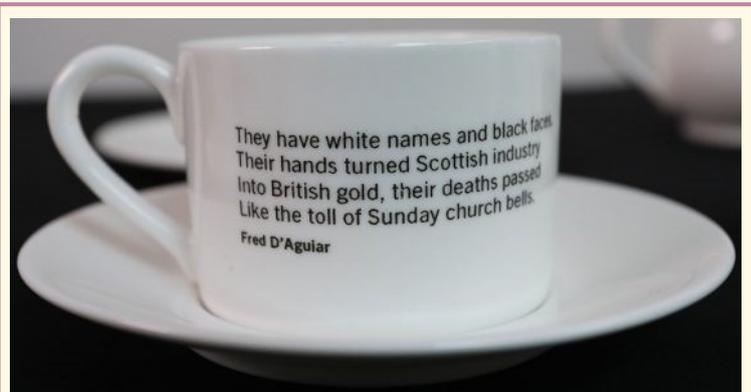
But what about Scottish participation in racism and slavery and exploitation? If we are to be a society upholding the values inscribed on the Mace of the Scottish Parliament, of "Wisdom, Justice, Compassion, Integrity", then these values direct us towards a more balanced understanding of our past.

In 2019 the National Museum of Scotland and the University of Edinburgh embarked upon a joint project entitled "The Matter of Slavery in Scotland." It is, they said, "...an aspect of history that has rarely been associated with Scotland." "Until recently, research into our links with the slave system has focused on the Scottish contribution to arguments for abolition. In the past decade or so, new studies have begun to reveal just how involved Scots were in the slave system, as owners of plantations and slaves. The wealth created by slave-based industries such as tobacco, sugar and textiles across the ocean was invested back home. The money was used to build townhouses in our cities, develop country estates, and to buy luxury things – everything from silverware, ceramics and carpets to jewellery and clothing.

" Source: NMS

The tea-set in the picture is now an exhibit of the Museum's collection. "Contemporary collecting," they say, "is not just about documenting major social, political and cultural change as it unfolds. It is also about marking shifts in the way we understand the past."

In the Christian Church we have always understood the incarnation and the ministry of Jesus as bringing a major shift in the way the world came to understand the past, the present and the future—and fundamentally about what it means to be a human being loved of God, and what it means to be 'fully human'. The Christian vision of God as the God of love for all persons—we have so often in history fallen by the wayside on this—should now be challenging us towards an honesty about our past, and towards a vision for the future that more fully reflects the love of Jesus. We should not be left untouched by what is currently happening.



### Rethinking the Past.

"From the 17th to the 19th century, the drinking of tea and coffee – and the sugar that went into it – was inseparable from the brutal system of slavery that saw people taken from Africa, shipped to the West Indies and forced to produce the stuff of luxury for growing groups of consumers across Europe. These enslaved people and their children became the property of their owners for life."

Source: National Museum of Scotland, Current Research—The Matter of Slavery in Scotland.

### Tinto Parishes REFLECTION phone line.



The line is available to call at any time, and a new reflection is added on Friday every week.

**01899 205410**

A reflection from Rev. George for those who cannot access the internet or take part in the Sunday worship—or just anyone!

**"For Jesus there are no countries to be conquered, no ideologies to be imposed, no people to be dominated.**

**There are only children, women and men, to be loved.**

*Henri Nouwen.*



“And so it begins! .

‘Good morning, I’m calling from the NHS track and trace service. According to our system, you are likely to have been in close proximity to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. This means that you now need to self-isolate for 7 days and take a COVID -19 test.’

‘OK. Can you tell me who that person was?’

‘I’m not able to tell you that. That is confidential information.’

‘Right. Um... so ....’

‘But you do need to be tested within the next 72 hours. So can I just get the best mailing address so that we can send a kit to you?’

‘Ok (gives address)’

‘Thank you - and I just need to take a payment card so that we can finalise this and send the kit to you.’

‘Sorry - a payment card? I thought this was all free?’

‘No - I’m afraid not. There is a one-off fee of £50 for the kit, and test results. Could you read off the long card number for me, please, when you’re ready.’

‘No - that’s not right. This is part of the NHS so there’s no charge.’

‘I’m afraid there is. Can you give me the card number please - this is very important, and there are penalties for not complying.’

Puts phone down.

This is a real telephone conversation that took place just a few days ago when the phone in a West Lothian Manse rang. Thanks to Suzanne Marshall for sharing this widely.

We know this sort of call from the Government may come to any home. The virus is invisible to us, and even if we are shielding...well, it might be possible. Even the fact they can’t tell makes it sound ‘official’. So, what do we need to do?

This seems logical. Giving out your address isn’t such a big problem if they already have your phone number, but it starts the process of you giving out information. Up to this point here there’s nothing you have said that they couldn’t find anywhere else

You have already started giving information. Now they ask for more –but this is information you that you shouldn’t give out to anyone you don’t trust.

**THIS IS THE DANGER MOMENT.**

You have reservations about what you are hearing. They become very firm—as is they’d never heard such a question before, and you are wasting a government official’s valuable time. If you are at all vulnerable to pressure, you can give out information while still feeling something not quite right.

**Well done.** You don’t like to put the phone down on anyone, but it’s the only way to stop the pressure. Now, if you are still stressed by this, tell someone you trust.

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

**Biggar** Coronavirus Community Action Group. Shopping and Prescription Delivery Helpline—07376 318724 (10-3h daily). A Biggar Community Council initiative for those who must self isolate due to age, health issues, or symptoms.

They also run a confidential Listening Ear Service, 10-3 daily, if you are bored, lonely, anxious, or just want a chat because you feel isolated, give them a call on **07422 356835**. They don’t collect any details, just need your first name, so they can chat.

**Carmichael.** Contact Margaret Telfer on 01555 880266 if you need help. Carmichael Community Council also provide contact names for assistance, guidance—Jamie Clarkson 01555 880213; Jen Martin 07811 045 578; Danielle Nesbit 07814 332 699; Ray Peace 07711 544 956—list is updated at the Community Hall.

**Lanark and surrounding Villages.** LanarkHelps is a volunteer led community helpline offering practical support along the lines of the other support helplines. It can be contacted Mon-Fri 9am to 4.45pm, Sat –9am to 12noon on **01555 437051**.

**Libberton**—Blackmount volunteers are covering Libberton. There are 5 volunteers numbers, and 19 volunteers offering support. In the first instance try Patrick on **07901 686759** or Nick on **07966 633428**.

**Symington Community Coronavirus Support**—a Community Council initiative for those affected by the national guidance on remaining at home—to assist with shopping, prescription uplift or other issues. Contact **07807 235 811** (10-12h and 2-4h)- at other times leave a message.

**Thankerton, Covington & Quothquan.** The Community Council is in partnership with Biggar, so call the Shopping and Prescription Delivery Helpline on 07376 318724

**South Lanarkshire Council** –they operate a Community Wellbeing Line—0303 123 1009—9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. For those shielding, over 70, long-term health problems including learning disability, pregnant, or with weakened immune systems. It gives access to services run by the Council and on behalf of the Scottish Government, and also signposting.

**NHS Lanarkshire.** Their Psychological Services run a Public Distress (Covid—19) Helpline offering advice and guidance to anyone in Lanarkshire experiencing anxiety or distress during the Covid-9 outbreak. **01698 687 567**, 8am—4pm weekdays.



**Tinto Parishes REFLECTION line is available at any time.** A weekly reflection from Rev. George for those who cannot access the internet or take part in the Sunday worship—or just anyone!

**01899 205410.** A new reflection is usually available from Friday morning onwards.

THE TINTO PARISHES are Cairngryffe , Libberton & Quothquan, and Symington Parish Churches—all part of the Church of Scotland.

**If you would like to speak to the Minister for any reason, please contact**

**Rev George Shand on 01899 309400 or on [George.Shand@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:George.Shand@churchofscotland.org.uk)**