

Starting the day peacefully

It is some time, about six months, since I have listened to Trans World Radio which is an evangelical Christian radio station broadcasting not only by the Internet but the way I get it, via Freeview TV. This morning I woke after my usual assortment of dreams and decided that the best remedy was hearing the gospel of Jesus being preached. My favourite preacher is Colin Smith. He is from the Free Church in England now working in California I believe and is a very good academic as well as preacher. You can find out about him by searching for 'unlocking the bible'

Choosing between BBC 'News' and TWR is a no-brainer so I listen for half an hour to remind myself about values, priorities, things to bear in mind when leading the good life and soul. From now on – touch wood – plus the weakness of the flesh permitting I will do the same every morning.

This evening, we had a ZOOM meeting with the men's group in Frome. The best sort of discussions happen from a simple enquiry like "how are you". We were discussing the ways that God has protected us and were asked to give an example. I said rather scurrilously and if we were protected we would not be aware of it because nothing would happen to us.

We also discussed in this Covid society context about touching and was then how important it was. I pulled up a study piece from the Bible saying that Jesus had healed on 16 separate occasions by touching the people concerned including replacing the ear of the soldier that Peter had cut off, healing a woman from bleeding and a man who had leprosy.

Even amongst Christians, awareness of the real nature of Covid is very low and I think most people prefer to switch off and do what they are told. I have to be very careful how I mention it in case I alienate people so I just content myself with the

occasional comment about the absurdity of masks etc.

The organiser of the ZOOM meeting said that he had a mailing list of 90 men. I was surprised to see only four people show up that is apart from me and the organiser. I suggested that he write a letter to everybody, not scolding them saying what a good time we had and the topics that we discussed hoping that they would feel free to join next time. When we write e-mails we need to see it from the point of view of those who receive it not from our point of view.

People who write stuff – and I'm sure I'm included in that – tend to take others' knowledge for granted. For example I have no fear of ZOOM but I know some people don't like any form of technology and put this 'needs must' phenomenon into that category. It is indeed a very useful piece of kit and you can for example chat to one person or everybody, the organiser can run a poll to get people's opinions and can be more efficient than a real-life meeting.

I celebrated evening for more than one reason. This was the first time in my 76 years that I've heard the word 'prevenient' never mind used it. It is an adjective with framing news, one of which is going before or preceding, the second is anticipating or expectant of something, or thirdly and antecedent to human action. I don't know how often I will use that word but it's nice to have it in my toolbox.