

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2022**

## **Connections**

**"Wonder ... is the first principle which prompts mankind ... to lay open the concealed connections that unite the various appearances of nature."**

*Adam Smith, Essays on Philosophical Subjects, 'The History of Astronomy'*

Before Christmas and into this New Year I've had some remarkable connections with people: *FaceTime* calls to my sister in the north of Scotland and long-standing friends in the USA; a *Zoom* consultation with a couple in Fargo, North Dakota, who're to be married next summer; a *Teams* meeting with an organisation where I volunteer; a professional conversation with a friend in the Netherlands; and a lengthy on-line chat and telephone conversation with a Microsoft employee in Nigeria.

The final one of these may require a little explanation. I was having a problem with Microsoft Office 365. I couldn't get the "insert page number" function to work. No amount of trying this and that and looking at Q&A threads on various blog sites, fixed the problem. There was nothing else for it – I'd have to contact Microsoft. And that's why, for seventy-five minutes, I got to know a lady from Nigeria very well indeed, as she "took remote control" of my PC (with my permission, of course), installed an "upgrade" (whatever that is), gave me guidance over the phone and set the whole thing right.

Adam Smith didn't live in an electronic world when he pointed us to "wonder" in the connections that unite us. But he encouraged us to "lay open the concealed connections". My connection with Microsoft was laid open by a kind lady from Nigeria. But what about concealed connections closer to home? I need to say something in love, but reticence keeps it concealed. My concerns for issues of poverty and justice aren't always actioned. I know people cry for help, but their pleas are unheard because I don't listen. There are words of challenge needed in a sermon, or even a "Thought for the Day", that stay hidden in my heart.

If the electronic world opens me to the wonder of such a variety of connections, might there be even greater wonder if I lay open the concealed connections that could matter all the more?

### **A prayer for today**

*Lord, as I work on the connections I have with those around me,  
may I never lose my connection with you. Amen*