**Reflection for Sunday 14 June 2020**

Who writes the history books? I will admit that the saying of “a little bit of knowledge is dangerous” applies here. I didn’t do history as a GCSE, so my experience of the past is limited.

At Primary School and early in Secondary, we learned about the Romans, the Saxons, the Vikings, the Vandals, the Celts all who invaded Britain at various times – so can we really say that there are any truly pure Britons left?

We learned for example that the Romans were organised and civilised, that they built roads and cities and walls, but not much was made of how brutally they did it – we learned more about that from the Gospels than the classroom.

Nor can we say that the church is exempt from sanitising its history. As an institution we have a lot to answer for in our treatment of others in our attempts to “convert the heathens”. We cannot claim to be innocent.

In the passage for this week Jesus says “I am sending you out like sheep into a pack of wolves” as the message we bring is often controversial and dangerous as it challenges the status quo. But a message we take nonetheless.

So what of those affected by history? The records after all, are often written by the victors, the winners, the conquerors. But what of the losers, the oppressed, those cast aside? So much of our history is built on the exploitation of others, of the weak, of those who are “different”. We become complacent that “we are not like that”, but our ingrained culture would beg to differ as the events of the past few days would illustrate.

So how do we achieve equality for all? How do we challenge our own perceptions of what we believe our history to be – and how much we are influenced by what we are told rather than what actually happened?

We may look at the #black lives matter and glibly reply “all lives matter”. Of course they do, but if the victims of centuries of abuse and oppression do not speak out – who will? How can we challenge our perception of the past and change our future if we don’t listen to the voices of those who have never been heard?

May we open our ears to the voices of the oppressed, the poor, the marginalised, the “different”. May we allow our own preconceptions to be challenged, and our culture questioned, that we may open our hearts and minds to all, and not just the few that are “like us”.

Keep safe

RevRuth