

Which way are you looking?

As I write this, nations around the world are beginning to ease their way cautiously out of the lockdown caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In the UK too we are beginning to look at what we will, and won't, be able to do in the weeks and months ahead, and what we will need to do differently.

For many in our nation, and globally, COVID-19 has brought either heartbreaking tragedy or unprecedented personal risk and heroism, or both. But for many others it has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to press the 'pause' button on 'normal life,' to reflect, and to begin to assess what it is that we actually value most. I have heard voices locally, and from across the world, saying that they value the chance to slow down, to travel less, to step out of the must-have, choice-driven, consumer-driven lifestyle. Many have said to me that the only thing they really miss is actual, physical contact with family. Unsurprisingly, a YouGov survey found that only 9% of Britons want life to return to 'normal.' Across the world, people have been appreciating less air pollution, (people in some Indian cities have been able to see the Himalayas for the first time in their lives), hearing birdsong, seeing wildlife, and sharing in stronger communities.

As we hopefully begin to move beyond COVID, we have an amazing opportunity to help our politicians build a future with hope. Countless voices have been telling us for decades that our 'normal' life is a crisis, destroying the climate, biodiversity and ourselves. This pandemic was not a surprise; it was the natural, inevitable, foreseen outcome of our global choices. Whether or not it is simply the first of many more is up to us.

As a Christian, I believe that every step we take to combat the damage done by our climate crisis and our biodiversity emergency, every step we take to value our poor sisters and brothers around the world, and our non-human sisters and brothers, is a step that gladdens God's heart, and brings us the joy that can only come from living according to God's ways of justice, and peace, and harmony.

Yours in Christ,
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