

July 2021 - Little steps

Recently, I have been able to enjoy walks with our young grandchild, something that many of us have missed over the last year or so. As many of us know, walking with a toddler is very different from walking on our own!

Our grandchild is walking reasonably confidently, but has a very different set of priorities on a walk from most adults. The destination is completely unimportant, but the travel is everything. Every interesting sight or object has to be inspected and experienced, whether it is watching an ant walk across the path, or carrying a stick, watching a sheep eat grass or copying the noise the ducks make. And whilst I am aware that generally I tend to notice some things more than others, our grandchild pays attention to everything. The commonest flower is as interesting as the rarest, a duck or a sheep is often more interesting than a person. In short, our grandchild helps me to stop and look properly at things that otherwise I might ignore. As we walk, and look, and play, I am reminded and encouraged to engage thoroughly with the world I am part of.

I believe that part of the message of Christianity is the invitation to live life to the full, to engage fully with all that is around us; to become like a small child in laying aside many of our preconceptions about what is or is not important, and to value all that God has made, all that God loves. Although the Bible tells us repeatedly that God made all, and God is God of all, and although Jesus taught us to constantly expand our category of 'those we care about,' our lives still often indicate that actually we still believe in a tribal god, interested only, or mainly, in humanity.

My prayer is that we will all learn again to engage fully with the world around us, as our grandchild does, finding it endlessly fascinating and endlessly absorbing. And that as we learn to value more deeply, we will also learn to care more deeply.

Yours in Christ,
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