

Coronavirus reflections

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This Easter is like no other in my entire ministry. Yet curiously, being in self-isolation has had some wonderful spiritual benefits. Self-isolation has slowed everything down and offered time to meditate and pray.

Reflecting on COVID 19, a 95 year old woman in England said amusingly, 'It's like Mother Nature has said – you're all naughty and out of control, therefore I am going to confine you to your bedrooms so you can lie down and think quietly to yourselves about your misdeeds and when you are rested and had time to think, let's talk and see if together we can continue your journey on the right path!'

In the Book of Genesis chapters 1 to 3 it is profoundly clear that there is a contract between human beings and their environment. The violation of this contract resulted in the human family being expelled "East of Eden" (Genesis 3).

Future Shock is a 1970 book by the futurist Alvin Toffler, in which the author defines the term "future shock" as "too much change in too short a period of time". We got the speed wobbles. Humanity has got out of step with the environment. So, according to the wise 95-year-old lady in England, we have been sent off to the naughty corner, "East of Eden" to consider our relationship with the environment.

One small virus can bring the entire human enterprise to a halt. Who is really in charge? How we live on this world is fundamentally determined by the order God created between human beings and the environment. Again, we read in James: ¹³ *Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money."* ¹⁴ *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.* ¹⁵ *Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that"* (James 4:13-15 NIV). The great Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer, who lived to 104 years of age would say: "Life is a breath of air."

I heard a politician express his hope: "After this virus life will snap back again." I hope not! I hope we learn some things during this period. Learn some things that will change the way we live with our environment and each other. If we don't, nature may have some other more serious things in stall for us. Environmental scientists are already alerting us to this dreadful possibility. We aren't in control, we are guests on a lovely planet, sojourners, trustees. Our life is a gift from God, let's use his gift in harmony with our environment and each other.