

What's the Story? Easter 2020

Two refrains have kept running through my mind recently:

"What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stop and stare,"
(the opening lines of "Leisure" by the Welsh poet, W.H.Davies, 1871–1940) and

"Be still, and know that I am God!"
(Psalm 46 v.10).

Time to stop, to observe, to ponder, to know.

What's the story? What is my story?
What will be the story?

Like many others, I have been catapulted into a fresh realisation of the reality that I am now "elderly", "Senior", also "self-isolating" and "staying at home", with certain Government provisions.

But I am not alone.

Extremely kind friends, and a previously unknown volunteer from our local support-group, ensure a regular supply of essential food and medication.
I can join in a Senior work-out on YouTube!
I can gather with friends from around our Methodist Circuit, and beyond for Holy Week and Easter services, and on into the weeks ahead, on Zoom. (So, I am now a "zoomling").
I can share with my son and family and my daughter, and their church families, in services and devotions streamed on line.
I have communication with my family and friends by phone and video-link, by e-mail and snail-mail, and surprise conversations with friends with whom I usually correspond at Christmas.

We are distancing physically but not spiritually, emotionally nor socially, coming closer together through shared experiences.

There are other advantages and benefits of the "lock-down".

The air is cleaner, the bird-song clearer, wildlife flourishing.
I already have a rich bank of memories stored in my mind and on my new phone-camera, accumulated on recent, local, solitary, early-morning walks by the river:–
the fading super-moon in the West,
the red sun rising above the Chiltern Hills,
bringing warmth as the sun rises from the cool water of the river,
the clear reflections of the silhouettes of various trees, reeds and grasses,
the fresh, light green of lime and weeping willow trees,
soft, yellow pussy-willow catkins,

sticky horse–chestnut buds gradually coming into leaf and buds which promise white candles,
three stately, black cormorants perched like steps on a tall, dead tree, one with wings outstretched to dry,
two geese honking as they rise and fly up–river,
two swans gliding low over the water, silent except for the beating of their wings,
the thrill of the flash of blue of an unexpected kingfisher darting from the river–bank
the calling and drumming of woodpeckers, and
an ambulance passing over the bridge, its siren piercing the stillness and sense of peace, reminding me of the grim reality of these strange times but also of sacrificial love and care.

This Spring, as in every Spring, as creation bursts into fresh, new life after the barren beauty of Winter, we are reminded, and know afresh, that God is. God is always there for us and for His entire creation, known and unknown, if we can only stop and stare and still ourselves. God is God. He was and is and is to come. He is the beginning and the end. And God is love. This Easter–time, God, who made Himself known in Jesus, gave Himself in love in Jesus and raised Jesus to life, gives us new life, fullness of life, eternal life. Like Spring, the truth of the Easter story comes afresh in 2020. It is the story undergirding all else, for ever true, for ever new. He is risen. He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Libby Bolton. April, 2020.