

Déjà vu – all over again!

So – where have you been for the last couple of months?

In lockdown recovery...

Mmm... Lockdown recovery, what's that?

Well, coming out of lock-down, I was suffering from a multiplicity of complaints - Zoom fatigue, bread-makers' elbow, gardeners' fingers, dislocated hip from overdoing yoga, a growth on my vocal chords from Javanese throat singing, severe headaches from binge-watching box sets, and stomach problems from a high fibre, artichoke and dandelion diet which actually made me put on a stone and a half in weight. In addition to all that, the trophy pet that I decided to buy after watching Tiger King has pretty much destroyed all of the living room furniture, not to mention the smell and its' disgusting eating habits - so it had to go and is now roaming once again in the Serengeti. And to cap it all, I was duped by someone via email, who was supposedly the governor of the central bank of Vanuatu, into parting with £20,000 that was intended for investing in merchandising and starting a YouTube channel for my blogging alter-ego, Bloggy MacBlogface. So, I decide to go into a quiet room for a few months to pray and meditate.

So, how are you doing now - are you feeling a bit better?

Yes, I have stopped doing all of those new things and gone back to my old lifestyle.

But what if we go back into lockdown again, what are you going to do different this time?

I have a list of brilliant new things that I want to try.....

I have spoken to many people who have had very different experiences of lockdown. For some, it may have been a relatively peaceful and stress-free time, but I would guess for many people, lockdown was very challenging in terms of health, family situation, finances, etc. My daughter was really affected by lockdown – she thrives on being around her friends and people in general and not being able to do this had a

very negative effect on her well-being. Fortunately, she is now back at college and getting back to her old self. However, I remain somewhat anxious and fearful about re-entering lockdown and a repeat of what happened in the summer. It is a reminder to us about people needing people and lockdown takes this away. While for some, it might be an opportunity to try new and different things and show off our cool credentials, the reality is that the negative effects can far outweigh this. And often, these effects are not seen immediately and build up over time, resulting in issues down the track. They are not, statistically speaking, easy to quantify and therefore, tend to be neglected by government as they like something to measure and drawing graphs. Keeping people connected and involved is so important for all of us, for our families, our church and our community.

As I stood outside of Sainsbury's in Fetcham last Saturday lunchtime, resplendent in my LoveFetcham t-shirt, and frozen to my very core, I was greatly impressed by the local community in which we live. When asked to contribute to our Hearts of Hope banner, there were relatively few people who completely blanked me or others in our little team. We had many positive comments and not really any grumpy people who thought we were wasting our time. I spoke to a young couple from Sutton, looking that day at houses to buy in the local area, and they were impressed by the sense of community that we were promoting. In terms of LoveFetcham, those who wrote prayers and other messages of love on our Hearts of Hope gave us quite a diverse range of things to be grateful for, to hope for and to remember. For some reason, the pie shop (William Dyer) certainly was receiving a lot of love!

There is a sense that when everything is changing around us and huge uncertainty prevails, we need something that does not change, that remains the same, on which we can rely - yesterday, today and forever. Thank you Nathan for reminding us of this last week during the worship at the 10 am virtual service. Whatever new normal means for each of us, that part of the old normal is definitely OK with me.

PA – 01/10/2020