

April 8, 2020

Trinity Musings: Rev Brian Goodings (self-isolating and feeling sadder today in my office at Trinity UC)

I assume you've heard that John Prine died yesterday from complications caused by his Covid-19 infection? He was one of my favourite singers and song writers and gave the world songs like Sam Stone, Angel from Montgomery and dozens and dozens of others. I used to sing his song Dear Abby at the top of my lungs while tree-planting in northern Ontario. I probably had most of the words and tune mixed into my own version, but it kept me in a good mood in spite of the misery of that work. Drove the blackflies and my fellow tree planters away too so I spent most of the days happily alone. He was a musician's musician and Andrea and I had tickets to go and see him this year at the Mariposa Folk Festival in Orillia in July. This virus has now cancelled all the tomorrows and songs he might have shared with others. Sad news indeed, heaped on top of all the sad news we've been inundated with as of late.

This virus seems to be everywhere...and it probably is or has been in one form or another for a long time. I read about it being found in a tiger at the Bronx Zoo yesterday. I wonder who administered the test! Standing on the business-end of a 900 pound tiger and sticking a twelve inch swab up their nose wouldn't seem like a good idea to me. It's something that Joe Exotic (Tiger King) might do but he's in jail right now for trying to kill Carol...gadzooks...sad commentary that I know so much about that crazy-dude!

The important thing to remember right now is that our testing results are helping us describe where this virus is, or has been, but it's this knowledge that is spreading quickly, not necessarily just the virus. When the first microscope was invented and people put lake water under the slide, they discovered an entire world of microscopic plants and animals that no one knew existed.

They had always been there but nobody could see them. Same story with the telescope. It "discovered" things we didn't know about before we looked through the lens. Likewise the testing for the Covid-19 virus. We are growing in our "knowing" as much as anything. We may always have been at risk from corona-like-viruses but we haven't been testing on an international level like we are right now. This particular mutation of a virus is proving to be deadly but it's not like they just appeared out of nowhere.

We are certainly in a very public and alarming pandemic right now but I believe it's important NOT to panic. On many levels, the world is only temporarily more dangerous from the threat of viruses that it has been since the beginning of our existence. We just haven't known as much as we do right now and it's unsettling-but not really something that wasn't there before.

I reiterate what I said in an earlier musing, THE most oft repeated phrase in the Bible is “Do not fear”. John Wesley (not quoting scripture) may have coined the phrase “Cleanliness is next to godliness” and God is the kind of company we can keep. It’s important to keep learning about the viral-world that has always been around us but also to quell our fears and wash our hands- A LOT.

I’ll end with the words from one of John Prine’s songs. When I Get to Heaven might have been as appropriate as anything right now but it is pretty cheeky and this is a PG column so I’ll quote from “Boundless Love” instead.

*“If by chance I should find myself at risk  
A-falling from this jagged cliff  
I look below, and I look above  
I’m surrounded by your boundless love  
Surround me with your boundless love  
Confound me with your boundless love  
I was drowning in the sea, lost as I could be  
When you found me with your boundless love  
You dumbfound me with your boundless love  
You surround me with your boundless love”*

May he rest in peace and we keep singing and playing his wonderful songs that he gave the world.

\*link to Boundless love

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ON7ChuK7D4>