



Stepping Toward God's Future

By Bishop Greg
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There is a place not too far from our house that has become our regular go-to place for a hike. We live on the lee side of Burnaby Mountain, which is criss-crossed with trails and bike paths of varying difficulties.

It's a great place to walk the dog and to stretch one's legs after a day of work. In no time at all, we are in the midst of towering cedar and fir, and the accompanying aromas of resinous needles and moist earth. There are rocks and roots jutting out everywhere along the paths, which makes walking a challenge. You have to watch your step along the way. It's heads down; you don't want to trip. And in places where boards have been installed for the trail bikes, a thin coat of algae has covered them and that can become quite slippery.

As I walk along this favourite trail of ours I regularly have to catch myself and force myself to stop. I have been so busy looking down at the ground that I have forgotten to look up. I need to stop walking, stop looking down at the ground, and take a moment to see — to see the majesty, the beauty, immenseness of the forested world around me.

I need to take time to look at the beauty of the trees reaching heavenward and at the multi-hued forest of green around me. I need to look at the rays of sunshine straining to reach the undergrowth in order to provide photosynthetic energy to the plants below. I need to stop and rest in the wonder of nature.

Perhaps this is a metaphor for our lives. Perhaps we are too focused on our feet that we have forgotten to turn our heads heavenward. In some ways, it makes sense. We need to be sure of our way. We need to look down; it's safe and we don't want to stumble. We've walked these paths before and we know what works best.

But we need to stop every so often and look up and look beyond. We need to remember the one who is the author of life, the one who has created us, the one who lives and moves and has being among us.

As I stop and look heavenward, I give thanks to God for this world in which we live. I say a prayer of thanksgiving — how could you not? — and I also say a prayer of concern and fear — how could you not? — for much threatens this creation. And we as homo sapiens are culpable. Our consumptive and dismissive attitudes have harmed God's own creation. We are the primary drivers of climate change in this age of Anthropocene. How do we find our way? How do we step forward into God's future? How do we look heavenward in order to be re-oriented for our place and time?