

17. **Adjusting to adjustments made.**¹

January 2019.

Brenda and I have spent 2018 adjusting to life with less of a 'preaching, leading and teaching' role – yet surprisingly our days still seem to be just as full! We must be slower at doing what we *do* do?

My '**laryngectomy lifestyle**' continues much as before. I had only two voicing-valve changes, 2nd May and 5th November. Royal Cornwall Hospital's policy is not to let a valve go in situ much over six months. In both cases mine had just started to give a few leaking problems when the 'six months reminder' notice appeared in my diary.

On the bus home, coming from the change, I remember thinking, "These used to be quite a battle to change early on as a laryngectomee. The Speech and Language Therapists, who carry out the procedure, could find it very difficult to keep the fistula open with a puncture dilator, in between when the old valve was removed and the new one placed. I did not enjoy having the insides of my trachea touched inadvertently, making me cough in a body-shaking, head-spinning way.

¹ When you **adjust to** a new situation, you get used to it by changing your behaviour or your ideas

But this last time **the whole process lasted just five minutes with no discomfort to speak of**. Just a tad of 'gunge' was discovered encrusted on the oesophagus (back) side of the valve. Of course this is invisible when the valve is in place, but it can make its presence felt by wedging the speech flap a tiny bit open and therefore enabling fluids to leak into the lungs, causing intense coughing. I must learn understand that a few more little coughs in a day around meals or drinks *may* be a sign to email Jane and Frances for an appointment to change my valve.

At the back of my mind as I write is an inkling to **stockpile my required laryngectomy supplies** because of all the kerfuffle around Brexit. My backplates, Heat and Moisture Exchangers (four different types), adhesive removers, foam shields, and the like, all are imported to the UK from manufacture in Sweden. I use one or two backplates, one to four HMEs, one adhesive remover sachet per day, plus occasional foam shields, for the different situations I find myself in. The supplies I have courtesy of **our great National Health Service (for which I thank God regularly)**, will not last more than a month to six weeks. So far I have resisted ordering a load more from my local doctor because our government promises there *will* be enough – and medical supplies are their priority. Only time will tell!

Thoughts of not being able to speak at all with any loss of all these aids, and being much more susceptible to germs etc., are unpleasant. Using them daily makes me **consistently grateful for God's blessing on me** in supplying items that I do *not* take for granted.

When **I nebulise for 30 minutes** or so every morning, with a saline solution to cleanse the inside of my stoma, and then while I spend a further 15-30 minutes cleaning the valve and the skin before applying the adhesive backplate with HME, I try to always count these and other blessings God has given to me.

Away from laryngectomy issues, Brenda and I are adjusting to me **'doing less, as the doctor ordered'**.

We attend a church homegroup, but do not lead it. We go to church communion services with two different fellowships, but do not preach. (We *do* occasionally do public Bible readings when asked). We attend Speak Easy Club meetings sometimes, but I'm not the secretary/organiser. I go to local Atos Medical events for updating discussions.

Obviously we miss some things we used to do and some people we used to be with quite a lot. But we have quite reasonable health to thank God for – *as long as we carefully accept our physical limitations.*

I have only attended one Redruth RFC home rugby match this year – when “we” were thrashed by the top-of-the-table team from Reading known as ‘the Rams’. A friend whom I married when I was minister of my first church, in Ascot, is an influential follower of the Rams. I did not want to refuse his offer of a free lunch in the clubhouse before the game.

My 00gauge model railway has expanded to go around my study walls completely, with a twin track. There is a four track terminus station, two other stations, and two independent ovals with goods trains plus sidings. I can have four controlled trains running concurrently. The scenery will be the major item for 2019.

Work wise we were able to publish 10,000 copies of a Christian discipleship book in Juba, South Sudan, in the autumn of this year: 5,000 in English and 5,000 in Arabic. You can read and/or download both elsewhere on this website. God has graciously and generously used this book since 1987 when it was first published here in England as “Raising the Standard”.

We know of people blessed by God through it in Australia, Jamaica and Zambia, as well as Sudan and more recently South Sudan. This thought spurs us on to keep writing and publishing with whatever time God grants us before as our Father in heaven He calls us home. Both Brenda and I are working on new books for 2019 – Brenda “My Notes on Teaching the New Testament”, the complement to her “Old Testament” also on this website – and mine with the provisional title of “Later Lessons from my Journey with Jesus”! We have published up towards 100,000 books in Sudan or South Sudan.

We will really praise God if we can break that ‘goal’ in 2019.

Thank you for your interest in reading this. May God grant you peace, faith and love in the present and the future.

Colin Salter – Redruth, Cornwall, 14th December 2018.

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(mind the train set when you send!)

