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Dear Friends,

I have recently returned from a three month sabbatical which included elements of 'holiday', but the main emphasis was upon change of pace, new experiences and fresh learning.

I was most looking forward to visiting a Christian hospital in West Bengal, India, my previous travels having been mainly on European package holidays. I little anticipated the very rich, overwhelming and somewhat unsettling experience which awaited me. Believing I'd prepared myself pretty well, I had a lot of adjusting to do. Nothing prepared me for the long (much delayed) journey, or the conditions in the hospital and local community. Most impressive was the quality of the life and work of those working in the hospital. Working with almost nothing, and mainly obsolete equipment, they were cheerfully and faithfully changing and saving lives. Their achievements were amazing, and I wondered about all that we take for granted.

Since returning, I've been thinking about the need to determine what is 'enough'; a word we do not often hear, intent as our rich western society is upon the pursuit of production, consumption and profits. Our need for instant gratification is not helpful and, just yesterday, an email offered me "an iPhone 6S with no upfront cost. Amazing". I was not tempted.

In reality, this cannot continue. I am no 'Extinction Rebellion' protestor. Though their actions attracted much publicity they proved very inconvenient for many, as they pointed out some inconvenient truths. On 3rd/4th May, Tropical Cyclone Fani made land near Pune in Odisha, having been steadily winding up to a severe storm at sea. It travelled inland, thankfully decreasing in strength as it crossed West Bengal. I feared the possible consequences of it passing, in strength (as forecast) right over the hospital in Sarenga that I had recently visited, where so much is being done with so few resources.

The severity of weather events in vulnerable parts of the world is increasing. The situation in the Bay of Bengal is complex, with chronic air pollution in Kolkata (Calcutta) getting worse as the sprawling city grows.

I am no scientist but we cannot continue to ignore the fact that the careless consumption of humankind comes at a cost, especially to the world's poorest peoples.

I will always remember my Indian trip and the wonderful, committed, generous, friendly and joyful people that I met – making so much out of so little and living so simply. I will therefore try to commit to living more simply and with less, to do what little I can to enable their flourishing.

God bless,

Nigel