

## 87 *View from a drone*

This is going to be a rather self-focused article, but please bear with me; I believe I have some important questions to ask here.

I recently visited Toronto in order to give a talk about ‘macros’, the computer programs that I write for editors and proofreaders. In my preparations, I looked back, over the years, at my use of computer programs for editing text, and it made me realise how amazingly God set me up (as I see it) to become a ‘world expert’ in my (minute!) field.

When I first started using Microsoft Word for editing, 14 years ago, I had already been editing text by using computer programs for 18 years on Acorn computers, and I just assumed that this was ‘what one did’ in Word, but I soon found that virtually no-one in the proofreading and editing world had done this kind of thing.

The other factor was that we were heavily in debt, so I needed to earn money fast! I was therefore set up with both the skills and the motivation to develop, over those 14 years, a massive bank of computer programs (now over 700). My earning rate grew steadily so that now, with my pension income, I don’t need to do much paid work and so I have a lot of disposable time (which is partly why I’ve been able to spend so much time in Bible study, reading books and writing articles).

On the work front, as well as developing macros, I have created a range of YouTube training videos, my hope and prayer being that people will see this all as a witness. To celebrate my 100th video, I recorded ‘The Making of a Macro Maniac’, explaining my history with computer-based text editing. But I also explained how various of the flaws in my character – including my being an obsessive-compulsive problem-solver – have been redeemed to produce something that is hopefully useful to other people (my macros and videos).

But to show that I don’t take myself too seriously, at the end of the video I demonstrate how to take a satsuma and peel and segment it, and cut all the segments in half in under 20 seconds. (It’s at about 11 minutes into the video, if you want to know my secret!)

So what? Well, if you feel minded to pray for me in my international witness, that would be great, but please be encouraged at how God uses people’s shortcomings to bring blessing to others. (My YouTube channel now has almost 600 subscribers in more than 40 countries.)

To get back to my title, the drone is just one of the new technologies that has allowed archaeological investigations (my latest passion!) to reveal things about a potential site that might otherwise not be spotted. By taking an aerial view of the site, we can see patterns that aren’t obvious at ground level.

But that’s just an illustration (it makes a change from the ‘looking at a tapestry with a magnifying glass’ one): it says that taking the big picture is sometimes very helpful. Actually, I’ve recently been doing this with Romans, reading several chapters at a sitting, trying not to get distracted by the minutiae, and it has been *really* revealing. But that’s for another day!

As with my work life, I've recently been looking back at my spiritual journey and I stand in awe at how God has been at work, seeing how far I have come – or so I hope and believe. Here's how I see it from a drone's eye view, in bullet points:

#### My initial unhappinesses

- the gospel as a mechanism (shouldn't it be a relationship?)
- prayer as a shopping list (shouldn't it be part of a relationship?)
- feeling embarrassed at British imperialism over the centuries, both politically and religiously
- the prevailing attitude of Christians (me!) towards homosexuals and homosexuality

#### My attitudes

- Christianity is right (therefore all other religions are wrong)
- my job in life is to persuade other people of the rightness of my (Christian) views

#### My trajectory

- the 'I'm right' syndrome came to a head through being in a tiny sect
- left the sect, but then 'what *do* I believe? Does God even exist?'
- rebuilt a sort-of-Christian faith
- 'discovered' the Trinity (so I was right about relationship after all!)
- (coming from a dysfunctional family, I think I discovered love again)
- reverted to type and tried to persuade everyone that the Trinity was 'the answer' (Doh!)

#### My continued questioning

- what about all the 'nasty stuff' in the OT?!
- still really struggling with (intercessory) prayer  
(but learned the joy of silent prayer + the importance of the Lord's prayer)
- what do I believe about hell?
- what would Jesus say today about homosexuality?

Once again, more questions than answers, but I know from discussions I've had with some of you that I'm not alone.

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