

# THE POST-COVID THEOLOGY PROJECT

Being Human  
(Theological Anthropology)



# Being Human

## *Theological Anthropology*



**T**his strand of the Post-Covid Theology Project is focused on what it means to be human which theologians often refer to as theological anthropology. It explores what it means to be human, fragile and mortal, particularly at this specific point in history, with its unique challenges. Whilst some of these questions are directly a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic others are linked to other events such as the killing of George Floyd and the increasing consciousness around race and injustice. It asks questions around how we live with risk, how we understand our physical presence and its role in relationships, and the meaning of physicality within our faith.

These questions arose out of a number of online meetings between theologians and practitioners from Anglican, Baptist, Catholic and Quaker backgrounds. The questions are grouped into four sections.

# Questions to consider:

### Race and identity

1. How has coronavirus forced you to think of your own humanity?
2. How is your church or organisation creating safe spaces for people to lament about justice issues?
3. How will you or your church (mission agency, workplace) participate in tackling issues of racial justice?
4. How could the church seek to engage with Black Lives Matter?
5. How can we speak together about race and racism and all their complexities?
6. How can we truly hear each other's stories?
7. How do we deal with power, even the silent and unacknowledged kind?

### Human fragility and limitations

1. What ways of thinking about being human you had before the pandemic have helped you in some way? What has been shaken?
2. How did you experience the limitations of lockdown? What was the most important challenge or blessing for you in that time?
3. Did you feel you were more 'free' during lockdown? How did you experience that? Will you continue or discontinue anything in your lifestyle as a result?
4. Have you thought more about dying since the pandemic? Has that been helpful in preparing for your own death, whenever it comes?
5. What has stuck in your mind from sermons you've heard or watched, things you've read, or the reflections of friends, family or people you work or volunteer with? What's been helpful and what's been unhelpful so far?
6. How can we hear what people with disabilities have to share with us about what really matters? How can we make more space to truly listen to their voices and insights among us?
7. What really matters to you?

### Blame and risk

1. What does the image of divine parenthood mean to you?
2. How do you interpret the Parable of the Prodigal Son?
3. What has Lockdown revealed about your community and relationships?
4. What might happen if you let go of the notion of the deserving and the undeserving?
5. What does Jesus' life tell us about notions of care and risk?

### Real presence

1. What does physical presence mean to you?
2. How has the pandemic made you feel about physical presence?
3. How has the pandemic changed your perception of who is present and absent in your church community?
4. How can your community attend consciously to who is present, and who is absent?
5. How has the pandemic changed how, where, and with whom you worship? How do you feel about it?

#### The following theologians were involved in devising these questions:

Isabelle Hamley (Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and Theology at the Church of England's Council for Christian Unity, and Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops)

Gemma Simmonds CJ (senior lecturer in pastoral theology at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology)

Sally Nelson (Dean of Baptist Formation, St Hild College)

Israel Olofinjana (Director of the One People Commission Evangelical Alliance)

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