

13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## Stumbles

**“As we stumble along on life's funny journey ...”**

Lisa Lambert and Greg Morrison, *The Drowsy Chaperone* (musical)

Stepping onto a moving walkway in Heathrow Airport recently as I trundled my carry-on baggage wearily towards my Departure Gate, I found myself reflecting on what I was seeing around me. I was glad of the help the walkway gave me. But some people walking beside me, who'd eschewed the convenience I'd chosen, were moving more quickly than I was. And the thought? We all move at different speeds through life, and make different choices about how we travel, don't we? Interesting ...

Then I recalled how Sheila Cassidy used this image in her wonderful book, *Sharing the Darkness* (formative for me in my time as a hospice chaplain) about what the end-of-life journey is like for some people. "For some," she writes, "the journey is at breakneck speed, with all the terror of the line to Auschwitz", while for others, the travelling is slower, "like the moving floors at Heathrow". Such is life, and not just towards the end either. And often we have no choice, as we're carried along frighteningly fast or painfully slow, because of circumstances out with our control.

But there was a third image that came to mind, one recently shared with me. It comes from *The MeidasTouchNetwork*, an independent news channel which offers commentaries on the issues of Donald Trump's presidency and the turmoil in the USA and beyond at the present time. It's in a piece by a recent guest writer, Dina Doll, an experienced attorney and legal analyst, who reflects on what she describes in her US parlance as "moving sidewalks". Watching people coming to the end of the moving walkways, she sees some of them stumble, unprepared for the transition from movement in one form to movement in another. She watches those people reach out in their moment of imbalance, as if asking for help. And she sees no one noticing, no one responding, no one bothering to help.

However we travel, even on moving walkways, we will inevitably have our stumbles. Again, such is life. Such is unpredictability in the USA right now. Such is the nature of the world we live in. People stumble on their journey and spontaneously reach out for balance. Will we notice? And, if it's one of us who stumbles, will someone reach out and help?

### **A prayer for today**

*To the companion that is my God I pray: for a hand that helps me when I stumble.*

*An original reflection © Tom Gordon*

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