

## Providence in the Pandemic

Years ago when I was a graduate student in California, I had the opportunity to visit some of the beautiful national parks in the western part of our country. One of my favorites was Arches National Park in Utah, so iconic with its red sandstone archways formed by the erosion of the rock by the elements of wind and rain.

During this pandemic I have reflected on a warning I recall from the park literature about hiking in Arches. Sandstone slick rock, those smooth weathered outcroppings which are great for biking and jeeps, are dangerous for hikers. The sandstone can be precarious, it crumbles and breaks easily. The footholds you use to ascend a rock formation may break off, making climbing down after an ascent impossible. Park officials warn of getting "rim rocked", stuck on the sandstone, unable to go back the way you came. It results in hundreds of hikers needing to be rescued each year.

Over the past month or so, as I have needed to make decisions with my leadership team about which way to go in these unprecedented times, I have often thought about that image of getting "rim rocked", stuck in one place, not able to move. I have found great comfort, particularly during this holy season, in the many examples scripture provides of Jesus placing his trust in his Father to show him the way.

My firm belief is that, no matter what the outcome, God will be there to show me the way, perhaps a new and better way to move forward, and this has sustained me in these uncertain times.

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