

Home

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

*For I will bring them from the north
and from the distant corners of the earth.*

...A great company will return!

*Tears of joy will stream down their faces,
and I will lead them home with great care.*

*They will walk beside quiet streams
and on smooth paths where they will not stumble.*

There are many fine stories of coming home in the Bible, together with stories of the restoration of relationships. To name a few - Nehemiah who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, Joseph - reunited with his father and brothers in Egypt, the parable of the prodigal son and the vision Jeremiah sees in chapter 31 of people returning to Jerusalem and to God (quoted above). Paul's letters too are full of the encouraging prayers of comfort and support (try Colossians chapter 1 verses 3-14 for common sense ideas about what to pray for someone you care about) that I associate with that 'coming home' feeling.

Even as a small child, there were milestones on the return trip from a holiday that signalled that we were nearly home. As we passed a particular landmark, familiar smells and bumps in the road - and the noise the car made when changing down a gear in order to turn into the gate... Even when half-asleep I always knew home was nearby. Funnily enough, a few holidays ago I suddenly found the Lathallan roundabout was starting to cause the same reactions in my heart!

I am a homebody - there is no time I am happier than when all my chicks are through the front door, warm, clean, dry and preferably sitting down to the sort of meal I remember my mother and grandmother making when I was a child! I don't care if it is boring or unadventurous or uninspiring, it is my version of 'American apple pie'.

One very important topic covered in the Preparation for Marriage course which Jerome and I are running for the betrothed couples is creating a new home. For a successful marriage, the new couple have to learn to 'leave' their parents and create a new centre of gravity for themselves. Obviously the about-to-be weds have (or will soon) set up a new home together, but they need to free themselves from parental apron strings and influence and there are ways of dealing with this symbolically, but in many instances practical advice is useful.

I have recently got back in contact with an old friend who had been 'my mentor' when I first became a 'believer' twenty-six years ago. Chatting with her on the phone reminded me of many things - particularly an ongoing discussion on what heaven would be like. You would be assured to know that we were certain of the overwhelming and wonderful presence of Jesus and God the Father as well as the continuous presence of

the Holy Spirit. We did not discuss much about John's vision in Revelation or the other amazing creatures which Ezekiel saw. We were neither supporters of the school of 'the great golf course in the sky' or 'celestial shopping mall' and other imaginative secular concepts of eternal life. Our discussions centred around the inconveniences of our earthly bodies being left behind - the need to eat and sleep etc will be modified, we were very sure! We agreed that the level of fellowship we would enjoy with other believers would be uninterrupted and far closer than in these earthly lives. We would have a full understanding of the mysteries of this life, which we see 'through a glass' now. There would be no misunderstandings between God and His children - in fact, we would be better understood by our heavenly father and heavenly siblings than by even our earthly families. At last we could be 'made sense of' - something that could never be experienced on earth. We would be home!

We have had an email, out of the blue, from another friend we had lost touch with over twenty years ago. This got me thinking of our spiritual ancestors - the long string of people who have passed on the 'good news' of Jesus through the years - perhaps I am at the other end of the line of those who heard Paul preach in Athens after he had seen the altar to the unknown god. Perhaps the thread goes back to Peter or Joseph of Arimathea or Timothy's grandmother or even one of the lovely unnamed followers of Jesus. Our spiritual family trees are not easy to trace online, but those roots go down through the years to the water of life.

I have made three trips to Ingliston airport in the last ten days. It was only on the third trip that I spotted the 'Homecoming' billboard just past the spitfire. This made me think about 'nationality' - we get so caught up in our ethnicity and patriotism and cultural differences. But we are united by our humanity and earthly birthrights. However, those ties are nothing in comparison to our spiritual birthright - how we believers have been adopted as children in God's family. We are citizens of the New Jerusalem, we have a future which is out of this world!

So why don't we live as those who have a heavenly tomorrow? Things of this world are great, but let us lay up treasure which cannot be destroyed - in heaven. Let us be sure of our spiritual descendants and make sure we are there to welcome them! I can't wait to be part of those streaming in from all points of the compass, experiencing such joy. I long to be led by those quiet streams where I will not stumble. And to hear those words, spoken in that familiar voice of the one who has made sense of me, 'Welcome Home!'

**With all love
Tracey**

Welcome