



* * * **GOING HOME** * * *

Let your mind drift awhile and imagine that you are driving slowly through a picturesque countryside. You are following an old but familiar dirt road through the rich green fields of what seems like paradise. Above, the sky is crystal blue and alive with a thousand migrant birds sharing their songs on gentle breezes. Fragrance fills the air with the delicate scent of sweet clover, wild roses and freshly cut hay.

The scene is quiet and peaceful and the ambient beauty of the land refreshes your soul. Sweet memories of long ago begin to flood into your consciousness as you stop along the roadway where an old farmstead once thrived. The remains of the buildings and fences are barely visible now in the deep, green grass and leafy poplar trees. Leaning on a weathered fence post, you linger and dream.

You can see where the farmyard and a busy driveway had once been, now overgrown with weeds and grass. An old, leaning electrical pole still stands, its wires limp. Long gone are the friendly sounds of farm animals, replaced instead with busy wild creatures, nesting and playing in the country quietness.

A pretty Redwing Blackbird sings from a fence post nearby and a Killdeer calls from the lush pasture beyond the house. The sun is hot, but the breeze helps cool your skin. Deep in the grass at your feet you hear the sound of crickets, and honeybees buzz around the roses along the old fence line.

As if standing at the very threshold of time, the scene before you stirs precious memories, long forgotten. Your chest begins to heave with emotion and a tear finds its way down your cheek. Ever so

faintly, you can smell the aroma of wood smoke and freshly baked bread as you close your eyes and reminisce, your mind far from the present.

Allowing your mind to travel back forty years or more, you can faintly remember the gentle mooing of cattle at the barn. Is that the sound of children's voices coming up the roadway with the merry chime of bicycle bells and laughter? A small dog is following, running, barking, chasing his tail.



Wait! Was that Mother calling? It must be near to suppertime. And is that Father you hear coming in from the field with the tractor? Geese are honking and calling from the dugout pond and a Wren is busy tending her nest in the twine box on the old binder. You take deep nourishing breaths of rich fresh air and cherish the fragrance of the wildflowers. A breeze tussles your hair and the slam of the screen door jars you back to reality. . . to the present, with your heart still aching for the carefree days of youth.

But, those wonderful days are now gone, left somewhere in the dusty past of a busy life. Oh, that we could travel back to those trouble free days once more, savouring the sweet country air and walking with Mother in the garden.

Alas, the barn is now empty, the children have all grown and the old tractor is cruelly abandoned with willow trees growing through its wheels. The sadly leaning fence posts are rotting and barely able to hold themselves up. An old swing seat sways gently in the breeze, hanging now by only one faded rope.

You wipe away another stray tear and turn back to the car. Sitting with the door open and one foot out on that familiar clay road, your heart yearns for those wonderful, wistful days of old. Closing the car door now, you linger and savour one last time, the overgrown farmyard, the old weather-beaten buildings and those sweet memories that caress your consciousness.

Only a tuft of roadside weeds caught in your door is proof that you ever ventured far from the pavement. Laboriously, your car rolls away as if straining to detach itself from the power of some mysterious magnetism from the past. Suddenly and gracefully, a white tailed deer bounces across the road ahead of you, threatening to pull you back into the dream. Struggling to remain in the present, you drive on, forcibly closing your storehouse of sweet memories and straining to contain the emotion blooming in your breast.

Something inside you cries out for a way to manipulate time, to go back, even for a day! With emotions still tingling, you concede to what you know is fact. Home and family, cherished the way it once was has been hopelessly lost, far in the past.



Each of us has a vast library of valuable memories from a time when life held no pain. For some, those memories are all that sustain us as we struggle with life in the present.

If your storehouse of comforting memories are fading and your friends and loved ones are becoming fewer and fewer, take comfort in the fact that you are still traveling life's journey and have yet to come home. You see, neither our childhood home nor the sweetest of life's memories can ever compare to what is being prepared for us on the other side of this life.

Take heart, for it is written, “Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man what wondrous things God has waiting for those who love Him!”



You may not believe in God or in His son, Jesus Christ, but listen for a moment to the spectacular offer that God has given to us.

Gathering His disciples together, Jesus himself said, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father’s home are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

These scriptures might have been the random musings of some human writer or a poet if it were not for the fact that only a few days after Jesus made this statement, He stood again among the many, bidding them all goodbye as they witnessed Him rising before them into the sky, back to His heavenly home.

“Well,” you say, **“that would be nice, but growing up and living in this war torn miserable world, how can we believe that there really is such a place as this?”**

God knew that heaven would be difficult to conceptualize in our minds since we have only known what is here on earth. This is why He gave His most prominent disciple, John, a picture of what it will be like.

We are able to read this account in the book of Revelation chapter 21 in the Bible to discover that it is not only possible, but in fact, very real

Here is what John saw.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down out of

h e a v e n
from God,
prepared
as a bride
adorned
for her
husband.



And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the house of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts (who searches for me.)’

Then He showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. Also, she had a great and high wall with twelve gates and twelve angels at the gates. Then the angel measured its wall: one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to a man, that is, of an angel. (Around six hundred miles!)

The construction of its wall was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh

chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. The street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and Jesus the Lamb are its temple.

The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. The nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it.

Its gates shall not be shut at all by day, (there shall be no night there). And there shall by no means enter into it anything that defiles or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the middle of its street and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations.

Now I, John, saw and heard these things. God then said, 'And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with me, to give to every one according to his work. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.' "

By invitation only!

Indeed, we are invited to come. But naturally, God tells us that the invitation is only extended to those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The Holy Scriptures clearly show that we can be

reconciled to God and our names entered into the Lamb's Book of Life only when we "invite" Jesus into us!

Yes indeed, God says, "Behold, I stand at the door of your life and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me." So you see, God is so gentle that He will never force his way into our lives but enters in only by our invitation.

God assures us that we are very precious to Him and if we "Draw near to Him, He will draw near to us." He says, "Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you (join with Me) and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

"And as many as believed in Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name."

"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

There isn't much we can depend upon in this world. The weather is changing, money doesn't last, governments change and people will let us down. But, the authority of the "**original Scriptures**" can always be depended upon. From the beginning of time, God has shown Himself faithful through His Word (The Holy Scriptures). God assures us, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Word will never pass away."

This invitation to believe in Jesus comes with the spectacular benefit of "Heaven!" In heaven, we will be busy looking after the affairs of the planet and possibly even the universe, as we are equipped with new and improved bodies and minds.

We will find, once we arrive in heaven, that the time we spent back on earth was a period of testing and learning. We are being tested down here to see what we would do with all that God has given us... our time, our energy, our money and personal gifts. We were each given the intelligence and time to search for God. He promises us

that when we search for Him with all of our heart, we will find Him!

You might say, “I never made a decision to follow Christ because I was confused with all the different religions.” Unfortunately, that won’t be a viable excuse, because when you stand before the throne of God on judgment day, He will say to you that it was written. . .

“For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (nature), even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

Finally, you need to know that there is no other way to get to heaven. You see, God Himself says, “There is no other name (but the name of Jesus) given under heaven, by which we must be saved.



You might say, “SAVED! Saved from what? I lived a good life, I didn’t steal or lie or cheat, and I have certainly never killed anyone.”

Are you aware that even the nicest, kindest, best-behaved people still need to be saved? The reason for this is that we all fall short of the expectation of God and are all born with sin, a kind of human moral disease. It is this that has separated us from the favour of God and from our inheritance in heaven.

Now you know why we need to be saved by Jesus. “God sent His only Son, that whosoever would believe in Him would not perish (in the fire) but have everlasting life”.

My wife and I gave our life to Christ, Jesus, the Son of God well over thirty years ago. Like you, we were not sure what to expect from the Lord when we first invited Him in, but it didn’t take long to find out that He was a pleasure to know. Getting to know God is an experience that we are certain you will enjoy. He is gentle, kind,

understanding, very forgiving and always faithful. As a Father, He has treated us better than any earthly parent could, and as a friend, He has never been a disappointment. As our Saviour, He readily forgives us and washes us clean of all our sins. As the Holy Spirit, He gives us free access to His power and promises to enrich our new Christian lives. It took us a few years to learn just how much He really loves us and what He actually wants for us, but it has been a journey that we would recommend to you if you are serious about a joyful and abundant life.

Now, if you have become aware that you are in need of God's saving grace (Grace is God's willingness to forgive us when we don't deserve it) and believe that Jesus paid for your sin, then pray and ask Him for forgiveness and **invite Him** to be your own personal Lord and Saviour (He wants to be personal). Once you have made that invitation, you are then a Christian.

Congratulations, you are one of the sons or daughters of God, part of the family of God and of the glorious inheritance that we are promised from our Heavenly Father! God tells us in the Bible that "As many as believed in Him, to them He gave the power to become the children of God, even to those who believe on His name."

We look forward to seeing you "at home" one day in our new heavenly home

© 2006 Doug and Maggie Greenfield

ARTSCRIPT PUBLICATIONS

ARTSCRIPT PUBLICATIONS is a creative ministry reaching out to encourage a troubled world with inspiring articles, books and poetry combined with beautiful Canadian Photography.