

Coming Home

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I remember asking my Mother about the song: "I'll be Home for Christmas." She explained that people who sing that song probably live far away like in California where they make records. They were wishing they could go home for Christmas but couldn't.

I imagined Bing Crosby looking at palm trees and wishing they were pine trees with snow on them. In my mind he was fervently longing for what we had in northern Wisconsin at Christmas. I felt very sad for him because I knew how I would feel if I was looking at palm trees instead of pine trees at Christmas time. I didn't know then that Mr. Crosby was born and raised in Tacoma, WA where he could see plenty of snow as he looked toward the mountains from his home.

Whatever our context whether it be pine or palm in nature, we relate to that song in a number of ways. In World War I the soldiers from our country thought their fighting time in Europe would be short. Indeed, they thought they would be home for Christmas. Soldiers, college students, those far from their home, or far from the 'feeling' of home, though they may be home geographically, relate then and now in great numbers to the yearning for home.

People need a sense of home: the comfort it brings, the familiar surroundings, family, smells, a sense of belonging. Yet not everyone "stays home" for Christmas or for their life's work for that matter.

Most who move from home move away for adventure, service, love, education, career, or a mix of these. I think of Jesus with his disciples, Paul traveling with friends, missionaries finding that they have two homes and are living in a third culture, at times not quite here and not quite there.

For people thinking about their loved ones far away most have a home away from home. Places and people to feel safe with wherever they are. Even in dangerous places like war, soldiers live for home yes, but also for their buddies.

Relationships and purpose are not just geography and family. Home is comfort. God's word tells us to comfort others with the comfort we have been comforted with. (paraphrased from: 2 Cor. 1:3-4;) What have we been comforted with? For all who look to God as they experience the difficulties, longings, and loneliness of life, there is the Great Comforter. He says: how many times I would have pulled you under my wing and you would not. (paraphrased from: Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34) As one who has many years away from "home," I can tell you that I have found home where God is. God's message through the gift of His Son allows us to come together in safety and comfort.

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