

After a relatively mild winter we are now experiencing a cool start to the spring. However, the flowers are blossoming with the promise of another beautiful summer season. Victoria is lovely at this time of year as we have the mildest climate in all of Canada. We are able to enjoy the outdoors when many other areas are still covered in snow.

One of the blessings we are experiencing is that our good friends Steve & Sulwen are here from Wales, for the next four months. While in UK last year, I received an email from Mark Buchanan, a pastor friend from Duncan, a town about 60km (40 miles) north of Victoria. Mark was seeking some contacts in Wales as he wished to go there as part of his sabbatical leave. I put him in touch with Steve, a pastor in Wales, and the next I knew they had agreed to exchange homes, cars, etc., for four months! Steve's home is in a most beautiful part of west Wales, so Mark will have a wonderful place to relax with his family while he explores the history of revival in my home land and researches/plans his next book. He has already authored a number of excellent books, the latest of which, ***Your Church is Too Safe***, I have recently finished – excellent! (See on-line for a complete list.) I'm confident that Mark, together with his wife Cheryl and daughter Nicola, will make many wonderful memories during their time in Wales. Meanwhile, we will certainly enjoy spending some time with Steve and Sulwen. Each man will preach a few times at the others' church, during their sojourns, and I shall post their sermons on this web.

The weekend that Steve and Sulwen arrived in Victoria, the local tourist board had a promotion for four days, *Be a Tourist in your own city*. For only \$10 one could visit many of the local attractions, several of which would otherwise cost between \$15 and \$25. Thus we were all able to visit Butchart Gardens, Butterfly World, Undersea World, Miniature World, etc., as well as take a guided tour of the harbour in one of our wonderful harbour water taxis. It was a wonderful way to welcome them (again) to our home city.

One of the other blessings we are experiencing is that, now we are eligible for an annual bus pass for only \$45. We have already taken advantage of it to travel across to Richmond, Vancouver, where our special young Muslim family now live (see Newsletter #19). Rami and Nesiba, together with his brother Hani and wife Zainab are very special to us, considering us as their 'Canadian family'. Please pray for them with us, that this relationship will deepen and that it will be blessed of the Lord. That entire trip cost us nothing, as the beautiful 90 minute ferry ride between this island and the mainland is also free, to seniors like us, Monday to Thursdays.

I have also taken several bus trips to points from which I have walked back home, enjoying long times of prayer. I find 'walking with the Lord' to be some of my most precious times, especially as I have a deep burden for this city. I am constantly asking Him to revive His church here, manifesting His presence, as He has done in Wales so many times in the past, so that others will know Him and worship Him as is His due. This is also the theme of prayer times with my good friend, Clayton – a precious time each week.

Since we have been back home, I have been very aware of how many people, like ourselves, are quite disillusioned at the state of the local church. Many of our dearest friends no longer attend a local church, though still maintaining a deep relationship with the Lord. One couple, when asked where they currently attend, claimed they had grown more (spiritually) in the last year (since leaving their

church) than they had done while in the church. They are spending much time in the Word and in prayer to compensate for the lack of fellowship. They are listening to sermons on web pages such as sermonindex.net and being fed there. As a result of such a conversation I began to contact others that I knew attended no church regularly. I found them the same, with a deepening love for the Lord, His Word and prayer. Because I empathise with such disillusioned people, I am asking the Lord if He would open the door for me to minister to them in some way – by visiting them, encouraging by an email, bringing them together for times of fellowship, etc. I do not want to start a house church, as such, but know my calling as a pastor, so wish to be used in whatever way the Lord would lead me. I am also aware of some who are not so joyful, going through a dry season at present – so I make it my goal to contact them regularly to encourage them.

In January I had the privilege of speaking once again at Departure Bay Baptist Church, Nanaimo – *Why I long for revival*; In February, I spoke on the theme of *Lies we believe* at Glad Tidings Pentecostal Church, Victoria to their Celebrate Recovery group – a wonderful Christian 12-step program for peoples affected by adictions; on the 20th I was guest speaker at the local Full Gospel Business Men International banquet; on the 28th I spoke at Sunago – a ministry at the local university – on the suggested theme of *Loving God – emotions and affection*. The emphasis was on *experiencing* God. My diary is free now so we shall be able to spend much time with Steve and Sulwen – what a delightful thought!

Rejoicing as always in the Saviour

Gareth