

Melissa's Thought for the Month – November 2015

Each of my Saturday newspapers in October seem to have been leading me to the theme of migration. Every week there is something fresh on the subject.

In my childhood migrants were always birds which arrived in Spring and left again in the Autumn. We looked for the first swallow and listened for the first cuckoo. Later I learned to recognise the house martin – very similar to the swallow but having a white rump and no long tail “streamers”.

Particularly since Sir Peter Scott opened the Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre at Martin Mere we have been watching for the Autumn arrival of the V shaped skeins of pink footed geese. We either see them and/or hear them flying over night and mornings to and from their Martin Mere roosts and their feeding ground on our coastal marshes.

This year some excellent TV programmes have shown us many more birds, fish and mammal migrations over both longer and shorter routes. All these movements follow their equally mobile food supplies.

Human migration is something else though it too is led by a desire for a better life. Some groups are genuinely evading persecution – either cultural or religious. For others it is the lure of economic advantage. In the olden days, folk had the idea that “The streets of London were paved with gold.” Now the attraction of the UK is our systems of benefits, pensions and the National Health Service. Some of these people have no idea that most of us have had to work hard to earn and to save in order to receive these advantages.

Legal immigrants know that they have to work here for a certain length of time before they are eligible to receive them. The illegal enter the country in unorthodox ways – hitching through the Channel Tunnel (some of us realised this potential at the time of its opening and had serious doubts about its wisdom). Others arrive by boat or ‘plane at unexpected parts of the country.

What should be our attitude to this situation from a Christian point of view? We know that every single human being is one for whom our Saviour died.

My personal view is influenced by my experience of having visited relations in different parts of the world. One Canadian friend commented that the trouble with our towns and cities is that we live in a land of “wall to wall people”. In Australia (the Big Country), they are concerned about migration not from Near East but from the Near North – Japan too is a group of overcrowded islands like ours.

Our Creator Father God knows the whole picture. Not one sparrow falls to the ground without him and we are of more value. His plan is perfect but we cannot know it all.

Melissa.