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**Home truths**

So it is holiday time, and this summer, Lesley and I will be ‘staying at home’...in the UK. I have to confess this is because we shall be joining all our family on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean in October, so we won’t be abstaining from foreign travel this year! But for a week or so in August we will spend some time with my parents in South Wales and then with Lesley’s family in Yorkshire, enjoying trips to places well known to us. We may even remain in Wirksworth for part of the time and take some days out in Derbyshire.

The ease of international travel has brought exotic locations within comfortable reach of many of us. Holiday advertising, be it TV, websites or printed brochures, aims to sell us the idea that ‘paradise’ is out there somewhere. It might be a sun-kissed island, or beautiful mountain scenery, or a culture so different to ours that visiting for just a short time will transform our lives. And there is no doubt that we will be changed by such experiences.

But paradise may be right here on our doorstep. The tourist boards of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland proclaim this truth, and no doubt we can tell of wonderful times had camping or narrow boating, walking the hills and going to the beach *in all weathers.* Then there are our historical sites and buildings, places of worship that have stood and served for centuries and faith communities such as those at Lindisfarne and Iona that we may have visited.

I have been privileged to make trips to Nepal and El Salvador in recent years and the purpose of each visit was to engage with the church in those places. Both were fascinating and transforming experiences. Yet the work of God can be encountered right on our doorstep – it may be expressed differently but is equally transforming. One of Jesus’ sayings was *‘the kingdom of God is among you’ (Luke 17:20-21)* This is certainly true when we look around our church and community of Wirksworth and see God at work - for His kingdom is not an exotic and far off place in space and time, it is here among us. So this year, how about paradise?

Have a blessed summer

Kevin