

September 2009

New Beginnings and Monarch Butterflies

I love butterflies. I always have. Even before I was old enough to go to school, I would sit in the back yard for hours and watch them dance among the flowers and garden. With their exotic colours and designs, they live up to their fabled nickname of “Wings of Paradise.”

For some reason I am particularly drawn to the Monarch Butterfly.

In the spring, the Monarch Butterfly begins a unique journey from the mountains of Mexico, travelling some 5,000 kilometres one way to southern parts of Canada, then in the fall begins the trek home. The first generation of flyers may have only reached the lower United States, where after as few as six weeks of life, they lay their eggs and die. The next generation continues the trek northward, taking as many as five generations to complete the round trip.

The mere magnitude of the distance travelled by such a unique creature in the insect world is enough to boggle the mind. For me, what is even more amazing is the Monarch Butterfly undergoes this annual migration without GPS or a roadmap!

How do they do it? From Mexico to Canada, then back again? No tour guides, road signs, no maps.

The answer is simple Dear Watson: God has placed a wonderful homing instinct in animals. For example, the robin flies south to a warmer climate for the winter, then returns in the spring to the same tree in the same backyard to build its nest. The salmon swims thousands of kilometres from the Fraser River to its feeding flats in the Pacific Ocean, then when its life cycle is about ended it returns to the same river it left, fighting its way up the falls and rocky shoals, refusing to stop until it comes to the same bend in the river where it was hatched. And there's the Monarch Butterfly.

Is it only in animals that God has placed a homing instinct? No, anyone who has been away from home for any length of time knows what it means to be homesick. God has placed within the heart of each of us a profound homing instinct for our real home, heaven, the Kingdom of God. Nothing on earth can satisfy our longing except for God. It is a precious, divine gift, a constant reminder that the most permanent dwelling place on earth is but a body, a tent, and that we are really pilgrims on our way to our permanent home in heaven with God.

The meaning and goal of life for each of us is to respond to this homing instinct and to go home to God. We were made to live with God and nothing less will suffice.

Now that the summer is drawing to a close, and we begin a new school year, what better way to start anew than by being more attentive to our homing instinct? With each new breath, with each new day, with each new friend, let us respond evermore to God's never-ending call to come home, to regain our true nature as God's sons and daughters.

“ET,” call home!

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