

The following article is from the January 27, 2003 issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

# Finding a place called home

By Beverly Goldsmith

*The spiritual concept of home is with us wherever we are. Getting the concept more clearly enables each of us to find proper housing.*

Owning your own home is still the “great Australian dream” — and still achievable for many people who are willing to work hard for it. But there are those throughout the world who hold little hope for having the home they yearn for. Some can’t afford to cope with skyrocketing rents. Some live in the open without a roof over their heads. Others have no home state or territory. Various indigenous peoples have been dispossessed of their traditional homes and lands. And others are refugees, leaving their homes behind to seek sanctuary from racial intolerance, war, terror.

To most people, *home* represents safety — a refuge, a private space, a place of peace. And because it’s unthinkable that anyone should be without food, water, clothing, or shelter, many people around the world are working hard to see that everyone has these basics. This is no easy task, but I truly believe that no matter how difficult the situation, it is possible for each one of us to find a place to call home.

What would give me reason to believe such a thing? Well, for many years I’ve been reading, actually studying, the Bible and *Science and Health*, and have come to the conclusion that home is not fundamentally a location. It’s a spiritual concept representing love, beauty, peace, protection. Such spiritual qualities are ideas and are not external to you, not outside of you. This concept of home is with you wherever you are. So home is within your heart and mind. It’s like the “kingdom of heaven” — God’s creation — that Jesus spoke of as being “within you.” Because of this you can never lose your spiritual home or be separated from it. Home is a permanent place in your heart. And understanding this fact enables each of us to find proper housing.

I saw this some years back when my brother and I left our home in Melbourne to embark on a career in Sydney as a singing duo. At first we stayed with a family we’d met while singing on a cruise ship. Next, their relatives, an elderly couple, took us in. Then one day on returning from another cruise engagement, we found this note on their kitchen table: “Please find somewhere else to live immediately.”

Shocked and upset, we began packing our bags. With my whole heart, I prayed for God’s help and guidance. Then I remembered these words Jesus spoke to his followers: “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2).

Instantly those words — like an angel, a message from God — brought me reassurance and comfort. The hurt and fear I’d been feeling melted away. I prayed that my brother and I could never be removed from or deprived of our true home. Divine Love was with us. There would be somewhere for us to stay. God would help us find it.

We decided to put our belongings in my car and drove to the nearest estate agent's office. There on the office window was a listing for an affordable furnished apartment on the cliffs overlooking the surf beach. The apartment had become vacant just moments before we arrived. We moved in that night. We had found a home of our own.

Since then I've moved home more than 20 times — an average of about once every three years. Each time, prayer has helped me find a suitable place to live. But does this kind of spiritual thinking help everyone find housing? I believe it can. The same sheltering presence of Love can help anyone find a *good* home. I've seen this happen for others many times.

One friend of mine lived alone for 25 years in a dingy, single, rented room in a small, rundown, old boarding house in Brisbane. One day, without warning, the establishment was sold, and the new owners turned it into a backpackers' hostel. It was no longer a satisfactory place for my friend to live, but he stayed there anyway. Two years later, to his dismay, he was told that the building had again been sold and was going to be pulled down. Now he had to leave.

With very meager financial resources, no friends or relatives, and no idea how to go about securing new housing, he became very afraid and depressed. In desperation he called me and asked me to pray for him. I told him that God was Love, caring for him. And I said I knew his needs for accommodation *would* be met.

We prayed together for guidance and direction. When I explained what steps he could take and where he could look for housing, I discovered that he lacked courage to move to a new place. He was afraid of change. So, in order to take the idea of housing out of the realm of the threatening unknown, we wrote down some of what he would be looking for in a new home — things such as peace, security, and friendship. Those characteristics brought the concept of home into tighter focus, making it more accessible. But after several weeks, I found that he hadn't even begun his search. He was about to be thrown out onto the pavement. Something had to be done right away.

Praying for God's guidance, I grabbed a business telephone directory, not quite knowing what I was expecting to find. I found myself turning to the pensioner accommodation listings. A place was advertised for people on old-age pensions. It offered self-contained living quarters, three meals a day, and required no bond. It sounded good. I wrote down the telephone number for him and said he could call them. I kept praying.

The next time I heard from this man, he was settled into his new home. He'd not only found the courage to make the call, but also had traveled across town by himself on the train for an interview. To his surprise there was a vacancy. When he decided to move in, the manager even helped him transport his belongings. All of this took place in just a couple of days.

When I visited this friend, I was delighted to find him in a brand new, fully furnished unit with his own separate bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and lounge. The meals, which he found delicious, were served in a lovely community dining room in the company of other people who were his contemporaries. I thanked God for His ability to help this man find a home with everything he needed. In talking with me recently, my friend said he was very grateful to have this lovely home and that he was so happy there. "God certainly took care of me," he said.

Examples of God's provision for us, such as this one, encourage me to pray for the housing needs of people around the world.

If you are seeking a place to live, suffering displacement, hoping for restoration or restitution of homes and lands, I urge you not to give up hope. It may look as if there are shortages of places, or you may feel priced out of the market. You may feel desperate, but your situation is not beyond God's power. Have courage. There will be an answer. God has given you the right to live in peace and security. Like my friend and me, you *can* find a place to call home.

*Beverly Goldsmith is a contributing editor, who lives in Brisbane, Australia.*