

Reaching Today's Teens



Better Days Coming

by Marsha Boyd-Mitchell

MMy maternal grandmother was one of 14 children. There wasn't a lot of extra money in her home growing up and she had a strong desire for music lessons (piano). Her mother planned with a local music teacher that my grandmother (then around 13) would clean the teacher's house on Saturday mornings and in the afternoon, my grandmother could have a music lesson for payment. She often told us this story as she would sit down at our family's piano to play. She loved to play the piano and loved to hear any of us kids sing. When I was a very little girl (about 3), she taught me the first song that I could sing to music by heart. It was a song written by Jean Bradford and made popular by groups such as The Speers and the Cathedrals. The song was called "We're Not Home Yet Children." The chorus went like this:

We're not home yet, children
So keep your eyes on the savior
Just a few more days to labor
And we'll sit down beside the river.
How we long to be with Jesus

And our loved ones
gone before us,
There's a better day a comin'
We're not home yet.

I would stand by my grandmother, and she would play and I would sing. The first verse starts out, "This old world is filled with disappointments and trouble every day." I've known this song all my life and, as I became an adult, I would smile to think about how weighty those lyrics were for my little 3-year-old self. Spiritual songs often have this winsome way of talking about heaven, eternal life, and exchanging the troubles of this life for the glory in the next. I'm not sure our current worship music highlights this idea of human struggle in a fallen world the way that spiritual songs did in other seasons.

I also remember singing this Albert Brumley number as a little girl:

This world is not my home,
I'm just a passing through
My treasures are laid up
somewhere beyond the blue;
The angels beckon me
from heaven's open door
And I can't feel at home
in this world anymore.
Oh Lord, you know
I have no friend like you,
If heaven's not my home,
then Lord what will I do
The angels beckon me
from heaven's open door,
And I can't feel at home
in this world anymore.

Hymns of Faith

I recall singing the lyrics, not knowing exactly what they meant, but picturing those angels peeking through heaven's door. Heaven seemed so close and the people who loved me most were so confident that we would all be there together quite soon. Their voices were strong as they sang of a faith that had them "Looking for a City" where we will never die,

meeting on the shore "In the Sweet By and By," and asking, "Shall We Gather at the River?"

Our world, our country, and our Maritime region has fallen on hard times. As I write, we are under COVID-19 restrictions, we are trying to adjust to the idea that Canada's largest mass murder has taken place in our beloved Maritime region (and some may be in direct mourning because of this), and all of it has us spiraling both economically and emotionally. That is enough for us adults to digest—but what about our kids?

As funny as it seems now about my grandmother teaching me lyrics about "loved ones gone before us," we are never too young to learn how quickly life can change. While we hope to protect the kids in our sphere of influence from the results of a fallen world (and it is our job to do so), we also need to teach them biblical truths of what it means to walk through this world as Bunyan's Pilgrim did. A pilgrim is on a journey through the brevity of this life and on to a life eternal with the Lord Jesus. Jesus suffered and died on his earthly mission to seek and save those who were lost in their sin. We may suffer along the pathway, and it is good to know in our spirit that "there's a better day a comin', we're not home yet."

My Grammie Rita has been with Jesus five years now. How we miss her and her piano playing.

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