

Message from A Strathclyde Minister

In Christ, there is no East or West ... even in Scotland

Moving to the bright or the dark side of Scotland? That is the question. Forget Brexit; will it happen this coming year or in two years or ever. Forget Strictly. Forget the question of independence of the Popular Republic of East Glasgow or Leith. The real question is where is the bright (or dark) side of Scotland?

Coming from the deep East, it was clear that moving west was understood by many friends and colleagues as an abomination almost as bad as eating shrimps (Leviticus 11:10). It must have been a divine punishment said our friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar also known as Henry, Tavish and Frazer. It is maybe why Joe and myself were offered food and warm clothes at our farewell party. We started to think like Jeremiah Why us my Lord?

So like Mary and Joseph moving to Egypt riding our donkey – well Skoda-donkey to be more precise in our case - we remembered our Bible: “Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

Arriving in East Kilbride we discovered that not only were the people incredibly welcoming and also the Manse garden was burned by the scorching West Scotland Sun. Things were a lot of better than we were told. It seems that we had moved from the bright side of Scotland to another bright side of Scotland. Following a few adjustments – including changing my name to Jimmy – we pitched our manse in the old Rolls Royce car park waiting for God’s call to become clearer in our mission in these new communities of Shettleston and East Kilbride. May the circuit stewards not worry, we are not expecting any hand-written messages on the walls (Daniel 5).

One thing was sure. We were glad to not have listened to the message of gloom and doom regarding the West Coast and we felt the East Coast must have been mistaken. Until someone asked us “Why could Jesus not have been born in Glasgow?” “Because no wise men have ever come to Glasgow from the east”. So for many the question remains: is there a bright and a dark side in Scotland?

I can tell in confidence that in the Methodist Church in Scotland we have only found a bright side ... okay with some clouds ... but what to expect, it is Scotland at the end of the day.

With Joe we want to thank the Circuit team for their welcome, patience and Christian love. To experience such fellowship is a blessing for our first steps in this new place and a good basis to build our future in this circuit.

Joe and Laurent