9th November 2022

Children

"Over at our place, we're sure of just one thing:
everyone in the world was once a child."

Walt Disney, *Recorded statement (1938) used in 'The Pixar Story*

My wife and I had a wonderful afternoon recently at a performance of *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat* when the production was in Edinburgh's *Playhouse* theatre as part its national tour. The telling of the story of Joseph through the music of Andrew Lloyd Webber and the lyrics of Tim Rice remains vibrant, uplifting and compelling. I reckoned I'd be able to write a "Thought for the Day" on something profound and deep about dreams, or forgiveness, or redemption, or family life, or whatever. But there was so *much* that was stimulating, I could write a whole *series* of "Thoughts". So, I'll confine myself to this one simple observation …

More than two years ago, when we were in the depths of the most severe Covid-19 lockdown, I wrote a "Thought for the Day" which began, "I'm missing the voices of children". On my afternoon walk, I'd passed an empty swing-park, silent because the kids weren't allowed out to play. It was there that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic really hit home.

The contrast with the *Joseph* production couldn't have been more dramatic. A dozen or so children were involved. Singing their hearts out on stage, acting their socks off, skilled, enthusiastic, talented, *they* made the show for me. One of them was the spitting image of one of my grandsons. So I was excited again about the voices of children, especially a lad who could have been one of my own family. I was "hearing the voices of children" and I was thanking God for what it meant to me.

Walt Disney is right. Everyone in the world was once a child. So let's value the voices of children as much as we value our own. Whether they sing on stage in the *Playhouse* theatre or play in the swing-park in the village, let's celebrate their voices. And if their voices are stilled because of poverty, or alienation, or domestic abuse, or discrimination, or a lack of education, or a disability, let's deal with these social problems so that the voices of *all* children can be heard. Because, even as we emerge into "normality" after the ravages of the pandemic, the voices of *some* children are still not heard and heeded as much as they deserve to be.

A prayer for today

"All God's children have a place in the choir", the song tells us. Yes! Amen

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