

REFLECTIONS

August 27, 2006

A time to plant and a time to harvest.

Ecclesiastes 3:2

Footprints

Walking on the beach is usually not an inspirational experience for me. But something was different this time. The difference was not the noise of Gulf water rolling in and washing out again, or the seagulls and their ornithological friends beachcombing the seaside, or even the other people engaging in their various endeavors up and down the waterline. It was the footprints in the sand that caught my eye. How quickly the water will restore smoothness to the sand that holds them; and how memories of them will also fade away. Soon it will seem as if no one had ever passed there at all.

Some of the footprints were headed back the way we came, while others were going in our direction. Though we weren't really following them, it was the ones going in our direction that made me think.

They made me think of footprints that I did follow, especially those that were important in leading my life's journey to where it is. The footprints of those I followed have led me to places that I might never have gone and to do things I would never have done. In short, those were the footprints that made possible the life that I lead, the values that I hold, and the person that I am. Yet the very footprints that led me are no longer there. Time has washed them away. Only memories of them remain. And one day, even the memories of those whose steps I followed will be lost. But the direction they set endures as I still seek to follow the path they were traveling.

It occurs to me that now I am leaving footprints of my own, and someone might choose to follow them. My footprints might lead someone else to places they may never have gone, to the values they hold, and to the persons they become. Like those before me, my footprints will someday wash away and fade from memory. But the direction they set will endure for those who seek to follow the same path.

The footprints we leave make a difference. They may lead someone to places they may never have gone and to be someone they may never have become. And even after our footprints are washed away and the memories of them fade, the direction they set will endure for those who followed them.

Our footprints are seeds we plant. The harvest may come long after our footprints have been washed away.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +