



# HERE BE DRAGONS

By Vera Entwistle

I have been blessed with the opportunity to travel all over the world, and, as I thought about some of those journeys, I remember the hours spent pouring over detailed maps as I planned my route; maps were essential. On some journeys, even with my maps, I was nervous when traveling in countries like Romania and Bangladesh.

I had learned that when the early mapmakers had recorded all their geographical knowledge, they would look at the maps they had carefully drawn, and then, in the surrounding blank space they had written the words, "Here be Dragons." For me, this was a clear indication that they, too, had been fearful of moving out.

For the past year, concern about the future has been uppermost in my mind and, while I do not fear dragons, I have found it difficult to deal with the "blank spaces," when I tried to visualise my future. In recent months, my isolation has been onerous, and I wondered how long it would be before I could once again leave my home and venture out into my community; and yet now, when I begin to see signs that my isolation may end, my courage is flagging and I wonder if I will be safe?

Brian had a magnetic sign made that said, "Brian and Vera Entwistle, off on an adventure," and as we left our home, he would attach this sign to our car. If we were traveling overseas into places where we had never been before, he would tape it to a suitcase. The sign was often commented on by other curious travellers and we spent many happy hours in airports, talking with people from all over the world, as we shared with each other where our travels would take us.

I remembered the saying by Martin Luther King, "If you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose the courage to be, you lose that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all." In times of such isolation, I knew I needed to be able to look forward in hope and courage, and I knew it had to come from within me. I struggled to find my "brave bones." I look back on times when much of my courage came from Brian and I want to recapture that hope and courage today.

Years ago, my grandmother shared a poem with me when she thought I seemed sad: Hope is a thing with feathers that perches in the soul And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all.

For me, this poem indicates that hope is a fragile thing that can easily be lost, but today, as I recited this poem, I remembered the words of my favourite hymn: No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging. Since Love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing."

In my isolation, I not only have had little reason to speak, I have not been singing! Now, as I wait for the news that the time of isolation is over, I will find my courage and hope by singing the hymns I love. I will remember times when I was brave and will tell myself that I will cultivate the hope that never stops at all.

