



From the Editor

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When Reality Exceeds Expectations

DO YOU HAVE WORLD CUP *fever?!*

Right now, as I write this, soccer fans from around the world are in North America for this amazing weeks-long event. For many, it is their first visit to the United States, and they are staying for a while. They have seen pictures, watched movies, followed social



A woman cheers for Colombia's soccer team. Photo: IMB

media accounts, and even heard stories about America for years. Yet many are discovering that experiencing a place firsthand is far different than simply hearing about it.

Social media has been filled with visitors sharing their surprise and delight. International guests have marveled at things many Americans take for granted: the friendliness of strangers, small-town culture, free refills with ice!, ranch dressing, Waffle House, and even ordinary road trips. One Scottish fan was amazed by Buc-ee's and described it as "a gas station mixed with Disney World wrapped in a gift shop."

Some have expressed amazement at the vastness of the country, the diversity of its people, and the beauty of its landscapes. Many are finding that reality has exceeded their expectations. They had heard about America but experiencing it (especially during our 250th anniversary) has been something altogether different.

As Christians, those reactions should remind us of what awaits us in our true home.

The Bible gives us glimpses of heaven. We read of streets of gold, the throne of God, angels worshiping, and a great multitude from every nation standing before the Lord (Revelation 7:9). Jesus promised His followers, "I am going away to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2-3, CSB). These passages paint vivid pictures of our eternal home, yet Scripture reminds us that even the best descriptions fall short of reality.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived—God has prepared these things for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9, CSB). Think about that for a moment. No sermon, song, book, or imagination can fully capture what God has prepared for His children.

I'm so glad that World Cup visitors are discovering that America is more welcoming, beautiful, and memorable than they imagined. Yet even

the most breathtaking experiences on this earth are only a faint reflection of what awaits believers in Christ. Heaven is not merely a better version of life here. Absolutely not! It is truly where God dwells with His people, where every tear is wiped away, where death is no more, and where joy is complete (Revelation 21:3-4).

One day, we will step into the presence of Christ and, with our own eyes, experience what we have only read about. On that day, we will discover that every promise of God is true and that heaven is infinitely greater than we ever imagined. When we think of it that way, we can truly say with Paul, "Our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20, CSB).

The World Cup will eventually end. The crowds will go home. The memories will fade. But for those who belong to Christ, our greatest destination is still ahead. We know it is unimaginable.

Are you ready?

