

## **“The Fish Net”**

Pentecost 2017

Dear Friends,

This past Christmas my nieces gave my sister the DNA testing kit from Ancestry.ca, the idea being that she would have some idea as to where her ancestors came from – even if she doesn't know who they all are! She did the test and quite happily shared the results with me. I must admit that with one exception there were no real surprises.

According to the test, we are almost overwhelmingly British in origin, the percentage being almost 80%. The surprise though was to discover that we are also 8% Scandinavian. When I think about it though, perhaps I shouldn't be that surprised. While my surname is Scottish going back some 800 years, it almost certainly originated somewhere else and some say that it is Scandinavian. The area where my father's family came from has a number of place names that are Viking in origin but perhaps the clincher was the colour of my hair as a child. It was so blonde it was virtually white (and no jokes please!). As a devoted fan of the TV series “Vikings”, I find the possibility of Viking ancestry intriguing and perhaps even a little bit disturbing but at the end of the day ... what does it really matter?

While people can quite rightly take pride in their heritage, whatever it may be, one of the great messages of the Christian faith is that our ethnicity, heritage and all the rest really doesn't matter. What does matter is that we are all created in the image of God and are the beloved children of God. In the well-known words of St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there  
male or female for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Yes, we can be proud of our heritage, our accomplishments and all the rest, but our true importance is not to be found in who we are but rather in what we are; the disciples of Christ and the beloved children of God. These outweigh all of the rest.

Wishing you a most blessed summer!

Shawn