

Rent or buy? That's a question many grapple with in this upside-down economy. In the good old days, we really didn't even have to ask the question. We went to school, learned a trade or earned a degree, got a job, saved money for a down payment, bought a house, and started a family. That American Dream now seems like a distant memory.

The formerly stable housing market has become a gamble. What happens if you buy a house and the bottom drops out? Who wants to live with the pressure of being underwater with the value of their house and unable to sell it? No wonder rental construction is soaring while single-family housing construction languishes. Young people especially are opting for the financial safety and locational flexibility of renting rather than buying.

Still, older people and especially those who have retired embrace the stability, security, autonomy, and privacy of owning their own home. During our eight years of marriage, we've moved between eight and ten times (depending on how you count them). Either way, that's a lot of moving and renting. So after living along both coasts of Florida, up to Virginia, and back to Cary, why did we end up living next door to where Ron had lived for over twenty-five years and within forty miles of various places Betsy lived virtually her entire life?

Of course there's that line from the *Wizard of Oz*: "There's no place like home." Perhaps that's it, but in our travels we did find it enriching to thrust ourselves into new environments. We met new people, formed new friendships, and learned new points of view. We also learned to appreciate the many advantages of living here including: the mild climate, relative prosperity, readily available quality goods and services, educated people, and solid churches.

Have you considered where Jesus lived when he walked this earth? After all, this is the Christmas season. We know He was born in a manger. He grew up on the wrong side of the tracks. His dad was a simple carpenter – not a teacher, physician, philosopher, or lawyer.

When He set off on His ministry, the Creator of the universe had only the clothes on His back. He had less than common animals. The Bible puts it this way:

Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head. (Luke 9:58b)

Interestingly, that's not the end of the story. While He lived a common life during His time on earth, there's nothing common about where He went.

In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (John 14:3)
...no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain:...all things new...the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass (Revelation 21:4,5,18)

Having just lived through an ambitious building project, we've gained a particular appreciation for having our *future* home being done for us by Someone who knows what He's doing like no other. We're looking forward to it and hope you are too.

Merry Christmas!
Ron and Betsy

