

Fowey Fables – No.24

April 2010

Have you ever wondered how God felt about the behaviour of the guests whom He had invited to His place (at Mt Sinai)? They were always grumbling! The commonest complaint was about the catering. First they grumbled about the quality of the water.(Exod.15) He fixed it. Next they had nothing to eat.(Exod.16) He laid on a feast of manna, the ultimate bread, and KFQ (Kentucky Fried Quails) Shortly afterwards there was no water at all.(Exod.17) He produced an endless supply of superb quality water. The next problem was the pushy neighbours.(Exod.17) He showed His people how to deal with them.

Finally He was able to get down to business with them. He wanted to teach them how they could really know Him, based on forgiveness and a whole new way of living.(Exod.20-40) Before He had finished training their teacher, Moses, they got bored and threw a wild party right in God's front garden.(Exod.32) Their grumbling began to have consequences. It was not long before they were complaining about the menu again and wanting the food they grew up on as Egyptian slaves.(Num.11) They were gossiping among each other.(Num.12) They were criticizing Moses, their God-appointed teacher.(Num.16) Very soon they were again moaning about the food they did not have and the dwindling water supply.(Num.20) This time Moses lost it and damaged his own relationship with God. Soon there were all kinds of immoral behaviour going on.(Num.25) A whole generation missed out on the best of God's hospitality.

Paul tells us, 'these things happened to them as an example and they were written for our instruction...' (I Cor.10:11) The Lord has invited us to dwell in Him. He has provided us with the fountain of the Holy Spirit's life within us.(Jn.4:14; 7:37-39) We think we can do better, and find ourselves living in a spiritual desert. He has supplied 'the bread which came down from heaven which give life', Jesus Himself.(Jn.6:31-35) Every page of His word gives us another mouthful of understanding of Who He is and what He wants to be in us. But we grumble that our diet of Bible is boring and look for something more exciting. We stuff ourselves with entertainment and ideas that don't nourish. The Israelites gathered the manna daily, family by family. As parents we leave the feeding of our kids to others, from kindergarten to university, and wonder why they prefer the wild life back in Egypt.

At the beginning of February we had a one day Bible conference to which nearly all our current lecturers contributed half an hour of teaching. We videoed the day and recently reviewed what had been recorded. We realized afresh what a brilliant team of capable, faithful teachers God has given us. We were so encouraged by what is jointly being offered in the Bible School, every weekday – and like the manna, it is free! Our student group has been relatively small for the last 5 years since NZQA removed our ability to gain student visas for those from overseas. The hunger to learn of those who have come has been exciting but it seems obvious that so many more could be fed if someone invited them to join us. Would you consider passing on this invitation to 'dinner' at Fowey

Lodge to those you know who need to know Jesus better? The current timetable is on the website, www.foweylodge.com. If you are wondering whether we are distributing copies of the Bible conference, the answer is no. The speakers were great but so was the chorus of cicadas who tried to drown them out on the recording. We are planning another day conference for mid winter. Ask us for details from Paul Crowhurst at paulcc@value.net.nz if you are keen to come.

We continue to look for new ways of sharing Bible teaching outside of Fowey Lodge, the spiritual equivalent of 'Meals on Wheels'. Between us as a team we have plenty of opportunities to speak around NZ and overseas. Eugene de Villiers, one of our new lecturers, was speaking in India recently. Nick and I have opportunity in November to revisit Andhra Pradesh, to teach pastors. Peter Williams who has lectured for the last two years and his wife, Tammy, are currently in Chennai, India with the International Justice Mission a group of Christian lawyers who seek to bring justice to the oppressed. Don and Vivian Rhody, who are also new to our programme, will be teaching Christian leaders in Fiji next month.

For the past two years groups of pastors led by John Wandera in Uganda and Alfred Nsofwa in Zambia have been working through a six part programme which we offer without charge on DVD. The first students have completed a Certificate of Christian Ministry and want to move on to the next level of a Diploma. Past students in several other countries are interested in running the same programme.

For a number of years we have offered studies of Bible books on our website. There are currently 37 Bible books available. We understand they are well used. Sonya Kim who has lived at the Lodge for about 6 years has developed a Korean version of our website on which she has translated many of our studies. She is in touch with a large number of Korean students. You can find her site as a link from www.foweylodge.com.

Nick's place, Taihoa Farm near Opotiki, is now well established and even warm and cosy for the winter months. He is happy to host boutique camps or conferences for those who want solid Bible teaching and a taste of a wild and beautiful part of NZ. Contact him on nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com.

For those who like their spiritual food served cold, we are again running a young people's snow camp at Mt Ruapehu from 4-8th July. Pete is already on the spot setting up the best trip ever. He is now into his second term of Outdoor Education Instructor Training and loving it. He climbs mountains, explores caves, kayaks down rapids, tramps through the wilderness and has jumped out of an aeroplane. We won't do all that but we will ski and snowboard all day and 'feed' on manna by night. For more details, contact Pete on peterhanne@live.com, Nick on nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com or us on jahanne@clear.net.nz.

We would love to know how you are enjoying God's hospitality or any ways we can help.

Our love in Christ,

Tony, Chris, Nick and Pete