

Fowey Fables – no.12 November 2005

Dear Friends

Life, some people say, begins at 40. Moses must have agreed. For him something new started every 40 years of his life. At 40 he had to run, from a life of power and privilege in the palace, to the wilderness to save his neck. At 80 he met the Lord at the burning bush and began his task of leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and through the same wilderness. At 120, 'his eye was not dimmed and his vigour not abated', when he died, was buried by God and taken to heaven. It is often said that Moses spent 40 years learning to be a somebody, 40 years learning to be a nobody, and 40 years learning what God could do with a nobody. A number of leaders, some successfully and others not, played their roles for 40 years. Gideon, judged Israel for 40 peaceful years, though his chaotic personal life was far from tranquil. Eli, after 40 ineffective years as priest, fell off his chair and broke his neck. David and Solomon were both kings for 40 years. The former ended well and the latter was a big disappointment. So 40 years in the Bible is often a landmark whether good or bad.

We are rapidly approaching a major landmark at Fowey Lodge. I signed a contract, which some encouraging friends suggested would be financial suicide, to buy the Lodge on Christmas Eve, 1965. The first Bible School opened here on 1st April 1966 as Capernwray Lodge. In 1980 we returned to the original name of Fowey. The last 40 years have been an incredible adventure with good times and hard times.

The important question, as Moses I believe would have agreed, was not where have we travelled but where to from here. He never seemed to look back nostalgically on his life in the Egyptian royal family or his own family life in the desert, but only ahead to the next exciting phase. Even at 120 he was looking towards the Promised Land which the people would enter without him. He rebuked the Israelites often when their hearts went back to Egypt as seen through rose-tinted spectacles. He talked at times of the lessons God had taught them along the way, but only to encourage them not to repeat the same mistakes and to remind them of how wonderfully patient and gracious God had been when they did mess up.

I have been deeply impressed lately with some similarities between Moses' time and our position at the beginning of the 21st century. The Israelites had lived through a golden age when Joseph was Prime Minister and for some time afterwards, but the world had changed and now they had a government which was hostile to their God and determined to repress His people. The most endangered Israelites were the children. Babies were either killed at birth or drowned in the River Nile. The situation in Egypt seemed beyond hope until people stopped and remembered God, who was waiting eagerly for that moment. Government in New Zealand has moved from a rather vague benevolence towards Christianity to a deliberate rejection of Christian values. Our troubles with NZQA in the last several years have been just symptoms of this changing philosophy. Our babies are aborted in ever growing numbers or as they grow up are drowned in a sea of alcohol, drugs, violence and promiscuity. NZ children seem an endangered species. Listening to what many people are saying, not about church, but about Jesus, we could just now be entering such a time. God's response today will not be a quick, overnight fix, but it will again

be to take, prepare and use those who are ready to learn what He can still do with a nobody.

Nick and I returned a few weeks ago from what, for both of us, was the experience of a lifetime. We had two weeks in Andhra Pradesh, South India, at the invitation of Dr Immanuel, uncle of two of our recent students. He has ministered for 30 years, most of them while still a lecturer in a Hindu college, to many of the 1500 villages in the Krishna district. God has used him greatly to establish many churches, and train leaders, in a thoroughly Biblical ministry. Since leaving the college where his wife still lectures he has travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometres in the back of an old Ambassador car, driven by a former driver for the Naxalite terrorists, preaching, teaching and encouraging small groups of believers or mass audiences of many thousands. His present dream is to have a regular Telegu language TV programme. To be part of his ministry was a huge privilege. Nick spoke to University students. I taught pastors and spoke in crusade meetings. Both of us spoke by interpreter, often in the same service, to many village churches. People everywhere were hungry to hear.

India, as some of you will know first hand, is a country teeming with people, over a billion in an area less than Australia. Hinduism dominates with idols and temples everywhere, reminiscent of Ancient Greece. Islam is obvious though Muslims as a minority keep to themselves. Christians, though less than 2%, shine as lights in the darkness. The constitution is secular but the threat to Christians, when they make themselves too noticeable, is never far beneath the surface. There is a great gulf between the comparatively wealthy and educated, and the desperately poor, living on \$2 per day.

We met up with two past students, Jampani Baburao and Samuel Dasi, both of whom with their families are working very faithfully as pastors in difficult circumstances. Jampani is planting churches in villages near the coast devastated by last year's tsunami, wanting to start a small school attached to each new church. Samuel leads a church linked to his father's ministry in a village which recently suffered a cyclone and severe flooding. We have many invitations to return to India next year but God knows what He plans.

Back in New Zealand we are preparing a new brochure for two schools next year, one at the Lodge which will return to a short term programme of 10 week units, and the other at Muanicula in Fiji for 8 weeks starting in April. Nick has spent much time at Muanicula helping develop excellent facilities in a tropical paradise. The new brochure is available on paper now as well as on our website, www.foweylodge.com. The start of the next 40 years seems a good time for a totally new approach, based on the same old principles. If you look at the website you will see big changes including many more Bible studies in English and Korean, and soon in Telegu, a South Indian language.

You can help us greatly in guiding in the effective distribution of the very attractive new brochure. If you e-mail us back we will be delighted to mail you how ever many brochures you believe you can use, or alternatively to mail them direct to those whose names and addresses you give us. We want to reach out to all those to whom we can

be of service without wasting printing and mailing costs providing those who are not interested with yet more junk mail!

Nick and Pete are working on our Water Weeks programme which will run from 19th to 30th January based, as in past years, on Ponui Island because Dayspring III is sadly consigned to staying in Wallis Island. Details are on www.foweycamps.co.nz and also on paper if you let us know of kids you believe would benefit.

Chris and I love what we have been called to do at Fowey Lodge, both in the Bible School and the medical practice, more than ever. The Lord has not changed His instructions so we are ready for as many of the next 40 years as He chooses. We always enjoy hearing from you or seeing you, whether you have faced good times or tough ones in which we can share. Our love in Christ,

Tony and Christine