

## *Fowey Fables – No.18*

*March 2008*

Tomorrow is celebrated by many Christians as Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter, the day when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey which no-one had ridden before.(Matt.21) Beside Him trotted the young donkey's mother, offering an empty seat to any of us who dare to join Him. Most of the crowd welcomed Him enthusiastically as a messenger of God, though some thought otherwise and plotted His downfall. For the moment He had celebrity status which He well knew would not last. Watched by the expectant crowd He entered the temple courtyard. Some saw Him as a military Messiah who would free them from their Roman oppressors. Would this be the coup they had been waiting for? What followed defined forever the very different purpose and people for which He came.

The temple surrounds had become a market place, where greedy entrepreneurs waited for gullible tourists who would come to worship. They exchanged heathen Roman currency for holy Jewish shekels, at premium rates. They sold doves, the cheap alternative sacrifice for those who could not afford a lamb, on tough terms. The problem however was not their inflated prices but their presence in the house of God. Jesus was rightly outraged at the home invasion of His Father's house which had taken place. Somehow the commercial world outside had invaded the temple. The Lord's purpose is that the Christian church invades the secular world with the message of God's grace. A weak, half-hearted church will look to the methods and ethics of business which give nothing for free, instead of to the Lord who lavishes His best on us in Jesus. The only coup in which Jesus was interested was to recapture the temple, His own house. It still is, and we are that temple.

From the traders who had no right to be there Jesus turned to those for whom, above all, He had come. First there were the blind and the lame who flocked to Him for help. They were the poor, the helpless and the powerless, not the most promising force with which to challenge the Roman army for control of the country. He met their need as He still meets the need of the spiritually blind who cannot see the truth, and the spiritually lame who cannot of themselves walk the way God wants them to. James reminds us frequently in his letter that our response to the needy is the simplest evidence of a faith that works.(Jas.2:14-17)

The religious leaders were not impressed, particularly when it was the children's voices which were heard praising Jesus. They were the ones who wholeheartedly welcomed Him back into His rightful place in His own house. What do kids know about matters of theology and politics? Jesus refused to have the children ignored and excluded as He still values so highly the lovely example of a child's faith. To Him children were not to be abused, neglected or put down.

Don't we still struggle with the same issues today? We value sound budgets, policies and procedures before sacrificial faithfulness. We look to the successful rather than the

desperate. We treat children as an inconvenience to be avoided, aborted, parked in day care or in front of a play-station, and then we wonder why they hit out at a society which did not want them.

Having for the moment re-established control of the temple Jesus spent the next few days teaching all who came. He used the one weapon He has provided to mount a coup in anyone's life, the word of God, the sword of the Spirit.

Eight years ago, John Wandera returned from Bible school to Uganda. God used him to establish some 25 churches in villages which had no church. New Christian families provided opportunity for AIDS orphans to be cared for if only they had some help with education and medical care. Over two hundred children are now being supported from several groups in New Zealand. Christine has linked about 50 to sponsors. Pete has just designed a new website, [www.newgenerationuganda.com](http://www.newgenerationuganda.com) which explains the need and the process of sponsorship. He and Nick went to Uganda for three weeks in December to run camps for the orphans who were part of the programme. For both of them it was a life changing experience. Nick is hoping to take a group to East Africa later this year or early next to help in practical projects according to need and the skills they have to offer. Let him know if you are keen at [nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com](mailto:nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com) The other exciting development in Uganda is a correspondence course on CD which the pastors will start in April under John's leadership. It will run for a year and hopefully equip them further to care for the families who care for the kids. There is now considerable interest in taking up the same programme in other parts of Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

For many years we have talked about Muanicula, near Savusavu in Fiji, and our hopes for establishing a programme there to help that country. Our dreams have been about leadership training, the care of homeless children, a free medical clinic, programmes to help village development and a Christian backpackers' hostel. The dreams are coming closer as the needs of Fiji get greater. Since the military takeover in December 2006, overseas aid and investment have dried up and life for ordinary people has grown harder. A week ago we were given a remarkable opportunity. Nick and I went to Suva where we took part in a new enterprise, Godly Servant Leaders, GSL, which held the first of 4 weekends for this year to which they invited leaders from government, business, university and the traditional chiefs. GSL has been organised by Rig Reddy who first came to Bible school in 1968 and has been a good friend ever since. Last weekend was a great start towards demonstrating that only Jesus can truly reconcile a divided society in Himself.

Back in New Zealand, we had a thoroughly enjoyable series of Water Weeks, this summer up at Parua Bay near Whangarei. Holy Ground Christian Camp is run by Chris and Bjorn Garland who have asked us to walk with them in a ministry that has drawn in many Northland young people for over 50 years. We took our various boats up there and it proved a superb base. Sadly, just a week ago, the speedboat which we have used for the last four years to transport kids to the various island camp sites was stolen from the Lodge. A friend spotted it parked down near Morrinsville and phoned Pete but by the

time he arrived it had gone. We are still searching and hoping to locate it because it has been such an effective part of summer camps.

Nick and Pete are moving closer to fulfilling another long-time dream. They are exploring the possibility of buying a block of land near Opotiki in the Bay of Plenty as a permanent site for camps with the special extra purpose of providing an adventure programme for young people in trouble. They have been linking up with other Christian groups who are working with such kids and would be keen to bring them to such a remote place. Watch this space!

Bible school is well under way for a new year. After the devastating effect on numbers of NZQA cancelling the accreditation of our course 3 years ago and thus blocking overseas students from obtaining visas, the group is again beginning to grow. We have now been able to have our course registered once again but not accredited which means that overseas students will be able to come for up to nine months without any bureaucratic control of what we teach. The government call it a 'recreational course for personal development' rather than an academic programme. We do not mind what they call it! Some 40 students from Africa, Asia and the Pacific have kept in touch, waiting for such an opportunity and we are now beginning the process of trying to get them into NZ.

We have made some important changes in the running of the school. Paul Crowhurst, who has been lecturing for several years, is now Principal. Alan Rorich has taken on the role of Academic Director. Tom and Margaret Ngapera are responsible for the pastoral care of live-in students. Nick Hanne is in charge of outreach in New Zealand and overseas. Have Chris and I retired? No, we are loving what we do as much as ever and are still totally committed.

Please share you dreams with us and any way we can help and encourage.

Our love in Christ

Tony, Chris, Nick and Pete