

Fowey Fables – December 2002

How much time do we spend reminding God of what we think He might have forgotten, only to realise later that we have it the wrong way round? David had the same problem in Psalm 119:49 when he reminded God of what He had promised him. The usual reason for suggesting the Lord might have overlooked our particular problem is because He seems a bit slow. He promised; we trusted Him; time has passed and nothing has happened! David recalled how good God's promises to him had seemed, how optimistic he had been, particularly when people were giving him a hard time. (v.50,51) But even though David had hung in there, nothing had changed. Then it hit him, the problem was the other way round. The one with memory problems was David. First he remembered what God had promised that never changes, (v.52) then he remembered the Lord's name, all that God is. Reality struck him in the middle of the night, at the time when most of us do our best worrying. (v.55) What a relief! Now he could move on.

Time and again this year God has shown us that He has not forgotten His amazing promises to us. We were just about to worry about who would do what? How would we solve this problem? Where was the money coming from? – and He took over. Some of our most difficult problems just melted away. For several years NZQA were demanding that we measured what students knew and we refused because Christian leadership training is about Whom we know, not what we know. Just as we thought they were going to try to deregister us, the whole system changed and their emphasis now is on sound management. As the number of Korean students in Bible School has increased greatly we have been concerned that we were not meeting their needs. Then God began to provide Koreans helpers who could take tutorial groups, counsel, translate and teach English, - Simon, Terry and Helen, Sonya and Jae Sun. Why were we so surprised?

The 37th year of Bible School came to an end this week. Every year is unique. This one was no exception! The Lord was amazing. Teaching His word is such a privilege.

In recent months, after years of hard work by Barbara, Precept studies have really taken off. New groups are starting up all the time. Leader training has drawn in new people and some who never believed God could use them – but He does. An exciting development has been that a number of students have been translating Precept studies into the Korean language not just for use in NZ but for publication by the Precept team in Korea. Late in January, Barbara, Nick and I will visit Precept headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee for their International Conference.

CNEC has been the umbrella under which we have sought help for John Wandera and his team in Uganda. They are doing a great work planting churches in villages where Jesus was completely unknown. In one village to which they have recently come, the custom has been to offer human sacrifice at the beginning of the fishing season. As in most of sub-Saharan Africa AIDS is killing millions in Uganda leaving large numbers of orphans. John's vision is to find Christian families who will take these kids in. There is enough food in Uganda but no money for education or medicine for extra

children. We want to do much more to help with child sponsorship, supporting Christian workers with, for example, bicycles to help them travel the many miles over rough roads, and assisting in leadership training. A growing circle of New Zealanders are serious about helping. There is now a special Uganda e-mail newsletter for those who ask for it. Let me know on jahanne@clear.net.nz if you want to be included.

Water Weeks are taking shape. We plan two camps from 10-15th and 15-20th January on Ponui Island as usual. Our new flagship, Spirit I, is being fitted out and should make a big difference under Capt. Nick. Brochures are being distributed by Pete, the new Water Weeks manager, who succeeds in squeezing this role around home schooling. Chris and I are busy recruiting helpers and organising the logistics of moving 30-40 people at a time, with all the equipment, to our favourite island.

Nick has done well in his first year in university, not only academically, but in keeping the integrity of his faith in what is at times a very hostile environment. He has been doing philosophy, politics and English. Like his parents he enjoys a good argument! His magazine, Incite, continues to be well accepted particularly by university students. The third issue is under production. If you want to receive it, by mail or e-mail, let him know.

Past students continue to keep in touch with interesting news. Charles Bushby from Tasmania, arguably Fowey Lodge's most talented violinist, was here for a short visit. Michael and Shobna Mani are pastoring a church in Sigatoka, Fiji where God is really working. Vladimir Nessin, our barefoot Russian, is walking around Canada. Frank Samui from Santa Cruz in the Solomon Islands describes how difficult life has been in his conflict-torn country in recent years. Jampani from India has all kinds of questions about the Bible and Science. Samuel Dasi also in India is planting a new church in the city of Machilipatnam. Miko who has been telling us funny stories for several years has finally returned home to Finland after painting much of the Lodge. Nancey Crookes has been in touch recently. She is back in Gisborne and involved in Precept. She was many years in Panama. Paul Thompson was over from Australia for his 50th birthday. He is as enthusiastic about life as ever.

Our Sunday morning fellowship continues to be a very happy group who care for each other and us wonderfully well. David and Sharon Cordery run a Wednesday evening Bible Study in their home at 37 Gillett Place, Howick and would love you to join them at 7.30pm. They lead the sort of studies that really make you think about your faith.

Chris and I continue to live very full lives which are deeply satisfying. The opportunities to make a difference in our home, in the Bible School, the practice and the university are challenges we so much enjoy sharing together as much as possible. Our boys are a great delight. But we too make the mistake of reminding God of what He never forgets – and then He reminds us of who He is. What a relief!

We would love to hear from you. Thanks for all your friendship and encouragement to us.

Yours in Christ,

Tony and Chris