

No book in the Bible has meant more to me since I first came to know Jesus Christ when I was a 20 year old medical student than Paul's letter to the Philippians. Soon after I became a Christian I remember, at a Christian camp, being very sceptical when a Christian doctor only a few years older than me quoted Phil.1:21, 'for me to live is Christ, to die is gain', and explained that this was how he felt. Only a couple of years later, he was married and they were expecting their first child, when he developed liver cancer. He died just 3 months later still radiating the joy of knowing Jesus. The concept of sharing the mind of Christ in serving others, in chapter two, convinced me soon afterwards of the servant nature of Christian leadership. Chapter three got me excited at the single life purpose of knowing Him and the power of His resurrection. Chapter four taught me the simple choice between worry and prayer, and the extraordinary possibilities of choosing the latter.

When we came together on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to celebrate 40 years of God's faithfulness since Fowey Lodge began, I was impressed again by the example of Paul in Phil.3:12-14 to forget what lies behind and to press on towards the goal. It would be easy now to live in the nostalgia of the past but the real challenge lies in the future. There are lessons from history – which we usually do not learn! In this letter I want briefly to recall some of those lessons, and then to share the sense of anticipation we have about what lies ahead.

In the early 60s four men had a profound effect on me. Major Ian Thomas taught me that Christ was my life. He once wrote to me, 'The river of God is full of water. Let the river cut its own path.' The river has taken a fascinating course since those days. Stuart Briscoe showed me that the Christian life was impossible for me, but wonderfully possible for Jesus, who wanted to live His life in me. Everything worthwhile I have learned since about Biblical counselling has been built on this marvellous revelation. Dr. John Hunter explained, and demonstrated, the free gift of the grace of God, which convinced me never to charge for Christian ministry. Leonard Van Doren encouraged me to seek God, not man, as my teacher and led me to understand inductive Bible study. I am immensely grateful for all of them.

In 1964, Dr David Rowlands, a delightful Christian doctor invited me to join him in practice in New Zealand. In late 1965 as the idea of a short term Bible school began to take shape, three people helped to make the dream happen. Dr Arthur Eisdell Moore, a retired Christian surgeon, made it possible for me to buy his beautiful home, Fowey, at 215 Bleakhouse Road. Ian Thomas agreed to partner me in the project. Jim Chamley, a Christian lawyer, with one of the sharpest minds I have ever met, negotiated the precarious deal. Some good friends like Rodney Smith, Anne Carr, and Haldane and Thelma Rowan joined me to launch what was then called Capernwray Lodge. Dick and Jan Park moved up from Wellington soon afterwards so that Dick could join me to teach. Some well known religious leaders phoned to warn me that another Bible School was not needed in NZ and that I would be bankrupt within 6 months. I learned to listen to God not man. Interestingly for the first six months of the Lodge's operation, gifts came in such abundance that I assumed that living by faith was easy. Then the money ran out and I have found ever

since that the Lord keeps me trusting Him by not letting me know where the next dollar is coming from.

At a camp a few months before the Lodge opened, 130 people indicated their intention to come to the first school. We began however with just 11 students, all from New Zealand. Among them were Owen Chamberlin and Cyril Everett. I learned quickly that programmes were for those who came, not for those who might have come. The late sixties were years in which I had to learn fast how to teach the Bible. I could not keep repeating the notes of Stuart Briscoe's lectures on the first three chapters of John's gospel. Opportunities exploded all over the country to preach and teach, as I learned how to depend on Christ for the words to say. Those same years saw the building, in the vegetable garden, of Ron and Aggie's first yacht Dayspring I, and the early days of Water Weeks. The first few students began to come from the Pacific and Australia.

In the early 70s I began to receive invitations to speak overseas, in Papua New Guinea to missionaries, in the USA to students, and in Australia to churches and camps. Ian Thomas and I were able to purchase jointly two beautiful properties, Wongabri in Australia, and Muanicula in Fiji which was led in the first few years by Rig and Shakuntala Reddy. My first book, Prayer or Pretense, was published by Zondevan and to my surprise lots of people bought it. It was even translated into Spanish. I began to have opportunity in Christian broadcasting. I felt I was on the way to becoming a spiritual superstar! Then in 1974 my world fell apart. For the next 4 years I went through a private tragedy in which I learned just how good God was when it hurt. I was able to share from the inside in the sufferings of others instead of just saying the right things as a professional. I was certain that I should continue in ministry and medicine, and God blessed me in both. I realised what Paul meant by living in contentment in good times and bad.(Phil.4:11-12) Meanwhile at the Lodge, schools continued to grow with increasing numbers of students from North America.

At the end of the 70s, my private hurt became public. Many Christians wrote me off, students were warned off the Lodge, invitations to speak dried up, and I discovered just how good were the real friends whom God had given me, like Ross and Ethne Hanna, and Dave and Dawn Greenfield. Then the Lord brought Christine into my life and there began a joyful, fruitful partnership which is still going strong 27 years later. As the crowd at the Lodge shrank to a trickle the obvious question was 'why stay here?' Together we learned that the path to follow is the one in which 'the peace of God which passes all understanding keeps your hearts and your minds in the knowledge of Christ Jesus',(Phil.4:7) not the one determined by circumstances or the opinions of others. We were convinced we should stay and continue.

The 80s were different. The school, now called Fowey Lodge, was small. Speaking elsewhere was limited. Travel was occasional. My second book, A New Old Testament, sold only a few hundred copies. I learned what Jesus meant when He said 'when two or three are gathered...' And then some wonderful changes started to happen. Our first son, Nick, arrived in 1982. I began to learn why God enjoyed being our Heavenly Father, and I stopped giving advice on how to parent. Radha and Barbara Poonan moved in to help us. A couple of years later, Sam and Thelma Chapman and their four kids came to live at the Lodge and stayed 10 years. Following them were many delightful Maori people who opened our eyes to another

world. Rod Biddick, Frank Hutchinson and Ewen Bartlett started to lecture. In 1987 I left the busy group practice in Panmure, where I had had 20 happy years, to start again as a doctor at home in a quiet solo practice. The intention was to have more time for teaching. Within six months I was as busy in medicine as ever.

1990 was an exciting milestone. Our second son Pete arrived. Water Weeks began again based around Dayspring III and our favourite campsite on Ponui Island. We met Mike Wells of Abiding Life, who taught us much more about translating the indwelling Christ into practical counselling, and John Lind from Precept, who gave us great new resources for inductive teaching. Both of them opened up relationships with other ministries that greatly expanded our horizons and gave us wonderful friends. A long time interest in Biblical creation led to the start of Creation Science, now called Creation Ministries. David Cohen, a very special friend from the early 70s, introduced us to CNEC, which supports national missionaries among their own people in some 50 developing countries. The school started to grow again with students coming from Africa, Asia, South America and Europe, eventually some 70 countries. Nearly all were financially needy but God never failed in His promise to provide our every need, (Phil.4:19) though not our every want! In 1993 with a new wave of opportunity ahead of us, I developed a heart problem, spent a month in hospital, nearly died, and learned that, in Christ, death was nothing to fear. (Phil.1:21)

From the mid 90s there began a relationship with South Korean students which grew beyond all expectation. We learned through them about churches which had seen a very rapid growth in the proportion of Christians in their country over 50 years, which have the expectation that God is going to work, and a zeal to reach to the ends of the earth with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I had two medical partners in practice for 4 and then 2 years. The first did not work out and nearly ruined us, and the second worked well but did not last. By the end of the 90s I was working alone again, but a fascinating new door had opened to work in the Auckland Medical School as a senior lecturer. This continued for 7 years during which time I had a great opportunity to influence general practice throughout the country, but also to learn a lot about education in a professional sense, after many years as an enthusiastic amateur.

In the late 90s we were able to build a number of new homes at Fowey Lodge so that we could be much more a Christian community. Hand in hand with this, a Sunday fellowship began which has produced a wonderful team of people who have stood with us in the ministry.

The first five years of this new millennium brought an explosion of growth in student number from around 20 to 200 followed by a spectacular shrinkage back to 20. NZQA, a government creation in 1991 to control all education according to secular standards, became more and more demanding in their determination that we should measure learning outcomes by examinations. When we refused yet again because we have always maintained that Christian teaching is about life change, not just knowledge, they withdrew our accreditation and therefore our right to obtain visas for overseas students during last year. We learned that those without Christ will hate us because they hate Him. (Phil.1:28-30) Again we had to ask the question, 'Do we continue here?' and again God's peace and provision has answered us. Midway through last year, Dayspring III, with Nick on board, was wrecked on a mission trip to Wallis Island in the Pacific. Everyone was rescued after 7 frightening hours.

On 1<sup>st</sup> April we met at the Picton Centre in Howick with about 200 people for an evening we as a family shall never forget. Nick had done a superb job in organising invitations, catering and a delightful programme. Among those who came were students, lecturers and helpers spread across 40 marvellous years right back from those early days. Sam spoke powerfully about what he believes the Lord wants to do among His people, the kids performed, people sang and testified, and after we had opportunity to say what was on our hearts, Pete showed a brilliant video of 40 years of moving or funny memories, which he and Nick had put together. Thank you to all those who came and shared the night with us. Thank you to all who sent loving and encouraging messages, but could not be there.

Now to what should we 'press on'? (Phil.3:12-14) We remain convinced that there will be more Bible schools at the Lodge with a fresh emphasis on training New Zealanders, particularly, to teach, a programme at Muanicula principally for children, short term schools overseas, especially where former students have returned; Nick and I plan to go to South and East Africa in July and August; he and Pete will run more kids' camps in New Zealand; I hope to write another book, and continue developing the website – [www.foweylodge.com](http://www.foweylodge.com) where students who cannot come to NZ are able to meet us.

What is on your heart? Share your dreams with us so that we can be alongside you as you have been so lovingly and loyally alongside us.

Our love and thanks for your friendship,

In Christ                      Tony, Christine, Nick and Pete.