

Fowey Fables – No.26

April 2011

If God had to start His work in us at the cross because we could not fix our problem of sin, why would we think we could finish the job by living the Christian life in our own strength? If becoming a Christian meant that God had adopted us into His family to enjoy our inheritance as His grown-up sons and daughters, why would we want to go back to being small children always needing someone else to correct us and tell us how to behave? These are the telling questions Paul asked the Galatians in chapter 4 of his letter to them. He warned us that if we let others tell us what to do and how to do it as if we were in primary school, there would always be plenty of people keen to control us because they can manipulate us for their own advantage and make themselves look good in the process. How crazy can we be to imprison ourselves in man-made rules for living again when Christ has freed us from inevitable failure by coming to live in us?

As Paul explained his concern for those among whom he had worked tirelessly over the years, with his typical vivid ability for illustration, he described what he now faced as like being in labour to give birth to them all over again!(Gal.4:19) What an interesting challenge for a man! For many years as a doctor I delivered babies, a couple of thousand of them, at all hours of the day and night. However tired I was I never ceased to feel the thrill of a new life entering the world. Many of those babies have remained my patients ever since. I feel a special sense of pride in their progress into adult life. Two things I remember clearly about my years of obstetrics. I never delivered the same baby twice. And I am certain I never delivered a baby from a man. I never cease to be thrilled when someone comes to know Christ however long a road it has been for him or her to get there. The excitement of seeing the sense of wonder a new Christian has is exhilarating. But then to see that same person become trapped in the self effort of religious legalism is heart breaking.

1st April marked 45 years of Bible school at the Lodge. Reflecting on those years is moving. God has been so faithful to us. Every year since the beginning there have been those who came to be students but realized that they were hearing about a Jesus they did not actually know and so they trusted Him. Michael,(42 year old) was the most recent new born. We had the huge privilege of baptizing him in the sea at the bottom of our cliff a couple of weeks ago. Every year there have been many who had met Jesus years before but somehow the Christian life had been a disappointment. Somewhere they had been sidetracked into living back under someone's laws. Discovering the simple secret of saying, 'Lord, I cannot live the Christian life but you can IN me, thank you!' has set them free to continue the adventure. This past year has been no exception. Religious 'prisoners' have escaped. Just this weekend we had an e-mail from an American student, Barb Woolley, now Hall, who was at the Lodge in 1971 and we have not heard from since. It is a cause of immense joy that the Lord uses His Word and His Spirit to keep those who trust Him throughout the ups and downs of their lives.

In January we had two camps at Nick's place, Taihoa, near Opotiki. The first camp for teenagers was near perfect with superb weather and a great team of helpers. The second for younger kids was a challenge. It began with a cyclone which almost prevented us crossing the Waioeka river to Taihoa and ended with another one which meant we had to escape across the river late at night before it rose to become impassable, and drive back to Auckland overnight. But each time we saw God introducing Himself to young people.

Christine spent the month of January in China with her cousin Catherine who teaches in Beijing and her Chinese friend Anne who has lived with us since her husband died last year. She came back with amazing stories of the Great Wall, the Summer Palace, the Forbidden City but most of all of some beautiful Christians who have been faithful under difficult conditions.

Nick has returned to Auckland University as the first step towards a Masters in Political Studies. He is living with us at the Lodge, helping in the teaching programme and leadership of the students but at the same time keeping one foot in Opotiki where he is exploring the future plans for Taihoa. He still anticipates a camping and training programme there but it needs to be as a team so he is interested to know who else is called to be part of the team. We have just had an outstanding camp at Taihoa in the April holidays with 27 kids and the Hanne family. We are planning a work and fellowship weekend there from 20-22nd May. Let us know if you are interested to join us.

From 18-22nd July we are holding another ski camp again at Cardrona near Wanaka. This time we have amazing accommodation right up on the ski field. Cardrona is a great place for beginners and experts. The price will be really low if we can book you early!

Pete is well into his second year at the Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Ruapehu, training as an outdoor education instructor. We have just had some thrilling news about him. The Queen has approved the award of the NZ Bravery Medal for his very courageous rescue alone at night of a truck driver whose truck and trailer were jack-knifed on a tree above the Waioeka River in the gorge near Taihoa in October 2008. As you might guess we are all so proud of him.

Following our visit to India and Pakistan in November Nick and I with a group of others are launching a new child sponsorship programme for 150 children. There are 90 children in a thatched roof but open sided school building on the edge of rice paddies in South East India. Their parents are desperately poor. There are another 60 children of indentured labourers, in effect slaves, in a brick-works outside Lahore in Pakistan. Their school has a dirt floor, brick walls and no roof. All these children are hungry for food, hungry to learn and we believe hungry to know Jesus. In both places the teachers are led by former Lodge students who in turn are caring for a group of pastors for whom we are providing a training programme. Our hope is that sponsors will take on the support of a child at \$35 per month. Please let us know if you would like more information. We have a special letter prepared to explain the plan to help the kids in both countries.

On the evening on Tuesday, 3rd May we have a dinner at the Lodge with Enoch Phiri, Africa Enterprise director in Malawi as our guest speaker. He has a great story to tell. Let us know on jahanne@clear.net.nz or 09-538-0022 if you can join us at 7pm. There will be no charge but we will take an offering for the work of AE

Please keep in touch.

Our love in Christ,

Tony, Chris, Nick and Pete