

Fowey Fables – no.16

April 2007

Many of us love Hebrews chapter 11 with its marvellous and inspiring gallery of Old Testament heroes of faith whose stirring examples we are urged to follow. I have recently been noticing that the book of Hebrews has 10 fascinating chapters before chapter 11 that we may have been inclined to skip over because they seemed too hard. If we do catch on to Heb.1-10, chapter 11 takes on radical new meaning.

One word dominates the book of Hebrews, the word ‘better’, which is used 22 times, nearly as many as in the whole of the rest of the New Testament. We have

- a better High Priest – Jesus in heaven,(chaps.5-7)
- a better covenant – Jesus in us,(chap.8)
- a better tabernacle – us in Jesus,(chap.9) and
- a better sacrifice – Jesus on the cross,(chap.10)

than what was available in the Old Testament, even though the Old Testament hinted strongly that all this was coming. It was for this reason that the first two chapters of Hebrews urged us to ‘consider Jesus’,(3:1) as Son of God,(chap.1) and Son of Man.(chap.2) We can share in Jesus by faithfulness which the Israelites in the wilderness failed to show in their grumbling,(chap.3) until Joshua taught them how to ‘enter into God’s rest’.(chap.4) At the end of chapter 10 the anonymous writer of Hebrews returned to the theme of faith when he (or she?) quoted the famous words of Hab.2:4 which we normally associate with Paul’s letter to the Romans – ‘My righteous one shall live by faith.’ which is a much better message than trying to live the Christian life by my own effort. That is what my Old Testament heroes in chapter 11 with all their weaknesses and failures so powerfully demonstrate.

What has really impressed me as I have dug into Hebrews has been how easy it is for the Christian church to slip back into an Old Testament model which emphasises holy men enforcing holy rules and following holy rituals on holy days in holy buildings! Experiencing the ‘better message’ of the gospel simply means all of us enjoying all that Jesus is, all day, every day, everywhere, with everyone, in every situation. Like the role models of Heb.11, life can be incredibly tough at times but the answer is simply – Jesus.

We saw a powerful example of this in January. While we were enjoying another series of Water Weeks on Kawau Island, a phone call came for three brothers who were on the camp. Their mum had died 5 years before and now their dad had taken his own life. Sharing their sorrow was heartbreaking but hearing them share Jesus at the funeral a few days later was unforgettable.

A week later we had a visit from someone I had not seen for 40 years since her mother died at the Lodge in tragic circumstances leaving her an orphan at the age of 13. At that time she and her sister had returned to family in England. Gilly came back with her doctor husband, Chris. She had not just survived the emotional trauma of her teenage years but had flourished to produce a delightful Christian family. The secret – Jesus.

I have written previously about the trip Nick and I made to Uganda last August to see at first hand the needs of orphans whom some of you have been supporting through a former student, John Wandera. It was heartening to see in the village of Mafudu how well those with sponsors were doing but troubling to meet those whose sponsors had had to discontinue. John has worked hard to gather photos and profiles of those who are most urgently in need of help. Loving families have taken them in and fed them but there is nothing for education, medicine and clothing. Some of these orphans now have sponsors but on my desk are details of a further 17 for whom we would love to provide. The solution is – Jesus, working through those who care. Barbara Poonan is organising our sponsorship programme. You can reach her at rbpoonan@gmail.com.

Some of you knew Adrian and Debora when they were students here. It was one of the great romances of Fowey Lodge! They married in Brazil where Debora comes from and have been working for several years among a poor Muslim community in Sarawak, in Malaysia where Adrian was born. Preaching Jesus publicly is not allowed so they have had to preach Him by caring for the practical needs of their neighbours. They do it beautifully.

Others of you will remember Thang from Myanmar, another country where the open proclamation of Christ can put you in jail. After a year of further study in India, he is now back among his people, with his wife and family, teaching in a Christian college which is training leaders. He has proved the faithfulness of God who has kept him trusting Jesus to meet his every need.

Nick is in Greece for this year where he is fulfilling a number of dreams at the same time. He is first mate and Bible teacher on a 90 ft yacht which takes groups of young people out in the Aegean Sea for two weeks at a time to introduce them to Jesus. He phoned us a couple of weeks ago from the Areopagus in Athens where he had climbed one day to read in Acts 17 the account of Paul preaching from the same spot. He has a great interest in Ancient Greece both because of Paul's visits and because in earlier centuries it was the birthplace of European civilisation. You can see the work he is involved in by going to www.kingfisherproject.org He would love to hear from you on nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com

Fowey camps are under new management in Nick's absence. Pete has taken responsibility for bringing ideas and people together into a whole range of exciting camps. You can be kept in touch with plans through Pete's website, www.foweycamps.co.nz He would also appreciate your input and practical help, beginning with word of mouth advertising to young people between 8-18. Our next event will be a Ski Camp at Mt Ruapehu from 9-13th July.

Over Easter, Chris, Pete and I were involved in a youth camp at Parua Bay out of Whangarei. Chris and Bjorn Garland have very faithfully cared for the beautifully situated facility for many years and do a brilliant job with limited support. We are planning to work more closely with them in the coming year. If you are looking for a

good site for a camp where there is a simple emphasis on Jesus, you could not do better. Their website is www.holyground.org.nz

Since the loss of the Dayspring III on a reef outside Wallis Island nearly 2 years ago we have dreamed of a new boat for ministry in New Zealand and perhaps in the Pacific. In the last few months an exciting possible solution has emerged through a long time friend who is well ahead with building an ideal vessel. There is much work to be done and he is going to need help. The first need is a business partner. Secondly it would be great to have a group of mature people with a real commitment to support and encourage. Thirdly we would love to see a bunch of young people who can see the possibilities of a yacht based ministry and want to have a part in it. Do let us know if you are interested.

Bible school at Fowey Lodge continues to draw a very special group of those hungry to know Jesus better. While our numbers are far smaller since NZQA withdrew our course accreditation, there is no question that those who come mean business so we remain excited. We continue to be in touch with some 40-50 outstanding potential students from Africa, Asia and the Pacific who believe God wants them to come to Fowey Lodge. We are still exploring ways and means of helping them to get student visas and there are now some promising leads. Two new lecturers have joined us this year, Paul Crowhurst and Tony Romero, both of whom have made a great contribution. Plans to offer more and more material on internet continue to move ahead. Paul, Alan Rorich, Nick and I are working on an on-line certificate course for those who cannot physically reach NZ. We are sure you know where to find us at www.foweylodge.com

Another fascinating venture is taking shape for part of next year in the form of a joint programme with a Korean based group to train missionaries at Fowey Lodge to work around the world among the disabled. As a doctor it is a project which is very important to me.

We are still waiting for confirmation from Solo Tuibua of his plans for short courses at Muanicula in Fiji beginning in June. The immediate need is to put the roof on the meeting house for which financial provision has already been made. In the Pacific time is not a pressing issue. We remain convinced that God will do great things there in His own good time.

We would love up to date news of you and what you have discovered lately about Jesus.

Love from us all

Tony, Chris, Nick and Pete

