

## ***FOWEY FABLES – NO.6 – JANUARY 2004***

According to Psalm 119:73, God shaped our bodies as a potter shapes a lump of clay. What we now know is that He used and continues to use the remarkable tool of the human genome, that coiled string of DNA that contains all the information necessary to shape any one of us. For the last several years argument has raged around the world as to whether it is good or bad to interfere with God's tool by genetic modification (GM) or to clone copies of people either to satisfy their egos or to be able to harvest spare body parts. There is an even bigger issue than GM.

Almost every one of the 176 verses in Psalm 119 is about the Word of God, its character, purpose and potential to bless us if we receive it faithfully. Nine different words are used almost synonymously for the scriptures – commandments, law, ordinances, statutes, judgements, precepts, ways, words and testimonies. What usually escapes us is that this section of Psalm 119, 73-80, goes on to describe the possibilities of a much more important plan for Divine engineering, mind modification, (MM) by means of His Word.

Unravelling the human genome was hailed as a great triumph of man's intellect. It opened the way for GM. God's far greater plan for MM can easily be overlooked. It begins with His commitment to be our Teacher and give us real understanding. (73) Seeing this happen in other Christians is a source of enormous satisfaction to mature believers, but it is a process which takes time and patience. (74) It leads to a growing conviction in tough times that God's view of the world is the right one and that He is absolutely dependable. (75) Knowing even a little of how much He loves us is a wonderful strength, (76) and makes any situation bearable. (77) It reveals the lie in other world views with which we are bombarded, but we must take time to let His word sink in. (78) It gives the only solid basis for Christian fellowship and friendship. (79) It offers us the wonderful privilege of being guilt-free before God and man. (80)

And this, God has again reminded us, is why we do what we do as His sons and daughters.

As I write this we are just in the process of dismantling our Water Weeks camp on Ponui Island in the Hauraki Gulf. Pete and I are back to showers and soft beds while Christine and Nick are the last survivors, packing up on the island for another couple of days. Nearly 40 young people and adult leaders attended each of two 5 day camps. Some of the unforgettable memories include – the boy with the bright idea of throwing a rock into a wasp nest, singing around a campfire at night as the moon rose over a still sea, seven of us high and dry at an angle of 45 degrees in the yacht Spirit on a visit to Rotoroa Island, an unexpected visit from a Ukrainian ship touring the world with our old friend Sergei Permitin leading a group of Russian young people, another bright boy who stuck a knife through the roof of his tent to release the pool of rainwater on top and then complained that his tent was wet, beating Russia in a canoe relay race, a long dead cow which had inconsiderately chosen our favourite campsite to expire, a superb team of leaders in each camp, nearly sinking our new 6 metre inflatable when it was driven off fully loaded from the beach with the drainage bung still out, and the intense interest and serious questions of each group of kids as we

shared Jesus with them. This was the beginning of lifelong MM for a delightful group of young people.

In three weeks we begin a new year of Bible School again anticipating a very large group of students from all over the world, 25 of whom will live in as usual while the rest commute from around Auckland. This is serious MM because those who come to Bible School these days overwhelmingly show that they mean business. Once again we will use a local church for morning lectures. We will rely on a big team of tutors to break the group down into smaller, more personal units to be sure no-one is lost in the crowd and that individual needs are met. In the last year there has been quite a lot of sickness among the lecturing team putting Frank Hutchinson out of action for several months and forcing Radha Poonan to stop teaching for the time being. A couple of months ago Graham James who has been a missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators with a special interest in indigenous Christian music had a stroke and passed away a week later. He has been a frequent lecturer and a good friend whom we will greatly miss. Just a week ago Terry Cowland had a fairly minor stroke but is recovering well in hospital. We feel for him as he also struggles to father 2 young kids on his own.

As the Psalm writer pointed out when God is doing MM through His word the arrogant will also be busy trying to subvert with lies. (119:78) MM brings SS (Satanic Subversion). As I have shared before, most of the subversion we face seems to come through various branches of government. For the moment at least, these pressures are under control. NZQA assessed us last May and agreed to some changes we proposed which did not compromise what we believe we are called to do. They are visiting us again this March. The Immigration Department made things tough for several years but have been more reasonable of late and are again allowing suitable students to stay for a second year. Potential students from the poorest countries have the hardest time obtaining visas because our government cannot believe they would want to go home again afterwards. The Manukau City Council threatened to close us down because of students parking in the street but through the intervention of a good friend, Nick and I were able to meet Sir Barry Curtis, the Mayor, who was most sympathetic and helpful. We will probably only have to go through a limited Resource Consent process to resolve the problem. The Inland Revenue Dept. sent an outrageous demand for imaginary unpaid taxes and penalties but now after a year and a half are reconsidering. Compared with the persecution Christians have faced throughout history, and still in much of the world, all this is peanuts!

For MM to work there also has to be AA (Active Application). For many students AA happens in service in their local churches. For all of us it happens simply from living together with all of our different customs and personalities but as often as possible we want to go out into the community and share what we have discovered. During last year student teams went to Fiji, Tokoroa and Wanganui. Our first outreach this year will be to Whangarei and later again to Fiji. We are open to ideas! Solo and Akanisi who led last year's AAs are currently reaching out to a very dysfunctional community on an island off the North Queensland coast.

We do trust God's MM is happening for you, without too much SS. Do share your news with us. Our love in Christ, Tony and Christine

