

I have been rediscovering an extraordinary book written by an extraordinary man. Surely the apostle Paul was crazy when he wrote Philippians? Fifteen times he used the word 'joy' or 'rejoice' but he was sitting in jail, facing trial and, sooner or later, execution. Every day could mean life or death. Some very competitive fellow preachers were using the opportunity to get one over Paul and raise their own audience ratings. Many of his friends were suffering, one had nearly died, and two female co-workers were at each others throats. All over his world there was work he longed to do but he could not get out to do it. How on earth can anyone have joy in such circumstances?

The simple secret of joy according to Paul is to share the very heart of Christ Himself. In Christ we can find encouragement – 'paraklesis' means 'called alongside to help', like a search and rescue operation in the bush or at sea. Consolation – 'paramuthion', means 'coming alongside to tell a story'. He helps us by telling us the stories of the Old and New Testament to change our thinking. Fellowship – 'koinonia', means 'sharing' or 'contributing' and tells what He does for us, often through others. Affection – 'splanchnon', describes 'the inward parts', and compassion – 'oiktirmos', is 'pity', our gut feelings which should come from Him. Notice that sharing the heart of Christ is about mind, will and emotion. Paul confirmed this in verse 2 in urging us to be of the same mind, love and purpose with Christ and each other because the Spirit in us will make us one. (Phil.2:1,2)

One word sums up the attitude which describes this, humility, which wants the best for others. Esteeming others more highly than ourselves is an attitude which is directly in conflict with the modern explanation for many social ills, that our problem is 'low self-esteem'. If we esteem Jesus Christ highly we can forget our own needs and be concerned above all with the needs of others. (2:3,4)

Jesus demonstrated how this could work when He willingly put aside His right and power as God to be born as a man of very humble circumstances, who was willing even to die for the rest of humanity on the cross. As God He became man dependent on God, trusting the Father to raise Him from the dead and ultimately to put Him again in charge of a world which at the end of history would have to acknowledge Him. It would be all God's doing. (2:5-11)

So, if we are willing to share the heart of Christ, we are to let 'work out'(v.12) the salvation which God has 'worked in' us, enabling us to 'work for' His purpose. The words fear and trembling seem extreme but the point is simply our reaction to the absolutely awesome privilege of the Creator of the universe putting His Spirit inside us. 'Trembling' is the word 'tromos' meaning an earthquake! (2:12-13)

How will this show? 'Do all things without grumbling or disputing.' Grumbling and disputing are about my will, my reputation, and my interests not those of others. The absence of these will be such remarkable behaviour that it will be dazzlingly different from the world we live in. It will be marvellous evidence that the word of God has not

been preached in vain. Paul's sacrifice of his life for which he was now in jail had not been wasted. Together they could rejoice because grace, expressed through God's word, changed lives. (2:14-18)

I have just been reading on paper or e-mail about just a few of those who are enjoying the grace of God while humbly serving among those who are suffering. Here are just a few. Medical teams in Eastern Congo are seeking to restore some of the terrible damage from the torture and rape of villagers. A pastor is missing and his congregation are in prison in Eritrea. Nineteen South Korean short term missionaries were released by the Taliban after two months as hostages but two of their leaders were murdered. An Algerian woman who trusted in Christ after seeing a vision was in court facing the death penalty but was freed after she prayed aloud for the judge. A thirteen year old Vietnamese boy professed to be a Christian and so was barred from entering high school.

At the Lodge we have enjoyed some very lovely demonstrations of the grace of God over the past few weeks. Adrian and Debbie Wong have just returned from three tough years serving the people of Borneo. John and Jessica Wandera have been with us for two weeks from 15<sup>th</sup> September. The Lord has used them to plant more than 25 churches in Eastern Uganda in the past 8 years which has given us the opportunity to arrange the sponsorship of many AIDS orphans who are cared for by Christian families. Rev. Bo Eun Ryou was here from 18-21<sup>st</sup> September. He has been involved for many years in encouraging outreach into North Korea, with support from CNEC-Partners International. Emmanuel Kopwe has had a key role as part of African Enterprise in bringing about reconciliation among the brutal perpetrators and victims of genocide in Burundi, Rwanda and Congo. He has been with us from 26-30<sup>th</sup> October. The principles he taught are the answer to violence in NZ as much as in Africa.

Two months ago I had the privilege of participating in a very joyful memorial service for one of the most remarkable men I have ever known, Major Ian Thomas, who died recently at the age of 92. I first met him at Capernwray Hall in England in 1962 and learned for the first time that Jesus Christ lived in me. When I bought the Lodge in 1965, it was in partnership with him. We were also involved together in establishing Wongabri in Australia and Muanicula in Fiji. He will be remembered however not for the many beautiful centres around the world he helped to set up but for his simple, powerful, Christ-centred message and the lengths he went to invest time and teaching in young people in whom he saw promise. We did not always agree on some issues and for a time went in different directions but were able later to reconcile and to resume a strong mutual respect and common conviction. For me his message was not only life changing but it became the basis for everything important that I have ever learned since about the Bible and the Christian life. My understanding of prayer, of inductive study, of effective counselling, of servant leadership and above all of grace each started from his constant insistence that the risen life of Christ, offered to us by a loving God, is the heart of the Christian gospel.

At Fowey Lodge this year we have known much joy. Students, hungry to know the grace of God, keep coming. Wonderful friends help us in so many ways, as part of the team teaching or giving practical help, meeting needs of all sorts and giving us all kinds of personal encouragement. The correspondence course which will be available on the

website or on CD is finally ready. There are 2 topics, Biblical Counselling, Christian Theology, and 4 Bible books, Genesis, I Samuel, Matthew and Ephesians. We have just gone through a final editing before making it available to those who want to take it as a certificate course. Our ski camp at Mt Ruapehu was well attended and God was in charge, despite a huge storm in the middle of the week. Lots of young people were thinking seriously about Jesus. Pete's leadership was a cause for great joy.

We are planning towards another series of Water Weeks in January with, we trust, the use of 2 yachts as well as a land base on an island. Go to Pete's websites for details nearer the time, [www.foweycamps.co.nz](http://www.foweycamps.co.nz) The new 50 foot yacht we mentioned in the last newsletter which is being offered for our use in New Zealand and the Pacific is still being fitted out. There is still much to do but we know God will lay it on the heart of those He wants involved to help.

Those of you who have rattled and bumped your way up our main drive are in for a shock. We have received a gift of a new drive which was laid in October. The resurfacing of the tennis court is actually nearing completion. Leaks in the roof are being fixed. The grounds have been well cared for lately. The Lord even looks after such practical things. We thank Him and those who help us, and rejoice.

Nick has come to the end of his time in Greece a few weeks earlier than planned and after a visit to family in London, returned to NZ two weeks ago. We believe he showed great integrity in his decision to move on. He has been sailing and sharing Christ on a 90 foot yacht throughout this season. Cruising in the Mediterranean sounds like a dream but at times it was tough. The temperature has been over 40deg C with no air-conditioning. He describes a recent day spent fixing a broken toilet on the boat and somehow getting sprayed with the contents! In his words 'Joy, joy, joy'! He has been using every spare moment to write an historical novel set in Ancient Greece. It is looking promising. In December he and Pete will be in Uganda to take camps for orphan kids and would love some help. Contact him on [nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com](mailto:nickjhanne1982@hotmail.com)

We have often shared our hopes for Muanicula in Fiji without much progress to report until now. The fruit of the Spirit includes patience as well as joy...The coup last year has put economic pressure on the Fijian people which makes it hard for them to look beyond the immediate needs of the day. But once again ideas and offers to be involved are taking shape. Solo Tuibua is going to lead a Bible training programme from June 2008. We are hoping to visit some time early in the New Year to prepare the way with local friends. Next week I am going for a few days to Suva to speak in a Christian Leadership seminar, organised by Rig Reddy, for key leaders from different segments of society.

Every time you share with us your joy in all that the Lord has been to you, even in hard times, you multiply our joy. Please continue to do it.

Our warmest love in Christ,

Tony, Christine, Nick and Pete