

THE THREE ARMIES OF GOD

The Lord has given me a picture of three armies, all fighting the same enemy but with varying degrees of effectiveness.

THE OUTER COURT ARMY: This army reminds me of the Chinese Army. They appear to be a huge, seething mass of soldiers when looked at from a distance but as you get closer you can see that they are in ranks, very close together. Their uniforms are all much the same but there are epaulets distinguishing regiments. The regiments are separate and do not mix. The officer's uniforms stand out.

The soldiers are armed only with a very basic rifle. They are pleased to be in the army as it gives them security in an otherwise poor country. The only way they can win battles however is by sheer force of numbers. The leadership doesn't mind sacrificing soldiers in the battle, as there are plenty of replacements available. The individual soldiers however, while willing to sacrifice themselves in this way in the past, are not so keen to do so now, their education levels having increased. Most of the leaders however do not realise this, being of the old school. So there is increasing disaffection in the ranks and even desertions, as the soldiers are no longer prepared to be cannon fodder.

The leadership is at a loss as to what to do. They are not prepared to learn new tactical skills as they feel they already have all the answers. What used to work still should, in their opinion, but it doesn't. They have a defeated look in their eyes when confronting major battles. So they avoid these and restrict themselves to minor, low tech skirmishes, where their numerical superiority guarantees success. They are increasingly reluctant to enter into battle unless success is virtually guaranteed, for they know they cannot rely on their troops to accept the risks of all out warfare. This huge potential resource is slowly dying due to the lack of innovative and inspiring leadership and their leaders inability and unwillingness to employ the new weaponry their government is providing. It sits neatly in piles in huge storage sheds that surround the army. The leadership have put armed guards on these sheds with orders to shoot on sight any soldier attempting to use their own initiative to go in and try out one of these weapons. The soldiers lose even more interest and many do not renew their contracts once they have served their allotted time. The army therefore, has to expend even greater resources on attracting and training to a basic level, new recruits. This distracts them from the battle even more.

Their enemies can see this and are getting bolder and bolder in their attacks. The size of their occupied land is shrinking as the soldiers gradually withdraw towards the safety of numbers in the middle of their territory. Yet the army is potentially a tremendously powerful one, consisting as it does of such huge numbers of soldiers. If only the leadership would employ new tactics and make use of the weaponry available to it, it could once again become a great force. Sadly, such a change does not appear to be in sight.

Encouragingly though, increasing numbers of the soldiers who are leaving realise the situation and are joining the adjoining supporting armies who they can see are prepared to use the weaponry they have been given. This, in spite of the leadership instructing them not to have anything to do with these armies, whom they sometimes incorrectly see as being the enemy.

The enemy, in increasing desperation, seeing not one but three armies gathering against it, is concentrating its attacks far more than it used to. Sadly, this first army is not adapting to this new situation at all well. It spends most time remembering past glory days, rather than adapting to today's battle conditions. While it cannot be defeated completely because of the huge numbers and infrastructure it contains, it is continually reducing in size and effectiveness, leaving more and more of the responsibility of the battle to its associated armies.

THE HOLY PLACE ARMY: This army reminds me of NATO. Not as many soldiers as the first army although they cover a greater area, being spread further apart. This army is in a much more confident mood, having had recent victories, although in reality, against much less sophisticated foes. Their uniforms are many and varied, representing the diversity of countries they come from. The troops are more highly

educated, needing to be to handle the sophisticated weaponry they have at their disposal. The officers are clearly distinguishable from the troops, not because their uniforms are radically different, but because they have adorned themselves with all sorts of gold braid and medals to make themselves stand out.

Everything looks pretty good on the surface but there are major problems underneath. Firstly in the areas of communications. For here are many different national languages spoken, so troop units have considerable difficulties in communicating with each other. An attempt has been made to overcome this by making the predominant, English language the primary one for the command structure, but misinterpretations are frequent, particularly in the heat of battle when stress levels are high. Resentment and uncertainty occurs, amongst both officers and men. This is a major problem with this army, for national pride supersedes efficiency and effectiveness on many occasions. Each national unit feels that they know best and want their own people to be at the top of the command structure. This has led to a top-heavy organisation, one slow in making decisions. Pride and bickering between units, each of whom have slightly different agendas, also reduces the effectiveness of this army considerably. But they are finding now, the more they fight beside each other and come to rely upon each other in the heat of battle, that their differences are not as great as they once thought they were. As the battle intensifies, they are realising that they indeed have all critical areas in common and that the enemy is the real foe.

Weaponry is not a problem for this army. They have more than adequate supplies provided by their governments and the soldiers are keen and eager to use it. Unfortunately however, the weaponry is looked upon as being sufficient to win all the battles by itself. Technology is king. This reliance on technology has now got to such a state that the army is jeopardising the equipment's effectiveness by not being willing to risk soldiers lives in the employment of it. So massive firepower is poured out in a shotgun approach from a long range, losing its effectiveness and inflicting more damage than is really necessary, both to property, but more importantly, unnecessarily injuring and killing innocent civilians.

The life of the soldier has become more important than the lives of the people they are fighting to protect or release. While the individual soldiers are prepared to fight, the leadership are unwilling to risk the public backlash that battle casualties are likely to cause. For they are most interested in protecting their lives and positions, and supplies of high tech weaponry. Sadly, the leaders' focus has turned inward, away from the battle to what is in their personal best interest. Getting the leaders to work together is harder than for the troops, but it is happening more.

While this army, in spite of its limitations, has been winning many battles, the enemy is getting wise to its major weakness, particularly the unwillingness to risk soldiers' lives. So the enemy has designed his tactics to get the army offside with the people it is trying to influence by exaggerating damage and casualty figures. If it can't win the war on the battlefield itself because of the power of the weapons employed against it, it will try to win the propaganda war, both amongst the soldiers themselves and within the civilian population. For the enemy's real expertise is in psychological warfare as in reality, he does not have a fraction of the weaponry of the army available to him.

While this army may appear to be on top of the present level of enemy activity, it currently does not have the willpower necessary to fight against a foe prepared to launch all his resources in one final desperate fight to the death. When this time arrives, this army is going to be faced with the most critical decision of its existence – are leaders and soldiers alike prepared to die for the cause? Some will and some wont.

Many will leave the army but there will be many more prepared to fight to the end, putting the cause ahead of their personal safety.

THE HOLY OF HOLIES ARMY: This army reminds me of the Israeli Army. An army that always appears to be facing insurmountable odds, both numerically and in weaponry, but continues to win its ongoing battle of survival. This army is not large in comparison to the other two, in fact it is really only now starting to be formed. But it is growing rapidly and will in time, become the most effective, although remaining the smallest of the three. The most impressive impression of it as it grows, is that it

has a focused direction.

The soldiers' uniforms are not smart; in fact they display the dirt and grime of battle. The soldiers themselves have a battle hardened look, for they have personally experienced the harsh reality of war. Understanding only too well, the reality that they may be one of the next casualties. They know that war is harsh, hard and unforgiving. Realising that war is not a game, that it involves risks, that many don't return. Understanding war is necessary for survival, individually and as a nation. Yet their look is not one of exhaustion even though they are tired, but one of confident expectation, knowing that the victory is already won!

Interestingly they seem to be so well organised, moving as if one, yet their leadership is not obvious. No one person stands out by virtue of his or her uniform. All appear much the same. Yet the leaders are there and obviously well respected, giving instructions in an informal yet precise way. For the leaders are as one with the soldiers, giving the impression that they have come out of the ranks, rather than having been imposed from above. All speak the same language. Orders are therefore easily understood and instantly acted upon as if the soldiers' lives depend upon it, which in fact they do. Surprisingly there appear to be far fewer fulltime professional soldiers in this army, compared to the other two. Even many of the officers have outside jobs and come and go as required. This doesn't seem to be a handicap at all, for they seem better able to relate to their soldiers than the professionals do.

Their weaponry is very good, but not necessarily the very latest available, although some is. Indeed much looks very battle scarred but is still in very good working order. For it is almost as if these soldiers are as one with their equipment. They obviously understand it thoroughly, through much training and wartime experience. Knowing what it can do and its limitations, they work within these to achieve the maximum results from their armoury. Differences of rank do not affect the jobs they do. Each job is done by the best person available and when a job is required to be done urgently, all 'muck in' and do it. This army operates on a team rather than a hierarchical basis.

The territory they control is actually not that large, although on a per man basis it is much greater than for the other two. What is most important though, is the key location of the area. It reaches out into the very heart of the enemy. So different to the first two armies, which have essentially become defensive in orientation. For this army, the best form of defence is attack. They instinctively know that if they sit back and wait to be attacked, they will be overwhelmed by the sheer weight of numbers of the enemy. Controlled aggression typifies their strategic thinking.

This results in their companion armies having a much easier time of things than they would otherwise have had. For they alone recognise that all three armies have a role to play in the overall victory. Even when their air of quiet confidence and successes are misunderstood, sometimes even envied by the other armies. Gradually however, through patient communication and because of the spectacular results this army is achieving, their companion armies are being won over.

Indeed recruitment skyrockets, as other soldiers want to join. However many can't pass the intense initiation programme which requires total commitment and dedication to complete. For this army can only operate successfully with those who are 100% sold out to the vision and prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice of their lives in the attainment of it. The vision of this army is not one of containment, but rather, a total and final victory over the enemy. They are highly educated, knowing their strategy and goals backwards. Most importantly, they know that when they follow the defined battle plan, their ultimate victory is assured.

INTERPRETATION: By now, many of the interpretations should be familiar to you. However, I am including a few hints to help.

Outer Court Army: Traditional/Evangelical Church.

Holy Place Army: Pentecostal/Charismatic Church.

Holy of Holies Army: Tabernacle Church Movement/Army

Education: Knowledge of the Word.

Regiments. Nations: Denominations, Ministries

Braid, Medals, etc: Vestments etc.

Uniforms: Picture of the nature of the people in the particular army.

Weapons: Spiritual Gifts.
Leaders: Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists, Prophets,
Apostles, Ministers, Priests, etc.
Enemy: Satan and his army.
Battle: Between forces of good and evil.
Battlefield: External for the Church, internal for the
individual.
Psychological Warfare: Waged by Satan on our mind, convincing us
to give up the battle.
XXX Army: Similar to, but not precisely the same as. A
human illustration only.

Received by David Tait 20 March 2000

UP THE MOUNTAIN

THE DREAM

Once upon a time, as all the best tales start, there was a man. He could have any number of names but we will call him John. John was a very ordinary man. He lived in a city on a vast plain. There were lots of cities round about similar to his, where millions of citizens got on with life, making a good living from the surrounding land and craft industries they had developed, producing the goods that go to make for a comfortable life. The people were happy with their lot. Generations came and generations went. Life began, was lived, and one day ended. That was that, and that was all. The sun rose, the birds came out to play. The sun set, the birds went back to sleep. The cycle of life rolled on and on throughout the ages.

John owned his own little house in a good area of town. Most comfortable and homely it was too. He worked hard, enjoyed kicking about an inflated sheep bladder, footbladder they called it, with his mates after work and in the weekends. Life was good. "This is what living is all about!" or so his mates told him.

But John had a secret dream. He couldn't tell his mates about it, lest they thought him stupid. For when he was young, sitting upon his Grandma's knee, she had thrilled him with stories of a people far away, living on a mountain. A land overflowing with milk and honey, a land very different to the one he knew. John had no idea what a mountain even was, for the plain was his world, stretching as far as the eye could see.

As a special treat for his fifth birthday, Grandma had drawn, on a very expensive, special piece of papyrus, a picture of the mountain of his and her dreams. For she had once been to the mountain, returning solely to share her discoveries with others. How sad she was, that so few were interested in hearing and even fewer in going to see for themselves. For life was pretty good, you see, right here on the plains.

But John treasured that present like no other. He knew that one day, he would search out this mountain and experience for himself, the wonders of her stories.

The inevitable happened and Grandma died. What would he do? Let his dream die with her? No. He would find the mountain! So John quickly 'rushed up' a designer sack with shoulder straps to make carrying the load easier on a long journey, good at design and stitching as he was. (men did these things in those days – women carried the burdens – still do, some say!) Named it a rucksack. After filling it with the needs of his journey, including his precious papyrus picture, off he went. Didn't tell his mates though, for they would only have laughed at him!

THE JOURNEY

He journeyed from city to city, showing people his picture, asking everyone he met if they had seen the mountain. But no one had. The cities themselves were interesting enough, for each had a different philosophy on life, but none excited him as much as his precious Grandma's stories. After several weeks of seemingly purposeless wanderings, John felt down in the dumps, wondering whether the journey was worthwhile. His rucksack seemed particularly heavy that day. "Perhaps I would have been better off staying at home, playing footbladder with my mates," he thought, in a moment of pensive reflection. But the dream he had so blissfully nurtured over the years was so strong that he convinced himself, "I must go on. I can't give up yet!"

Heading down the road, he caught up with another traveller, a kindly looking soul. As they pounded the dirtments, (for paving had not yet been thought of) passing the time of day, John, rucksack on his back, mentioned his search for the mountain. His friend's face lit up like a lantern. You want to go to the mountain, he exclaimed! I am heading that way too. And what's more, I have a map. I can show you the way. John was ecstatic! His dream was about to come true!

Together, they headed down the road at an increased pace. They were on their way to the mountain! The way John's newfound friend talked about the mountain was truly inspirational. John couldn't wait to get there! After a few more days of dirtment pounding, John's friend suddenly stopped. "Look over there", he cried. "The mountain! I can see the mountain!" John squinted. (the only treatment for short sightedness in those days.) He squinted again. Yes, there it was! As one, the two of them jogged off down the road. Running would have made the story sound a lot more impressive, but the mountain was still 30,000 paces away, their rucksacks were heavy, and we don't want them to collapse through exhaustion before they get there, do we? Would ruin a good story!

As they arrived at the foot of the mountain, John could see all the awe inspiring, craggy magnificence his grandmother had spoken about those many years ago. It was as if he was coming home. John was just so happy, he gave his friend a big hug. (men were allowed to hug then! Today too actually!) "Thankyou for showing me the way," he cried. It was a really emotional moment. He didn't care about his tears, though real men, even then, were not meant to cry!

At the foot of the mountain there was a river, deep and wide. "How do I get across?" John asked his friend. "For it is too deep to wade and the current is so strong." "There is a way" his friend replied gently. "A bridge. Come, let me show you." So he led John round a bend in the stream towards the bridge. As they got nearer, John's friend stopped. "I have to leave you here," he said with a sigh. "For we all have to make our own journey onto the mountain." As John watched with amazement, his friend was transformed. Light glowed over his whole body. A thousand candle power! Wings sprouted on his back. He rose gracefully into the sky. "Don't worry, I will be on the mountain too, keeping an eye on you," he said comfortingly, disappearing into the sunset.

John, walked towards the bridge, astounded. "What else is going to happen today! Well, I have dreamed of this moment for so long, I can't back off now," he thought to himself.

"Can I be your guide?" asked the man at the bridge. A man like he had never seen before. So kindly and merciful, yet strong at the same time. It was impossible to explain. "I would like to go across the bridge to the mountain," John requested quietly. "My Grandma told me how wonderful it is, and I would like to experience it for myself." "Have you got your toll?" the Guide asked gently. Now John knew what he was talking about, for tolls and tax gathering are as old as history itself. "So, how much is it to get across?" "It costs nothing to cross over the bridge my son, your ticket is my free gift to you. But, be warned, to climb the mountain will cost all that you have." "That's okay with me," John said quickly, so keen to get across. "Okay, let me take you by the hand, for the bridge is narrow and I wouldn't want you to fall off, after having come all this way." "How does he know how far I have come," John thought to himself. "He seems to know me better than I know myself!"

So John held out his hand, letting the Guide take him over the narrow bridge, into the land of his dreams. Halfway across, glancing down for a quick look at the water, John gasped with amazement, for the river was flowing blood red! Surprises abound for our intrepid traveller!

Upon recovering his composure, John looked up and down the bridge itself exclaiming! "It's made like a giant cross. Criminals are normally hung on these. The Guide doesn't look like a criminal, though!" "The cross is mine, the blood in the river is mine," said the Guide gently, again reading his mind. "It is the toll I paid to get you across." "Thanks so much," John exclaimed, staggered by the ease with which the Guide understood his thoughts. As they stepped off the bridge, he turned to John saying, "I have to leave you now to go back and bring others across. But I am leaving you with another friend to 'show you the ropes' of my kingdom. You can't see him, but

he is now inside you. Just ask in your mind anything you want to know, and he will tell you." Naturally, John thought this to be completely weird, but then, so was everything else about this place. The Guide obviously knew what he was talking about though, so he thought he might try it sometime. Bidding his Guide farewell, John headed off on a journey of exploration, keen to experience all that Grandma had thrilled him with, those many years ago, as he sat on her knee. "Great days, they were," he reminisced. "But now, I can experience it all for myself!"

'TWEET TWEET'

John was more excited than he had ever been in his whole life! Caused him to jump up and down with great glee! Hopped higher than he had ever managed before. That's funny he thought. Must be the adrenaline! He turned round and looked at the trees. "Boy o boy, they seem massive!" He looked and he looked and he looked again. But his focus of attention was not now on the trees but a lot closer, to his face in fact. Before his very eyes, his nose was growing longer and longer and longer and joining up with his mouth! "Must be hallucinating," he squawks to himself. "All the excitement you know." So he waved his arms round in a circle, to relax his body and brain. "Hey, something's not right here," he thought to himself. "I feel as free as a bird on the breeze. Wait a minute! I am a bird on the breeze! And I am about to hit that....." Thud! John's world suddenly went black.

Gingerly, he woke up, as if from a dream. "What's happened? Surely not! It can't be! It can't b-b-be! B-b-but it is! I am a bird! A sparrow, even! What has become of me! Grandma never told me about this!" John looked for his rucksack but it had gone. No more jellypeas he said sadly to himself. (For no one had yet had the brilliant marketing idea of trebling their size and changing them into a bean shape, selling for four times the price! An idea that turned this 'has bean' 'sweet pea', into one of the world's sweetest, succulent success stories!)

"Well, I guess I had better make the best of it," he thought sparrowfully. Flapping his new found wings he yawed his way up into the tree that had so rudely stepped out into the path of his first flight! After a perfect two foot landing on a high branch, a fine chirpiness feeling nested over him. "This is a birds eye view," he exclaimed. "Well, it is for us sparrows," said a chipper voice next to him. John looked around and there was this very nice lady sparrow, twirling her beak in a classic sparrow smile. "Welcome to the mountain," she said sweetly. "Can I take you under my wing, metaphorically speaking of course!" she said blushing, embarrassed by her little joke. "What a good idea," John replied, "For this is all very strange to me." "By the way, my name is Jill," said Jill. "And mine is John," said John, pleased to have the introductions done with. For he wasn't too practised in introductions to beautiful 'birds' of the opposite sex!

So Jill winged John on a guided tour of the mountain. He really enjoyed the freedom of flying, being able to get from point to point, 'as the sparrow flies.' "Flying is certainly easier than climbing," he thought to himself. Jill was obviously really at home. "There are two groups of us here" she informed John tweetingly. "The Sparrowditionalists, who have been here the longest and the Sparrangelicals, real enthusiasts for the Guide and his River of Blood." Jill introduced him to many of her friends, about whom she talked freely. "Gossip, his grandmother would have called it," thought John to himself. "But they all seem happy enough playing around, twittering from tree to tree, enjoying the sunshine filtering through the trees of the foothills in which they live."

As they flew round John was feeling a little peckish but could find nothing to peck! He so wanted to try out his newfound beak too. Had noticed that all the trees were in blossom but there was no fruit anywhere to be seen. Finally, plucking up the courage, John asked Jill where they could get a bite to eat. "Oh that's simple," she tweeted, preening her feathers, "We have a field of barley over here. We can eat as much of it as we want. It's not great food but there is plenty of it and we are happy enough, although more variety would be nice for a change. My friends often complain about it, but they are not prepared to look elsewhere either. Some people are never satisfied, are they! Let me take you there." So Jill and John went to the barley field and joined thousands of other sparrows pecking their lunch. "Plenty of it," John thought to himself once again, for he didn't want to offend the beautiful Jill, "but it isn't anything like the magnificent feasts Grandma used to tell me about. And those trees are strange. Always in blossom! But never producing fruit!"

John pondered all this inside his bird brain, which being sparrow sized, took time to compute. But unlike the sparrowbrains around him, he quickly became dissatisfied

with his lot. Plucking up his courage, once again, (won't have many feathers left soon!) he asked Jill if this is all there is to the mountain. Jill was not really surprised when he asked, for she was getting to know him a little by now. "I hoped you weren't going to ask," she said sadly, for she knew she was about to lose her friend. "You really do want to fly higher up the mountain, don't you. Sometimes I dream of flying higher too. To be really honest though, life is very comfortable down here in the foothills. But I have seen that dream in your wistful sparrow eyes for a while now, and know that you won't be happy until you give it a go. Remember our Guide at the gate telling you about a friend inside? Well, I have always been sceptical about him, but others say that he holds the key to flying high. So you'd better ask him. I'll say my goodbyes now, for when you go away I won't see you again." Jill cried sparrowfully, gentle sparrow tears rolling fetchingly down her delicate beak. "And I was becoming fond of you too," she twittered with a birdie blush, before disappearing into the sunset as all true jilted heroine sparrows do. John was sad to see her go, but he had a greater purpose in life – to climb the mountain.

‘COO COO’

"I just don't see how I can fly high," he mused, totally bemused, "for my wings only lift me to the treetops, not the mountaintop!" For a quick lesson in sparrowdynamics, he had taken. "This will be a good test for my Friend Inside. I feel pretty stupid talking to someone I can't see, but I really do want to go higher and I have run out of ideas myself." Looking round to make sure no one else was watching, John said in his best bird thought, "Friend Inside, please tell me how I can climb further up this mountain?"

"You want to discover the wonders your Grandma told you about when you sat on her knee?" a gentle voice replied. John was so surprised he did a springsault (for summer had not yet come) right there on the spot! "You too! How is it that you know so much about me? Like my Guide!" he squeaked. "We both knew you before you were even born," his newfound friend said gently. Not wanting to get involved in a deep theological discussion about the origin of bird life, John accepted that his friend knew what he was talking about and queried again, "You know how to climb this mountain?" "Yes John, I do. If you let me, I can guide you right to the top." "Can we go now, please," John cooed in a most unsparrowlike manner. "That's a funny voice I have! I am growing too, and my feathers are turning white! What's happening? I like this! I'll hop over to the 'looking pool' and see my reflection in the water!" "No need to, John, for I can tell you that you have been transformed into a dove. You have been prepared to trust me, so now are taking on my image. Spread your wings and enjoy yourself! Fly high, fly on up the mountain!" So John did. Now bigger and stronger, he effortlessly winged his way over the treetops, up onto the mountain itself.

Jill looked on from far below, a tear welling in her misty eye. "Farewell John, I wish I was as brave as you but I am so comfortable here. I just can't make the break. Maybe one day. Maybe....." John didn't hear for he was already flying high above the trees, delighted with the flapping power of his new wings. Up, up and away. He would get to the top of the mountain now! He climbed and climbed, so happy that he had now made it! But soon, feeling tired from exertion and excitement, he spotted a group of doves feeding. Thought he would join them for a well-earned rest and refreshments. He landed, again in a perfect two-point landing, feeling proud of himself for how far he had come. The other doves welcomed him warmly. They were so much more outgoing than the sparrows, although he soon observed that they were also expert at pecking each other too, when one got in another's way! But there was even more food here, and it was tender wheat, rather than the tough old barley of his sparrow diet. "Jill doesn't know what she's missing," John thought fleetingly. "But it's her choice." So reinvigorated after a good feed, he decided to take a look around.

There was just a different atmosphere about this place. Not as many doves as there were sparrows but they made so much more noise! So enthusiastic they generally were about life too. Oh yes, there was the odd reclusive bird. Suffering from something called 'spiritual dovpresion' the others said. But most happily perched on the local tree branches, cooing about the good life. Noticing green fruit on the trees John asked his dovecostal friends when the fruit ripened. "We don't know," they said in a chorus. Then each promoted a different theory in a hubbub of noise. But suddenly, there was silence. John looked skyward with the others to see why. For up there, a flock of jet black vultures wheeled around, seeking prey. Several careless doves were not quick enough at getting under cover and were caught in the vultures' trap. The vultures chased them relentlessly until their resistance caved in. They just lay down and died of fright. Dead doves - vulture food! It was so sad to see. He observed the battle of

wits going on between the doves and the vultures. Like psychological warfare between two opposing armies. The doves would squawk at the vultures, most undovelike really, and the vultures would counter with their own blood curdling screeching laugh, that harbinger of death so feared by countless generations of desert dwellers. A contest of intimidation. A contest of wills. A phoney, yet ever so real war

Now John wasn't just a lovey dovey, but really a most astute bird, for he remembered from his plains' days that vultures only fed on the dead. "Why then, did the doves fear them?" He shared his thoughts with his fellow doves, encouraging them to call the vultures' bluff! "We're going to come out of the bush and exert our authority," he cried out to his mates encouragingly. "Remember, 'a bird in the battle is worth more than two thousand in the bush!' The vultures are already defeated! We will call their bluff!" Some decided that John was right, while the majority, as usual in such matters, thought, "He doven't know what he is talking about, or, the vultures will kill us." Or again with dove-like caution, "we will wait and see how he gets on, before risking losing our beautiful white feathers in the battle." Much like the sparrows," John thought to himself. "Enjoying what they have, but not prepared to risk home comforts to fly higher up the mountain. While this place is great, I know there is more, for I haven't yet experienced all that my Grandma told me about those many years ago, when sitting on her knee. Well padded, comfortable, 'Grandma knees' they were too! Memories, memories!"

So John took his small intrepid band of dynamic doves out to face the vociferous vultures. The vociferous vultures circled above, vigorously vociferating, then dive bombed the dynamic doves. The dynamic doves responded by flying, feathers flapping furiously, fighting fear, up in the air as one, to do battle! They were perfectly dovetailed, one to the other. The voracious, viscous, vocal voices of the villainous, verbose vultures, vaporised vacuously, as the wall of pure white, dovetailed doves rose to meet them! Then the vanquished vultures voluntarily vanished! For they knew that their bluff had been called, that their hold over the doves had been broken.

Some of the watching doves flapped their wings vigorously in appreciation before flying off to join their victorious friends. Many others however, didn't know quite what to do, now that the vultures had, temporarily at least, vacated the area. In fact, in their heart of hearts, they really yearned for the vultures' return. For they were actually more comfortable with the enemy being there! Some doves you just cannot please! John was philosophical about all this, as he used his birdbrain to mull over the day's happenings. "Didn't happen like this with the sparrows," John thought to himself. "That was because the sparrows were not large enough to interest the vultures," John heard a voice from nowhere reply. Then he realised that the pearl of wisdom had come from his Friend Inside, whom, he had to admit, he had temporarily forgotten, in the midst of the excitement. "Perhaps he can also explain this phoney war," John thought to himself. "Yes I can." John's feathers underwent a rapidly ruffling reaction, now fully understanding that his Friend Inside could hear everything he was thinking. "That's okay then," he thought with relief, preening himself back to normality. "This place is certainly different to the one I grew up in. But I wasn't a bird in those days either! This mountain is surely a world apart." Yes, John was at last starting to attain a 'bird's eye view' of the world.

'SOAR SOAR'

"You are at last starting to understand the mountain," his Friend Inside exclaimed encouragingly. "The real, eternal world, is not back down there on the plains in the cities you came from, but here, living as a bird of the Spirit, on the mountain of God. As a sparrow, you were limited to the foothills, small, one amongst millions, yet even there, you were known by name. You wanted to fly higher. This I made possible by transforming you into a beautiful dove, with the ability to soar further up the mountain. But I know your heart's desire is to fly higher still. That was proven today, when by overcoming the vultures of sin, you earned the right to move up into the very mountaintops of God. Do you want to go?"

John took just two tweetseconds to come up with his answer. "Yes, Friend Inside, you know I do. My favourite Grandma stories were those about soaring over the mountaintops, overseeing everything happening on the mountain, while fellowshiping with the Lord of the Mountain himself. But I know that I can't go any higher as a dove, for the rarefied air will not support my weight. I place myself completely in your hands, or wings, as the case may be!"

At that very tweetsecond John underwent a further miraculous transformation. His wings grew and grew and grew until he had to squint to see his wingtips! Not only had his wingspan wonderfully widened but his plumage too, glistened, the purest white reflection of the sun's supernatural glory. The doves standing

nearby appeared positively dowdy by comparison! Now too, he was able to peek over that annoying rock that had previously blocked the sea views from his favourite preening perch! "A new perspective on life," he thought airily, before glancing down to find out why. Seeing his now massive masculine legs, John exclaimed, "Better than I could ever have hoped for stonelifting in the gym!" Then the 'piece de resistance', for he was a bilingual bird. His designer claws! Sensational! So beautifully, yet powerfully sculptured for maximum grip and clutching power. Their razor sharp tips would tear a vulture to shreds in an instant. Yes, John was now a fantastic, fully-fledged, flying eagle machine! He knew that at last, he was going to be able to soar to the mountaintop to experience for himself, his childhood dreams.

"Thankyou, Friend Inside, for making my dreams come true," John glowed in ecstasy. "I am eternally in your debt. Whatever your desire is for me to do, I will do." "I know," said his now, Best Friend Inside, "for obedience was the single condition necessary for your transformation. You could only call the vultures bluff by trusting me to get you through. As an eagle, you shall now soar to the very mountaintop, just as your Grandma did those many years ago, there to dwell with the Lord of the Mountain.

The light now radiating from him dazzled John's dovecostal mates. Some asked how they too could become eagles. "Obey your friend inside and overcome **t**he vultures" John stated in his newly acquired, deep and authoritative eagle voice. Some flew away eager to earn their 'eagle wings'. The not so silent majority however, were as we have come to expect by now, content to carry on in their own comfortable, established ways. Being strictly honest, they didn't really believe, in their deepest of dovehearts, that they could put the vultures to flight anyway, in spite of all their boisterous bravebeak bravado. Besides, they would quite miss them if they weren't there! Saddened by once again having to leave birdmates through their lack of desire to seek the mountaintop, but wanting more than ever, to fulfil his dreams, John majestically flapped a fond farewell, before flying off to discover the magnificence of the mountaintop.

As he soared John made an amazing birdynamic discovery! No longer did he have to flap his wings harder to fly higher, for now he could just soar, gliding free on the gentle eddies and currents the mountain wind provided. So effortless, yet so much more effective! Flying was now so much fun! "Thankyou Best friend Inside" he yelled victoriously, "I have eagley awaited these wings for such a long time! Now I can be a soldier in the Taberneagle Army!"

Higher and higher he soared, enjoying the amazing freedom he now had, to go wherever he, or rather his Best Friend Inside, pleased. For John knew that without his friend's help and ongoing guidance, he could not possibly be flying high today. John cast his 'eagle eyes' round as he flew.

Then, as the recipient of a severe shock, he momentarily folded his wings in disbelief! But free falling like a stone towards a squelchy end rapidly revived our eager eagle! Wingly equilibrium was urgently re-established. "Phew, that was too close for comfort! I can't believe my eyes! My inherited short-sightedness has disappeared! I can now see everything! I can even recognise my old sparrow friend Jill right down there in the foothills. Brings back some memories, that does! Still down there playing with her friends, just as I left her. Oh Jill, you are missing out on so much!"

"Your 'eagle eyes' are for a purpose," reminded his Best friend Inside. "For you are to protect all my birds on the mountain from the vultures, my friend." Now not particularly being a 'culture vulture', John was delighted with this new responsibility, for he felt so protective towards his old friends, wanting to encourage them to climb and experience the freedom of the mountain top, as well. So vigilantly victimising, villainous vultures, would be his pleasure! For John could now clearly see the insidious control the vultures had over the bird life of the mountain.

Needing a bit of a break, John alighted in one of the many trees that graced the upper mountain slopes. Immediately he could see that these trees were covered with the most delicious looking, mouth watering, ready to eat fruit that he had ever seen in his life. Taking his first bite, John discovered 'eagle heaven', for he had always liked his food. This fruit was just so much better than the barley and wheat he had lived on at lower levels. "My old friends just don't know what they are missing out on!"

"That's right," confirmed his Best Friend Inside, "for this is my fruit, the fruit of the nature of the Spirit you see, available to all who commit themselves fully to me. Eating of this fruit will satisfy not just your bodily needs but your whole being. For there was a time many, many years ago when the whole earth was full of trees such as these and this fruit was available to all mankind. But man was not content to merely live in paradise. He wanted to control it, to be the master of his own destiny. As if you could improve upon perfection! The Lord of the Mountain gave him his wish and you lived the results before coming to the mountain, successfully managing to turn gardens into deserts. As you remember from your days on the plains, mankind has had to fight weeds, bugs and disease and sometimes, other people, in order to eat. So the Lord of the Mountain removed himself from this mess, requiring mankind to seek him by coming to the mountain, entering over the bridge of the Guide. To be set apart from the world, by being transformed into a bird. As you have experienced John, in your progression from the foothills to the mountain peaks, two further major transformations are required to adapt to the new conditions experienced as you fly higher. For the trees of the fruit of the Spirit will blossom in the foothills, will pollinate and grow fruit in the middle reaches but will only ripen to full maturity on the mountain tops, under the pure light of the Lord of the Mountain, in the glory of his 'Son.'

For it saddens me John, to see the blossom of the sparrows, promising so much but failing to pollinate. They accept me in their minds only, but their heart and will are far from me. But I have still provided barley for them to eat. The doves have allowed me to pollinate their fruit by accepting me in their heart as well as their mind, but sadly, their fruit will never ripen. But I have provided them with wheat to eat. For you must understand, it is not until I am given mind, heart and will, as you have done, that the sunshine will ripen your fruit. Sadly, so many sparrows and doves think that if they do good works for me, they will produce ripened fruit. But ripe fruit only comes from the sunshine of submission and obedience."

It was amazing how so many of the things that John had often wondered about were being clarified. It was as if he was getting closer and closer to the origin of the voice. The more he listened and obeyed, the higher he soared. He was rapidly becoming 'in tune' with his surroundings. This both thrilled and puzzled him for something was definitely different up here. "What is it?" John asked his Best Friend Inside. "You are becoming as one with us," he replied. "With us?" John questioned. "Yes, with us. For we are three. The Guide who made the pathway for you to enter the mountain kingdom and who has been keeping his eye on you all the time you have been here, myself, your Best Friend Inside, and the Lord of the Mountain, to whose plan we operate. The higher you soar, the closer to us you get, the more like us you become."

Somehow now, it all made sense to John, for he had experienced it. He now knew though, that it was impossible to understand, before coming to the mountain. Even as a sparrow and a dove, this 'mystery' was only partially understood. But as he became more in tune with his Guide, Friend and Lord, so the unity and purpose of the intimate relationship they shared, gelled in his birdbrain. And, even more amazingly, it was a unity of purpose into which he also was now absorbed. As if they were all one! Incredible!

John, now comfortably settled high up on a rocky crag, designer claws anchored to the rock, suddenly realised that he had not seen many other eagles up there with him. In fact, if it had not been for his Best Friend Inside, he would have felt positively lonely! There had been a few off flying in the distance, but it did seem rather a solitary lifestyle he was living. Still, it was far more satisfying than his sparrow and dove days. For he now knew what his Grandma had meant when she told him how she had felt to be at one with the mountain.

The views were magnificent and flying a dream with the latest developments in advanced birdynamic eagle wing engineering. John had been able to make many 'kills' in birdfights with the black vulture squadrons whose weaponry was no match for the superb fighting machine he now was. His telescopic eyesight, speed, manoeuvrability and designer claw armaments spelt instant destruction to the opposing vulturfence. He remembered how he had found them to be all bluff and bravado in his dove days, no match even then, for a unified, dovetailed doveforce. But getting the doveforce to fly in formation under a single dovemander was the problem! With the Taberneagles

however, it was as if the vultures knew that defeat was inevitable. After an initial short show of bravado they would quickly 'turn tail', trying unsuccessfully to escape their inevitable fate. "But there are so many of them," John thought to himself, "far more than us few eagles can annihilate by ourselves." As he mused, the sun set. Now tired, John in good eagle fashion, rested his head comfortably on his left wing, ready to take his 140 nightly eaglewinks. The end of another fulfilling day. He slept soundly, for vanquishing vultures is a tiring business.

'TRUMPET CALL'

At 132_ winks John was not so rudely awakened by the blast of trumpets coming from the highest reaches of the mountain. The sound was a 100-decibel blast to him, for he was near its source. Further down the mountain in Doveland, it still registered 60 decibels, sufficient to wake all but the heaviest sleepers amongst the doves. In Sparrowland too, a more gentle 30 decibels reverberated, bringing to life many but by no means all, the residents.

"What is that sound!" John exclaimed, as he awoke. He listened more intently. The trumpet calls resounded, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of the Mountain. Prepare yourselves for the return of the Lord." "Wow!" thought John, "the day of promise is about to come, the greatest of all days when we will be able to fly to the very top of the mountain!" An air of excitement and anticipation descended upon all the eagles, many of the doves and some of the sparrows. The remaining doves and sparrows got quite angry, for all they heard was a loud noise that startled them out of their very pleasant birdreams, a mite earlier than they desired.

Amongst all those who heard the voice in the trumpet, there was an urgency to fly higher and higher, into the very presence of the Lord of the Mountain himself. John stretched out his eagle wings and took off to soar to the mountaintop. As he did so, he found the other eagles he had previously only seen from a distance, joining him. It was great to be in the company of other eagles. They immediately bonded as one.

Further down the mountain in Doveland, there was a great clamour, for many more doves now desired to scale the heights of the mountain too. The vultures wondered what had hit them, being attacked by clouds of dovetailed doves. The Friend Inside all of them, was kept working flat out as more and more doves were prepared to place themselves fully in his hands. Transformations from dove to eagle now became commonplace sights in Doveland. John's Best Friend Inside was now busier than he had

ever been! He was so happy, well able to cope - no problem. In fact he had been looking forward to this time, right from the very beginning.

In Sparrowland too, there was considerable activity, as numbers of sparrows were blasted out of their complacency and sought to fly higher. John's former friend Jill, was one of the ones galvanised into action by the call of the trumpet. "Interestingly" the Best Friend Inside observed, "many sparrows are now more motivated to soar than lots of the doves. They will not need to spend too long in Doveland before becoming eagles. Will surprise and shock some of the older, more self satisfied doves, I am sure!"

With all this upward activity on the mountain, a strange phenomenon gradually started to take place. For as all these birds started to fly upwards, more and more light reflected from their transformed whiter and larger wings. This reflected light began to shine as a giant beacon over the cities of the plains, even reaching those places furthestmost from the mountain. The citizens of the plains were either attracted or repulsed by this supernatural light. Large numbers of people flocked to the mountain where they were now more than willing to accept the free toll the Guide offered to enter the mountain, to cross over the cross shaped bridge. No qualms about the 'life price' to climb the mountain either. Never in all history, had so many people crossed the bridge in so short a time. Both the Guide and the bridge were well up to coping with the influx. "Although I would have built the bridge for just one person to cross, this influx is the fulfilment of the promise made to me by the Lord of the Mountain before it all started," the Guide thought thankfully to himself.

Amongst those people who remained on the plains, lawlessness and war now broke out. They tried their hardest to stop others seeking the mountain, being possessed by the vultures of the plain, but they were not successful, for those on the journey

to the mountain seemed to have a hedge of protection around them. The trumpeting from the mountaintop continued daily for six days.

BIRD CRIES

As the sound of the trumpets faded, the wind came up, a gentle zephyr at first, much loved by the doves but ignored by the sparrows. Gradually the puffs of wind increased in intensity, penetrating every nook and cranny and every bird on the mountain. There was no way to avoid its effects. All the old hiding places where smart birds would go to get out of the wind when it blew too strongly for their liking, were penetrated by this new wind. A wind of repentance from which there was no escape.

As the wind grew in intensity, so a new noise arose from the mountain. Almost imperceptible at first, the cries of the birds gathered in strength as a wave forming on the ocean, increasing in size and power before inevitably crashing on the shore in a thunderous cacophony of conviction and repentance. Plaintive sparrow cries intermingled with the louder grief of the doves. There were even a few screams from the eagles, as all remaining impurities were expelled from their bodies. For the eagles had already partially experienced this phenomenon, before being awarded their eaglewings. As the wind penetrated feathers, right into the very bodies and hearts of the mountain's birdlife, multitudes of bird tears flooded to the ground and streams of repentance flowed down the mountain into the Blood Red River of Sacrifice that the cross-shaped bridge spanned. A more powerful intermingling of the blood of sacrifice with the water of sanctification had never been witnessed throughout all history. The birds were being purified, as was required by the Lord of the Mountain.

However this cleansing windstorm was not welcomed by many of the sparrows and doves. The wind was too strong and there was no longer anywhere to hide. Large numbers now looked longingly back to the plains from whence they had come, for they had had enough of this strange land. The pleasures of the plains now seemed so much more attractive. So these birdsliders flew back over the river, upon landing on the plains, to become humans once again. The Guide was very sad to see this exodus, for he had given his very life for each one of them. But he also realised that the sounding of the trumpet heralded a time of great upheaval, a time when the strength and penetration of the wind would cause many doves and sparrows to leave the mountain. Returning to the cities from whence they had originally come, many became the bitterest critics of the ever-increasing birdlife on the mountain.

And as usual, there were those who toughed it out, digging in their claws, determined not to lose that which they had, but too fearful to let the wind change them. What a sorry sight they made, indeed.

At the mountaintop however, the scenario was completely the opposite. For John and the other eagles, having adapted to the new intensity of the wind, were perfectly equipped to take advantage of these new conditions. For they were able to go with the flow, joyfully taking advantage of all the many eddies and currents, making use of the wind rather than being blown round by it, as were the other birds. John too, quickly observed that the air was now becoming thick with 'Taberneagle Squadrons,' for the windstorm had caused many sparrows and doves to desire eaglehood, to join the Taberneagle Army and fly high in the sky.

The power of the wind removed all the remaining weaknesses and impurities from John's eagle body, so he and his eagle mates could now soar to the very mountaintop, into the presence of the Lord of the Mountain himself. It was a place that until now, no bird had been able to reach, for the uplifting wind of the Spirit had not blown to these heights before. Yet, as he reached the summit, John saw that one had been there before him and was now waiting for him to land on the mountain peak. Yes, it was the Guide who welcomed John as he landed. He was the one who made this journey possible, who had pioneered the way. "Well done, my good and faithful eagleservant," the Guide said lovingly, "for you have made my return journey to be with the Lord of the Mountain worthwhile." And he revealed his name as being 'Jesus'. John's white eagle body glistened, a heavenly, perfected, pure white, for he was now one with the Lord of the Mountain. His life dream had been fulfilled.

But there was still work to be done! For the wind so enraged the black vultures that they all took to the air in furious frenzy. They knew that this was their last chance

to do battle with the doves and even the sparrows. The Guide saw all that was happening and ordered his Taberneagle Force into action. With a mighty roar, the eagles descended to take on the vultures one last time. The vultures concentrated their attacks on the doves and fought the sparrows too, for they knew they could not defeat the eagles. The battle raged over the entire mountain, claiming many sparrow and dove casualties. The eagles spearheaded the fight. Inevitably though, through the preparation the Guide had done on their behalf, turning them into lean, mean, eagle machines, every last vulture was either slaughtered or captured, including the Field Marshal of the vulture forces himself, one Satan by name. Satan's forces were an-eagle-ated. There was a huge victory party on the mountaintop as the wind stilled, having fulfilled its task. The Taberneagle Army finally reigned supreme on the mountain.

THE LAST TRUMPET

On the seventh day there was a new trumpet call – the trumpet call of victory, blown by the Guide - by Jesus himself! The sound of the victory trumpet resounded throughout all the land, from the top of the mountain to the furthest reaches of the plains. Doves, sparrows and plain dwellers alike - all were stopped in their tracks, mesmerised by the incredible sound. Their attention was drawn to the top of the mountain from where there was a mighty reverberation of wings as the victorious Taberneagle Army, John and Jill amongst them, took to the air with their Supreme Commander, the Guide Jesus at their head. As one, the Taberneagle Army flew off the mountain, spreading out over the plains below. A mixture of fear and wonder overcame the plain dwellers as the eagle army approached. Passing over the river of blood and water called Salvation, the eagles underwent a bodily transformation. John saw that his body had once again taken on human form. He could still recognise himself, even though he now radiated the glory of God. Looking around, he saw that his body was perfect in every detail. He couldn't believe it. Yes, this body would never again get sick or grow old. It was his, perfect and unchangeable, forever. And what is more he realised with a start, he was still up in the air, flying without wings! Around him too, he saw that the army was now surrounded by hosts of angels, who did need wings to fly! Among them he spotted his angelic friend, the one who had originally guided him to the mountain. John waved out to him vigorously, doing a summersault (for summer had now arrived) in the air, not quite yet having refined the piloting skills necessary for human flight! His angel friend arrived in a flash, to steady him. Yes, his Guardian Angel was still there. John now understood that he too, had been with him all the time he had been on the mountain, keeping him out of trouble when he flew faster than his wings had been designed for. For John had always been a speedfreak, pushing his wings beyond their birdynamic limits! But he was healed of that now!

Yet, the most exciting thing about his body was the glory of the light that shone out of it. Enough to turn night into day! The glory of the Lord of the Mountain was his forever!

Looking down, he could see the people running for cover, for the light was too bright to bear. Jesus gave the order and the victorious army landed on their feet, right through the land. The people now came out of cover, attracted to the light of the individual overcomer arriving to govern their area. The whole Taberneagle Army moved about the land seemingly as one, with automatic communications. No radio transmitters or receivers required here!

Taking a moment or two to get his bearings, John looked out into the distance, momentarily blinking, unable to believe what he saw! For he was still getting used to his new 20/20 vision. He remembered his earlier short-sightedness and could hardly believe the difference! But it was what he saw that truly amazed him. For the fields and deserts that he had remembered were now beautiful gardens, as they had been at the very beginning of time. One vast Garden of Eden! As the people realised what had happened, they too were delighted, for living in a garden paradise is attractive to all.

Equally surprising to the people of the plains was how they all now started to get along well together, no longer having the desire to fight one another. While the people themselves did not understand this new phenomenon, John knew that it was because Satan and his vultures had been defeated, the survivors having been bound and thrown into a bottomless pit from which there was no escape. The ultimate black hole!

Some of the people came to John wanting to know about Jesus and the army, before

setting off on their own journey to climb the mountain. But, as usual, most were quite happy to enjoy the gardens and their new, harmonious environment, carrying on with their lives, just as they had always done. Some things, some people, never change!

After a few days had passed, John heard a great groaning and gnashing of beaks coming from the direction of the mountain. For the remaining sparrows and the doves had finally comprehended what was happening. The eagles had flown! The vultures had gone! All was peaceful and pleasant on the mountain. While enjoyable for a few days, this relaxed state of affairs had soon got pretty boring really! In desperation, the doves and even some of the sparrows that normally enjoyed the quiet life, asked their Friend Inside what had happened. They were told, "The eagles have flown to the top of the mountain where you all were encouraged to go. But you did not choose to leave your home comforts to fly high. The eagles have now attained their reward. To rule and reign on the earth with Jesus for 1000 years. Your reward will come too, but you will have to wait until the end of that time."

The enormity of the situation hit them squarely in the eyes. For they had missed out on the very best that the Lord of the Mountain had to offer. They would live most pleasantly, for the vultures had been defeated, but would have to make do with barley or wheat until the end. Their reward was delayed because of their own actions. "Why didn't we climb the mountain while we had the opportunity" they cried out to each other. For this was the weeping and gnashing of beaks that John heard, as he reigned and ruled with Jesus in the cities far away.

And so John lived happily ever after, as his Grandma had promised all those years ago, when he sat upon her knee.

INTERPRETATION

Given by the Lord after the 'fairy tale' was completed!

The Dream: The witness of others into our life.

The Journey: Making the decision for Christ.

'Tweet Tweet': Fulfilment of the Feast of Passover, as reflected in the Traditional/Evangelical Church.

'Coo Coo': Fulfilment of the Feast of Pentecost, as reflected in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Church.

'Soar Soar': Individuals throughout history, living their lives in full submission to the Father's will.

Trumpet Call: Symbolising the Feast of Trumpets, now in progress.

Bird Cries: Symbolising the Day of Atonement. Now starting to be fulfilled by the growing Tabernacle Army.

Last Trumpet: Symbolising the Feast of Tabernacles itself. To be fulfilled in the 1000 year reign of Christ.

David Tait: 4 May 2000

THE BOOK OF RUTH

On 2 August 1999, the Lord gave me these, the first words for this book.(Eagles Fly High!) Ended up being placed last in the teaching section! God's order – the first shall be last!

INTRODUCTION:

The Lord has sent me to the Book of Ruth many times over the past year, as a guide to my future work for him, to the point that it has become the book that I know best in the bible on a "know the words" basis. However this has not reflected until today in specific inspiration of interpretation. Now I have been shown that Boaz is a symbol of Jesus and Ruth, a symbol of the gentile church and an example of holiness. Jesus (Boaz) looks after (marries) the church and brings in the harvest. However, because the Lord has referred me there so many times, continually stressing its importance in relation to the job he has for me, I have persisted through the frustration of not being able to gain a deeper understanding of it. I have resisted the temptation to read what has been revealed to others, preferring to wait for the Lords time to reveal the meaning that is of direct relevance to me, and to what He wants to show me in and through it.

Today, Monday 2 August 1999, is the first weekday that I have been free of Kaydees Gardens since the Lord sent the buyer for our mail order company. I was intending to catch up this week on other outstanding matters (such as tidying up my filing system!) but the Lord prompted me again for the umpteenth time to go back into Ruth and have another look at the words I know so well. What follows is the result of today's revelation

- and the filing is still in a mess! But never mind! Some things never change!

THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS:

BOAZ: A type of Jesus.

NAOMI: Type of the Jewish people or "Jewish church"

RUTH: Type of the gentile church.

THEME:

A. TO THE JEWS: The transformation of Naomi from despair to happiness and cultural fulfilment through the selfless acts of Boaz and Ruth.

B. TO CHRISTIANS: A picture of Jesus (Boaz) and His care for His (gentile) church as represented by Ruth.

UNDERLYING SPIRITUAL MEANING:

PICTURE OF THE END TIME CHURCH

1:1-1:5 The family (representing Israel) deserted God by leaving Israel for Moab, then compounded their disobedience by intermarrying. The men paid the price for their disobedience - dying premature deaths. The women suffered too, in that they had no surviving offspring - a matter of cultural shame to the Jews and probably the Moabites too.

Symbolic of rejecting Jesus.

1:6-1:7 The Lord rescued His people, so Naomi (Israel) ran back home.

Symbolic of the Jews returning to Israel.

1:8-1:15 Orpah and Ruth (together the gentile church) were given the opportunity to return to their people. Orpah decided to return, thus avoiding the shame of having no husband, being disliked by the Jews, having to rely on charity, etc., etc.

Symbolic of the falling away of the church as end times approach and things get tough.

1:16-1:19 Ruth stuck with it and went with Naomi.

Symbolic of the remaining (end time) church's full commitment, putting the world (Moab) aside and going on in God's will.

1:20-1:22 Contrast between a desperate Naomi (Israel) and a faithful Ruth
(end-time church)

The end time church sets the example to Israel and has an impact upon her.

2:1-2:3 Ruth desires to gather grain. Naomi allows her to do so and Ruth finds herself in Boaz's field. Symbolic of a desire in the end time church to gather a harvest of people to Jesus. Jesus puts us in the right field under His protection and allows us to first gather the "gleanings", a foretaste of things to come.

2:4 Boaz comes to supervise the harvest.

A symbol of a most powerful move of the Holy Spirit as the harvest time comes.

2:5-2:7 Boaz receives a report on Ruth's hard work in gleaning.

Symbolic of the commitment required to gather the harvest.

2:8-2:9 Boaz instructs Ruth to stay in his field and he will look after her generously.

Symbolic of our remaining under the cover of His church to receive His generous protection.

2:10-2:13 Ruth asks why she has received such favour and is told it is because of what she has done for Naomi (Israel). She submits to him in deep gratitude.

Symbolic of how Jesus rewards us when we come to Him, even though we don't deserve it. Also speaks of His desired attitude for us towards Israel.

2:14-2:16 Boaz's generosity towards Ruth illustrated in both personal provision and by making her work easier.

If we are fully committed to Jesus He will look after us personally and enable us to do His work effectively.

2:17 Ruth collected an unexpectedly large harvest.

Our harvest will be greater than we imagine when we walk in His ways.

2:1:23 Naomi was surprised how much grain Ruth had gathered. Ruth explained Boaz's generosity and protection. Naomi understood that Boaz was looking after her too, getting Ruth to stay under his protection until the end of the harvest.

The works of the end time church will impress Israel, as they will see the source of them. Also we need to stay under God's covering within His church.

3:1-3:9 Ruth is persuaded by Naomi to step out, taking a risk to assure her future by approaching Boaz at the "male only" threshing floor.
Speaks of our need to be bold in Christ, to step out in faith, breaking tradition and comfort zones to obtain the rewards He offers. Also that the harvest is not complete until the "threshing" or "training in God's ways" of converts is completed.

3:10-3:14 Boaz is honoured by Ruth's approach and subject to satisfying the custom of the time, agreed to marry her, recognising her status as a "woman of noble character."
Jesus rewards those who step out in Him with a closer "tabernacle" relationship with Him. As we step out in holiness, so our relationship with Jesus deepens.

3:15 Boaz poured six measures of barley into her shawl as a gift.
A gift of souls through the example she had set, as illustrated by her shawl, symbolising a covering of righteousness - and an example to others. The shawl (or cloak) symbolises that which is within.

3:16-3:18 Naomi received the gift and acknowledged the righteousness of the giver.
Harvest is the reward for righteousness and obedience. Gentile end time church created first (Boaz and Ruth) and the Jewish church (Naomi) is then added, as the Gentile church reflects God's glory to the Jews.

4:1-4:10 Boaz offers Ruth to another kinsmen-redeemer who decides that it is not in his self interest to accept her. Boaz undertakes, with the elders as witnesses, to take Ruth as his wife, restoring Mahlon's (Ruth's first husband) family name amongst the town records.
Symbolically this reveals the freewill choice that Jesus made to die for our sins in order to re-establish our relationship with God the Father.

4:11-4:12 The elders give their blessing to the marriage, accepting Boaz and Ruth as members of their Jewish family, in the line of their "royal" inheritance.
Spiritually symbolic again of the acceptance of Jesus (Boaz) and the end time church (Ruth) as being the fulfilment of the Jewish inheritance.

4:13-4:17 The Lord enabled Ruth to conceive producing a son, and in doing so fully restoring Naomi to happiness and cultural fulfilment.
Symbolically illustrates the creation of a universal Jewish/Gentile church awaiting the return of Jesus.

4:18-4:22 The establishment of the ancestry of Boaz and Ruth as being in the line of David. In turn this was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus, who was of the same line.
Symbolically speaking of the return of Jesus to rule and reign as one with his perfect, unified (in Him) church, consisting of both Jews and Gentiles who are totally sold out to Him.

NOTES...

'TABERNEAGLE' THOUGHTS FROM.....

.....THE SHOWER

1. A foolish man knows his strengths, a wise man acknowledges his weaknesses and makes allowances for them, while a godly man seeks to overcome them.

.....BEHIND THE LAWNMOWER

2. A foolish man needs wisdom, the wise man godliness, a godly man the character of Christ.

.....ON THE RIDEON

3. A foolish man denies God; the wise man acknowledges God, but the godly man experiences his God.

.....A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

4. The foolish man seeks pleasure on earth. A wise man builds treasure in heaven. But the godly man seeks to build heaven on earth.

5. Earthly possessions are perceived to be:

- Owned - by the foolish.
- Rented - by the wise.
- Administered - by the godly.

6. The true heart of a man is found in his wallet:

- A foolish man spends all he has on himself.
- A wise man tithes 10% to the provider.
- A godly man spends all he has been given on the provider's behalf.

.....IN FRONT OF THE COMPUTER

7. The foolish man rejects God, the wise man respects God, but the godly man lives for his God.

8. A foolish man speaks before he thinks, a wise man thinks before he speaks, but a godly man lets his life speak for him.

9. The foolish man is satisfied with reading the Word, a wise man follows the Word, but the godly man is as one with the Word.

10. The foolish man listens to himself, a wise man listens to others, but a godly man submits to spiritual oversight.

11. The lips of a foolish man blaspheme God, those of a wise man honour God, but a godly man's lips glorify his God.

.....IN THE SPA

12. A foolish man loves pleasure, a wise man finds pleasure in love, but to a godly man, pleasure is love.

13. Unity of fellowship is spurned by the foolish, acknowledged by the wise, but sought by the godly.

14. Foolishness is effortless, wisdom a gift, but godliness requires submission.

15. Satan loves the foolish, attacks the wise, but fears the godly.

.....AN EMAIL

16. Wisdom is easily read, takes time to acquire, but needs to be applied over a lifetime.

17. A fool believes he has all wisdom, a wise man is prepared to learn from others, while the godly man's teacher is the Holy Spirit.

.....IN THE SPA AGAIN

18. A foolish heart seeks only God's blessings, while a wise heart seeks to bless others, but a godly heart first blesses God.

NB: A lot easier to write than to live! But God and I are working on it together!

THE WINNING TEAM

In late October 1999, there was a major catastrophe that personally affected many, indeed probably most, New Zealanders. It wasn't a plane crash, or a volcanic eruption, although the resulting ash cloud of burned up expectations clouded the country for weeks. It was the loss of the 1999 Rugby World Cup by our national Rugby Union team, the All Blacks. Certainly reflects the sad state of priorities of our nation where rugby is God to more people than to whom God is God! It is indeed our national religion!

Not only did we get beaten in only the semi-finals, the World Cup itself was won by our arch trans-Tasman rivals, the Australians. To rub salt in the wound they have now won the World Cup twice to our once, in the game we taught them to play! Sufficient reason for national mourning!

What will be the reaction when Jesus comes? The World Cup of Rugby will be a minor loss compared to losing the World Cup of Life! But I am determined to be on the winning team! My desire inspired this story, which I hope you will appreciate, rugby fan or not, sportsperson or not. For the bible tells us that we all have a race to run. (a game to win!)

THE WINNING TEAM

A three person coaching staff with ultimate vision, proven experience and integrity, and amazing personal insight heads my team. Fondly known to those in our team by their initials, GF, JC and HS, they are so in tune with each other that outsiders often have difficulty in separating them. Their nickname is "The Trinity." They have that amazing ability, which no other coaches have ever had in spite of sometimes claiming so, to be able to see the oppositions game plan in advance, then to train our team in the countermeasures necessary to win the game.

Their training system is set out, step by step, in their 'Life Training' manual. Interestingly and sometimes frustratingly, the steps aren't always set out in a simple, logical order. They have their reasons though. To make us study the manual continually so we absorb it all – "until it becomes part of us," they say. Pretty hard work sometimes though, particularly when we would rather be out playing the game. HS keeps telling us though, "If you don't understand the rules and strategy, you'll get murdered by the opposition."

It is funny though, that our opposition can't understand our manual at all. They think it is irrelevant to the modern game because it was written 2-3,500 odd years ago. But our coaches tell us that the basic principles of the game never change, something the All Blacks could take heed of in their modern, affluent, materialistic, professional era. There is no substitute for putting our life on the line. "The example JC set for you in the past still remains valid today," we are told.

You know too, our coaches didn't pen the manual directly themselves. They cleverly used 40 odd players to write this 66-section 'Bible' for them. So the game is thoroughly analysed from all perspectives. Remarkably with so many different authors, it still comes together as a single, successful, united game plan. To be honest, when I first joined the team, I found it a little difficult to understand, and a bit dry at times. Incredibly though, once I allowed HS to explain it to me, it all started to make much more sense. Funny how some of my team mates are still reluctant to let him show them too! For HS taught me how it all fits together like a giant jigsaw. Have tried doing the jigsaw by myself from time to time though, but can never seem to get the pieces to fit! Strange that! I tell you, I always used to be sceptical about this game plan, before joining the team. But since being involved, I have found out that it is perfect. For GF is the master of that. He has analysed and organised each play to the infinite degree. Nothing has been left to chance.

And there is practical experience too! For the coaches don't ask us to do anything that is not possible. As we are continually reminded, JC set an incredible example in his playing days, achieving a far higher standard of performance than is required of us current players.

HS too, is an amazing guy! He seems able to keep his eye on all of us, all of the time, as if each one of us was the only player on the team. Can't understand how he does it! All with such a quiet mannered calmness about him too.

The only hiccup to an otherwise perfect programme seems to be in their player selection system! For they choose the most unlikely looking players for their team. Seems as if they want to give themselves a bit of a challenge! For a more motley lot of recruits you wouldn't see anywhere. They say they deliberately pick those no one else would want! They say it helps show up the quality of their coaching. For it is obvious that we, the players, cannot possibly take credit for the results we achieve. Certainly giving themselves more than a few problems, coping with us, though!

Like the All Blacks, our team trains well at our Sunday morning training sessions, but unfortunately many of our players seem to lose the plot when they rejoin the Monday to Saturday game. Putting the perfect plan into action seems to be a problem for both the AB's and us! For once we're on the field it is up to us what we do, so the coaches tell us. Something called freewill they say. Sometimes I think they should programme us like robots. But the coaches say they would never know if we would do what they desire if they did that. Their choice, I guess.

However, unlike the All Blacks who have to wait another 4 years for their (inevitable!) win, there has recently been a new sense of unity, optimism and increased level of performance amongst some of our 'Tabernacle' team. This is encouraging us to believe that the final victory may not be too far away. A good number of us seem to be attaining a new level of confidence and skill, when facing the inevitable, final, desperate thrusts of the opposition. For we know that the winning of the game is finally to be ours, just as the coaches have told us!

And you know what? From such unpromising beginnings, some of us players are now looking as if we could beat the All Blacks (not too much of a challenge at the moment!). And we have absolute surety we will soon be good enough to win the World Cup of Life and attain the eternal rewards that go with this ultimate victory! Amazing what the coaches have been able to achieve with such unpromising recruits!

Sadly, quite a lot of the original team have fallen by the wayside, because they haven't been prepared to do what the coaches have told us to do. Some have given our team an undeserved bad name. For it is not the coaches or the teams fault (although sometimes we team members are not as good to our fellow team mates as we could be!) that they choose to leave the team. Rules are rules, if the game is to be won! They often love to have someone else to blame though. Saddens the coaches particularly!

If you haven't yet joined our team, we do have a few positions left, so why not ask our coaches today. They are always excited to accept the challenge of blending keen new players into our team. Any current player on the team will be more than happy to put you in touch with them. And, unlike the All Blacks, if you follow the coaches' instructions, you can't possibly lose!

VICTORY!

An Explanation: The inspiration for the first two parts of this poem came from a cross island trek Kathy and I went on when we were staying on the beautiful Island of Rarotonga, in the Cook Islands. For those who don't know, The Cooks are situated around the Tropic of Capricorn in the Pacific Ocean. A great place to visit! The last part is based loosely on the book of Revelation, Chapters 21 and 22, the biblical promise of what is to come. Hope it is both enjoyable and challenging to you. Of course it is just verse, so is not all strictly theologically accurate! Called poetic licence!

VICTORY!

THE MOUNTAIN CLIMB

I rang a guide, booking a trip for the day,

So Kathy and I, could go out and play,
"Any special offers?" as I always ask,
"Yes sir, but are you up to the task?"

"How much will it cost?" showing more interest,
Now more open to tackling Mount Everest!
"Our special offer is entirely free,"
This now, I couldn't wait to see!

So off we go in a very smart minibus,
Kathy and I, some others, a group of us.
There we first meet our new guide to be,
Jesus by name, seemed friendly to me.

Hopping off the bus, now ready and eager to go,
Our lot in with Jesus, we were all willing to throw.
Until Jesus said, "There's a small catch to my generous offer,
The trip's tough, no turning back," the advice he did proffer.

Two people looked at the track ahead,
Could see the markers, all coloured red.
"Don't think we can do it," was what they said,
"We'd rather stay in bed, being newly wed!"

"The choice is yours," our guide kindly does cry,
Maybe another day, you will come back and try,
As he leads the rest of us on, up into the trees,
"You must try in life, even when there's no fees."

As we wend our way ever upwards on the path,
Sweating heavily now, would love a cold bath!
The blood red markers were now on every side,
To tree after tree, with love they'd been tied.

This Jesus our guide, is oh so strong,
Always encouraging us to move along,
And when the load is heavy on our backs,
He helps us out, willing to carry our packs.

He shows us all the interesting points along the way,
Has a guidebook, called his 'Bible', I heard him say.
Knows all the small birds, twittering from tree to tree,
His oneness with the creation, is just wondrous to see.

For some aren't used to this mountain climbing lark,
Exercise for them means a leisurely stroll in the park!
Of these ones Jesus takes considerable, extra care,
Before their continual grizzling, gets into our hair!

The tropical rain forest was so lush at the beginning,
But as we progress, the trees they are now thinning,
The further we go, the steeper the track,
Some of us wish, we could now turn back.

But rules are rules, as teachers so often say,
A condition of the trip at the end of the day,
So we all plod on as the going gets harder,
Learning new skills, seeking to be smarter.

Until two of the party hit upon a brilliant idea,
A shortcut ahead, look! There, nothing to fear!
So off they went, full of confidence that they best knew,
More insight than the rest of us, two of the chosen few.

Jesus stands sadly by, watching them depart,
Their leaving weighing so heavily, on his heart.
Surprisingly he says, "Let them go, that is their choice,
Should they cry out though, I will still hear their voice."

Another of the party misses a turn in the track,
Off into the bush, a sense of direction did lack.
Jesus stops us all, while he goes to look,
In finding this person, every care he took.

At the top of the mountain the scenery did change,
The summit now in view, well within our range,
Grasses indeed, now the landscape predominate,
Sprinkled about with wild orchids, looking great.

At the summit we rest, our faces all aglow,
We have made it! No more climbing to go!
We thank our guide Jesus, for taking us right up there,
But our own efforts too, we are wanting to compare.

Jesus just looked at us with a wry grin on his face,
"How little they know, thinking they set the pace."
But he says nothing, for we're still learning the way,
"Let's go down to the waterfall', then see what they say.

So down the mountain towards the waterfall we wander,
Satisfied with what we had done, but our legs do wonder!
For we have reached our goal, or so we thought,
In the ecstasy of our achievement, we are caught.

On the way down, we all get a little careless,
Tripping over a stump, my side now a mess,
Suddenly learning that a journey isn't complete,
Until you are safely back, sitting in the bus seat!

More carefully now, we wend our way down,
Conscious of our need, to get back to town,
To have a shower, to again get clean,
Jesus grinned, this he had often seen.

For he did, and still does, know more than we,
Some of us by now, understanding him you see,
Could glean that he has more surprises in store,
For those who want to move on, who desire more.

UNDER THE WATERFALL

Finally the track bursts out into a clearing,
A sigh of relief, so many of us are feeling,
But the few who noticed the grin, those minutes ago,
With a new sense of anticipation, now begin to glow.

Here is a sparkling, different world.
Vines aplenty with leaves unfurled,
Spreading their wings with reckless abandon,
We can see we are entering a heavenly garden.

Centre of the landscape is a refreshing waterfall,
Cascading gently down over a sheer rock wall,
Bouncing, dancing into a delightful rock pool,
Over which the waterfall, as master, does rule.

The pool is bordered with trees so lush,
The sound of the water, they seem to hush,
And flying among them I see a pure white dove,
Which Jesus tells me, is the sign of perfect love.

Is something about this place I can't work out,
So I seek out Jesus asking, "What is it all about?"
He looks at me, as only a father looks at his son,
"Enjoy it my son, It's all for you, my job is done."

Looking back to the water I hear, "David come in"
A voice from somewhere - seemingly from within!
Now that is impossible, I think to myself with 'logicality',
"Pull yourself together, clear your head, get back to reality!"

Coming to, I turn again towards Jesus, only to find,
He's gone to the bus, leaving some of us behind.
For you see, others did not want to go on into the pool,
Would rather go back to the hotel, to enjoy their cool.

As Jesus hops in the bus, ready for the drive,
He waves back at me, motioning me to dive,
Lovingly now too, he points down by my side,
He'd left me his guidebook, to take on my ride.

Opening the cover, not knowing what I'll see,
A personal note there, one from him to me.
"Trust in me, my son, I will never lead you astray,
My Spirit's with you, always to show the way."

Sitting down on the rock, a tear in my eye,
"Can't ever repay him," I think with a sigh,
For the book of life, he's so generously given me,
With it beside me, I'll always enjoy his company.

Hearing that voice again, "David, the water is cool",
See Kathy there too, already enjoying it in the pool.
Taking the guide book with me, waterproof so I found,
Now jump right in, to where Kathy is playing around.

A great splash - the water is so refreshing!
Gives a new lease of life, 'tis a real blessing.
Can't now understand my reluctance to hop in,
Feel really at home here, amongst kith and kin.

Kathy calls me to come, walk under the waterfall,
Together we stand there laughing, have a real ball!
For the water has special healing properties,
Curing us all our aches, pains and disease.

Such healing water, able to lift my spirits inside,
No longer feeling the need, to run away and hide.
Strange really, how it refreshes my soul,
'Tis so much more than a watering hole.

After playing round in the pool some more,
Hopping out to dry off, being wet to the core.
Sitting on the side, calmly enjoying the breeze,
I am attacked by mosquitoes, as big as bees!

Slapping at one, then another, then a third!
Slap, slap, slap, until that voice again I heard
Coming from deep inside me, so gently saying,
"Jump back in, it's with me you should be staying."

A few more slaps before learning my lesson,
Wiser now, back into the pool I do hasten!
In the refreshing water my bites do soon disappear,
The Spirit, in the right direction, would me steer.

In him, by now, I was coming to trust,
Just as Jesus earlier, had said I must.
For such a slow learner I am sometimes,
Until my head clicks, then the bell chimes!

So once again enjoying the play,
Happy to go on from day to day,
But I have to admit to becoming a little bored,
"Surely there has to be more", my inside roared!

RIDING THE RIVER OF LIFE

"What is this I do hear?" the Spirit said,
"New words appearing, inside your head.
They are the ones I have been longing to hear,
So you my son, in a new direction, I can steer."

"For I must explain," the Spirit then told me,
"To move on, your decision only, must it be,
For to do the will of our Father is the highest call,
To attain this goal, you must sacrifice your all."

"I can show you the way, point out the bends,
But the success of this journey, on you depends,
For this step involves 100% commitment,
Your own desires, being substituted for atonement."

"Sounds good to me" I said, after some deep thought,
For giving up dreams is not what I had been taught
As being the real way to be successful in life.
But pursuing them, had only brought me strife.

"So how do we proceed?" I asked the Spirit,
"'Tis easy", he said, "if you really want to do it.
Look over to the far side of the pool,

See there, the river starts, it's so cool!"

Turning towards the river to look for a wee while,
"Not many swimming in it," I think with a smile,
To my mind, that was so good to see,
Appealed to the adventurer, within me.

Seeing one person take the plunge,
Bobbing up and down like a sponge.
Struggling at first, fighting against the flow,
Before relaxing – now that's the way to go!

Looking back at numerous people in the pool,
All happily swimming, many playing the fool,
Yelling out to them, "Hey, look what I have found!"
But no one hears me, by pleasure they are bound.

The stream is so inviting,
The journey so exciting.
Now I can no longer wait,
Others to join me at the gate.

Do a fine swallow dive, deep into the river,
Bounce in the current, hither and thither.
It is a new sensation to be unable to stop,
The water too deep, me on my toes to hop.

Hearing that gentle voice again inside,
"Relax now David, in me you do abide,
Obey me implicitly on this journey of life,
That's the only way to keep out of strife."

So relax I do, and float down the stream,
No effort on my part, life is but a dream!
So this is what living is all about!
For me there is, now no doubt!

Looking up to the sky, what do I see,
An eagle high above, flying so free.
Eagle eyes searching the river below,
A victory song, he does now bestow.

"But where will this stream take me?" I think,
Once again questioning, not wanting to sink,
"To the heavenly city," the voice inside replies,
I believe him again, to me he never, ever lies.

"The heavenly city, wonder what its like?
I know!" The thought to me, then did strike.
For it is described in the guidebook Jesus gave,
The last two chapters - here it is - for it I did save.

Pondering this greatest of all cities as I float along,
"Is it possible that to it, one day, I will belong?"
Where the very glory of God has its home,
Living in perfect peace, no more to roam.

To view its great high wall, with twelve large gates,
Going in past the angels, now to be with my mates!
Seeing the names of the twelve tribes there inscribed,
With those of the Apostles on the foundations inside.

The wall is made of jasper, shining as clear as crystal,
The foundations of precious stones, emerald to beryl.
A main street of pure gold, like transparent glass,
Like everything else in this place, it has real class!

Floating down the stream,
Ever content in my dream,
I'm being cleansed inside,
No longer any sin to hide.

The voice inside now cries out – "Look! Look!
A city ahead – greater than any picture book!
The glory of God surrounds it from above,
And the light of the Lamb bathes it in love."

Struggling against the flow to take a look around,
The voice said, "Don't David, you'll run aground,

Just rest in me, only I know the way to take you in,
Your own effort now, would merely end up as sin."

So lying back, enjoying the current's flow,
For the Holy Spirit, he knows where to go.
The goal of my life is now about to be achieved
With the Spirit's help; 'tis what I've perceived.

One last bend, the river runs through the gate,
To a life full of gladness, no bitterness, no hate.
Entering the city, to be completely surrounded by gold,
More magnificent even, than the stories I've been told.

The river, from the very throne of God does flow,
Yes, I am in his will, that much I certainly know.
For the river flows through the main street of the city,
Its gurgling waters bubbling, bouncing - oh so pretty.

Looking to the left, then to the right,
The trees of life there, what a sight!
Twelve crops of fruit each year they bear,
An abundance of goodness for all to share.

Then coming to the final, eternal destination,
On a throne of gold sits the author of creation.
Welcoming there, truly magnificent in his glory,
I see it is my Jesus, long promised in his story.

Falling at his feet, overwhelmed by his glorious presence,
The air being charged with the most delightful fragrance.
His face smiling, radiating so much love and care,
I know it is he, for he still has his long black hair!

Then, the most amazing thing I have ever known,
A culmination of all that in my life has been sown,
By so many helpmates on my journey through.
He held out his hand saying, "David, I love you."

As my hand grasps His, He gently raises me up,
Saying, "Come, be with me and share of my cup,
For you have overcome, won the final victory,
Earning the right, to rule and reign with me."

Guiding me to my personal, hand built throne,
My heavenly glory reflects a little of his own.
For no longer does my earthly body smother,
The joy and fulfilment, of being his brother.

David Tait: 11 April 2000