



THE 'BE-FOREWORD'

**WALKING WITH JESUS MINISTRIES
P O BOX 9143
TAURANGA
NEW ZEALAND**

23 August 1999

Dear Reader

Have you ever felt it strange that the introduction to a book is nearly always written after the book is finished?

Well this book is going to break all the rules – probably because I don't know most of them anyway!

So here I am, typing this letter to you on my computer, sitting in my office looking out at the clear, sky blue, blue sky of a lovely late winter's day in Tauranga, New Zealand, the heater on high to keep me warm! Praise the Lord for technology – heaters to keep us warm and computers to write and spell for us too! For no one can read my handwriting – a left hander made to write with his right hand – that's my excuse anyway.

Exactly what is to follow I don't know yet – I am still waiting on the Lord to tell me! He told me last Thursday to write this book, (yes it is Monday today - I know you wanted to ask!), but where to start, how long, what specific content? Well I don't know. So I hope we will both go on an exciting journey of discovery together. I have been down this path once before, 7 years ago, when the Lord stopped me one day as I was getting very near the end of reading my bible right through - at Revelation 12:11 to be exact. At that time, as only a 3 year old Christian, He told me to base my life's work for Him around that verse. Two years later the first result was the "Walking With Jesus" course, a 3-part ministry of understanding about living the Christian life today.

To be honest I felt completely inadequate, as one so young in the Lord, not a biblical scholar, just an ordinary new follower of Jesus, talking about realms that I hadn't personally experienced in a significant way. Amazingly though, the Holy Spirit led me through it step by step, page by page. The result has been a course that has helped over 12,000 New Zealanders (out of a population of only 3.75 million people) find or deepen their relationship with the Lord Jesus. The Holy Spirit's work, not mine.

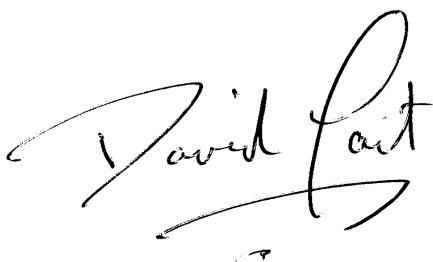
The course was promoted through our business at the time, a mail order garden company called Kaydees Gardens. The Lord blessed our business so much, becoming within 3 years New Zealand's largest garden mail order company by far.

Three months ago now, the Lord miraculously brought along a buyer for the company – a story that may or may not be shared later – as the Lord leads. Three weeks ago today, my first day after leaving the business, He gave a new revelation (for me) of the meaning of the Book of Ruth, which will be included later. Then last Thursday, the day before I caught up with my much delayed office work, He told me to start writing this book. A book to encourage those who, like me, are seeking more of God.

This time it is not quite so nerve wracking, as I have now been along that path before. Just as exciting though, as the one thing I am learning is, to trust Him even when I don't know the next step. Frustratingly, He only tells me what is ahead on a 'need to know' basis. I am sure I could do a much better job if I could plan ahead! But then it would become my doing and not His! So I am resigned to the journey of walking in the dark, relying on the light of the Holy Spirit to guide me along His path. Enough of the serious stuff! Of course I cannot yet thank all those who have helped make this book possible, as it is not yet written! However I could thank my parents for 'bringing me up proper' in a good Christian home – and I do - even though it took me 42 years to understand and appreciate it! Some of us sadly are slow learners. I could also thank my 4 sons for constantly telling me that 'the old man is over the hill' – and I do – for giving me the motivation to prove them wrong! I could, I should and I must – and I do – thank my precious wife Kathy for enabling me to do this, by working fulltime to pay the bills, and for being so supportive of my 'way-out' endeavours. As with my parents it has taken me a long time to fully appreciate the inestimable value of a truly godly, faithful (although not yet perfect but far more so than me!) wife. To my pastor, Mike Cullen, of the Abundant Life Church here in Tauranga, I should thank – and I do – for the difficult and often painful task for both of us, of rubbing off some of the rough edges from my life. He has become a friend. I will get my revenge by giving him all the pages that follow to proof and check for their accuracy in the Word and Spirit! And to the other members of my oversight team also, for their honesty and willingness to impart truth and reality into my life. And finally, in anticipation, I thank the computer typing tutorial programme that I pray will dramatically increase my typing speed before this book is finished – or it may never be!

I trust you will join me now for our exciting journey together as we explore what the Lord has for us in the days ahead.

Your friend

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Tait". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Tait



THE 'AFTER-WORD'

**WALKING WITH JESUS MINISTRIES
P O BOX 9143
TAURANGA
NEW ZEALAND**

20 October 2000

Dear Reader

In the short time it has taken you to turn to this page, 14 months have passed. And a surprising 14 months they have been too. Just about the only thing remaining the same in our lives today, is the postal address above!

As would be expected, I started writing full of hope and promise; as sure as one can ever be of the Lord's plans for the future. The task of writing was to be the major challenge I would face, in what I saw to be a year's work. Well, the timing hasn't worked out too badly, at 3 days less than 14 months. Good things do take time! Each day I have learned so much more about the Lord and myself. I trust you will notice some of these changes in me as you read on. One of the more obvious ones has been the verse – maybe you could even call it poetry - which the Lord has unexpectedly given me at times over the last 8 months. While I had written a couple of poems, years previously, I had never anticipated the bursts of creativity (how much or little of it, you the reader, will be the judge!) the Lord has given me. I have enjoyed it anyway! Hope you do too. This has resulted in these writings being quite different to what I had anticipated.

The year 2000, the first of the 21st century has brought its share of personal challenges, to say the least. For us they have unexpectedly, been in the financial area. From seeming prosperity on New Years Day to, a short 10 months later, being on the verge of bankruptcy. That times can change so rapidly shouldn't come as a surprise in a world where the pace of change increases daily, but it always seems to be when it affects oneself! New levels of faith, new levels of trust in the Lord's plan and provision have been required - and given. Amazing how the Lord uses the mistakes we make for His benefit and our training.

It is in times of stress and challenge that marriages and families either blow apart or grow together. For Kathy and I, these tough times have seen a further strengthening of the bonds between us. As we still need to eat, though probably a little less than we now do, Kathy's financial contributions from her job as a Theatre Nurse have assumed an even greater significance in making this work possible. Thankyou so much my sweetheart, for your love, support and hard work. Thanks also to my two youngest sons for occasionally allowing me the use of my computer outside of normal office hours! You are two great guys. To my two elder sons, both far away from here, I hope this reminds you a little of home.

For those who have supported us with encouragement and prayer cover, we are all most grateful. Without the support of our Abundant Life Church family, both in opening up new horizons of knowledge and experience in the Lord, and in caring for us, this project wouldn't have got started, let alone have been completed. Special thanks are due to my pastor, Mike Cullen, for the many hours and much wisdom he has expended in vetting this manuscript.

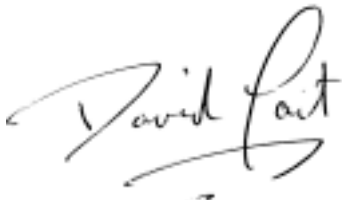
To Kathryn Fisher, Pam Somerville and Neil Adams too, go my thanks for also attempting to keep me on the straight and narrow spiritually, and for partially correcting my English so that I don't completely shame my old schoolteachers. I do realise that I have broken English grammar rules in places, particularly when starting sentences with conjunctions. They do get through the computer grammar check though. Like me, it is not perfect! Also, references to God, for example 'He' and 'Him', have been capitalised in my text, but not in quotations of scripture. Maybe rebellion – but I prefer to think of it as honouring my God. Overall, I trust the results are both helpful and a little entertaining. Of course full responsibility for the material presented remains mine. Being human, no doubt I haven't got it 100% right. Please check me out. Only God's word, the Bible, is the gospel truth!

The amazing front cover is the work of Bobby Aranas. Thanks Bobby for your superb interpretation of the theme of these writings.

Acknowledgement of the authors and presenters of the 'Word of Life' course, the writings of Kevin Connor and the teachings of Rob Wheeler and Derek Prince need to be given, for they all have helped illuminate the Bible to me.

Finally, I thank my God for entrusting this project to me. You are my King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

Still your friend (I Trust!)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David Tait". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

David Tait

Kathy and David enjoying 'Island Night'
on the beautiful island of Rarotonga.



EAGLES FLY HIGH!

FROM PASSOVER - THROUGH PENTECOST – TOWARDS TABERNACLES

‘ONE IN THREE - THREE IN ONE’

BOOK ‘WON’

INNER

THE MAN
▲

BOOK ‘TOO’

FIRST & LAST
THE WORD
▲

BOOK ‘FREE’

ETERNAL
THE VISION
▲



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TAURANGA
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Further copies of this manuscript are available FREE OF CHARGE to genuine enquirers upon request. Please include P & H of \$5 (Visa and Mastercard welcomed) in the currency of the country to be delivered to. Donations are welcomed to cover costs of production and the ongoing work of the ministry. Those of \$NZ20 or more will be receipted and are tax deductible in NZ.

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BIBLE TRANSLATIONS:

Unless otherwise stated, all quotations are from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

"Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973,1978,1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers."

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

'THE HOLY BIBLE' by God. The primary source of information and inspiration.

Many thoughts, particularly in 'The First and Last Word', have been crystallised by the following works of Kevin Connor.

'THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL' by Kevin J. Connor
Bible Temple – Connor Publications, Portland, Oregon 97213, USA. 1980

'THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE' by Kevin J Connor
KJC Publications, P O Box 7, Blackburn South, Victoria 3130, Australia. 1988

WE OVERCOME SATAN THROUGH BELIEF IN JESUS, who is

'THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB' (From Revelation 12:11)

'BOOK WON'

I N N E R
THE MAN
▲

*Words are cheap, dreams are free,
'Tis our heart that God does see.*

**FAR FROM PERFECT - BUT ALLOWING GOD TO
WORK ON IT!**

ONE MAN'S WALK

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'TIS ME!

'Tis me, David John is the name,
Born for business to be my game.
For 30 odd years, I did give it a go,
Often successful, other times low.

Ten years ago now, it collapsed all around,
Misery in my life, did plentifully abound.
So I gave my heart to the Lord, you see,
For by now, I had come to the end of me.

In the time since then,
My God I have sought and fought,
In these years of ten,
He has of me, taught and caught!

He restored me in the business world.
At the same time, my desires He curled.
Now he has me writing this book,
I trust you find it worth the look.

David John is the one I would like to be,
A 'King David' with a heart after his God,
If only the Lord would say the same of me,
A real sinner, but still worthy of his nod.

The Apostle John too, has a special place,
In the shadow of Jesus, he did run his race.
Given revelation of our heavenly destiny,
Proved his love for Jesus was a reality.

Now when God gives you a book to write,
Should you show yourself in the best light?
Surely people, God won't want to offend,
Our image, it's all-important in the end.

But my friend, that is not my style,
Sweet savours, my readers to beguile.
To be honest, revealing warts and all,
For me, that has always been the call.

I'm far from being the perfect man,
If I were, God wouldn't need a plan.
Not needing to turn me around, into his image,
Life would be boring for Him, or so I envisage!

For spiritual gifts are given, as He does choose,
Yes, they are ours for life, them we never lose.
Even at times when our behaviour,
Does not do honour to the Saviour!

When I look at the television or stage,
And see the perfect person, strutting their stuff,
I begin to wonder, with the benefit of age,
Is it really God, or are they calling my bluff!

The fruit of the Spirit on the other hand,
Need to be worked at, with Him to stand.
Not just for a splendid hour on the podium,
But in all actions, we are to show no odium.

No, not all can be good looking, I'm certainly not!
But the fruit of the Spirit, we are to display the lot.
For it is in the life we lead from day to day,
The depth of our commitment, we'll display.

So when I come to read a book,
I always want to take a real look,
At the life of the person who pushes the pen,
What is he thinking, while writing in his den?

Now here you will find David's Musings,
Over which I have taken some '*abusings*'!
Why are you focusing on yourself? Some do say,
Others, revealing yourself, a dangerous game to play!

But life is a journey my friend,
To be run out to the very end.
To see where I'm at, on the way through,
Will I trust, be of some benefit to you.

Now you may well not, be used to my style,
I have many faults, not just one in a while!
Have endeavoured to be as open as I can be,
What you see here, good and bad, it's reality!

I normally seek to build a logical case,
On which my conclusions, then to base.
So if at the start, you know you've heard it all before,
Don't give up! By the end, there's far more in store!

As you read through, you may notice some change,
Being young in the Lord, I am to give him full range,
So if you aren't too keen on the person you first
meet,
Read on, by the end, you may find a new one to
greet.

So now, that is a little of the story of my life,
For the full version, you need to ask the wife!
One day I hope we will meet in Heaven,
All our failings healed, no sin, no leaven!

DAVID'S MUSINGS

AN EXPLANATION: David's Musings and Testimonies have been compiled from thoughts and experiences jotted down throughout the 12 months of writing this book. They give a 'snapshot' of the person behind the words. Like all untouched photos, these words are at least partially revealing of the one photographed. Showing some of the highlights and low points, successes and failures, quirks of character, both good and bad, that go to make up one unworthy member of the human race. One though who has been rescued, changed, restored and cared for by a loving and very tolerant God. An imperfect character, but one desirous (most of the time!) of being transformed into the person that God would wish him to be.

When I now read some of the earlier 'Musings', I am tempted to go back and modify them, for there have been changes in me and certainly, in our circumstances. I have resisted this, as change is part of life. In fact ongoing change is essential if we are to attain to all that God has for us. Sometimes we cringe at what we were! Well, I do anyway.

As you will see from what follows, if the Lord can use me, then he can use you too. For it is obvious that I am no 'superman', but merely an ordinary person facing the normal challenges of day to day living encountered by us all. I hope the lessons of my failures as well as any successes, are of value to you. I look forward to getting to know you too, in eternity, if not before. Lack of time should not be a problem there!

31 August 1999: Yesterday I started writing the first section of the book proper. I am a bit of an "exercise nut" (enables me to eat more!). Getting up yesterday morning I ached all over. Unnaturally so! Felt 104, not 52! Have never had a feeling like that before! There was no way I could exercise. I persevered with the writing, but by the end of the day, ironically my legs were killing me through lack of exercise, etc. But what a turnaround this morning! I got up, felt great and recorded personal bests for my long session on the exercycle, and on the rowing machine. Amazing! Just chance? I can't say.... but I have my suspicions!

1 September 1999: Today, unbelievably, another record day for exercising. A training record time for my hilly 5km run of 24:34, over 2 minutes faster than the last time I ran it! And to top it off, another record for my short exercycle session as well! Just chance again? I'm beginning to doubt it! And my injured ankle was healed as well. What would have happened had I given up for good, after feeling so bad just 2 days ago? Four personal bests would not have been set and I would have been downright miserable to go with it! A real lesson for me.

6 September 1999: Have spent an interesting 4 days "hatching, matching & dispatching!" For Kathy and I have travelled from one end of the North Island of New Zealand to the other. From Paraparaumu – don't you love these New Zealand Maori names – near Wellington in the south, to Howick in Auckland in the north to attend a funeral, a wedding and a christening. Some variety! And extra interest for me too. Being of Baptist and more latterly, Pentecostal background, the services and surroundings in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches we attended, were different to those I am used to. When asking the Lord about the pomp and ceremony of the Anglican funeral He told me, "Don't be distracted by the surroundings for I am taking one of my own home." A needed reminder! It is our heart attitude, not our surroundings or worship style that the Lord is interested in. A timely "acceptance" lesson for me on a basic principle of God's church to come, where people, not things, are paramount.

7 September 1999: *Letter to God.* Dear God, Next time you write the bible, could you please

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arrange for the books to be placed in alphabetical order. Thanks a lot, *David*.

9 September 1999: (Explanation: In 1991, I was reading through my bible, happy to be nearing the end, when the Lord suddenly stopped me at *Revelation 12:11*, telling me to base my life's work around that verse. It reads: "*They overcame him (that is Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.*" Explaining the meaning, He explained that we overcome Satan by the blood of Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, through submitting to the will of God the Father in our lives.)

I am sitting in front of my computer, contemplating how much Revelation 12:11 has affected my life. Spiritually, I trust I am moving along the path of living it. Ask my wife Kathy for independent verification! Our spouses know us the next best to God, but still only 10% as well as He does! "For better, for worse, for richer or poorer (both for us!) etc, etc." Sometimes I take a backward step or two, or walk off to one side, but overall I know I am making progress. Still some way to go to reach the end goal of unity with Jesus though! In the natural, on that day 8 years ago when the Lord stopped me at this verse, my life changed for good. And for the good too! It gave me a purpose in Him. Now, as I recall the miracles He has done over the time since, developing my life and His ministry based round this one verse, my faith increases. For my faith levels are built up through my experience of the Lord's faithfulness to me. All because of 29 words, which so succinctly summarise the goals of my walk in the Lord. Yes, Revelation 12:11 has changed my life.

15 September 1999: Until this point yesterday, my writing had flowed very easily. Then I made a big mistake! My mind told me that I could easily write this next section – had done it all before - so I set out to do it in my own strength and knowledge. What I wrote was terrible, even by my standards! I have had to repent (say sorry to God and promise to try not to do it again) of my foolishness, and so I will have another try now, in His power. Find it so easy to let self take over! Wastes a lot of time and causes unnecessary stress too!

29 September 1999: My writing today reminds me of my Great Auntie Ina. For she was someone who reached a place in God to which I aspire. In her latter years she literally radiated the peace, joy and love of the Holy Spirit, even though being badly crippled with arthritis. When not baking cheese cakes (New Zealand style – a puff pastry shell, filled with a teaspoon of raspberry jam, topped with a sponge mixture), she used to sit in her chair, bible by her side, just so interested in what all her nieces and nephews were doing. She had that rare ability to rise above her physical circumstances and radiate the love and joy of her precious Lord. Talk about someone glowing with the light of the Spirit – 'twas my Auntie Ina. What was it that made her different? For I desperately desire that same dimension in my life too!

30 September 1999: Two and a half years ago I committed myself to a 12-unit property development. The worst time possible, with the Asian downturn of 1998 resulting in a drop in New Zealand property prices. Combined with high cost overruns, largely as a result of my inexperience, I got myself into a severe cash flow shortage situation. By early this year, I was staring down the barrel of bankruptcy for the second time. My original funding fell through. The Lord was starting to lead me towards this ministry. "You couldn't use me Lord if I went bankrupt again", was my main thought – an erroneous one too, by the way! He can (and does) use anyone He chooses, to do His work for Him. At the last minute (again typical for me) He, with a good laugh I am sure, in an ironic twist, arranged for the bank that had sent us bankrupt nearly 10 years before, to come to our rescue! Amazing. Then organised some Christian friends to put up money too. Amazing provision again. But we could not get titles issued for the subdivision, so could not get payment for the one property sold, to repay our remaining creditors. For a 9-month period no other buyers were on the horizon. But the Lord kept telling me not to worry – that He had it all under control! Yes God I do believe you, but.....! Know the feeling? Well, yesterday we sold another property and in a couple of days titles will be issued! Everything in the Lord's time, for we can't be paid for these latest sales until the titles are issued anyway! Amazing though, how it has happened right in the middle of this section, while giving the first real insight of what this book is all about! Coincidence yet again? You be the judge. Yes Lord, you were right. I need to trust you more.

THE INNER MAN

Thank you for being with me. Thank you for again proving yourself to my weak human mind. Thank you for building my faith and trust in you. I do know I can trust you with all my life. Help me to believe!

October 2 1999: This morning (Saturday), I went to a baptism at one of the natural 'hot pools', here in Tauranga. Yes, the water comes directly from natural hot water springs. A lady, named Melissa, from our church was baptised, along with, I think, 7 others. When asked if she would like to testify beforehand, she said something really interesting. Melissa testified that she was fully sold out to God, desiring to achieve excellence in Him, that she "loved not her life to the death." (Revelation 12:11 King James Version). These weren't just nice sounding words. You could sense they were the deep desire of her heart. How God must have loved hearing those words. I sure did! For that is what He is calling us to in these days.

7 October 1999: Today has been a "red letter" (very good) day for me. For today the titles for our property development have been issued, after delays of many months. A great relief! Now things can progress again. The Lord told me today to start on this particular chapter, even though it is likely to be out of order. Funnily though, most unlike me as I am reasonably well disciplined, I found every other good thing to do instead. Unusual! Eventually I started, and a few minutes later Kathy came home from work. We immediately had a disagreement (minor – but still unusual for us these days). Then it dawned on me! Something is going on here. Lack of motivation, disagreement with the wife? On such an otherwise special day! So I got into His word and the Lord started to show me new things that are of vital importance to our understanding of the incredible things to come in Tabernacles. Then upstairs to the wife to explain! For I have been told, and have previously experienced, that in ministry when something important is about to happen, you can very easily have an argument with the wife. Happens too often, to too many people, to be coincidental! You be the judge of whether or not this was worth having a disagreement or two for!

8 October 1999: A confession! With the benefit of a night to think about the revelations of Tabernacles, I realise how we need to be open to changing our cherished, preconceived ideas. For I live in a country with a strong democratic and egalitarian heritage. New Zealanders have a tradition of 'knocking down' those of us we perceive of as being successful. Called the 'tall poppy' syndrome. Unless of course, it is our national rugby team, the All Blacks, who are expected to, and mostly do, win every game they play! They get knocked down when they lose! Spiritually then, we are naturally drawn to the concept of all Christians, having given their hearts to the Lord, receiving equal rewards both on earth and in heaven. This has been accentuated, coming as I do from a strong evangelical Baptist background, where "Salvation" was effectively regarded as both the beginning and end of our spiritual journey. That situation, I hasten to point out, has changed a lot in more recent times, as the Baptist Church in New Zealand has embraced the charismatic movement. Therefore, the concept of different 'steps and rewards' in our walk with Jesus, has been a difficult one for me to accept. I did not have too many difficulties with the 'steps' on the walk side, as early on, the Lord showed me these directly, through the progression in Revelation 12:11. These steps have also been confirmed through practical observation and experience. (Being a practical person, just what I like!) For it is very obvious that individual Christians are at different places in their walk with Jesus. The 'rewards' however have been a lot more difficult to accept, as they're mainly future. My final resistance wasn't broken down until yesterday afternoon, when the Lord made it abundantly clear to me that differences in rewards, depending upon how we live our Christian lives, do exist. Sorry Lord for being so pigheaded! I will now dare to be different!

11 October 1999: An exciting journey of discovery for me! Suddenly, all of Revelation chapter 12 is starting to make sense! I have looked forward to this for years! The Lord has gradually expanded my horizons from just verse 11, more than enough to start off with 8 years ago. Then 5 years ago to verse 10, while experiencing the reality of Satan's accusations

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during a period of depression, lasting 5 months. It came immediately after a series of meetings I took, during which the presence of the Holy Spirit came down in great measure. The ensuing spiritual battle was too powerful for me to personally handle at the time, as it turned out. And now, this! The rest of this chapter is starting to come alive! Set two new exercising records this morning too! What more could I ask for! The natural and the spiritual!

14 October 1999: I've been thinking again – and that is dangerous! Kathy made a comment this morning about one of our relations weighing himself daily. Well, I do that too! For I want to know when I am putting on weight. Not necessarily to do anything about it, but just to know where I'm at! When it reaches a critical point I take action. Kathy on the other hand is very different. She will deliberately not weigh herself when she thinks she is putting on weight. She makes a decision to do something about it, based on other reasons. Don't ask me what they are though! I am only a mere male and therefore can't understand such things! For we are all unique. Interestingly too, when each of us decides to lose weight, we go about it in different ways. I exercise a lot and cut down on food a little. Kathy exercises a little and cuts down on food a lot. Different logic, different methods, but achieving the same result. Neither is right or wrong, just different. For we are all made differently. Variety is the spice of life! Takes some adjusting to at times though!

28 October 1999: The day of my last musing, 2 weeks ago, I was asked to donate blood at our local Blood Donors Clinic which Kathy used to run. That was good. But of course, donating thins the blood until all the 'goodies' are replaced, which Kathy tells me can take up to 6 weeks. I had a regular fast day yesterday. Normally fasting doesn't bother me too much, but yesterday I was unusually hungry, probably because I was writing on prayer and fasting! Today I set a record in my exercising – my slowest times ever! I know from past experience that things will improve as the blood builds up again. Should I fast, or should I let fasting go for a couple of weeks after I give blood? There

always seems to be a good reason for not doing it! I have given in lots of times! But in the end, the sacrifice of fasting and prayer is a matter of the will. We choose to do it to bless God, as a small token of what He has done for us. Must admit though, I really enjoyed a delicious stuffed potato this morning! Extra tasty!

28 October 1999: In 'Christian' personality tests, Kathy and I are opposites in just about everything - except giving! Nice to have something in common! Ever since I became a Christian 10 years ago, we have tithed. Starting out on the 'dole' after our bankruptcy, we have tithed during times of lower as well as higher income. We have been there and checked it all out! The Lord has blessed us tremendously over these past ten years, at times financially but always spiritually. We have been blessed to be able to give substantially as well as to tithe. The Lord has provided for all our needs, not without testing at times, mind you! But not everyone is going to be rich because they tithe. The ability to make money is a gift. But when we tithe, God does provide for our needs, although not necessarily all our wants. He is not a sugar daddy! Tithing is not about receiving blessings, but rather, is a real way of expressing our gratitude for what Jesus has done for us. For our true heart condition is nowhere better illustrated than in what we do with our money!

I have been through the battles of not liking the way my tithes were being spent too, but now know that is not my problem – it is between the church leaders and God. If the situation gets too bad, change churches. But we aren't to stop tithing – it is God's due!

25 November 1999: Kathy and I have just returned from a fortnight's holiday on the beautiful tropical island of Rarotonga, in the Cook Islands. Sunshine, snorkelling amongst the coral, tropical fruits and lots more! Superb! The Cook Islands are located in the South Pacific Ocean, stretching north from just above the Tropic of Capricorn towards the Equator. Christianity was brought to the Cooks during the 1830's by the London Missionary Society. The church, particularly the indigenous Cook Islands

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Christian Church, permeates the life and culture of the country. It may well be the most 'religious' Christian country in the world. Nobody locks their doors when they go out, yet their politicians are considered to be corrupt and there is an increasing alcohol and drug problem. The people are great, but things are far from perfect in this paradise. No, God has not yet finished with His creation mankind, for His perfect bride (the church) has not yet made herself ready for the return of the bridegroom (Jesus). We are not yet ready!

16 December 1999: For many years I have dreamed of being a comedian but have been too shy to give it a go. This year I have started sending joke emails to my friends - the prime reason for the establishment of the Internet! On Monday, I plucked up the courage to ask if I could do a comedy spot at our church's end of year leaders' celebration. I prepared well, but on the night they ran out of time and I missed out. Will get another chance though. Keeps me on tenterhooks for a bit longer! But I have made the decision to give it a go. I am happy about that. Just like writing this book - a step into the unknown.

5 January 2000: The clock has turned over without going back a hundred years and we are now in the 21st century. The actual new millennium is still really a year away. I guess you are like me - wondering what it holds. Well if it continues like New Year's day, I will be happy. After welcoming in the New Century with friends, having a late nap while Kathy went to work, I got my first phone call. About a difficult job vacancy in a Trust I am involved with. Could be an excellent solution to a long running problem. First the natural, then the spiritual. That evening, I got a call from a friend to whom I had given a copy to read, of the pages written so far. She rang to say how spiritually exciting and helpful they had been to her, and to be encouraged. Amazing what encouragement does, isn't it! Particularly when most of my friends delight in asking, "when are you going to get a real job?" But then I would have probably said the same to them in the past too! Déjà vu! A new century resolution - to be more encouraging

to others, as Beryl was to me! Can I keep it up for 100 years.....?

5 January 2000: Change affects us all. I particularly experienced this when the Lord encouraged me to seek more of Him than I was able to find in my evangelical church situation of the time. Change was the order of the day then. Leaving my old church family. (On good terms though) Change to a Pentecostal church. Change of pastor. Change of people. Change of form of praise and worship. Change of form of church government. Change of form of prayer. Change in form of teaching. Change in level of expectation of God's ability to change my life. Change in my life. (The hardest and longest one!) Change in Satan's attentions to me. Change in other people's perception of me. Change. Change. Sometimes, seemingly overwhelming change..... It really has taken me the best part of 5 years to fully adapt and I have always considered myself adaptable!

13 January 2000: Isn't it hard to get back into work after a holiday! New Zealand goes on holiday over the Christmas - New Year period. Distractions for me of books to read and cricket to watch! Cricket is my first love amongst many sports, although I was never particularly good at it. The Lord gave me a dream several years ago that my life would be like a long game of cricket, which sounded pretty good to me. As long as it wasn't that of a New Zealand cricketer that is, for we normally lose! However, for just about the first time in my life, this summer I would be happy to be like one of the "Black Caps"! For we did the impossible - beating the previously almost invincible West Indies in 7 straight games. The first time anyone (except them!) has ever done that! Amazing. The glorious uncertainty of cricket! And life too! But cricket takes a lot of time to play and therefore to watch also. In the middle of the games, the Lord (not the cricket I hope!) gave me the inspiration for some poetry and song, most of which are included. Getting back to work fulltime hasn't been easy but I am really more excited about what the Lord has in store for us in the 2000's than I am over a cricket series! Anyway, the Australians are coming over in another month

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and they will be a lot more difficult to beat! At least with God, we don't have to start a new game from scratch each day or week! So on with the work!

19 January 2000: Yesterday did not start well. It was one of those days when lots of little things went wrong. For instance I had to replace the battery in our ride on lawnmower. And we have a lot of lawn to mow. The battery wasn't put in properly so we had to get in the serviceman to fix it. However, half an hour later a major problem arose when our youngest son Cameron, got his foot caught in one of the blades and seriously cut. Kathy was at work too. He raced inside yelling for help with blood streaming from his foot. What should I do? Then I remembered. Our friends, Beryl and Roger had arrived three hours earlier from Napier, some 300+kms away, to stay with us for a few days. Beryl is an Emergency Department nurse! She had been on duty the night before but travelled up immediately after coming off duty rather than having a sleep first, Roger doing the driving of course. So we were able to wake her and she took over. Amazingly, four hours later Cameron was in Tauranga Hospital Theatre having his foot operated on, having first been stabilised at the hospital's Emergency Department. The staff were wonderful and the service great, from our much maligned health system. Kathy didn't have far to come to see him, as she was on duty in the Theatre!

Cameron was tremendous. You see what a person is really like when they are under pressure and I am very proud of my 13-year-old son. He was brave and so relieved that the accident hadn't happened to his mate Ben, who was with him at the time. Not a normal 13-year-olds' reactions I would have thought! All has ended well – no nerves or tendons were cut so he will make a 100% recovery. I am just grateful to the Lord (and Beryl!) that He arranged for her to come up to Tauranga before she had had a sleep. Even on our bad days he is looking out for us. The inspiration for the poem 'Seven Times Shed For Me' came last night – I guess I had blood on the mind! This morning, the idea for 'To Beard or Not to Beard', came as a result of thinking about the beard of Jesus being pulled out. So out

of the bad the good comes – well I hope you think they are good! I trust that Cameron too, will appreciate these poems one day, for they would not have been written had it not for his accident!

24 January 2000: A couple of weeks ago, our friends, Dave and Jeanette, told me that the holiday house they had recently bought at Bowentown, about 40km from where we live, is now available to stay in, for people seeking time out. Dave is a builder and Jeanette has an artistic, decorating bent, so they are making a great job of transforming a very rundown property into something that will be very comfortable when it is finished – in fact it is pretty comfortable now! So I am taking the opportunity to spend a few days here to get some uninterrupted writing time, which is not so easy at home. The setting is beautiful. I sit at my computer overlooking a peaceful harbour inlet, flax shimmering in the breeze, protecting a bright and cheery children's playground in the foreground. On the far side of the lagoon giant trees welcome green, gently rolling hills dotted with fine homes, backed by steeper, more mountainous country. Wish you were here too? It is work though!

The Lord has worked things out really well. Cameron, recently out of hospital and nursing his sore (fortunately not sawn off!) leg, was invited to stay with a friend nearby, so enabling me to come. I am excited too, because the Lord has been staring to reveal new things (new to me, that is) pertaining to the Tabernacle Church, and has promised to reveal a lot more. I am a strange person who reads little Christian literature, preferring instead to let the Lord speak to me Himself, directly through the Bible. Fortunately not many are like me, or there would be little potential readership for this book! So He has had to give me afresh, revelations he has likely given many others earlier! Thankyou Lord for being so patient with me! But last night, I was drawn to delve into a Christian history book that I have had sitting around, to acquire historical church information. Almost immediately I came cross an 1850 year old letter of real relevance to this work. Pure chance? All points to a special week to come in the Lord. And to clinch things, the 'tother fella' was active last night too, before my leaving to come, when Kathy and I had another of our rare disagreements!

27 January 2000: I got out of bed this morning feeling lacking in energy, not surprising on the fourth day of my fast. Will I go for a run, or will I give it a miss? I often have this battle, but as

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could be expected, it was worse than normal today. Still, I made the same decision as I normally do. Yes, I will give it a go! I walked down to the beach, looked up towards Pio (another Maori name) and thought, "This is the easiest way to go. I can see the end of the beach is not too far away." I ran, really slowly, to the

end of the beach. It was most beautiful there, so most uncharacteristically, I stopped before turning round and heading back. The poem 'On The Run' is the story of what happened next!

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Why 'Not Just Christotainment'?

Much of my business career has been spent in the Mail Order industry, selling garden and general products to our customers through Mail Order catalogues. What a real privilege it has been to be a small part of so many people's lives. Particularly so to the many thousands who ordered the free 'Walking With Jesus' Course that we promoted in more recent years. Yes, Mail Order does become a passion!

However, unlike general advertising, one of the basic principles of Mail Order is that you don't leave 'white space' in a catalogue. No one buys blank space! So my past habits are following me here. Can't bear to see space wasted! Has to be fun in life too! So will fill the blank spaces with some of my weird humour and thoughts. Hope you enjoy them. Quickly flick over the page if you don't!

Today's Newspaper Headlines!

- INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN WHEN BAKING BISCUITS – Writer must have had teenagers!
- SOMETHING WENT WRONG IN JET CRASH, EXPERTS SAY – All can be experts!
- DRUNKS GET NINE MONTHS IN VIOLIN CASE – A melodic hangover cure!
- TEACHER STRIKES IDLE KIDS – Wishful thinking but politically incorrect!
- MINERS REFUSE TO WORK AFTER DEATH – Surely God will have plenty for us to do!
- STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE – Through one of its has many branches!
- TYPHOON RIPS THROUGH CEMETARY; HUNDREDS DEAD – An act of God?
- TWO SISTERS REUNITED AFTER 18 YEARS IN CHECKOUT COUNTER – Became real close!
- ASTRONAUT TAKES BLAME FOR GAS IN SPACE – Repentance taken to the extreme!
- MAN STRUCK BY LIGHTENING FACES BATTERY CHARGE – One shock after another!
- WAR DIMS HOPE FOR PEACE – Diplomatically spoken from behind the lines!
- JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT – Guilty until proven innocent!
- PROSTITUTES APPEAL TO POPE – Actually had a successful outcome! He introduced them to Jesus!
- IF STRIKE ISN'T SETTLED QUICKLY, IT MAY LAST A WHILE – Like death without Jesus!
- PLANE TOO CLOSE TO GROUND, CRASH PROBE TOLD – Or 'Ground Rose To Meet Plane'!
- LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS CUT IN HALF – Knew we lived in a violent society but not that bad!
- COUPLE SLAIN; POLICE SUSPECT HOMICIDE – Elementary, my dear Watson.....
- KIDS MAKE NUTRICIOUS SNACKS – Haven't tried one yet.

SURELY, A GOOD MAN GOES TO HEAVEN?

I met a man, a very good man,
He looked after his family well.
And his son was his greatest fan,
He had no fear of going to hell.
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

He went to church at Christmas and Easter
And was most generous with donations,
While the pastors words could not be clearer
He'd sit there, in control of his emotions.
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

He was active in the community,
A man of standing - a Rotarian indeed.
Helping others at every opportunity,
The pillar of hope to those in need.
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

He had a dear friend, a Moslem brother,
Six times a day facing Mecca he'd pray.
To the God of Abraham, indeed no other,
Of course, he too had found another way.
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

Or the man in the jungle, he hadn't been taught,
He would never have heard of the Jesus word!
Living a good life, doing as he ought,
In no way could he be for the sword!
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

This Jesus man, he was a great guy,
The best role model of all to follow.
Crucified, now living up there in the sky,
But the only way – that rings too hollow.
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

The man I met, he suddenly died
His funeral was very well attended.
A pillar of the community the family cried,
Their grief so great, for a life sadly ended.
But surely, a good man goes to heaven?

He took the path to the heavenly gate,
Full of confidence, had nothing to fear,
More than willing to meet his fate,
His ears so eagerly waiting to hear.
For surely, a good man goes to heaven?

Jesus was waiting there; he's on the way in!
Then seeing God's face, hope turned to pain,
What if the requirement was forgiveness of sin?
And repentance the key that brings with it gain.
"But surely God, a good man goes to heaven!"

Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth and the life.
No-one comes to the Father except through me.*"
These words cut through his soul like a knife,
They gutted him, oh how wrong could he be.
"But, I thought a good man goes to heaven!"

"*I tell you the truth, I don't know you*", Jesus
replied,
The lake of burning sulphur now eternally his
fate.
Forever to burn, he cried, "To me the devil has
always lied,
Don't make my mistake – repent now before it's
too late!
For I've found out, a good man doesn't go to
heaven!"

I heard the man's screams - not so far away,
As Satan ever tortures him with his sword.
My sins to Jesus readily confessed that day,
"Thankyou my Jesus, please be my Lord."
Yes surely, a forgiven man goes to heaven!

Thanks to Julian Batchelor for the inspiration of his little
black book, "Why Good People Don't Go To Heaven".

David Tait: 30 December 1999 – 3 January 2000

TO BEARD OR NOT TO BEARD?

To beard or not to beard?
That's the hairy question.
For thirty years I've always feared
This subject - never to mention.

For you see my friend, I am not hirsute,
To grow me a beard, too great a pursuit.
Until the Christmas of ninety- nine, you know,
When I plucked up the courage to give it a go.

Why not, I said to myself, with great bravado,
Willing to be squelched - an over ripe tomato.
If I don't give it a try, I'll never know,
Whether or not my beard will grow.

What a terrible fate it would be for me,
To go to the grave, not knowing if thee,
Would grow to be little more than a fuzz,
Or rather, long and strong - what a buzz!

Give it a go David, yes, that's what I must do,
Too bad when people think I belong in a zoo.
I will break the mould, live a new life,
Then get in strife, for upsetting the wife!

Each day I look at the mirror, what do I see?
Are my hairs really growing, or is it just me?
Maybe I should count them, one, two, threeee...
One thousand, two hundred and nine – yipeeee!

Gently stroking my prickly stubble, do I detect a
problem?
For there's a bald spot here - smooth as a baby's
bottom!
Right in the middle of where my beard should
be!
O Lord, please help me, please give me the key!

The Lord said calmly from way up on high,
"No trouble David, to your stylist in the sky.
The designer beard I have in mind for you,
Is just the thing, will surely see you through."

"But Lord," I said, "you're up in heaven,
And I live down here - at number seven!
Your scissors would have be so very long,
I'm afraid, that little me, you might prong!"

There has to be a better way, was my thought,
In doom and gloom, I was now caught,
Until the Lord said, "An idea – for I know,
Shall we do it together? Let's give it a go."

Having no experience in beard styling matters,
My confidence level is quite clearly in tatters.
So I asked the Lord, "Please show me what to
do",
He said, "Don't worry son, my Spirit's with
you."

I said, "that's fine my Lord, but can he hold the
shaver?",
"No my son, but with his help, your hand will
not waver."
"I have believed you Lord for far more than
this," I said,
"It is written, you have numbered the hairs on
my head!"

I pick up my shaver, switch it on at the wall,
My bit's done. Holy Spirit, now it's your call.
My mind is so alert, my heart all a flutter,
Awaiting the advice, he's surely now to utter.

A tentative stroke here, a subtle stroke there,
Stroke here, stroke there, strokes everywhere!
Then it's all done - now what can I see,
Believe it or not – a designer goatee!

There must always be morals in a story so true,
As we gather life experience, on the way
through.

So growing a beard,
Is not to be feared,
But stopping the itch,
Now there's a hitch,
Reducing the grey?
No, give it away!
Appear intellectual?
Truly ineffectual!

So by all means,
Live your dreams,
It's better late
Than never mate!

For now I know fluff I can grow,
It ain't so weird to sport a beard!

SEVEN TIMES SHED FOR ME

- Matthew 27:46* *“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaacthani” He cried,
My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?
On the stroke of the ninth hour he died
Rejected, cruelly nailed to the God deserted tree.
My Jesus, shedding his blood for me.*
- Luke 22:42* *To Gethsemane he came, the holy one
Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me;
Yet not my will, but yours be done.
For I’ll ever be obedient, until you set me free.*
- Luke 22:44* *Being in anguish he prayed more earnestly,
His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.
The disciples exhausted, slept on peacefully.
Returning from his prayers, by Jesus they were found.
My Jesus, he shed his blood for me.*
- Luke 22:47* *While he was still speaking a crowd came up,
Included traitor Judas, with whom he did sup.
The chief priests, officers, soldiers and all,
They arrested him, for that was their call.*
- Matthew 26:67* *At the chief priests house they questioned him,
Spit in his face and struck him with their fists.
The cup of his blood now overflowing its rim,
Grieving eyes closing, seeing through mists.
My Jesus, again he shed his blood for me.*
- Matthew 27:11* *So Jesus, my Saviour, to Pilate was now taken,
His determination to do God’s will, never shaken.
“Are you the king of the Jews?” Pilate demanded,
27:11 “Yes it is as you say”. My Saviour then remanded.*
- Matthew 27:23* *“What crime has he committed?” The people, they were consulted.
27:22-3 “Crucify him! Crucify him!” The rabble cried out loud.
27:26 Then he released Barabbas to them, Pilate’s feelings most insulted,
27:26 While he had Jesus flogged, simply to please the crowd.
A third time, my Jesus shed his blood for me.*
- Isaiah 50:6* *Seven hundred years before that terrible day,
Through the prophet Isaiah my Jesus did say,
“I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting”,
To happen to Jesus, God’s son, was not befitting.*

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- Isaiah 50:6* *"I offered my back to those who beat me,
My cheeks to those who pulled out my beard."
With beard gone, Oh God, how could it be,
So intense the pain, more than he had feared.
Four times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.*
- Matthew 27:27* *Then the Governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium.
No peace for him there, no place to rest, was no sanatorium,
27:28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,
Preparing my Jesus to die, out on that awful limb.*
- Matthew 27:29* *They twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head,
27:29 They put a staff in his right hand, for truly he was the righteous king.
They used the staff to beat the thorns in deeper and deeper instead,
27:30 Struck him on the head again and again, making worse his suffering.
Five times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.*
- Psalm 22:15* *Under the weight of the cross, voice slurred,
"My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth",
Step by step weakening, as he headed south.*
- Psalm 22:16* *Hung on to the cross, "they pierced my hands and my feet."
Matthew 27:33-4 *At The Place of the Skull. There they offered Jesus wine to drink.
The time was coming near, with his Father again to meet.
His blood poured out, his body near death, it began to shrink.
Six times, my Jesus shed his blood for me.**
- Mark 15:33* *Darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour,
An 'awe-full', fearsome display of God's fury and power!
Mark 15:37 *With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last,
His worldly pain, now a thing of the past.**
- John 9:33* *The soldiers came to Jesus and found that he was already dead,
So now there was no need to break his legs.
A lunging spear into his side, spewing forth blood so red,
All poured out, right down to the dregs.
This final time, Jesus shed all his blood for me.*
- Yes, seven times my Jesus shed his blood for me,
Receiving from the Father, forgiveness of all my sin.
He came to earth; he died, forever to set me free,
He opened the heavenly gates, now to welcome me in.
All because, seven times, Jesus shed his blood for me.

My thanks to Dr Derek Prince for his insights
in discovering and teaching this truth.

David Tait: 20 January 2000

LIFE'S A LAWNMOWER, MATE!

Uptown, I heard a new saying - life's a lawnmower mate?
Like us, in a range of models, whose features we debate.

Mechanical and manual, rotary and reel,
Push types and ride-ons, all made of steel.

Being sold with a promise, yes, so sparkling and new,
But we know they mean work, before we're all through!

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

Like a new baby, right out of the box,
Full of promise, when kept off the rocks
Of trouble, that can soon blunt our blades,
Just as we look set, to mow many glades.

To mow through life, needs that something special,
If we are to succeed, to develop our full potential.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

Take my life's lawnmower for instance,
A racy model, but will it last the distance?
For the challenge of a newly grown field, I will always
look,
Something different, preferably new, but never by the
book.

Though sometimes to discover, I've bitten off more than I
can chew!

To learn the art of patience, to pace myself, that is what I
must do.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

My wife Kathy, is a model so different,
With a long stroke bore, reliable, diligent.
For she was born like her mother, a nurse she'd always be,
Until she revved her sweet engine, ending up marrying
me!

The years that followed, oft times were filled with pain,
Now she's finally fulfilled, having gone nursing again.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

Our eldest son Andrew was not a lawnmower fan,
Mowing lawns and gardening do not make the man!
So he revved up his mower for a journey over the sea,
To the land of Scotland, so his own man he could be.
Once settled, he was motivated to make a good living,
So tuning his motor, he went landscape gardening!

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

As the business built up, his lawnmower faster would run,
Until the day he realised, two mowers were better than
one.

So he found a gorgeous, sleek new model, Catriona by
name,

Another nurse, could be worse, their directions both the
same,

For their mutual desire is to start a new church,
To harvest people, not leave them in the lurch.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

To Brendan, our next, life's lawnmower's been less kind,
His teenage years a little temperamental, but never mind.
For a more honest and loyal model you would not find,
Always willing to help another mower, caught in a bind.

Now as he tunes his motor, pondering where to mow,
One day to find direction, then he'll know where to go.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate.

Our Nigel is a non mechanical type,
Gets on with life - ignores the hype!
He likes to tune his mower to sing,
For making music is his big thing.

Filling tanks with petrol, through university his way to
pay,

Nigel's found his Saviour, growing more like him every
day.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

Our youngest, Cameron, is a lawnmower freak,
Forever racing the ride-on, until last week,
When in one of life's many twists and turns,
The mower bit him, now a lesson he learns,
That life 'taint' straightforward, as it so often seems,
To an adventurous bloke, eagerly entering his teens!

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

Now you know our lawnmower family, no two models the
same,

With such a mix of makes and types, who would be so
game,

As to try to work in harmony, to always stay in tune?
About as likely as the cow, jumping over the moon!

But we are still a family, mowing our way through life,
Sometimes running sweetly, at other times with strife!

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

So how should we mow then, our life's uneven lawn,
To keep it manicured, ensuring blades aren't worn,
Maintaining our engine, so it will always go,
There's only one manual, as far as I do know,
It's called the Bible, sets out the rules,
Of living our lives, so we are not fools.

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

We don't always follow it - you can see from the above,
For our family's an ordinary one, not yet perfect in love.

Yet love is the key to God's maintenance plan,
To keep us going, this lawnmower called man.

Like any machine we falter, yes we weep and we spin,
But with Jesus our serviceman, we must finally win!

Oh yes, life's a lawnmower, mate!

David Tait 25 January 2000

THE SHEEP AND THE GOAT!

Before starting this story, I had better expand
On what I am doing here, in Bowentown land.

I came to write more of this book you see,
Without interruption, in peace and tranquillity.

My day started well, out of bed not too late,
In shorts and T-shirt, went down to the gate,
From there to go running, but what did I find,
Goodness gracious, my energy was left behind!

I plodded down the road at a snail's pace,
Praying I wouldn't meet a familiar face.
For vanity comes quickly, out there on the road,
Jogging an easy way, your friends so to goad.

There was a reason for my slowness you see,
For on the previous night, I had had no tea.
No meals indeed, on the day before that!
My body for me, would not go out to bat.

For I am fasting, seeking the Lord you know,
Praying for his inspiration to help me grow.
But in case you think I'm a super spiritual nut,
I'm also expecting now, a shrinking of the gut!

Next, sitting at my computer, uninspired,
Felt really down to it, suddenly so tired.
I was to write about 'The Sheep and the Goats' you
see,
Expecting God's revelation - that should have
inspired me!

I looked at the computer, viewed the writing on the
screen,
'The Blood and the Lamb', left from last night, it had
been.

Then the computer, it asked me to save,
The answer no, was the one I gave!

In no time at all, I realised my mistake,
No corrective action, could I now make!
Gone forever, fifteen hundred words,
A day's inspiration, lost to the birds.

I merely shrugged my shoulders, reacted very well,
Not like earlier days, when in anger I would dwell.
For the Lord had prompted me on the previous night
To print out a copy. Thanks to him, all would be
right.

But I'm afraid I was still most unenthusiastic,
More hours of typing, don't seem so fantastic!
For on my mind was 'Life's a Lawnmower Mate!'
So I sailed into it, all twelve verses did I create.

This philosophical piece took right through 'til lunch,
Not when fasting though, you're not allowed to
munch!

So I had a short walk, now taking time to ponder,
About my mistake, my sanity beginning to wonder.

A little happier now, for the poem was fun to write,
Too bad I have to work, so far on into the night.
I got down to it, typing my lost copy in,
Wasted hours really, but that was no sin.

The typing finished, took a wee drive,
To see the area, view how people thrive.
At 7pm I started again by gently rebooting the
computer,
But 'The Sheep and the Goats', it came not one word
nearer!

What would I do? Was my day to be a waste?
Because of one decision, that too made in haste.
But the Lord, he had another idea – you wait and see,
'The Sheep and the Goats', came flooding into me.

For hours I tapped furiously on the keys,
Fingers hard at work, like ten busy bees.
Five hours later, here it is - it's finished!
My earlier despondency, quickly vanished!

Now it all goes to show, I guess,
The Lord can get us out of a mess.
On those days when everything goes wrong,
We can rely in Jesus, if to him we belong.

David Tait: 26 January 2000

ON THE RUN

Running down the beach, exhausted I was feeling,
Reaching the end, before long I would be keeling.

So I stopped, taking some time to look around,
It was perfect, sea beaten rocks there did abound.

Stark cliffs, forcefully thrusting through the sand,
So powerful there, showing God's mighty hand.
But from wee crags, big trees were able to grow,
A loving God too, one who we can get to know.

I sat down on a rock to rest my weary legs,
The water is close by, my attention it begs.
As I watched the meandering of the sea
The Lord said, "It has a meaning for thee."

So I looked through the rocks at the lip of a wave,
Rolling gently towards me, as though through a cave.
"Was the tide going out or was it coming in?"
"It could it be the Spirit", I thought with a grin.

I watched the waves, resting on my perch of ease,
Flitting in, sliding out, look at us! they did tease.
"What is it Lord, you're trying to show me here?"
"Bide your time, my son, no need to shed a tear."

Patiently I waited as the waves lapped on the beach,
The Lord had a lesson, me he was trying to teach.
Yes, the tides coming in – no, maybe it's going out,
My decision making process, churned all about.

I can see it now, for the water's coming close,
An answer revealed, before I become morose!
"But what does it mean Lord, please reveal it to me,
This incoming tide, the meandering of your sea."

"Now I have your full attention, the time is here,
For in the right direction, you I will now steer.
The waves are those of My Spirit, my son,
With the tides of life, in and out, they do run."

Yes now I see, how the waves ebb and flow,
Like moves of the Spirit, they come and they go.
But the longer I sat, the more persistent they became,
Greatly increased in power, it was no longer a game.

The Lord said, "This is what happened, over the
times,
For My Spirit is always with Me, He perfectly
rhymes.
My Spirit's tide was out, for many hundreds of years,
But now is coming in, will put to rest, man's fears."

His Spirit's tide returned in a captivating flow,
First it would come in, then out it would go.
Sometimes in more, then sometimes less,
But always seeking, God's people to bless.

As I sat on my rock, His words became clearer,
Then a picture of my life, the waves ever nearer.
For I'd sat back and watched The Spirit, oh so long,
Did I need Him in my life, was it right, was it wrong?

Sitting there, the waves lapped playfully round my
feet,
Ever closer now, for The Spirit's coming, me to
greet,
Then suddenly my special, bigger wave came,
Engulfing me, so I would never be the same.

When it happened in my life, came as a great shock
To myself and others. Thought I would never unlock
My heart to the wonders of The Spirit you see,
No, there was no hope for a stalwart like me!

So onto the top of my rock, did I hop,
There was no way now, I could stop,
For the wonders of scripture, I was eagerly seeking to
behold,
Standing on the rock of Jesus, He would me, start to
mould.

Standing on the rock gave a new perspective,
For of new truths, I was ever more receptive.
As I looked down there, into the water,
Seeing the tide flow, allowing no quarter.

First there was the sand, a myriad of it you know,
Pushed about by the tide, not seeing where to go.
For there are many Christians just like that sand,
Drifting with the flow, not knowing how to stand.

In the water too, were many plants a bobbing,
So painful, one could almost hear them sobbing!
For they had grown initially, but their roots were
short,
Overcome by the troubles of life, their God they did
abort.

But the saddest of all to me, in the now seething
cauldron,
Were the dead leaves floating, no protection to call
on,
Even as I watched one, broken, smashed into a rock,
Yes a Christian, but the Spirit's power, he did mock.

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My heart lifted, looking at the rocks out there,
For them, the turmoil all around did not scare.
But as I looked closer, I could see rough edges worn
away,
For The Spirit was moulding them, they were there to
stay!

I realised then, the value of 'The Rock' in my life,
For he protects me, from the effects of the strife
That surrounds me. Christians, so hard to believe!
Refusing the mighty power of The Spirit to receive!

I jumped off my rock, now surrounded by water,
It's time to return home, for I must not loiter,
My lessons for the day so moving, never to be
spurned,
But more was to come, still more wisdom to be
learned.

By this time, my body would hardly canter,
Kept going only, by pretending joyful banter,
For I knew the end of the pain would be,
When I reached the base of that fallen tree.

I thought I had reached the limb of my choosing,
Only to find, it was now my mind I was loosing!
So I plodded on, until my tree was found,
My energy levels, now at zilch were around!

"Oh Lord, please help me up this path,
For I want to get home to a hot
bath. (Shower actually!)
I've not the energy to do this myself,
Please lend to me, a little of thyself."

"Reached the end of yourself, that's good to see,
For that is how I want you, permanently to be!"
Words spoken gently but with firmness by He,
"Yes Lord, I will try then, to give you all of me."

I walked up the path, past the Sewage Station,
It so reminded me so, of the state of the nation,
As I breathed in that foul, decaying smell,
God prompted me, "How many will rot in hell?"

A few drops of rain started to fall around,
Seen in the puddles but not on the ground,
But symbolic to me, His hand making me wet,
Today my own efforts did not raise a sweat.

"Drops of anointing," He let me know,
"And as your faith continues to grow,
The spots will increase, to a heavy stream,
That is, if what you say, is what you mean."

As I sit reviewing what is written,
My heart with wonder, it is smitten.
It is ironic, for when I woke up today,
No poem could I see, coming my way.

I know the Lord has called me to warn the lost,
To repent now before they are forever tossed
Into the pit of hell, from which there is no way out,
Many souls out there, don't know what it's all about.

Also to warn the church, before it is too late,
That many of you too, will meet the same fate,
If you don't teach Biblical Christianity,
Instead of a godly form of Humanity.

For the Lord is calling us to holiness today,
This is now his call, that we must obey,
To take part in his Tabernacle Church,
Or be left outside, forever in the lurch.

His call is yours, His call is mine,
No longer acceptable, no longer fine,
Another Laodicean Church, us to be,
Lukewarm, not red hot, in seeking Thee!

David Tait 27 January 2000

GOD IS GOOD!

My Dad was a highly successful man
A knight of the realm was he.
His hand would be raised, "Yes, I can"
While others preferred to flee.

Loved three short words, which got on my goat!
'God is good' he would always say.
For a job well done - even when sick on a boat!
These three little words came into play.

Most of his life was filled with success,
As Mayor of Napier the city grew strong.
Excelled in his dealings with the press,
'God is good', forever his theme song.

Now I found these words so very frustrating,
Why 'God is good'? - 'Twas Dad who was
reliable!

Like a scratched record, the words were grating,
For my heart, back then, was not set on the
Bible.

For I had seen my Dad succeed,
He worked hard, his job to fit,
A brain and work was all you need,
'God is good' - not a factor in it.

So I got stuck in, all work and toil,
Never looked up, ploughed the soil,
'God is good', was never right for me,
Success comes, growing your own tree!

But my little tree fell to the ground,
Not a very nice time to be around.
Dad's 'God is good', now struck a chord,
I ended up, giving my heart to the Lord.

So did a happy story end there?
Don't worry, it has only now just begun!
'God is good', as Dad did share,
But applying it, that would be the fun!

Accept it?
Not this bit!
All beliefs?
No reliefs!
God is good?
Things go wrong!
Not so strong!
Life snares!
Who cares!
God is good?
On the treadmill
Always uphill!
Never win,
Back to sin!
God is good!
So frustrating!
Ever waiting!
Does He hear?
Where's His ear?
God is Good!

What is going on? I cried,
Wouldn't care if I died!
For your words Dad, 'God is good',
In you, the test of time they stood!

For at a time near the end of his life,
Things went wrong, he got into strife.
Yet, 'God is good' stayed on his lip,
Why wasn't it in line with my trip?

My Dad he died, things hadn't come right,
But he didn't give in, to the end he did fight,
In 'God is good' he continued to trust,
From earth to earth, from dust to dust.

Yesterday, we took Mum to visit his grave,
Four years to the day since he died.
Simple words there, his memory they save,
But 'God is good' is what he cried.

Over this time I have now learned,
God's love is given it is not earned.
Dad's 'God is good', I too can trust,
As my life to Jesus, I give to adjust.

David Tait: 1 February 2000

MORE MUSINGS.....

28 March 2000: I am very sorry if I am boring you with running stories. But I find that the Lord relates His principles to my personal life experience, in order to teach me more about Him. For I do not think or communicate in the *thee's* and *thou's* of the King James English of the 1600's. In fact my computer spell checker rightly tells me that I have made a spelling mistake in using them here! Nor are my cultural experiences the same as those of biblical times, for I live in a different society, one that has hugely changed over the 6,000 years since the start of biblical history. While the principles of the Bible are the same yesterday, today and forever, the way we understand them is highly influenced by our culture and personal life experiences.

Yes, I am up at Bowentown again, away from the interruptions of telephones and people, trying to concentrate on my God and this writing. I have a morning run, or sometimes walk, as the effects of fasting cut in, then spend most of the rest of the day and evening at my computer. So I don't see it as unusual that the Lord should remind me of running related stories, as running forms quite a large portion of my life experience at the present time. Not that you would necessarily think so by looking at my gut! Still, it would be a lot worse otherwise! A bad combination of old age and love of food! I do exaggerate a bit! It's not really that bad! The body or the eating! Unreasonable really, how we are so critical of our body, in spite of everything it does for us. How ungrateful we are!

I am used to the Lord communicating with me where I am at, in terms that I can understand. For my God is not an old codger up there in the sky, out of touch with modern day reality, as kids think their parents are! No, my God understands me better than I understand myself and is fully capable of encouraging, teaching and rebuking me in ways that are of real relevance to my personal experience.

29 March 2000: When we take a new step in God, it is generally one of faith. We rely on God to come up with the goods, to see us through.

And he does! But the next time we go to do the same thing, we know how to do it! We don't need to rely on God so much this time! And surprise, surprise, we often fall on our face! The classic example to me, is new worship leaders in our church. Our church is really into worship, and following the leading of the Holy Spirit in it. It is recognised as being a challenging task, having a very public face if things go wrong! Almost invariably, the first time with a new worship leader results in great music, while the second time it is not so good. Over confidence in our own abilities and walking in our own strength may well only be in the subconscious, but they are still so often there.

So it has been for me, coming back to Bowentown this week. The first two days of five have been really tough. The first time I came here, fasting was relatively easy. My exercising gradually slowed down as a natural result of the fasting, but I had plenty of inspiration from the Lord. Sure, some things still were there to try and to test me, but overall it was a great week. I was looking forward to a repeat! How innocent or stupid I was! The first two days have been terrible! Fasting, unusually for me, has been a real challenge. When I look out the window from where I am sitting, I see a Takeaways shop! Now I can normally resist takeaways, but this shop has had so few customers, they surely cannot continue. The good Christian thing would be to go and support them by buying something, wouldn't it? Then the body! It just stopped straight away! Exhausted and tired all day, right from the start. Down to walking on day 3 instead of day 5. And the mind too! So little inspiration! You're useless David! God has deserted you! You are wasting your time writing this book! It's no good anyway! Go back to what you know and can do well.

So I was feeling very sorry for myself this morning as I ran, then walked, along the beach. It was a beautiful early morning, but I was bereft of both energy and inspiration. For the first time since coming here, no inspiration on the beach! Maybe I really am wasting my time. I came to a path leading back to the road. I hoped it was the

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right one but I wasn't sure. The way I was feeling, I didn't really care - just went up it anyway. The poem 'The Path', was the result. Inspiration has returned! And another inspiration when I got home too! 'Gruts'! Well, I think it's inspired, anyway!

Now, as I look back on the last two days from a more balanced viewpoint, I realise that there has indeed been some inspiration, even though Satan had done his best to convince me otherwise. My perspiration too, had resulted in the writing of more words yesterday than I had ever managed previously. Thankyou Lord. Sorry I doubted you.

30 March 2000: What a difference a day can make! From oppression to joy! From fasting with temptation to fasting for the Lord! From an exhausted body to just a tired one! From hard grind to inspiration! From duty to desire! For the Lord lifted my Spirit with the allegory, 'Up The Mountain.' When walking on in the Spirit, we gain a greater appreciation of the spiritual forces that surround us, of both evil and good, of depression and joy. But experiencing such roller coaster emotions and challenges is not the natural David! For before he found God, even until the time he came into the Spirit, he prided himself on his level 'logical *levelheadedness*'! (the first of many new words in 'Up the Mountain'. All are in *italics* for English Language gurus amongst us.) For I was a typical Kiwi male who wouldn't let emotions interfere with life!

The world of the Spirit changed all that. Learning the eternal truth that the hope of the salvation of Jesus is centred on the mind, faith in the Holy Spirit is seated in the emotions, (hence the ups and downs) while obedience to, and love of the Father, comes through the submission of our will. The Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles of our individual walk.

My first major experience of the emotional roller coaster ride of the Spirit came immediately after I took a big step of faith, one that was beyond my ability to cope with the consequences. I quickly discovered the joy of the anointing and the pain of spiritual oppression. I just did not have the maturity to cope, and went into a period of depression for several months. Until I woke up one day realising the cause of it all! Equilibrium was soon restored!

Now I have a benchmark by which to measure personal spiritual attacks. But the more I get into God, the more interest Satan takes in me! Maybe you too have had the same experience? I am just looking forward to the day when we can truly move from Pentecost into Tabernacles, attaining total victory over Satan and his oppressive powers.

This paragraph has been inserted a month later, upon the completion of the allegory. The Lord has developed both it and me, during this time. The story itself is a lot more extensive now than it was when I was first given the inspiration. For the past two weeks or so, while writing the bulk of the story, I have not been the easiest to live with, feeling 'down in the dumps' for no logical, natural reason. I apologise to Kathy here, for she has had to bear the brunt of my misery! She thought she was the cause of it at the time, but she wasn't! Spiritual oppression is real, particularly when we are pushing our spiritual boundaries. The oppression lifted off last night, on our 30th Wedding Anniversary! We trust the results are of value to you. Please remember though, that it is still only a story, not a theological treatise! This then, is the background to our fairy tale. All fairy tales are a little weird, aren't they? Their author's are too, so I believe!

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Religiously Held Viewpoints!

The long time church member was sorely distracted during worship as the new guitarist was wearing one red, and one blue, sock. Challenging him after the service about this serious insult to God, the music maker explained, "Yes I know the colours are different, but they're the same to me, because I go by thickness!" Obviously a teenager!

RUN, RUN AND WALK

MY REGULAR RUN

We live out in the country, on a busy highway leading into the City of Tauranga. Getting in and out of our driveway is a challenge with the high speed of traffic and restricted visibility. Undulating countryside surrounds us, the sort you drive through in a car with only the occasional noticeable affect on your car's performance. However, the perspective is quite different when you are running! The ups and downs quickly become hills and valleys. Now that I carry a bit more weight than I used to, I find the effects of gravity and ageing muscles mean that I am now less enthusiastic about the running up hills and more appreciative of the downhill sections! Yet I know, that if I want to run a good time, I need to push hard on the up hill sections, for that is where the most time is to be gained.

Lesson: *The Lord has shown me that this is much like life in Him. For when the difficulties of life come, those up hill sections, I can tend to cruise, so they go on for longer than is really necessary. But in order to run my best race, I need to run harder into God at these times. Conversely, when I get to the top of the hill where life is going well, I feel I can start to relax for the flat or downhill section ahead. Suddenly I find that the downhill has led me into another valley of difficulty from which I have to climb back out again. The moral for me? Relaxing in God only ends up making my race of life more difficult. Constantly keeping in tune with Him evens out the ups and downs, although not avoiding them completely. For successful hill climbing increases my strength and faith and makes future hills seem not so steep.*

When I leave my gate I run up quite a steep hill on the shoulder of the road, with cars and trucks whizzing by within a metre of me at 100kph. (60mph) This scares the occasional person who joins me for a run. But I think nothing of it as I have done it many times before, am watchful, and know that it is the only option I have if I want to run from our house. The draught of a big rig passing me will buffet me but I know from experience, that that is all it will do.

Lesson: *1. If I can have faith in the traffic staying in the right place on the road, I should be able to trust God in anything He asks me to do! For He is infinitely more trustworthy than traffic!*

2. The Lord has also shown me that faith or trust is proven and increased through experiencing the reality of it. To increase my faith then, it is necessary for me to take risks in God.

The route I take soon turns off the main road and winds through a good distance of backcountry roads. Traffic wise these are more pleasant to run on, although the ups are greater than the downs. Then I turn back on to the main highway and the traffic for the final 1.8km. I find myself picking up speed, as I know it is the final leg. For it is mostly flat or downhill, and to be strictly honest, there are many more people passing who can see how fast or slow I am running! Pride, I know!

Lesson: *The Lord has shown me that this run is how public ministry is to be. For it would be easy to get someone to drop me off at the beginning of the final, public stretch, and run home, looking impressive, at a fast clip. However when people eventually investigated, they would discover the deception and reject the superficiality. Rather, true ministry is to be built on the hard slog of miles of training and experience, of being tried and tested before entering the public arena.*

When I get home I am blessed to be able to relax in our spa pool. I often use this time to communicate with my God. Gives me a great excuse to stay in longer without feeling guilty! Don't have a spiritual application for that one yet!

ROUND THE BAYS

In Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, with a population of a million people, there is an annual 'fun run' called 'Round The Bays' in which around 70,000 people take part. A high percentage of the population, I am sure you will agree. The 10km course is magnificent, wending its way round some of the beautiful bays that sparkingly fringe Auckland's extensive harbour.

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The home of yaughting's Americas Cup too, if that means anything to you! It is just a great experience to be part of, but very difficult to explain, if you haven't done it. To be part of that huge, surging mass of happy people celebrating the joy of living in a beautiful city. What makes it so different to attending a football match, is that everyone is participating. Each runner, big or small, short or tall, is contributing to making the occasion a success. More easily if some training has been done first! For some have trouble making the finishing line and many more nurse sore bodies in the days afterwards!

The event has good memories for me, as Kathy and our older boys (we only have boys) and I ran in it several times while we were living in Auckland. My special memory is of the year when I was really fit, (a memory these days!), ran as fast as I could, ending up finishing 19th. I had no idea at the time, until receiving a certificate a couple of weeks later. The peak of my adult athletic career, in terms of results rather than effort! For the number 19 had always been special to me, since primary school days. I can still remember the quick-fire raffle at our school gala. The winning number was decided by the spin of a wheel. I watched this for a while and noticed that the wheel appeared to have a bias towards the number 19. So I bought the number 19 ticket a few times and was able to present mum and dad with 2 or 3 very cheap frozen chickens. A mercenary instinct developed by age 9! Hasn't worked so successfully all the time in later life though! So to finish 19th in Round The Bays was really quite special to me. Must go back and run it again one day – for memory's sake, not to emulate the placing!

Lessons: *1. That participation in God's race of life is the important thing. That my job now is to encourage others to participate and help those in the race to finish, as well as they able, rather than to try to win it for myself.*

2. Training is so important. Both for the best result and to enjoy the race! If I want to attain the best God has in life for me, I need to train in the Word and be willing to let Him adjust my life to make it more effective for Him. To become more like Him.

3. That the race of life is best run in the company of many Christians, to help, support

and encourage me. To correct me also, when I run off the path! Likewise, to help them too.

4. Conversely, while big events are great, they are not to be at the expense of my training. For I can only receive to the level that I have first prepared. Also, when taking big events, to emphasise and encourage people in this vital truth.

5. That luck and my own efforts, have nothing to do with my walk in God. For as I rest and trust in Him, He will use me in the purpose He has for me. How He uses me is up to Him alone.

THE MOUNT

Within Tauranga City we have a seaside resort, Mount Maunganui, best known as 'The Mount.' It got its name because of the volcanic cone dominating one end of the beach. There are two scenic walks you can enjoy, both of which take around an hour to complete. The major difference between them is the degree of energy usage required! Yes, you have guessed it! One walk meanders around the base while the other leads, by a fairly direct route, straight to the top.

Both walks (or you can run if you are feeling extra energetic) have much to commend them from a scenic as well as an exercise viewpoint. You can take a leisurely stroll around the base track, viewing at close hand the waves wreaking their vengeance upon the rocky outcrops that have so inconsiderately blocked their path. At the same time, watching wee boats fighting against the might of the rapidly flowing, anxious tide, wave upon wave queuing to get through the harbour entrance. Then see a majestic ocean going liner cruising effortlessly by.

Or you can slog your way up a steep barren track to the top of the mountain, to enjoy hard earned but magnificent, panoramic views of the aptly named Bay of Plenty.

I think you are likely to have gained the impression that I prefer the base walk! You would be correct! For I am a strange, illogical creature when it comes to walking up mountains! I enjoy running, don't even mind moderate hills, but generally fail to see the point of slaving my guts out climbing a mountain. To only have to, almost immediately it seems, reverse all the

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good work and effort by clambering back down again. I know that this is illogical but I feel I am allowed this one quirk to my nature! As my Kathy says, "It's quirks that make you interesting!"

So if we have visitors and Kathy manages to persuade them of the virtue of climbing up The Mount, rather than taking the much more pleasant walk around, I just have to grin and bear it and tag along! Mind you, it is likely that I will have already done my daily exercise programme, so I do have some excuse! The best idea though, if you visit Tauranga, is to do both walks, but preferably on different days. The majority of people seem to agree with me however, as 90% cruise round, compared to the energetic 10% who wend their weary way to the summit. One of the rare instances of the majority being right!

Lessons: God has shown me, that while my attitude in the natural towards climbing mountains is my own choice, in the spiritual I am 100% wrong! Oh dear! For his desire for me,

indeed for all His followers, is that we will desire to climb His Mountain, ascending up into His very presence. He is saddened that the majority of His people are content to take the easy option, to enjoy the foothill views, the immediate benefits of His grace. To make a little effort, for walking does indeed require effort, is still more desirable than being a couch potato however. But to praise, to worship from afar, then leaving the mountain to get back to the business of living life, rarely sparing a thought for the mountain or Him who inhabits it's peak, is so sad to God. But it is the way of choice for most people.

But the Lord's heart is really for those few who are prepared to make the effort to climb, to seek out His nature, to truly come to know Him as their friend. For the most magnificent view of the understanding of God's kingdom, is available to all those prepared to make the sacrifice of reaching out to Him. For that is the challenge the Lord has given me, and which I in turn pass on to you, Are we prepared to climb?

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Isn't Flying fun?

No, we're not nervous travellers but.....

- You thought flying was dangerous? No. It's the crashing that's dangerous.
- Even so, isn't it better to be down here wishing we were up there, rather than up there wishing we were down here? Of course, we can always walk!
- Have been told there are three simple rules for a smooth landing. Unfortunately no-one has yet bothered to inform pilots what they are!
- Told our pilot to learn from the mistakes of others. Because we wont live long enough if he makes them all himself!
- For good judgement only comes with experience. But unfortunately, experience is normally the result of learning from bad judgement!
- Told him to keep out of clouds too. For the famed 'silver lining' is most likely another plane flying in the opposite direction!
- You know the story about the turtle beating the hare. Well, in the race between a plane hurtling towards the ground at supersonic speed and the ground standing still, the ground wins every time!
- Rules for Pilots
 1. Keep the pointy end pointed forwards.
 2. The only time you have too much fuel is when you are on fire.
 3. Keep pointing up except when landing. It's hard to collide with the sky.
 4. Gravity is one of the few laws never subject to repeal.
 5. Always remember to keep your number of takeoffs and landings equal.
- The propeller in the front of a single engined plane is really a cooling fan. If it stops when airborne you can see the pilot start sweating.

THE PATH

I came to a path as I walked along the beach,
An insignificant path, with a lesson to teach.
For we need, from our mistakes to learn,
If the right way in life, we are to turn.

My walk had not been going too good,
Wanting to get back as soon as I could.
My mind wasn't working as well as it should.
"I am sure my path was near that log of wood!"

You know how it is, being engaged in wishful
thinking,
Believing you're afloat, when in reality, you're
sinking!
When you are fed up, having had enough,
The mind starts believing ridiculous stuff!

So it was, with this path today,
I was so keen to be on my way,
That I told myself it was the right one,
No doubt about it, 'twas good as done.

At first glance, it looked just like the right path,
If it wasn't, no worry, would surely be a laugh.
Surely doesn't matter whatever path I take,
My goal, in the end, I am bound to make!

The path looked easy, so happily, off I went,
Keen to get home, my energy almost spent.
I'm on the way, the pathway must be right,
How could I doubt it, for I've seen the light!

But as I walked, a niggle started to grow,
Is this truly, the way I really want to go?
The scenery's nice, the way appears easy,
But the rubbish there, that's a bit sleazy!

By now I knew the path was the wrong one,
But what the heck, I am having lots of fun,
Many new experiences to check out in life,
This small deviation won't get me in strife.

So I went on with a new spring in my stride
My pathway mistake, I knew I could hide.
For all paths end up at the same place,
I will surely get there, to see His face.

Then suddenly, I found my way blocked
By sewage ponds, what had I done?
The door to my progress, now firmly locked,
Where can I go, where can I run?

In desperation now, I looked all around,
There must be a way out of this mess I am in.
A faint track there, my eyes have found,
Is named 'Repentance', for forgiveness of sin.

This path appeared difficult at first glance,
Through bushes, and damp, long grass,
But it was the only way my life to enhance,
If in the end, my test I was to pass.

So I found my way back to the path of life,
Grateful that Jesus made a way through the
cross.

Having left the path where wrong was so rife,
In the sewage pond, He would no longer me toss.

He said, "My son, you made a mistake,
It wasn't really your heart to go that way.
But I came to forgive mistakes you make,
Take care now, not to deliberately stray."

David Tait 29 March 2000

‘GRUTS’

A man’s underwear is a most sensitive subject,
Not normally approached in a manner so direct!
But is a most important part of a man’s life you see,
A topic worth exploring, just between you and me.

For a mans ‘gruts’ have new psychological
implications,
Likely to be the cause of an outbreak of bad relations,
In an otherwise, very happy marriage you see,
As a man’s underwear, reflects his personality.

Now this hasn’t always been the case,
For in earlier days of the human race,
There was only one kind available to the Kiwi male,
White ‘Jockeys’ with ‘Y’ fronts, in which to set sail.

I readily admit now, to a phobia of my young life,
For their lack of support, would see me in strife.
To a grown man, a real problem they must have been,
To me as a growing lad, in my thinking, it did seem.

But the ‘Jockeys’ did have one advantage,
To Grandmothers, who never seemed to age,
The right size was all they ever needed to know,
When Christmas shopping, they decided to go!

Sad to say, this well depicted the age,
When conformity, was all the Kiwi rage,
Even though the nations ‘Jockeys’ you could not see,
You knew for sure, all men had a certain similarity!

‘Hanes’ came along with ‘Jockey’ to compete,
Their fit was much better, but far from replete,
And of course, they were still the standard white,
So no man, about his underpants, was able to skite.

But times did change, as they are wont to do,
No longer was fashion restricted to the shoe,
Coloured shirts then, made an appearance,
Providing us men, with a further dalliance.

But the fashion designers were still not content,
To their fertile brains, new perspective was lent,
Or maybe, they could remember their youth too,
A more comfortable alternative was now in view.

To us practical men, comfort is always the most
important.
So after decades of ‘Jockeys’, over which to rave and
rant,
Now had come a real choice for men to wear,
That they were coloured too, we did not care.

The designers now clapped their hands, in great glee,
For no longer were underpants, simply a commodity.
For now colour and style had been introduced,
To the range available, we were soon seduced.

Poor Grandma now, when she is wont to shop,
For birthday or Christmas presents, has to stop
Buying the old faithful underpants, ever so true,
For she doesn’t know now, which style suits you.

To grandsons this is a most desirable revolution,
As we had feared grannies presents with a passion.
Although we said thank you, and gave her a big kiss,
We are now so grateful, those old ‘Jockeys’ to miss!

Life has become more complicated for men to live,
Colour, style, different sizes, something has to give!
So now when it comes round to clothes shopping,
A man too, has to take his time, forever stopping!

But even more difficult than this, it would now seem,
Is the image we portray, enough to make one scream,
For to look right in the lockers of the gym,
They must portray the right image of him.

I have to admit to once being an underwear skinflint,
The cheapest pair would always do, whatever the tint.
Until I was given a more comfortable pair,
A little more expensive, but I no longer care!

Now I know that our God doesn’t mind the
underwear we wear,
Whether we call them ‘daks’ or ‘gruts’, He surely
doesn’t care,
For his eyes penetrate far more than skin deep,
So over our underpants, we are
not to lose sleep!

David Tait: 29 March 2000

DRIPS AND DROPS

Relaxing in the spa, after my workout,
Pondering awhile, what life is all about,
When a drip of rain, upon me, it did fall,
These musings to my mind, it did recall!
A drip of inspiration for me!

After a shower, I ran to my office downstairs,
Recording my thoughts – yes, somebody cares,
Then upstairs again, to help the wife,
Always good, to keep out of strife!
Going back down on my computer to type,
Now getting caught up with all the hype,
Punching out the words I have been given
Before I forget them - with joy I am driven.
And so this poem begins to flow,
Full of good cheer, with me aglow.
The keyboard is now being punched so fast,
Sweat on my forehead, it breaks out at last.
A drip of perspiration for me!

But as so often is the case,
When the words I do chase,
They decide to run away,
No longer know what to say.
Sitting staring at the screen,
With frustration I do scream!
A teardrop falls from my eye,
No one's here, on me to spy!
A drip of desperation for me!

“Do you want my help?” says a voice inside,
“Now I have your attention, you cannot hide!”
“Yes Holy Spirit, you sure have it indeed,
Need you – please bring me up to speed!”

“David, there's a difference between a drip and a
drop,
You need to learn it, if your education's not to
stop,
I'll show you some disciples, from the Bible my
son,
How they learned their lessons, a real good job
done!” ”
A drip of revelation for me!

“The Apostle John on the Island of Patmos,
Sat on a hard rock, there at a bit of a loss,
Cried out to me in frenetic frustration,
Gave him there, his greatest inspiration.
For a drop of ‘Revelation’ he was given.

The Apostle Paul on the other hand,
In dedication, he travelled the land,
Much perspiration was his thing,
Salvation messages he did bring,
To the peoples of the known world,
The banner of God indeed unfurled.
He was rewarded in a special way,
Allowed to visit heaven, just for a day.
For a drop of ‘Visitation’ he was given!”

Jesus himself is the ultimate example
Whose experience, all need to sample.
Set out in life to do his Father's word,
Doing all of it, that is, not just a third.
He came to earth, to give up his life,
Living for his Father, without a wife.
So many drops of blood he did perspire,
Fulfilling God's purpose, his only desire.

Finally to die on a godforsaken cross,
Separated from above, the ultimate loss.
After three days, in rising from the grave
With rejoicing, eternal life to us he gave.
Already three have seen glimpses of this
heavenly glory,
Followers of the cross, this has become our
eternal story.

For a drop of ‘Transfiguration’ they were given!

Mulling over what the Spirit has said,
Of the glory of Jesus, alive and dead.
Realising a drip I'd been, for far too long,
Ignoring his drops of blood, oh so strong.
No longer can deny what he's done for me,
In giving himself, there upon that tree.

Now the innumerable drips of tears, sweat and
rain, so often experienced in this land,
Can become drops of inspiration, revelation and
visitation, when placed in his hand.

David Tait: 20 April 2000

STILL MUSING!

15 May 2000: Throughout this book, there is an emphasis on the threefold nature of God. This chapter (Blood, Water and Fire) so far however, has considered but two elements, blood and water. While this hasn't concerned me unduly as I am not really 'religious' about 'threes', it has aroused my curiosity. Until today that is! I am at the start of another week away from home, seeking to concentrate on the Lord and writing. Thanks to my family for letting me go and to more friends, Noel and Rezea, who have let me use their holiday home. This is at Kinloch, on the shores of the beautiful Lake Taupo, right in the centre of New Zealand's North Island. It is autumn here. The trees are celebrating with a final fling of fanciful yellows, bronzes and reds before bedding down to hibernate over the winter ahead. The lake itself was formed by the largest recorded volcanic eruption in world history, amazingly recorded as far away as China, on the far side of the world to us. Fortunately it was well before human settlement of NZ. But I digress. Sorry.

When I arrived here, the Lord led me to read 1 John chapter 5. I have found that God's truth is revealed layer upon layer, in His timing. That's how we develop and grow over time. Fortunately, with the computer, it is very easy to add things! To add a third dimension to the chapter – Fire.

17 May 2000: Today is the third day, of my third week away. You will have gathered from musings about my March week away, that much of it was a particularly difficult time, both physically and spiritually. What a turnaround the last three days have been! Collectively, they have been the most exhilarating, long-term spiritual experience of my life. And each day has improved on the previous one. What will it be like by the end of the week? I can't wait to find out.

You will have gathered by now how I like to see the physical confirm the spiritual and vice versa. That has certainly happened with my running here. Yesterday's run was excellent for the second day of a fast, yet today's was even faster. I couldn't believe it! That has never happened before when I have been fasting. Have not suffered a single hunger pang or desire to eat either. A miracle in itself! I must admit to being a little apprehensive about coming away again after my previous experience, but this has shown me that persistence in the Lord pays dividends. Also the value of greater prayer cover. If this is what experiencing the presence of the Lord is all about, please give me more of it! Yet, I know I am only just touching the smallest part of what is available. The future is so exciting!

18 May 2000: Going to bed last night, most contented, after a day of experiencing a new level of the Lord, I dreamed, "Wonder if it is possible to run faster tomorrow." No! Today was miracle enough! Will be happy with that. This morning I set out on my run, feeling okay but seeming to be slower. Got to halfway and looked at my watch. To my surprise, I found I was well ahead of yesterday's time! A bit of effort on the way home to maintain the pace and today's run was even faster than yesterday's. An unbelievable effort! Unbelievable to me, anyway! Given my previous experience of fasting and running, this has to be a miracle. The three days times, for your interest, were 29:11, 28:30 and 28:03. What will happen tomorrow? If it is not raining, for I'm too wise or 'wimpish' to run in the rain in my old age, I will be more than happy if I can manage to run at all! I can normally only walk by then. But we will see. To add to this, one of the side effects from fasting, a bad taste in the mouth, is reducing each day. Normally I have to brush my teeth regularly, not to clean them, but to get rid of the taste. Not so often now, which is great too. On with Atonement and the Tabernacle church!

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Supermarket signs always say '9 Items or Less'. So changed my name to Les with a double ss.

THE VISION PUTTING FEET TO THE DREAM

A TESTIMONY

Today is the fifth and final day of my writing stint at our friends, Noel and Rezea's holiday home, here in the picturesque settlement of Kinloch, on the shores of Lake Taupo, the central heart of the North Island of New Zealand. Over this week I have had the deepest spiritual experiences, with accompanying natural confirmation, of my life so far. These have excited me! It is hard to get David excited, so I thought they might just be worth sharing with you.

IN THE NATURAL: First the natural, then the spiritual, as the Bible tells us in *1 Corinthians 15:46*. Natural confirmation is really important to me, to keep my feet on the ground, to avoid running amok in realms of spiritual fantasy. So firstly, the two natural experiences I have had since being here, before considering the spiritual application. I hope you will be able to understand the linkages.

1. Running: The first three mornings, (missing Monday, not having arrived until lunchtime) I went for my normal morning runs. Normally when I am fasting, my ability to run rapidly slows to a walk, within 3 days. This time however, I managed a run on Tuesday morning, in a very respectable time considering I was fasting, a time I was delighted with. Wednesday amazingly, saw over a half minute improvement and Thursday, miraculously in light of previous experience, was nearly a half minute faster again! This morning I have not run. Now some may well question my motivation! Was I afraid not to ruin a good story, to prove my god is not really exercise, or to finish writing earlier so that I could go get something to eat? My explanation, or justification, is that I have already had today's natural experience, lying in the comfort of my bed! Doesn't often happen that way, unfortunately! I did try a few paces though, just to see how I would go, and felt great! Would have been bound to be another record time! Dreams are free!

2. The Sprinkler: Before I came, Rezea told me that Noel had set up a sprinkler on a time switch, to automatically water some new grass seed he had planted to fill in bare patches on the lawn. This registered in the back of my mind upon seeing the sprinkler sitting on the lawn, but I thought nothing more of it. The first two nights here I slept really well. But both days I came to temporarily, hearing the sound of something like rain coming and going, beating on the house. As the weather was showery at the time I accepted this as rain, although the showers seemed very short and frequent. Yesterday morning however, I woke earlier than previously. Listening to the sound again, I realised it was too regular for rain - besides, there wasn't a cloud in the sky. Then I heard the click of a switch, and the sound stopped. The penny dropped in my empty brain cavity, creating a loud resonant echo that could not but fail to register in the small amount of grey matter that goes to make up my brain. Of course, it was the sprinkler! While I had known about it all the time, I hadn't linked the two. Before going on my run, I checked the ground around the sprinkler, just to make sure. The ground itself didn't look saturated, as the volcanic soil soaks up water like a sponge. But the leaves of the grass here were sprinkled with drops of moisture, while the remaining lawn was dry. My realisation was real! This morning I again woke early, and realised that Noel had set the timer to run for half an hour between 6 and 6:30am. It was most relaxing, listening to the rhythmic pounding of the water on the wall, knowing what it was all about.

IN THE SPIRITUAL: As I listened to the soothing sprinkler sound while comfortably snuggling under the covers, I realised there was a correlation between these natural events and my spiritual experience, both this week and over the longer term. Maybe my experiences and dreams are not fantasy after all! You be the judge!

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1. This Week in Kinloch: During the first three days in particular, I found a growing closeness to the Lord, not experienced before. It is hard to explain, but on Wednesday I felt as if my feet were 6 inches (15cm) off the ground! Now I know that heaven is a lot further up than that! So there must be far greater experiences to come, as I learn to trust and obey the Lord more. But it was a wonderful start. For together, we had made an initial breakthrough, to release my feet from their natural gravitational attachment to the ground. It was the spiritual fulfilment of the miraculous running I have been able to do.

Yesterday was a harder day, 13 long hours in front of the computer after my run, broken only by the soothing, relaxing, early evening swim in one of the natural hot spring pools Taupo is famous for. To help ease the pain in my back and contemplate the day. For you see, like the sprinkler, I had come into this week knowing the vision the Lord had given me, but not yet understanding the nuts and bolts that would link it together, would bring it to reality. I have known that the answers would be found in the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles itself, but I have had to patiently wait, well patiently most of the time, until the Lord was ready to reveal them to me. Yesterday, a harder day than the previous three, he started to do so. He had me delve into the Day of Atonement, and one

by one His end time Tabernacle church truths started to be revealed. Not that I have any exclusive patent on them, as He is revealing these truths in many different ways, to those who have a genuine heart towards Him, all round the world. These are truths and a church movement that will arise from the bottom up, not from the top down. For it involves not only the receiving of the grace of salvation and tremendous spiritual gifts, but is a response and commitment from the depths of the individual believer to the heart cry of God, for submission to His will. Yes, we live in exciting times, now about to see the fulfilment of His Kingdom plan.

I have still much more to learn, and even more to apply, but knowing where I am heading is of great comfort and encouragement, much like knowing for certain, that it was the sprinkler I was listening to in bed this morning.

2. Putting Feet to the Dream: On 30 June 1999 we sold our garden product, mail order business, through God's arranging - but that's another story. I was obligated to assist the new owners for the next month, as part of the sale agreement. Was then looking forward to a time of catching up on other things until the Lord showed me specifically what he wanted me to do. The best way to explain what happened next is to include an email I sent to friends on 5th August 1999.

Dear Family and Friends

I am writing this because I am constantly being asked "what are you going to do?" and my normal answer of "wait to hear from the Lord on the golf course" does not gain overwhelming approval or acceptance! I can't understand why people are sceptical about me spending my time on the golf course! Probably feel sorry for the grass - too many shots, too many divots!

I therefore thought I had better fill you in on how the Lord has been "upsetting" my supposed retirement, which was meant to commence this week, when my daily commitment to Kaydees ceased. I had all these plans for catching up to date with everything I am behind with, then the Lord might show me what He wants me to do.

FRIDAY 23 JULY

I got an inkling that all may not go to my plan a couple of weeks ago, while I was still working at Kaydees. Then on the Friday night, I talked to my brother-in-law in Australia, who really pushed me to find out what I was going to do. Things started coming out of my mouth that I had only shared with Kathy previously, certainly not to a sceptical engineering professor!

I may well have spoken to you in general terms previously, that I have seen my future as being involved with the future, end time, tabernacle, or whatever you want to call it, church, specifically relating to the 2 H's, Holiness and Harvest. But Bob kept coming with more specific questions.

SATURDAY 24 JULY

We had a visiting speaker at our Men's Breakfast (Claude Warner) who talked about vision and putting it into practice etc., and the Lord got onto my case, clearly telling me that my job for Him now is "to build His end time church." Not really new or surprising to me in general (check that out with Kathy), but pretty clear and straight to the point, in words of one syllable, which I like and can understand.

SUNDAY 25 JULY

Claude Warner spoke at church and covered some areas of what is starting to happen in the church, that really related to what the Lord has shown me over the past few years. The Lord (or David!) started to fill out the job description given the previous day. The expanded version, which is still developing, currently stands at:

DAVID'S JOB FOR GOD "or" GOD'S JOB FOR DAVID

"To build God's end time unified Tabernacle church through,

1. Attaining holiness by submission to His will

2. Reaping His harvest."

Pretty short on detail and impossible to achieve - I know that! A madman's dream - I know that too! Am I a madman or is it of God? The choice is yours!!!

Before you make your decision (if you haven't already!) please humour me and read a little further.

My only defence is this. This is not new for me, although the emphasis is. Around 8 years ago the Lord gave me Revelation 12:11 on which to base my life's "ministry" (I don't like that word - has become religiousese - prefer work or job!) for Him, with particular emphasis on the 3rd part of the verse, "they loved not their lives so much as to shrink from death." Feast of Tabernacles ideas or Holy of Holies stuff in Moses Tabernacle, or full submission in a personal sense, or end time church in a corporate sense. This is covered on page 27 of the 3rd Walking With Jesus course booklet, although with an emphasis on the personal side of things. So what the Lord is saying now is not a bolt out of the blue, but the development of a theme over a number of years. This makes me feel more comfortable with the enormity or apparent impossibility of it from a worldly viewpoint. Also the story of Boaz, Naomi and Ruth, which follows, has been on my heart and mind for the past year or so without any real understanding of it's full implications, until now.

I must admit that over all this, I relate well to my favourite joke of my favourite comedian Stephen Wright (well worth getting his CD "I Have A Pony") which goes a bit like this - "Bought a packet of powdered water the other day and ever since have been wondering what to add to it!" An impossible vision and humanly impossible to put into practice! Except God can!

MONDAY 2 AUGUST

The following is self explanatory.

THE BOOK OF RUTH

Will stop there as we deal with this elsewhere. Sufficient to say that the book of Ruth is a picture of the end time church. An understanding of it was given to me that day.

The Lord was gracious in giving me the Sunday off, before the revelation on Ruth on the Monday. The rest of this book, 9_ months later, is still in the process of being written. These months of building up the book from basic foundations, as the Lord has requested me to do, have not been easy. Not unexpectedly I guess, I have encountered scepticism from some, and a general lack of encouragement from most. It is interesting though, that encouragement often comes from those you least expect to give it, while others from whom you expect support are the least encouraging. Financing the daily living expenses has only been possible through the support of my faithful wife Kathy, who has continued to develop her nursing career as a Theatre Nurse at Tauranga Hospital. More money in cutting people up than in writing about them!

Frustrating too, has been the knowledge that the heart of this message was always going to be found in the two final Tabernacle Feasts, yet I could not get to them. For the

Lord has had me build the house from the foundations up. Building the foundation of basic truth, to support the walls of development of the pattern of the church, before starting construction on the exciting roof of the fulfilment of God's plan for His people. We all prefer the exciting bits, don't we? But the Lord has shown, as every builder knows, that solid foundations and walls are necessary, to provide the stability to support the 'Roof of Truth.'

It was only yesterday, that the Lord started to reveal His plans to build the roof. In general design it is similar to what I had envisaged in my dreams, but the reality will be so much more magnificent than we can comprehend. I must admit to a relief now, in being able to express the vision the Lord gave me in more concrete terms. People will now be able to more realistically decide whether to accept or reject it, for the feet are now on the dream.

As with the sprinkler this morning, it is comforting to be able to start to understand

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the reality of the situation, rather than to remain unsure of what was making the sound on the wall. God does require us to wait, be patient, learn, even face what we perceive to be criticism and ridicule, to trust Him more and more, before revealing the next stage of His plan for us. It took me several days to work out about the sprinkler, even though I knew it was there and what it was to do. It should have been obvious right from the beginning, but it wasn't. Took time to work it out. His ways are wiser than our ways, often so wise that we cannot understand them! But we can trust him to come up with the goods, at the time of His choosing, for only He knows the timing of what is best for us.

LET'S NOT TAKE OURSELVES TOO SERIOUSLY! At times when God works through us, it's all too easy for our ego to take the credit instead of giving the honour to Him. We need to remind ourselves of our mere humanity. Some of my current and earlier 'God -given' roles have encompassed:

1. **The Chief User of Small Pieces of Soap** left unused in the soap dish of bath or shower when a new pack is prematurely opened! Such a waste. Obviously a God-given gift, because it happens so frequently. Invite me to stay if you want to see your small soaps used!
2. **The Pusher of Toothpaste to the Top of the Tube!** For efficiencies sake. God however did a miracle, creating plastic tubes, so making this 'gift' redundant!
3. **The Chief Toilet Roll 'Turn Around-er'!** Should the paper be pulled out from the top or the bottom of the roll? I knew the answer and was out to show the rest of the world! Fortunately God withdrew this calling from me, as there are more 'loos' in existence than I could ever hope to check out! Now I don't mind either way. Really, I don't! What a sign of great maturity in the Lord!

How often we 'Godify' our own human desires and prejudices? Very sure this is not the case for me in the Tabernacle church though. For my natural, human inclinations and upbringing have been inculcated in the belief that Salvation is 'it', all there is when it comes to Christianity. Those who preached about coming end times were only trying to scare people into believing! As with the toilet rolls, I have had to learn to eat 'humble pie' concerning the Tabernacle church. It has taken God a long time to convince me, but in the end, if we truly want to listen, His arguments are most persuasive. The Universe's most convincing debater!

A MIRACLE: After leaving Kinloch on Friday, I drove on down to Napier to visit my mother for the weekend. She hasn't been so well lately but is now a lot better. That was excellent. On the journey down, then for a couple of hours of my journey home to my see my family in Tauranga, there had been lots of time to contemplate, for my car radio had not been going recently. For various reasons, I hadn't yet had it fixed. So halfway home, feeling bored with my own company, I thought to myself, "I would really like to hear a radio programme, Sounds Historical, that Kathy and I often enjoy listening to when travelling home on a Sunday evening." Surprisingly, I heard a voice say back, "Pray for the radio to be fixed, then turn it on." "Don't be silly, Lord, the radio is broken!" But I was feeling really bored, still with a couple of hours yet to drive. Weighing up all the things that had happened during the week, this 'doubting Thomas' gave it a go, feeling more than a little foolish! Somehow seems different praying over machinery than people! After praying, I turned on the radio and to my great surprise, could pick up the station desired. As I drove further on, not only did the reception improve, which was logical, but so did the quality of sound, which wasn't. By the time I got home the radio was as good as it ever had been and I had thoroughly enjoyed the programme. Telling the family what had happened, our more mechanical son Cameron went out to the car to check it out. Came back inside saying,

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“Dad, you should pray more often!” He was right in more ways than one!

I was really delighted of course, to have been able to listen to the programme. “But maybe the radio had just fixed itself,” the sceptical side of my nature thought. So this morning, Monday, I went out to the car and tried the radio. You can guess what I found!

The radio had again stopped working! I am convinced. Thankyou Lord, for topping off an amazing week by giving me my heart’s desire. Miraculous running, now a mechanical miracle. Builders of faith, of trust in Him. Just at and for the times I needed and desired them. Need now to get off my backside and get the radio fixed permanently! For I need to do my bit too.

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Life’s Most Puzzling Questions

1. Why is the time of day when the traffic is slowest called the “rush hour”?
2. Why isn’t phonetic spelt the way it sounds?
3. Why are homes called apartments when they are all stuck together?
4. Why do we drive in parks and park in drives?
5. Why don’t sheep shrink in the rain?
6. If nothing sticks to teflon, how do they make it stick to the pan?
7. Why is it for each and every action, there is an equal and greater criticism?
8. If fire fighters fight fires and crime fighters fight crime, what do freedom fighters fight?
9. If a service station never closes, why do they still have locks on the door?
10. Do vegetarians eat animal biscuits?
11. How come an iron has a setting for “permanent press”?
12. If barbie (the doll of course) is so popular, why do you need to buy her friends?
13. What’s another word for “thesaurus”?
14. If you had everything in the world, where would you put it?
15. After they make styrofoam, what do they ship it in?
16. When you see a microwave, do you wave back?
17. Why is experience something you don’t get until just after you need it?
18. Why is the severity of an itch inversely proportional to your ability to reach it?
19. Why is change inevitable, except from vending machines?
20. Why do bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of cheques?

THE BREAKTHROUGH

A TESTIMONY

26 May 2000: Here I am back at Bowentown again, just a few days after returning from Kinloch. Naturally I am missing my family. Not sure whether they too are missing me, or haven't noticed that I'm not around! While out on a brisk paced, 40 minute run this morning, a feat I would formerly never have dreamed of being able to do when fasting, I realised that the past 10 days had seen a real breakthrough in my life. So I thought I would share a little of my life's story, in the hope that it may in some way, be of encouragement to you.

BEFORE THE LORD: Most fortunate to be brought up in a Christian home, I did the normal Christian things for the 1950's and 1960's including going to Sunday school, Bible class and Church. So I knew a reasonable amount about God, but without knowing God. To be honest, it all bored me.

Success was a part of my upbringing. My father was knighted for his services to the community and I too enjoyed a successful life, not without a lot of effort, mind you! I have been blessed with good all round natural talents, not super good in any area, but able to turn my hand to most things with a fair degree of success. The 'Best Allrounder' award at school confirmed this. A commerce degree at university was followed by marriage to Kathy, a family and a successful career. Firstly in big business, where I was appointed Marketing manager of one of New Zealand's largest insurance companies in my late 20's. Later, I bloomed in floriculture, before running my own Mail Order Company, mail order being my first business love.

Towards the end of 1987, just at the time of the worldwide sharemarket crash, I succeeded, so I thought, in pulling off the biggest business deal of my life. Bringing together the single largest mail order group in New Zealand. I was happy. I had made it! Unfortunately, along with many others, the business suffered from the ramifications of the 'crash of 87'. To summarise a long story, we lost our business. Eighteen

months later, after fighting a desperate but losing rearguard action, Kathy and I were declared bankrupt. David and success had parted ways.

Not unexpectedly, I was devastated. Finally, I had to give in. I am sure the Lord was smiling, thinking to himself as He looked down from heaven, "Got him at last!" For indeed I did relent, and gave my life to the Lord, while standing in the queue to register for the dole, the Unemployment Benefit, my aura of self-dependence shattered for good.

THE YEARS OF BLESSING: The first five years of my walk with the Lord were just like all the good testimonies we love to hear, but seem unable to experience for ourselves. God just did amazing things. He brought Kathy and I closer together, at the same time, turning around our family life. What a patient (most of the time) and faithful wife Kathy had been.

During this time I came into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Church turned from a bore and chore into a place of excitement and delight. I learned and experienced so much more of my Lord than I had ever imagined possible from my childhood associations. A few typical examples.

Firstly, upon our bankruptcy, the Lord incredibly arranged for us to come to Tauranga to grow flowers, all we could think of doing to start again. A friend rang up out of the blue, not knowing of our desire, and offered to lease us some land and the use of his equipment, to get started again. The business prospered.

Kathy too, managed to get a job at the Tauranga Hospital, at a time when additional nurses were just not being hired. After having been away from fulltime nursing for approaching 20 years too. A reward for her faithfulness as well as a most welcome boost to our income!

One day when reading my Bible, the Lord stopped me at Revelation 12:11, explaining what it meant and asking me to base a ministry for

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Him on that verse. The result was the 'Walking With Jesus' course. The Holy Spirit led me through it, step by step, for I have had no biblical training. Over 10,000 people have now participated in the course. A number have come to know the Lord while many more have found a deeper relationship with the Lord through it. Unbelievable really.

The Lord restored our garden mail order business, now called Kaydees Gardens, by providing finances to get underway again, when we had none. He also miraculously funded the 'Walking With Jesus' course, an expensive exercise when you consider that each 30 hour course consists of 3 booklets and 13 tapes.

Finally, 5_ years after our bankruptcy, having completed the writing of the course, I was led to run 3 public evangelism meetings, based on the 3 parts of the course at Greerton, a suburb of Tauranga. The nights were not nearly as well attended as I had hoped, particularly knowing how the Lord had blessed me so abundantly up until this time. However the presence of the Holy Spirit steadily built up over the first two nights and really broke out on the third. I had entered a new realm of experience beyond my understanding. The bubble burst!

FIVE YEARS IN THE FIRE: "Oh Lord, why did that bubble have to burst," I have cried out many times over the past 5 years. "To make your ways, my ways, my son" has been the essence of His reply. "Surely it doesn't take this long, Lord. Am I that slow a learner?" He just smiles gently and turns up the heat. For, like most of us, I am slow in letting go of my own life and desires, in submitting myself to Him. A similar process to making good cheese or wine – it takes time!

After the incredible 'high' of the visitation of the Holy Spirit, I immediately fell into a state of depression. This is not natural for an even natured, emotionally controlled, New Zealand male. Looking back now I would have handled things differently, not allowing certain events to knock me as they did. But hindsight is a great thing of which foresight is not a part! While I was generally able to hide it to others, my family understood that not all was well.

The one event of the time I remember with particular sadness, was our 25th Wedding Anniversary, just a few days after the Greerton meetings. Having had my marriage restored over the previous few years, I was really looking forward to celebrating this significant milestone in our life, together with Kathy. It is just about impossible to describe how I felt. How the depression I had fallen into made that time seem like an oppressive wake, rather than one of joy and celebration. I felt sorry for myself primarily, for depression is centred on self. But for Kathy too. Frustratingly, I just couldn't do anything about it. It is a strange feeling when actions and reactions seemingly separate themselves from your true desires. We made up for it on our 26th though!

Several months of this sad state predominated, until one day I woke up thinking, "This is ridiculous!" The oppression immediately lifted off me. The Lord encouraged me too, with the promise of a radio programme. And confirmed this to me through a speaker at a meeting I attended a few days later. Speaking on 'my verse', Revelation 12:11, he included in his word, experiences of a series of radio programmes he had done. It was as if there was no one else in the room - that he was talking just to me. Confirmation that the Lord hadn't deserted me, that he was still on my case. Interestingly, these programmes have not yet come about, but they will one day, for both in my experience and in the Word, the Lord fulfils all His promises. In His timing though, not mine.

The road since then has been a long one, with plenty of ups and downs to test the stamina and will to persevere. My 'David-confidence' has been dealt, what I would desire to be, a fatal blow, but it doesn't die easily, keeping on rearing its ugly head, usually at unexpected times. Gradually however, I can perceive and others kindly comment, that Jesus is gradually building his principles into me. Not that I am to become a clone of Him, for that is impossible. My beard isn't strong enough anyway! Rather, He is developing my personality, my uniqueness in Him, but with more and more of His will being expressed, rather than my own.

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Those uncomfortable, torrid fires of testing and purification have been burning away merrily in my life, and when I remove my fireproof overalls, they seem to be having some effect. I now realise that this is an ongoing process, designed to continue until perfection is attained, a state which no one except Jesus has yet achieved. However the intensity does seem to diminish as we let him take greater control of our life. I'm hoping so anyway!

Twelve months ago now, the Lord brought along a buyer for our business. It was amazing how it all worked out, right down to the detail of the name Kaydees. Instead of **Kathy** and **David** being 'Kaydees', it is now **Karen** and **Dennis**.

Just prior to finishing in the business, the Lord clearly told me that he wanted me to devote my energies towards "building His end-time Tabernacle church." Now, that is an impossible task in the natural. At times since then, it has seemed so in the spiritual too! However I know His hand is in it, for on the first working day after finishing with the business, He gave me an interpretation of the book of Ruth, a picture of the end time church. Too well timed to be merely a coincidence! During the past 10 months, the Lord has had me write this book. It hasn't been easy, writing being a new experience for me. I have known where I am heading, but it is not until now that I have started to get there. Perseverance has certainly been the order of the day. Great fun this fire and testing!

BREAKTHROUGH! RESTORATION: The past 10 days has just been an amazing time in my life. A time of breakthrough! Gone are the negative thoughts, the burdens of the past 5 years. Let's be real. It is not a pleasant process. A time to be endured, with lessons to be applied, but hardly a time of great joy.

Now I am able to 'put feet to the dream.' The Lord is fleshing out some of the specific characteristics of His Tabernacle church. No longer is it an 'airy fairy' dream, somewhat lacking in substance. I have always known that the answers are to be found in the Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles. But rather than going straight there, the Lord has had me build the house of His truth from foundational

principles, before building walls of understanding, now reaching the exciting roof of truth.

During these 10 days I have had times of coming closer to Him than I have ever known before. Including one day when my feet felt they were 6 inches (15cm) off the ground! Other days too, of hard but rewarding graft. Heaven is still far away, but the natural gravitational pull has been broken. A promise of things to come.

In the natural, fasting too has become a pleasure. I never, ever thought I would say that! No hunger, no desire to eat, just a desire to communicate with the Lord. My running, which I see as a reflection of my spiritual state, has quite unnaturally, been getting better during my fast. Previously it had always slowed down. Really amazing!

Today too, the Lord has been giving me a vision beyond the book, something that has been distinctly lacking until now. This one book, as it is written, is also to be split into several smaller versions, each emphasising an aspect of the whole.

More back to the old David of years ago, but this time more in tune with God's will, rather than his own. I know I have to be careful to stay in His will, for the old nature would relish the opportunity to reassert itself. But by the grace of God, reinforced by the practical oversight of others, I will fulfil His will for my life.

AN AFTERTHOUGHT: As I neared the end of this testimony I realised that the three-part split could roughly be classified as follows.

THE YEARS OF BLESSING

Passover/Pentecost

Childhood

FIVE YEARS IN THE FIRE

Pentecost/Day of Atonement

Teenager

BREAKTHROUGH

A Taste of Tabernacles

Adulthood

We are spoon-fed as children, go through the turmoil of finding ourselves during our teenage years, in the expectation of becoming a mature, well-adjusted adult. Maybe, just maybe, I am starting to grow up! But after all, I am only 10_ years old in God!

ADAPT OR DIE

THE STORE

Across the road from where I am sitting, merrily typing away on my computer, is a small blue store, its doors finally, firmly shut. A small New Zealand seaside dairy and takeaway bar, typical of many similar stores found throughout the world. Someone's hope, someone's dream, lost to the harsh reality of a changing world.

I have had a special relationship, from afar, with this local store, for the last time I sat at this table my eyes were frequently drawn in its direction. Even then, it was obvious that all was not well. For you could count the day's customers on your fingers and toes. To add to the shopkeeper's woes, most customers would leave carrying just a newspaper or ice cream, not exactly high value or high profit items. My attention was drawn to the little blue store because of the magic message of 'food' it radiated, at a time when I was having a struggle fasting. "It would be good to support them for they aren't doing well," a voice would try to tempt me. "The good Christian thing to do," it argued silkily and convincingly, although totally incorrectly! A temptation resisted with difficulty! But, as a businessman, I could see that the writing was on the blue wall, and that sadly, the closure of the local store, just a matter of time.

For the people of the area were not prepared to support the venture with their wallets. They thought of it as a great community asset, but their spending power went elsewhere. To bigger, brighter shops with more selection and cheaper prices, the larger 'superette' 2 kilometres down the road, or the ritzy supermarket in the centre of town.

Now that the blue store is closed for good, it will be missed on a cold winter's morning, when the locals run out of bread or margarine to make their sandwiches. An expensive bought lunch will be necessary that day. But at other times, having purchased all their requirements from the supermarket in town, nary a thought will be spared for the passing away of the little blue store. 'R.I.P.' Life has passed you by.

THE CHURCH

Now this store could just have easily been a church, a small one in the country or another in town, a church whose time had passed it by. Certainly it will be missed for local weddings and funerals, but hardly at all on a Sunday, when the boat, football or simply the tele, vie for the family's attention. "Quite good really that the church has closed, for now we don't need to feel guilty about missing the service as we drive past on our way to the beach", the locals think smugly. "The few religious fanatics in the neighbourhood will of course make the trip into town, but that is not for us. Was dull and boring anyway, so we are better off without it really. Must admit though, they used to put on a pretty good feed occasionally." And so life goes on, now without God, without an eternal hope.

As I ran along the beach this morning I asked God for the answer to this phenomenon, and was surprised by the answer I received.

THE OBVIOUS ANSWER

The 'modern spiritual' answer is to gather the people into bigger churches where resources and personnel are available to run more professional and exciting programmes. People, being far more mobile now, are prepared to travel to the large 'supermarket church', where all their needs are met under the one roof. The one stop, religious shop! To compete with the TV and other entertainment, we need to offer the spectacular. And attract people by running secular activities too. Then trust the Lord that they will come along and praise Him on Sunday. Let's run professional counselling services also, applying the latest psychological advances to solve our adherent's problems. For ours is a church that is going places, one in tune with this modern day and age!

GOD'S ANSWER (Factual but not Literal)

"The answer, my friend, is not in the way the product is displayed or marketed, but in the

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product itself. For the shop of my church has not taken notice of my perfect direct marketing system, a system based on product quality, one in which customer satisfaction is guaranteed to provide numerous referrals.

Did you know some of my shops are selling product 100 years past its use by date? And they are surprised when people say they aren't interested in it! They ignore the fact that my latest model, being based on the wisdom of thousands of years of tried and proven design, is far more advanced than any competitive product available today. The trouble I have always found, is in training my demonstrators and long term loyal users, to utilise the myriad of new product features now available. Surprisingly, it is just so much easier to train new users, for they have no preconceived ideas or limitations, arising from over familiarity with my 10 to 100 year old models. For the application of my vast technological resources results in a constant updating of the product, necessitating regular upgrades and training to keep pace with product developments. I get so saddened by people who bought my latest technology, even 5 years ago, and now refuse to update it, thinking it impossible that further product enhancements could be made.

The thing is, my son, I don't believe in planned obsolescence when building my product. A model built 100 years ago will still work well today, even though the specifications are now dated. The same principles apply in its basic construction, but the delivery system has been dramatically enhanced. For I am using my Spirit far more extensively in the production process now than I did in earlier times. He is constantly adding new dimensions of life and vitality to the product, features of special relevance to this day and age.

I am seeking operators too, prepared to learn the intricacies of the product so thoroughly, that its operation becomes an automatic part of their lives. Ones prepared to devote themselves 100%, to understanding and living by the product's performance. These people don't need a large shop, or fancy marketing strategies, to sell my product. For others can see reflected in them, its living value. Yes, the smallest shop can still thrive, even in today's conditions, by offering my latest model to its customers. Not forgetting too, to regularly lubricate it with my special formula, patented oil, 'Jesus Love'.

Unfortunately too, my son, there are others who have forgotten about the product itself, in their desire to push the host of what they perceive as being easily saleable, exciting accessories. Unfortunately they have ignored the simple fact that for accessories to work, they must be attached to the product itself! This often gets overlooked, particularly in the supermarket situation, where the deli, bakery and other add-ons contribute more to the profits of the store, than the sale of the staple grocery product itself.

Even worse though, my son, are those stores specialising in cheap imitations of my product. For they attempt to pass off inferior, low maintenance, short life products as the real thing. And sadly, they fool many, putting potential customers off my offerings for a very long time, sometimes for good. This is such a pity, as these people are ready participators in the spiritual product market. I urge you to expose all these impostors as quickly as possible.

So, my son, stick with my proven sales methods. Promote product quality, be a living example of your product's benefits. Sales will go through the roof as people flock in, keen to participate, as you become a living testimony of my product. Never forget, my son, my direct marketing strategy relies upon your witness for its success."

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Our Driving Force: The one thing that all human beings, regardless of race, sex, religion or wealth have in common. We all believe that we are better than average drivers!

MUSING ONCE AGAIN

7 June 2000: Back at Bowentown again, looking forward to a time of celebration, checking out the culmination of God's redemption plan, as prophesied in the glorious Feast of Tabernacles. It is now early winter in New Zealand, but unseasonably pleasant and warm for this time of year. So much so, that I spent time sitting out on the back doorstep of the house, reading about Tabernacles while enjoying the sunshine. In fact it got so warm that I came inside to cool down. At the conclusion of my reading I thought to take a walk along the beach, there to gather my thoughts and hopefully obtain some inspiration before starting to write, as has frequently happened in the past.

As I walked out the gate I noticed a big bank of black clouds sitting over the hills on the horizon. Shall I go or shall I stay? Being a compulsive risk taker, I went! Walking along the beach, I could see the clouds getting closer, but as it was still very pleasant, I went on further. When nearly at the end of the beach, I felt a few drops of rain gently alight upon my head. Time to turn towards home! Straight up over the beach and onto the road seemed to be the quickest way. As I hit the road the frequency and size of the drops started to increase. My walk turned into a jog,

then a run. Fortunately I made it home before getting too wet, as I hadn't brought a full change of clothes with me for this short stay.

The rain is now coming down, sometimes heavy, sometimes light. Had I returned a few minutes later, I would have been soaked through.

The Lord is showing me that this is a natural picture for the church, of times ahead in the spiritual. As a church we are basking in the sunshine of complacency, convinced that the promised combined intensity of the end time rains of the Spirit are still some way off. We are not personally prepared as individuals, or as a Church, to cope with the promised final harvest of the Feast of Tabernacles. As I write the rain is getting heavier. We need to prepare ourselves now or else we may well miss out on the best that God has for us in the exciting spiritual times ahead!

Amazingly, the rain has suddenly stopped. The spiritual rain will only be for a limited period. Expecting the sun to appear again through the clouds at any moment. Are we prepared?

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Definitions For Real

- GRAVITY: A law, not just a good idea.
- GROSS IGNORANCE: 144 times worse than normal ignorance.
- CLOCK: A small mechanical device to wake up people without children.
- KARAOKE: A Japanese word meaning 'tone deaf'.
- OPERA: Where a man gets stabbed in the back, yet can still sing about it.
- RACIAL PREJUDICE: A pigment of the imagination.
- NORMAL: Merely a setting on a washing machine.
- HEALTH: The slowest possible rate of dying.
- POVERTY: Having too much month left at the end of the money.
- BOY: A noise with dirt on it.
- SLEEP: That fleeting moment just before the alarm goes off.
- CYNIC: Someone who smells the flowers and looks for the casket.
- SKIER: Someone who pays an arm and a leg to break them.
- WITLAG: The delay between the telling of and getting the laugh from a joke.

IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

2 August 2000: There is a well-known saying 'that a week is a long time in politics', but so also is a month in life! Well, certainly in our lives this month!

From the promise of the past year, seeing, as I thought, both God's continuing provision and direction, has come the harsh reality of today. While the direction is surely the same, or I wouldn't be sitting at the computer writing this, our provision has changed dramatically. For the fire of testing has seared the wallet, and in a big way! Two weeks ago we had to place our property company into Voluntary Liquidation, finally ensnared by a spiral of increasing costs and interest rates, accompanied by an unequal and opposite decrease in housing values. This was sadly compounded a few days later, completely independently, by the mail order Company we sold a year ago, going into liquidation as well. Our hopes, expectations and pride - dashed. A real temptation to go back and rewrite the diary of 'David's Musings', but that is not to be!

On the property side, I have let down the bank that supported us a second time, having had also lost money through our previous bankruptcy. Other creditors too, most of whom had supported us through earlier funding difficulties in the project, are let down as well. My hopes of a sound financial basis for our family and ministry foundering upon shattered foundations, foundations built on sand. On the mail order side too, we have lost both money now along with future income. Sadder however, unless the company can be sold as a going concern within the next week, is that the staff, most of whom had previously worked for us, will be out of jobs, in a difficult local job market. Suppliers too, many personal friends, will miss out, both on monies owed and potential future business.

What an unexpected mess! Absolutely devastating in the natural! Why me, Lord? How can I be such a failure Lord? I have tried so hard

to be faithful to you, Lord! Surely I am useless to you now! Why do I have to go round the mountain again Lord? "So I can have all of you," says the Lord to me, right at this moment. "I have protected you. I am protecting you. I will protect you from the wrath of the world," says the Lord, "if you continue to walk in my paths and to do my will. For my desires for you are for good and not for evil. Walk with me, my son, and we will do amazing things together for the extension of my kingdom upon the earth. Rest in me, my son, and I will give you my peace." Thankyou Lord!

For I know, and have experienced, His peace already. You see, the title for this musing was written before receiving this comforting word. The Sunday before last, one of the ladies in our church gave me a picture of my being in the still, calm eye of the storm that raged about me. As she told me, I immediately understood what the Lord was saying through her. Indeed that is what I have been experiencing throughout this whole tragedy. For Kathy has been tremendous, even though this also affects her. Somehow too, I have also been protected from the wrath of my creditors. Sure, I still feel dejected and exhausted at times. Not having had too much sleep in the past week, it is difficult to motivate myself to exercise. These are natural human reactions to excessive stress. But not nearly as bad as I would have expected, from previous experience.

It is no cakewalk, but I do have the support of my God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to see me through. There is just no comparison with last time. The two situations could be considered to be a painful but faith building experiment, experienced both with and without, God at my side. Believe me, there is only one way to go! Yes Lord, I will follow you through thick and thin, through good times and bad, for you are my Saviour, comforter, friend and Lord. You are my reason for living. All praise, honour and glory to you, my Lord. Even when my natural self doesn't feel like it!

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

By the time a man is old enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere!

YOU'RE STILL THERE

There are times in life, when all seems lost,
A cork in stormy seas, I'm being tossed,
Battered about from head to toe,
Don't know how or where to go.
Hurting in every sinew!
Impossible to continue!
Head does burn!
Nowhere to turn?
Run away?
Hey! Hey!
Stop!
Drop!

But surely, you're still there!

Now really, life is unkind,
No, it's not just in the mind.
What have I done, this fate to deserve?
For it's you I've tried, always to serve.
It's not on, Lord, such a fate to befall,
I've done my best, have given my all!

But surely, you're still there!

My thoughts, they just churn away,
Never in one place, will they stay,
Drift in here, shoot out where?
Yes! No! - Lord - it's not fair!

But surely, you're still there!

My mind's in turmoil,
My body in recoil.

But you're still there.

How useless!
All the stress!
Such a mess!
Can't you guess?

But you're still there!

Are you really still there Lord?

You're still there!

But you seem so far away right now,
For I need you Lord, show me how
To get back in contact, to talk with you,
You've always been, so faithful and true.

Yes, you're still there!

"Be at peace David. Stop. Then you will hear,
Gentle words of comfort, to your inner ear.
For now that your life is all at sea,
It's time to come, on bended knee.
So when on me, you do totally rely,
Together, we can reach for the sky."

Lord, you're still there!

"I'm always here for you, my son,
Into my arms, you can surely run.
At times in life,
All get in strife.

But I have not been the cause of your pain,
Instead, using circumstances for our gain,
More about me to learn,
You to me, then to turn."

Yes Lord, you're still there!

Into the fiery furnace I am bound to go,
If the best of my Lord, I'm to get to know.
This is the precious price to be paid,
If more like Him, I wish to be made.

While hating this place, being no masochist,
Of my great need for it, I am a realist!

Yet even while suffering the searing, white heat
of the flame,
I will still stand strong in Him, calling upon His
precious name.

Yes, my Lord, you're still there!

David Tait: 3 August 2000

LIFE WITH THE WIFE

We met at a camp, some thirty-two years ago,
What life was to bring, little then did we know.
Yes, there was a spark, that brought us together,
A mutual attraction - more than just the weather!

Maybe more notice, of the weather should have been
taken,
For just a few days later, the City of Wellington was
shaken,
By the 'Wahine Storm', the like of which is so rarely
seen,
A hurricane! Prophetic of our marriage, could it have
been?

Still, two years later in the month of May,
Kathy and David married, on a cloudy day.
In Palmerston North Baptist, our vows were said,
The journey of marriage, lay tantalisingly ahead.

Two years on, after tripping right around the world,
Exploring our roots. In Britain, they were unfurled.
We came home, ready to start our family of four,
Two sons soon, followed later, by two sons more.

So twenty years of our marriage, it did pass,
Oh me, oh my, the time! How it does go fast!
Me, taking the male path of 'girls, gold and glory',
The wife 'at home with the kids', you know the story.

Turning my back on God, over this time,
The vibes between us, they ceased to rhyme.
Resulting in tears, flavouring the baking you see,
Kathy gently sobbing, while making muffins for me.

By now our business, we had lost,
In stormy seas, vigorously tossed,
But then, I did come to the Lord,
For Kathy, that did strike a chord.

To Tauranga City, here we came,
Life never again, to be the same.
The Lord developed new love in me,
For Him, my wife, and all the family.

Over the years since then, our relationship's
improved,
As the conflicts of the past, the Lord He has soothed.
Kathy graciously forgave me of my wrong,
On a new foot, life is now going along.

During the last ten years we have grown close
together,
Finding strength in each other, whatever the weather.
So now, as we jointly share, life's hopes and dream,
Our relationship's blossomed - you know what I
mean.

Not to say that we never, ever disagree!
That 'perfect' couple, I have yet to see!
But we are learning to respect each other's opinions,
So opening our marriage to exciting new dimensions.

Valuing our differences, to paint a finer picture,
Our thought processes, an interesting mixture,
For women think differently, as all men know,
Frustrating sometimes, but helps us to grow!

As we go through turbulent times once more,
My God - no, not again! I am losing the score!
But this time, with God and Kathy on my case,
I'm no longer alone, in running life's race.

'When the going gets tough, the tough get going',
We face things together, our love ever growing,
Amazing the miracle that God has done,
For we enter life's battles, victory won.

So, looking back on those first twenty years,
Could have avoided the flow of Kathy's tears.
If only then, I had been willing to talk with the wife,
Would have banished earlier, much strife in our life!

Now, as we cuddle together, under the covers at
night,
Here, 'in the best bed in the world', it is our delight,
To share together, all the adventures of the day,
And so our love blossoms - Lord, long may it stay.

Looking forward to the future, with excitement and
hope,
For the Lord's on our side, with problems we can
cope.
Our maturing love, gently tightens the bonds of unity,
In the service of Jesus, we're fulfilling our destiny.

David Tait: 7 August 2000

JONAH OR JOB?

When life's problems strike, isn't it just so very human to wonder why? Why God? Why me? Surely I haven't been that bad, to be punished like this! It's not fair, God! It's just not fair!

Overcoming my initial natural reactions of denial and self pity, over this turn of events that has again shattered my life, I can now, with a modicum of reasonableness and regained sanity, ask of myself and the Lord, "Am I Jonah or Job?"

Now for those who don't think in my unusual, convoluted way, the question can be expressed a little differently. "Am I to blame for my fate because of disobedience in my life, as Jonah was when swallowed whole by the big fish, or am I more like Job, being tested to prove my faith?" Both these experiences resulted in suffering and neither was very pleasant to go through. Nor has been mine been, when it comes to that! So what is the verdict?

JONAH'S (then the fish's) BELLYACHE

Jonah had been a faithful and loyal prophet of the Lord for some considerable time. An encouraging prophet actually. Unfortunately for him though, he didn't like the assignment for which he is now best remembered. So often remembered for our mistakes, aren't we! For a streak of self righteousness was exposed inside, when he was asked by the Lord to go and warn the people of Nineveh of imminent divine

judgement, unless they repented of their wicked ways. Jonah's 'bellyache' with the Lord was that these people were so wicked, they didn't deserve to be given a chance to reform. Of course, he feared for the safety of the message bearer, himself, also! We all know the result. A fishy story!

Once consumed, Jonah, having plenty of time to think while waiting to be dissolved in the fish's gently gurgling acidic stomach, not surprisingly, realised the error of his ways. He repented of his disobedience, and was forgiven. Ironically being given the second chance that he had wished to deny the Ninevites. So the Lord gave the fish a 'bellyache', and it vomited up a no doubt, somewhat fishy smelling Jonah, onto dry land.

Now, when things go wrong in life, there are always Christians willing to give advice as to the sins that have caused the wrath of the Lord to fall upon you, for your edification of course. A variation too, is of those who knew you were doing wrong from the beginning, but unfortunately didn't happen to mention it until now! When you realise it yourself! Such is life, and the perfect 20/20 vision of hindsight!

Joking aside, I have had to face up to issues in my life as a result of my misfortune. For I know that I am far from perfect – even without others having to confirm it! After searching my heart I wrote this email to my support group.

21 July 2000

Dear Friends

The past few weeks have not exactly been lived at stress levels within Heart Foundation recommendations for longevity, as we have fought a finally losing battle to financially rescue our property development at Ohauti. Yesterday we took the one remaining positive step available to us and placed Kaydee Properties Ltd into voluntary liquidation. This will be publicly advertised on Friday or Saturday night.

At market prices, the assets roughly equate the liabilities, but unfortunately the market has gone into hibernation for the 'Labour Winter', and prices do discount in these circumstances anyway. Realistically, the bank should get repaid but the creditors are doubtful. This distresses both Kathy and myself.

As the 'second time around' in this 'realm' of financial failure I (we) have had to do a great deal of soul searching as to why this has had to happen once again. And hopefully learn some lessons from it. Last time caused me to give my heart to the Lord, this time I trust, to give all of me to Him. And to learn some practical lessons too from my mistakes such as:

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1. Not having God's positive confirmation of the project. I (we) thought we were doing the right thing to make provision for future ministry without being a burden on others. But there was no confirmation from God one way or the other. Things did just happen so easily that it seemed to be of God. Lesson 1: Wait for God's okay first.
2. I didn't consult with others on a spiritual basis as I saw it basically as a business decision, our business being very successful at the time. Lesson 2: Consult you guys too!
3. I unwisely tried to help our project manager have a 'second chance' by entrusting him with completely with the project and not checking out his costings independently. Not realising that his problems were basically spiritual, so giving him another chance without him dealing with the spiritual problems in his life, was doomed to failure. It is sad for Graham, as he has so much potential in God, which I now find out was actually a reality during his earlier years in the Lord. Lesson 3: Check things out thoroughly. Lesson 4: Look at the spiritual as well as the natural when helping someone out. Lesson 5: The buck stops here!

No doubt there will still be more lessons. Maybe God will give them to you to give me. I am open to that. I take full responsibility for my actions and apologise for not consulting adequately with those I should have and didn't do at the time, for your various areas of God's wisdom. That could possibly have saved a lot of heartache, or at least opened my eyes wider to the potential problems involved. Of course we are all a lot wiser after the event! With my 'Oversight' of the last year or so, I have already undertaken to do that anyway.

So we are again in the position of being 'asset poor' (actually zilch as our house is 100% mortgaged too) although we currently do have sufficient income to live on. Kathy's job (and a very supportive Kathy!) is a real blessing, along with list rental revenues still being received. Obviously our future finances are going to be 'faith based' which may well be how God desires it to be! God has continually confirmed over the past year that we won't have to worry concerning money and I believe Him! He has supplied us previously when in this situation.

We do need to sell our house to Transit to relieve the interest burden we still face. The 'designation' of the extension of the highway has been delayed once again. We therefore have to request Transit to help us out because of the 'hardship' situation we face. A word or two upstairs on our behalf for this would be much appreciated.

We are both okay although clearly it is not a most joyous time! Obviously we question why this has to happen again - for me - why couldn't I learn the first time round! Having the Lord beside me has made things hugely different and much easier to bear this time though. Somehow, I am still worthy in His sight. I must be stretching His supply of grace though! Fortunately adversity seems to bring Kathy and I closer together. One side benefit!

Not unexpectedly, I have done nothing on the book over the past few weeks as I have had no inspiration. However the Lord did show me the final format for it the other day, so I will be back into it very shortly - once I stop writing emails! Not too far to go to finish it now.

I am always asked, "What am I going to do now?" That always means about a 'real job'! When I left Kaydees God said I was to work for Him and that is what I intend to keep doing until I am told otherwise. Comments are again welcomed.

I do thank you for your interest and support of a failure like me! As and when God chooses to work through me it will obviously have to be Him, for in natural eyes I cannot be looked upon as one of the world's success stories! I thank both Him and you guys (and girls) for not rejecting me.

Thanks again for everything.

David (and Kathy)

As I am able to clear my head of the emotional trauma that inevitably accompanies difficult circumstances, and no doubt, if I am open to hear, the Lord will teach me more lessons from the situation.

So yes, as with nearly all of us, there are elements of Jonah in my life. But possibly some of Job too.

JOB'S PAINFUL TESTING

Now Job was a man to whose qualities I can only aspire, for he was 'blameless and upright', fearing God and shunning evil. The greatest man among all the people of the East of his time. Quite a CV! Yet Job suffered great misfortune and anguish, financially, health wise, and from

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the criticism of his advisors. Some things never change! Even though his wife, family and friends turned against him, he would not give up his faith and integrity. Yet none of this was for wrongdoing in Job's life. For Job was being tested, in a way that few of us could endure and still maintain our faith.

God did not cause his problems but did let the devil do his damndst. Job went through the painful fire of testing, exiting an even better and stronger person than he went in. This is attested

to by God giving Job 'twice as much as he had before.' For the fire of testing, unfortunately, from the immediate perspective of those going through it, is God's way of purifying us to turn us into the people He desires us to be.

Therefore two of the replies I had to my email were interesting. The first, from one of my support team, who has recently taken off to Malaysia to work as a missionary. I must have been too much for him! Not really!

Hi there David,

Sorry to hear of your predicament again and I can only empathise with you having been through similar circumstances before myself. Remember that Kaydee Properties is not David & Kathy Tait and there are plenty of successful people who have been bankrupt more than once. I have been thinking a lot about you since I got your e-mail, as we had to go up to Indonesia on Sunday afternoon for a couple of days to renew our visa's at the border as we do every month, and that place gives you time to think.

I know that one of the things you said was very important, about waiting to hear from God and I think that often we see things are going ok so we assume that God is doing the leading. But I always remember my dad saying "fools rush in where angles fear to tread" and I know I have been guilty of that many times, but I hope I am learning. I don't believe that the path of least resistance is at all the best, as anything worth while having usually has to be struggled for like a good marriage, the old saying "no pain no gain" and sometimes as Christians we forget those things. I remember as a young Christian I heard many older and I thought wiser Christians saying things about people who had struggles and set backs like "well there must be some sin in their lives" or "if they were truly right with God He would bless them." And I thought that they must have been right. UNTIL I started to read the bible for myself and found that anyone worth their salt in the scriptures actually went through the roughest of times and under much ridicule from others. So consequently I have formed my own opinion that anyone under extreme difficulty in life God usually has great things for them and that is why He has to form some character in them. So don't despair. I believe the Lord would say "Go again David. Go again".

So now what do you do, remember you may have lost this battle but the victory is still yours, some keys maybe in the scripture in 1 Cron14:2 where David is established as King and the Philistines hear of it and come out against him. So he enquires of God, verses 8-12, and there are 5 key points.

1: You must know who you are in Christ and see from His perspective (our identity in Christ).

2: You must have the Holy Ghost anointing, you must take up the responsibility to deal with the enemy in your own life. David had a spirit of militancy to rise against the enemy.

3: verse10. We need to listen to God for our direction in situations, not rely on past victories or failures, or to the opinions of others no matter how well intended they are. You need to listen for what He is saying right now, Gods strategy.

4: Follow through and do what God tells you to do 100% obedience even if it seems illogical cause He is quite illogical at times.

5: We must play our part in the victory. David gave the Glory to God but knew he had to do his part verse 11 "God has broken through my enemies by my hand etc." Underline MY hand.

David I believe that God wants you to breakthrough too, so one of my favourite sayings to end and wish you both well and those great kids of yours. Give them a warm hug for us and give Kathy a big kiss.

" Winners never quit and quitters never win"

God bless you all

Colin (and Claire.)

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And secondly from a lady whose husband I know but have yet to meet. Jill experiences

suffering firsthand, in the form of the scourge of cancer.

David & Kathy,

Jill here. A friend read me an extract from a book the other day - I thought it described her and what she had been going through for the last year or two. When I read your poem, I was prompted to share it with you.

We were created for God's pleasure. We were not created to live for ourselves but for Him. And while the Lord desires that we enjoy His gifts and His people, He would have us know we were created first for HIS pleasure. In these closing moments of this age, the Lord will have a people whose purpose for living is to please God with their lives. In them, God finds His own reward for creating man. They are His worshippers. They are on earth only to please God, and when He is pleased, they also are pleased. The Lord takes them farther and through more pain and conflicts than other men. Outwardly, they often seem "smitten of God, and afflicted" (Isaiah. 53:4). Yet to God, they are His beloved. When they are crushed, like the petals of a flower, they exude a worship, the fragrance of which is so beautiful and rare that angels weep in quiet awe at their surrender. They are the Lord's purpose for creation.

One would think that God would protect them, guarding them in such a way that they would not be marred. Instead, they are marred more than other men. Indeed, the Lord seems pleased to crush them, putting them to grief. For in the midst of their physical and emotional pain, their loyalty to Christ grows pure and perfect. And in the face of persecutions, their love and worship toward God become all-consuming.

Would that all Christ's servants were so perfectly surrendered. Yet God finds His pleasure in us all. But as the days of the kingdom draw near and the warfare at the end of this age increases those who have been created solely for the worship of God will come forth in the power and glory of the Son. With the high praises of God in their mouth, they will execute upon His enemies the judgement written (Psalm 149). They will lead as generals in the Lord's army of worshippers.

I won't throw in any glib clichés, but be encouraged.

Jill

Thankyou Jill for your encouragement. That is the sort of person I desire to be. Not that I have got there yet, but I am letting Him work on it.

So I guess, as in many things in life, the answers to our problems are often as complex as the problems themselves. For I know that I am a

Jonah, as we all are in areas of our lives, but hopefully I am also worthy of being 'a bit of a Job' too. For the enemy attacks those who represent his greatest threats, yet through his attentions, our faith blossoms and matures to produce sweet fruit worthy of our Lord and master.

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

Only In Church....

- Introducing his sermon the pastor said, "Today I have prepared three sermons. A \$10 one on 'Fire and Brimstone' that's 90 minutes long. Alternatively, a \$50 sermon on 'The Evils of Sin' that takes 45 minutes. And finally a succinct, 10 minute gem worth \$100, on 'Love and Generosity.' Now, before I speak we will take the collection, to see which one you choose."
- After church one day a young lad said to his parents, "I'm going to be a minister when I grow up." "That's wonderful," said his proud parents, "Please tell us how you made this wise decision." That's simple," said their son. "I know I'll have to go to church anyway, so I figure it's far more fun to stand up the front and shout, than to sit down and listen."

NOT JUST CHRISTOTAINMENT

THE FAST AND THE SLOW

The inspiration (or otherwise) for the following nonsense comes from this quote by my favourite comedian, Steven Wright:

"I took a speed waiting course. Now I can wait an hour in 10 minutes."

'Twas obtained while on a relaxing run, for once on flat roads, in the 'sun city' of my birth and upbringing, Napier. Next time you see a jogger jogging, maybe you'll now realise that they aren't necessarily, totally 'brain dead'! It just seems that way! Then again, this may confirm it!

LESSONS FOR COPING WITH THE EVER INCREASING PACE OF LIFE

1. TOOK A LESSON IN **sPEED tYPING**. NOW MAKE TWICW AS MANY MISTAAKES IN HALFTHER TIME.
2. Took a **Speed Logic** course. Can immediately jump to a conclusion. A very popular course, this one!
3. Took a **Speed Memory** course. Able to remember everything before it happens. Life's now so dull!
4. Took a **Speed Reading** course:
 - Then read a 'whodunit'. Read to the end of the book before the detective solved the case. Did I do it? Will never know now!
 - Read the Bible too, making some fantastic discoveries.
 - God created the world in only 7 minutes. Could have, if He'd wanted to, couldn't He?
 - The children of Israel took a shortcut, reaching the Promised Land in 4 years, not 40. All those experiencing the fire of testing should do this course immediately!
 - Those first 40, depressing, chapters of Isaiah, now take but an age to read, not an eternity. This course comes highly recommended for genealogical chapters too!
 - Discovered Jesus lived, but yesterday. Is still alive now in fact! Didn't need the course to realise that though!
 - Finally, I have been able to read right through the Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, before the return of Christ. Now that has to be a miracle!
5. Took a **Speed Learning** course. Now I know it all. Others have confirmed it! Don't say, you know it too!

FOR THOSE NOW PINING FOR THE SLOWER DAYS OF YESTERYEAR

6. **God's Slow Motion:** 5 years of testing seems like 50! But then of course, that's only for me!
7. **Life's Slow Motion:** Everything takes twice as long as it used too. But it still gets done!
8. **A Slow Hearer:** The wife gets to the end of the story, just as I start to listen. (Kathy's comment – "and won't repeat it!")
9. **A Slow Learner:** Its taking so long to go round the mountain, that others are racing past me on their second lap! Profound or what?

David Tait: 21 August 2000

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GROWING 'YUMMY' FRUIT

Don't you get upset sometimes, when the fruit of your spirit is a little less perfect than the specifications set out in our comprehensive 'Growing and Quality Control Manual', the Bible? Frustrating, isn't it? But be encouraged. So far, only one person has achieved 100% success in attaining all the standards, all the time. That is, one Jesus Christ. The rest of us suffer a little, or to be really honest, by a lot, in comparison. Our fruit looks so small, green and knobbly, compared to His large, fully ripe, yummy, 'taste-gems'. Drool at the mouth with the thought. No-ones watching! But as we improve our growing skills, both in learning and application, the 'Son' shines upon us. Our fruit progressively matures and ripens, finally positively, glowing with goodness.

Not surprisingly, all fruit changes in appearance according to the light in which it is displayed. In the soft, subdued, artificial lighting of church on Sunday, it looks far more enticing than it does under that bright, penetrating spotlight of home, where every imperfection is starkly highlighted!

As an encouragement, here are a few of the pests, diseases, fertiliser and water shortages that provide the fruit producing challenges of my life. Most involve the family, for that is from where the greatest challenges to quality production arise.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

According to both 'The Manual' of the Word and to my imperfect but improving 'Davidfruit'.

LOVE:

The Manual: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

Davidfruit: Love is not getting angry with the kids for not wanting to the dishes, until they have grizzled for the 20th time! Then saying sorry for getting angry and starting again, but without giving in!

JOY:

The Manual: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds." (James 1:2)

Davidfruit: Joy is being happy for someone celebrating success in the very area in which you are experiencing failure.

PEACE:

The Manual: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (John 14:27)

Davidfruit: True peace is knowing you're in God's will, even when those around you cannot see it.

PATIENCE:

The Manual: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." (Ephesians 4:2)

Davidfruit: Patience is waiting for your Lady when she says it will take "just a minute to make herself beautiful", yet experience tells you it will take a little longer.

KINDNESS:

The Manual: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

Davidfruit: Kindness is telling your Lady, 20 minutes later, that she "looks a million dollars" and meaning it, even when she doesn't really believe you!

GOODNESS:

The Manual: "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." (Luke 6:45)

Davidfruit: Being good, is letting the wife watch her favourite television programme in the middle of a vital football match, (and they all are!), without grizzling too much.

FAITHFULNESS:

The Manual: "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" (Matthew 25:21)

Davidfruit: Faithfulness is walking the dog in the rain.

GENTLENESS:

The Manual: "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." (Philippians 4:5)

Davidfruit: Gentleness is the wife squeezing a pimple on your back, without feeling any pain.

SELF-CONTROL:

The Manual: "Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed." (1 Peter 1:13)

Davidfruit: Self-control is the more frequent fruit required, when your wife squeezes that pimple on your back, and it hurts like mad!

David Tait: 29 August 2000

DAVID'S MUSING AGAIN

7 September 2000: This morning, a friend of mine died of cancer. I had only known Roy for a few weeks, having become involved with him through his video library ministry. Roy was always a very skinny bloke, yet in the two weeks before his death he had still managed to fade away to a shadow of his former self. The ravages of cancer are so sad to see let alone experience. Yet almost to the very end, Roy was still able to muster up his unique 'Roy Grin.' Last night it was my privilege to spend an hour and a half with him, watching him gradually lose touch with reality as the effect of the morphine pain relief set in. Fortunately, the time of his ultimate passing on to his Fathers kingdom was short.

It is often said that we marry opposites. Kathy is the compassionate nurse, and I haven't a bone of compassion in my body, according to her! Yet over the past two years or so, the Lord has put me in contact with a number of people with cancer. I have spent long hours learning how to comfort and help these sick and mostly terminally ill people. It is hard to change life patterns, but it is possible!

Fortunately most have been good talkers, as I am not good at 'small talk.' Yet to have had someone to listen to them seems to have been of help. Gradually too, I am learning how to meet physical needs. Now this is well outside the mindset and experience of most kiwi males, and males generally, everywhere. Feeding, turning and toileting are not exactly my fields of natural expertise!

For it to be a privilege for me to spend time being with and nursing a dying man is just amazing – a miracle of God. Maybe I have now developed compassion in the bones of my little fingers? Perhaps even Kathy can start to see it? I think she can! Just the rest of my hands and body to go now! Need to be compassionate with myself too, and give it time!

12 September 2000: Went for a run this morning and was thrilled that my 19-year-old son, Nigel, wanted to come with me. We ran

round my course together until the last kilometre when I ran ahead, as a good time was in the offing. The time in fact, was 10% faster than I have normally been running recently, primarily because I had the Nigel's company and encouragement. In running terms, 10% is a huge difference. Nigel's time was good too. Reflecting upon this, the Lord made the point that we are far more effective if we walk in unity, rather than operating in isolation. It was a timely practical demonstration of the power of working together in his cause.

15 September 2000: Have not shared anything about our personal financial problems over the past few weeks, as little has happened. Waiting and wondering is normally worse than the final reality. Yet we have not been as fraught as we ought, from a human perspective. It is difficult to explain how we have felt really, other than to explain it as resting content in God's will for us, confident in the knowledge that He loves us and cares for us all of the time.

But the full ramifications of our property company collapse are now starting to bite as some of our creditors take recourse against us, as they are perfectly entitled to do. How the hopes and expectations of just twelve months ago have collapsed around my ears. Can I understand it? No! Do I accept it? I have to, for it is reality! Do I like it? No! Do I blame God for it? No! Is God using the circumstances to change me? Yes! I hope you can see that too, through these musings. Has my trust in God wavered? No! Rather, it has been strengthened, for I need to rely upon him more and more. Lord, my life is yours. Is easier to do, the less I have left to give, or give up! Thankyou Lord for giving me my wife, my family, and our friends, to stand by me and us.

Of course there have been times when, as seems to happen during difficult circumstances, that the Lord has felt distant and far away. Sometimes a test of our faith, at other times a distancing of ones self from Him. But He never has us endure

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more than we can bear, although we don't always see it that way!

This morning the Lord also gave me one of His thoughts, to focus my attention away from myself and onto Him.

“God desires less of the world in the church, but more of the church in the world. Jesus weeps.”

Amazing the inspiration that comes from relaxing in the spa pool. Had better make the most of it though, for we are unlikely to have it for much longer. Have to admit that I will miss its soothing warmth after a run. For so often, I am able to meet with my God there.

16 September 2000: Sent an email yesterday to my friends sharing God's thought from the spa, and a little about our personal situation. Got an interesting reply back from Murray, who has gone through particularly difficult times, marriage wise, during the past couple of years. Contained the best advice and encouragement I have received on how best to handle difficult situations. His advice was:

“Be still before our God. Take things one hour at a time. Look to others that need help and encouragement.”

The last sentence contains an amazing practical truth. Kathy and I have already experienced this, currently being involved in 'being there,' for another couple going through marital difficulties. Looking after Roy and his affairs too, has helped keep my mind off myself. But slowed down the writing though! It seems as if God has graciously provided these situations to enable us to help others, while at the same time helping ourselves. Amazing really, when you think about it. A win, win situation for all! The Lord knows better than we do, what is best for us! Thanks Murray, for sharing your confirming experiences too from the school of hard knocks.

20 September 2000: Another little thought for the day, this time from prayer, not the spa.

As the Lord breaks us down, so He can rebuild Himself in us.

Not a painless transplant though! For ongoing rejection by our old, natural human nature can be a real problem!

24 September 2000: Woke up this morning and discovered that my watch was not working, for the battery had gone flat. Went for my run, now unable to time myself. As I passed the points where I normally check on my progress, I realised that today I couldn't, so didn't look down. But interestingly, 9 other times during my 10km run I involuntarily looked at my watch to see how I was going, of course, all to no avail. The Lord showed me that this was like sin or bad habits in my (our?) life. Easy to get prayed for or resolve to clean up an area of life. Manage to avoid the old way at obvious times, but it rears its ugly head when least expected. For it is an automatic reaction or pattern of life. So easy then just to give up and go back to the old ways. But must seek forgiveness and continue, in the confident expectation of building a new habit or way of life. Knowing that gradually the old ways will disappear and be fully replaced by the new. Another couple of runs without the watch and I will stop looking to see the time! A new pattern will finally be settled within me.

26 September 2000: Ran this morning with a new battery in my watch but unfortunately not in me! Felt good, but when I looked at my time it was really slow. Today the Lord used my watch to illustrate righteousness rather than sin. For feelings do not accurately measure our walk with God. The watch of 'The Word' is the only true gauge. In my current, strained financial circumstances, it would be easy to think that the Lord had deserted me, because I naturally don't feel joyous and happy. Difficult 'loss' circumstances, whether through death, health, marriage, money or in other ways, are unpleasant and discouraging, to say the least. Yet the words of King David in Psalm 23, the most loved and comforting chapter of scripture to those in desperate situations, are as true now as they were 3,000 years ago.

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“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.”

I can testify to this truth, for I have been through similar financial situations, both with and without the Lord in my life. Not a pleasant experiment to participate in, but one that proves to me the everlasting reality of David’s words. While I cannot honestly yet say that I consider my trials “*pure joy*”, as James wrote in *James 1:2-4*, I can see that the circumstances are increasing my faith and my maturity in Him. And without the bad, we wouldn’t truly appreciate the good, would we! Even the glorious game of cricket becomes a routine job to a professional cricketer! Variety of experience is indeed the spice of life.

3 October 2000: Went for my normal Sunday morning run during which the Lord reminded me that the spiritual and the natural are linked. For as I do my best running times by working hard on the uphill sections, so spiritually, if we allow ourselves to learn, we grow far more in God in the battles of life than when the going is smooth. I should be learning a lot at the moment!

Came home to get changed before going to take a service at a local Retirement Home, which we occasionally do. Kathy was suffering from the flu and decided not to come. Can’t say I was really pleased about it, although I was careful not to say too much! While driving in I had the usual thoughts – she’s letting down both God and me, and so on. The Lord referred me to *Philippians 2:4-5*. Of course, I didn’t have a clue what they were about so looked them up before going inside. They read, “*Each of you should look not only to your interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*” I think there was a message somewhere in that for me! Sorry Lord, for my unworthy thoughts. Went and took the service with a new mindset. Led the singing all by myself. A miracle! Then read some poetry The residents thought the service was wonderful and of specific application to some of them. I left feeling the Lord had accomplished his objectives, both with the people and in teaching

me too. Funny how things work out sometimes!
If we let the Lord take charge!

7 October 2000: You must be getting sick of running stories by now! I’m getting embarrassed about telling them, lest you think I’m obsessed! Which I hope I’m not. Well, maybe a little!

Last night my son Nigel came home while we were out and went for a run. Now this is still a notable event for him. Naturally I was very pleased that he had done it. Interestingly though, instead of going where I go, he went a different, new way. A typical teenager!

This morning thought I would follow in his footsteps. It was most refreshing and challenging. Not the distance, but the different terrain. Set me thinking – which is dangerous! My running has become habitual. While that is good in that I do it regularly, it has lost some of the vitality through the routine of following my well-worn tracks. You can almost see the impressions of my footprints in the road, so many times have I covered the same ground!

Set me thinking about my walk with God too. How easy it is to continue on in the same way day after day, year after year. Commendable regularity but lacking in vitality. Can be the same in marriage too. Must make sure I keep out of the rut. Broaden my horizons in Him. Look for fresh new ways to express my worship and love. Freshen and strengthen my relationship with Him. Seek new levels of faith and trust. Push the boundaries. Must think of ways to do that with Kathy too. God and wives don’t like boring spouses!

A much higher percentage of the run was along the main road too. I had always avoided this as much as possible because of the traffic. I mentioned earlier that the Lord had shown me that running on the main road was like public ministry, which I have also often avoided in the past. However, as on this run, that is now to change. And the run along the main road was pleasant, even though I was very tired. Trust future ministry will be like that too!

BODY 'Not So' BEAUTIFUL?

Adam and Eve, naked, did roam about,
Fine clothes, jewellery, they were without,
Forever and ever they were going to live,
Nary a thought of dressing, did they give.

Created by God, with 'bodies beautiful,'
So perfect in form - we can only drool,
The ravages of age had no effect you see,
Their bodies designed to last - for eternity.

Yet one sad day, in the course of time,
Their thoughts with God failed to rhyme.
For they ate forbidden fruit from the tree,
Which greatly affected their longevity.

Now they knew they were naked, they were ashamed,
Because their God, they had disgracefully defamed.
But to show that God loved them still,
He gave them clothes, even sent no bill.

But the putting on of clothes, had another side,
As the affects of ageing, they did wish to hide.
Cause eternal youth had passed them by,
Now to grow old, get sick, then to die.

When we're young, we know we'll never die!
For our 'body beautiful,' it does all we try,
We run and we dance, we jump and we swim,
Yes, then it is easy, to keep the body in trim.

But the time it does pass, as the fruit takes effect,
The results of our exertion, we can no longer neglect.
The things we once did with energy, grace and poise,
Now executed with effort, and a loud puffing noise!

Oh dear, oh dear, what is becoming of me,
The kids do laugh, for they cannot yet see,
That one day too, it will happen to them,
Will be like me, coughing up phlegm.

For no one escapes the taste of a fruit so sweet,
However much, life's ravages we desire to beat.
The fruit brought the concept of time,
But so little of it, now that's a crime.

Know what to do - I'll go for a run,
So good for me - may even be fun!
Though I realise you don't agree with that,
It's certainly one way, to keep off the fat!

For as I look down towards my middle region,
Something appears to be blocking my vision.
My toes, I can no longer easily see,
Blocking my vision, is more of me!

So much more than ever there was before,
No, it's not me - surely can't be - I implore!
Poking a finger downwards, it wobbles on its own,
Surely that's not my stomach, I inwardly groan.

But it is, it is, it is, it is,
Could be hers, maybe his,
For we all suffer from much the same,
As the invasion of fat, we seek to tame.

Now if nature seems mildly depressing,
When our youthful body, age is repressing.
God gave the answer to Adam and Eve,
Clothes for the body, others to deceive.

We learn how to dress our bodies, to disguise their
shape,
Over sagging boobs and bums, various pieces we
drape,
We pretend to be what we no longer are,
The spitting image of a Broadway star.

But now, to get more serious about this matter,
Recently had a friend die, of lymphatic cancer.
His body faded away to a shadow,
Before being buried in a meadow.

For we will all die one day you see,
As inevitably, as four follows three.
For our body has a limited life span,
So about it, we should have a plan.

There is only one plan, of which I know,
If grass over me, is not always to grow.
It's called salvation by grace.
In meeting Jesus, face to face.

He died on a cross, two thousand years ago,
To rescue us from death, that much I know,
He rose from the grave on the third day,
To give us a new body, in which to play.

To receive our new body, all we do,
Is believe in Him, the one so true.
By seeking forgiveness for all our sin,
His eternal kingdom, we will enter in.

A TIMELY TESTIMONY

10 October 2000: Today I cleared my mailbox, feeling a little burdened, with the implications of our current financial position, weighing a little too heavily upon me. In the box was the following letter from Christopher, in Australia. By the way, New Zealand is not part of Australia, but 2,000 kilometres away across the Tasman Sea, often one of the roughest stretches of ocean in the world. Yes, an Australian lifted

my spirits! A miracle in itself these days! For the Aussies are beating us in nearly every sport we play them in! And loving it too! The age old trans-Tasman rivalry!

Yet, the Lord saw my need! His way of meeting needs may be different to what we would expect (my expectations anyway), but His timing is always perfect!

AUSTRALIA
1st OCTOBER 2000

WALKING WITH JESUS MINISTRIES
P O BOX 9143
TAURANGA
NEW ZEALAND

Dear Sir/Madam,

In about 1992 I wrote to you about obtaining the three part course, "The Way of Salvation." It took me eight years to get to listen to the tapes and study the notes that unfortunately the three books have become damaged and worn through the years. I was wondering therefore if I can obtain another set of notes without the tapes.

I must say though that the notes and the tapes have helped me to understand how I am to stand in relation to sin. Before this course the minister (who has since left) taught me (through Bible study lessons) that it didn't matter how much a person sinned, as long as they prayed for forgiveness at the end of the day.

I now understand that I must "Resist the devil" (James 4:7) and that I must "Crucify my sinful nature." (Galatians 5:25) These passages were always there in the Bible but I was always told that they were not as important as believing in Jesus which was the only thing needed to obtain eternal life.

I thank you for correcting my stance on this issue. The devil may have kept me from understanding this for years, but I now feel better for knowing the truth.

Again thank you and the Lord bless you.

Yours faithfully
CHRISTOPHER

This letter so beautifully and simply sums up the main theme of this book. The need to live what we believe! Thank you Christopher. Thank you Lord for arranging for Christopher to send the letter at this very time. Precisely on time, not eight years late! For now Christopher's

testimony can witness to many. When we walk our talk, the Lord does respond. Yes, submission to His will is His heart's desire for us His people, in this exciting but challenging age in which we live.

THE SUN SETS – THE SON RISES ON A NEW DAY

13 October 2000: There are certain days which represent defining points in our lives. Today is one of those for me. For this is the day on which I basically finish writing this book. Sure, there will be corrections and alterations still to come, and I am waiting upon information to complete one chapter, but it now feels as if the task is done, the battle won. And it has been a bit of a battle too, at times, when the enthusiasm dips, when the inspiration dries up. When people keep asking, “Are you going to get a real job soon?” When life doesn’t do, what you would like it to!

But most of the past 14_ months has been a dream, as the Lord has inspired me, page by page. Not in the same way as in the writing of the ‘Walking With Jesus’ course though. Then I was a relatively new Christian. All I really did was hold the pen while He wrote! But as we grow up, the Lord treats us as adults, and while still guiding us, expects us to use the deposit He has built into us, over the years of our walk with Him. Of course, the major challenge then is to make sure we don’t walk off the path He has set for us, in our own strength and knowledge. Yes, there are potential pitfalls at every stage of our journey!

Today is my third and final day back once again at Bowtown, as I endeavour to finish before the ‘pre-publication manuscript’ is advertised next week. Deadlines are a great motivator! The first two days were wet and windy, so there was nothing else to do other than write! Today however, dawned a more typical, sunny Bowtown day, if still a little windy. So I got up and went for my run. For the first time I can remember for a long time, I injured my calf muscle and had to slow down to a walk. A chance to take in the scenery, but not exactly what I had expected and looked forward to.

I find life is a lot like that. When we sold our mail order business, a month before starting on this book, it seemed that the Lord had provided us with a secure financial position, in order that I might be able to work for Him fulltime, without

having to be a burden on others. Twelve months later everything fell apart. Our property development project was placed into liquidation, and even the previously highly successful mail order operation we had sold, went into liquidation a few days later. Lord, what is happening? Is this your plan?

Yesterday we were unable to repay part of the 1st Mortgage on our house on due date, which baring the Lord’s intervention, will inevitably lead to the bank taking over our house, and myself and possibly Kathy too, being declared bankrupt once again. Oh Lord, how could this happen to us? Again! My mistakes, I know, but it all seemed so rosy, well planned and in your will, just a year ago! Don’t say we really will have to rely on your daily provision Lord? A new step of faith! But we have known your provision in the past when we have been financially constrained, so we know you can do it. We will trust you. We will rely upon you.

How do we publish this book now? For I know I have to give it away. Maybe no one would read it if they had to pay for it! There is sufficient money in the Ministry Trust to start the process, so that is all we can do. The Lord will provide, as always. Praise be to the Lord. For as the sun sets on the old day, so the Son rises on a new dawn of promise and hope.

P.S. Thought I would be efficient and pack up my bag while waiting for the computer to back up after writing this last section of the book. Put my bag in the car boot. Went back and got my toothbrush and put that in too. Shut the boot. Eventually realised I had packed my car keys along with the toothbrush! Fortunately I had another key attached to the car so I was able to recover the situation. A celebratory rush of blood to the head caused my stupidity or was I helped? Found through hard experience that you need to be extra careful when doing things for the Lord, particularly when you relax and are off guard. Nearly deleted the whole book just now, so had better stop, while I’m still that little bit ahead!

