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December 2007 News

God, the builder of everything

Viewing the devastation of our drive from the kitchen window through the evening rain, I reflected on how long it takes to build something, and how quickly to destroy it.

A parade of former owners had stamped their signatures on the front of the property over more than twenty years – pseudo lytch-gates, bordered walk-ways, a feng-shui garden and trellis everywhere, not quite our style! Our self-imposed promises of, 'That'll



have to go!' when we first arrived now haunt us for their fulfilment.

So last month an army arrived of builders, diggers, and trucks bearing 'sub-base' metal (gravel!), and in two days left a great gash in our serenity like an open wound. This Monday it rained, dissolving our gash into yellow clag. Wheelruts became canals. Our feet grew clay plates. And the cats washed theirs off on the once-white bedspreads.

'It will look great!' we keep telling ourselves, trying to restore the glint to our mud-dulled eyes. It will. Truly! And as we watch the bank account dwindle beyond expectation (does any building ever cost less than the budget?), we keep reminding ourselves that 'the increased value will be greater than the cost'. It will. Surely...

Amazingly, God is in the middle of it all. For the Word of God tells us that 'God is the builder of everything.' All building requires removal of the old. A surgeon must cut before he can stitch. Nor should we expect our hearts or spirits to be any different. Yielding them to the Master's knife is the greater challenge.

We've had to learn new techniques. Bron has become an expert in cutting down camellias, but which resprout from the stump, green and cheerful, with no hard feelings at all. The borders are covered in weed-mesh and bark chips which are (meant to be) raked periodically to kill the weeds. Unmowable corners are sprayed. Paths are sprayed. Roadsides are sprayed. Grass under hedges is sprayed. (And 1080 poison is dropped by helicopter into vast swathes of native forest to kill the possums. Green New Zealand refers to its colour, not it's environmental

consciousness, which is at least ten years behind Europe. Organic is still quirky here.)

GOD THE HEALER

Meanwhile we have been greatly blessed in ministry. Two Godincidental meetings yielded two preaching invitations, and on both occasions God healed and saved! Barry Farmilo leads Life City Church in Albany along similar lines to our own, which is growing rapidly. The night before I had a picture of an older lady wearing a green twin-set, sitting by a pillar with others, and a blanket across her knees. When I shared this, although not present, she was immediately identified, detail perfect, and we were able to pray for her with increased faith! God is amazing!

A few weeks later I was at the new Jesus First, already with nearly 200 and many were healed, including a man delivered quite dramatically from a spirit of depression, his whole demeanour changing.

In between, I had the privilege to minister at Hillsong, Sydney, special for many reasons. This was the fulfilment of a long-held dream that the Lord first dropped into my spirit more than ten years ago when, sitting in a meeting there, he whispered, 'One day you will speak on that platform.' My brief was to teach their 500 first-year college students how to heal the sick. Drawn from across the world, they will one day return to their native countries and churches and influence many thousands of lives. To be able to influence the influencers is humbling.

The ministry began slowly enough at the City Campus. The first two we prayed for weren't sure if they had been healed... One lad deaf in his left ear, 'thought he could

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hear a bit more.' Not exactly faith-building. But we went through the teaching and a few aches and pains disappeared. I confess that I was rather dependent that night, but the Lord was teaching me not to rejoice in what I see, but in him! Trust, trust, trust. So the next day I taught the same material to the Hills Campus students and all heaven broke loose! Literally dozens were healed. One of the most exciting was a young gymnast who'd injured her back and wore a brace. Two friends ministered to her, and she was instantly and totally healed, doing flips and cartwheels on the stage for all to see. 'I am so happy,' she said afterwards, 'I will be able to take up my gymnastics again!' Praise the Lord! Other sports injuries were healed, and many sicknesses left instantly. The lame were walking!

The acid test of any healing ministry is, 'what happens when nothing happens?' Firstly, as Bill Johnson says, 'We never assume that nothing has happened.' To do so is arrogant beyond measure: to deny that God CAN heal is to deny his power. To deny that he WANTS to heal is to deny his love. To claim that nothing has happened is to claim to know all things! We might as well declare that God doesn't exist. How can you know? Have you travelled to the furthest corners of the universe? Others say that he cannot exist, because if he did he would not allow the suffering we see. But could it just be that he knows things that we don't? That he is wiser than we are? That we don't even know which questions to ask? Ask a 5 year old child if a visit to the dentist is a good idea.

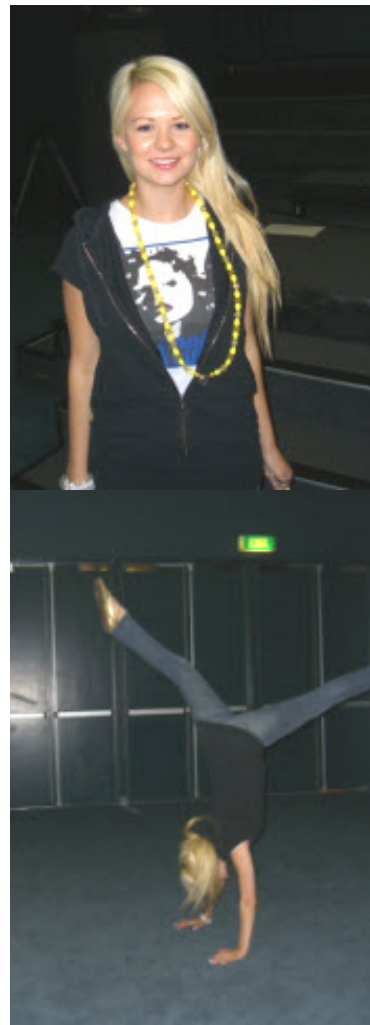
But often we don't see the answers we expect. Again, we must learn to trust, trust, trust. God doesn't show us everything and never will while we inhabit this limited and perforated tabernacle. In his new book 'Hope' David Peters has written, *Healing is perfectly available through the cross of Christ, but at times imperfectly ministered or received.* But when we DO pray, people DO get healed.

I have been meditating recently on [Exodus 15:26](#), in which God reveals to his people that, '*I am the Lord who heals you.*' Firstly, put the emphasis on the initial 'I'. This means that HE is the Lord who heals, not anyone else! The devil cannot – he comes, [John 10:10](#) tells us, ONLY to steal, kill and destroy – he does NOT come to heal. [In fact the Greek says, 'He does not come *except* to steal, kill and destroy... wow!'] Secondly, God also means to tell us that it is a person who heals us, not a process; a relationship, not a therapy or method, a doctor or a medicine. These are only a means to an end, tools that the Lord uses. We are healed out of love, not obedience; grace, not works. It is a gift. Obedience is an important condition, the same

Scripture makes clear, but that is not what heals! HE does. He is our Lord, and it is out of that relationship that healing flows. When we are with the LORD, the healer, we can expect healing.

And thirdly the famous 'I am' means that he still does. God is eternally present, eternally the same. To say 'he used to heal' denies his now-ness. Healing is what he does. The only thing that has changed is that we now have a new covenant. Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, demonstrated its values:- He said to John the Baptist, '*the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.* Blessed is the man

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who does not fall away on account of me.' The promise is a better one, but the Lord who makes the promise has not changed.

More recently I was invited to address the youth at our own church, now renamed simply, LIFE! In trepidation as ever, I had just thirty-five minutes to teach them to heal the sick! God was brilliant from the first moment. Beginning with a simple practical exercise many were healed including one girl, a dancer, whose knees had clicked for years. In seconds she was healed. I met the father of the girl who prayed for her the next day, who was bubbly with delight! Then right at the end of the meeting, a young teenager testified that he was healed of back pain he had had all his life, having been born with a birth defect. God is wonderful!

God the Saviour

Here are changed lives! Here are those who will take the message and do the stuff! The next day one of the girls in the meeting prayed for her friend who had a strained and swollen wrist. It was totally healed. I saw the wrist before red and painful, and afterwards normal. Both girls were delighted. Others said later, 'I didn't know we could do this!' My heartfelt prayer is that we, the church, take this astonishing gift to the world, so that they may see and know who is the real God, the real Jesus, and commit their lives to him.

And God has even used the writing of assignments at College too! Having recently sent our students into the streets to win the lost, one student was writing her reflection on it, when her cousin asked what she was writing. 'Oh, some questions we asked people.' 'What questions?' And through those same questions, she led her cousin to Jesus! Immediately her cousin called her friend, 'Hey, you must come and do what I have just done!' And she gave her life to Jesus too!

With our love and prayers that you might walk in your destiny and all of God's fulfilling plans for you in 2008.

John & Bron Fergusson

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