

Grace & Truth

Youth

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An occasional paper for young people

YOUTH CAMP 2002

A REPORT BY ELISABETH MARSHALL

It's funny how short a year is. We arrived at Camp Sladdin and seemed to settle back into last year's bunks and wet shoes and dishwashing duties as though we'd only been away a week. The campsite is full of things to do and we certainly did them all.

Camp officially began on Thursday night, the fourth of April. Unofficially, it began with an exciting ferry ride for the South Island campers, who spent a pleasant night on Cook Strait before tucking in for an early morning snooze in a Wellington carpark. Less adventurous recruits, myself included, joined them for the long drive up to Clevedon, stopping on the way for a dip in a little-known hot pool renowned as a natural out-of-the-way beauty spot and also a rich source of amoebic meningitis. We survived this and packed ourselves back into the car, no small feat given that the Christchurch pillows and duvets were multiplying before our very eyes, and we continued the drive. Musical accompaniment was kindly provided by Isabelle the Pig and her friendly leeches, while a jar of instant coffee went a long way to keeping Dafydd's body and soul on speaking terms.

We arrived, therefore, at camp, threw our things on the abovementioned bunks, and discovered that Gareth and Christa (of last year's fame) were still in the kitchen and cooking a pasta bake. (*Whoa*, we thought. *Déjà vu.*) This was the first of eighteen meals, including suppers, that the fabulous duo produced, and each without exception was better than the last. Food is so important, is it not? I thought so anyway, and we spent a pleasant evening chatting, talking, yelling and otherwise fellowshiping with each other and with the pasta bake. Dafydd brought some of his extensive DVD and video collection and our first night closed with the genial movie *The Dish*, followed by a lovely supper and epilogue and a very subdued bedtime.





Friday saw us up and at it once again. After an excellent breakfast, we gathered for the morning meeting, sang hymns and choruses to the accompaniment of several musicians, and discussed temptation in the life of the Christian, a topic that generated quite a lot of conversation. We then drove to Sunshine Ranch activity centre to attempt a water confidence course, climbing wall and flying fox. It was raining, but some people fell in anyway, so it didn't really matter. I personally made it about four feet up a wall before graciously admitting defeat, but many intrepid campers buzzed up and down the thing for hours, while we were also blessed with Heidi's "back-



wards headfirst shuffle through the wet tyres" act and Reuben's much-acclaimed scream on the rope swing. It was an eventful day, and we returned to camp plumb tuckered out. We were significantly revived by dinner (rice and stew) and we then reprised one of the favourite activities of last year's camp, the barn dance. This was a great time of hopping back and forth, pushing pineapple trees, weaving in and out, twirling round and round, doing the eagle rock with style and grace, et cetera. Unfortunately the CD skipped every time we hit the ground, but it was still an incredible event. We eventually collapsed and watched *Chariots of Fire*, followed by supper and an epilogue, and, of course, bedtime.

Saturday we spent mostly on site at Camp Sladdin. The morning meeting was on friendship and we talked about David and Jonathan, Ruth and Naomi, and being friends with God. (Yes, we had breakfast before that.) Kayaks were kayaked on a nearby river, while at camp we took turns squelching through the foetid stream in innertubes, leading each other through the



forest by a string (blindfolded), and rescuing small campers from near-death situations (one, indeed, was returned in worse than original shape). The trust exhibited by nearly all the participants as we guided each other through these trials was both touching and sad. But again, we survived, though the small round green plantlike things from the stream stayed on our personal belongings for days. Dinner that night was sausage stew, and the film, in keeping with all that survival training, was *Cast Away*. Wilson took his place beside Isabelle as a camp mascot. Supper, epilogue, bed, as usual.



The next day, naturally, was Sunday. The morning meeting was entitled Good News, and Fred spoke on the woman at the well. He focussed on the invitation, "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (John 4:30).



Lunch and activities at camp followed, and in the evening we had another meeting, this time on personal devotions. Steven Turner spoke from Luke 10 and John 12 about what some people believed about Jesus during his life and how this is relevant for us after his death and resurrection. We also discussed how to ruminate,

which was helpful and entertaining. Sunday's movie was *Joni* and some fans also saw a documentary about Wilson, the well-known volleyball.

Monday's topic was guidance. A relatively lively discussion ensued, though discussion throughout the camp during these meetings was sometimes slow - perhaps we were all shy. At any rate, we spent an interesting morning thinking about guidance, and then proceeded to more activities. A number of challenges had been set up around the camp and we balanced on logs and barrels, hauled ourselves and others across bodies of water, swung across same on a far too short rope though with surprising





levels of success, and took a revealing Bible quiz. When asked how many songs Solomon had written, numbers from one to the low hundreds were put forward (the answer, in fact, was a thousand and five). After dinner (pizza), we were ready for the proposed climax, the camp concert. Spirits were high and items few, but team four triumphed with their song, "Stop, Pause and Look at Us." Humility, obviously, was not one of this year's camp virtues. Other teams also had fun, a

key element of which was wearing fake freckles. Monday has traditionally been the all-nighter insofar as we had one, so we watched *Life is Beautiful* before the diehards stayed up to watch *Finding Forrester* and got to bed in the wee sma's.

The careful reader will note that we are now up to Tuesday, the last day of the camp. We made the most of breakfast and then, under Baden-Powell's baleful eye, packed up and cleaned the campsite. Camp diaries were signed, addresses exchanged, fond farewells bidden. As quickly as camp had begun it was over. Finito. No more.

Next year's camp promises to be a lot of fun, especially as a new venue will be found; hopefully too more young people from all over New Zealand will be able to come. It means taking time out from studying and working and this has kept a few people away, but I would encourage young people to plan on coming to Youth Camp 2003 if it's remotely possible. The friendships that we made between churches and isolated youth groups were great, and will be vital to keeping connections strong in coming years. The upcoming Young Adults' Retreat for older youngs should build on the youth camp too - so there's no excuse, except for the genuinely ancient, for not being involved with a camp. It was definitely the highlight of the holidays.

GRACE & TRUTH YOUTH CAMPS

These camps are for young people aged 13-21. The 2003 Youth Camp is planned for **17-21 April 2003** at **Kokako Lodge, Hunua Falls**, South Auckland (location subject to confirmation). If you have been on previous camps you should receive the 2003 brochure when it is available. Otherwise, to be added to the mailing list contact:

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For up-to-date information visit the web site: <http://www.graceandtruth.rbc.org.nz>