

Grace & Truth *Youth*

Number 7

A pull-out supplement for young people

YOUTH CAMP 2001

A REPORT BY LAURA TURNER

Youth Camp 2001 began with a storm and traffic jams for me, my brother and my dad. We slogged through Auckland city and crawled out the other side, finally arriving at almost 7:30pm. Camp Sladdin, owned by Scouting Waikato and only two minutes drive from the bright lights of Clevedon, proved to be a relatively cosy Easter weekend retreat.



On walking through the front door, one was immediately scrutinised by a painting of Sir Baden Powell, founder of the Scouts. He frowned down upon our delicious meals, but failed to make an impact on our appetites. Our wonderful Welsh cooks, Gareth and Christa, dreamed up all sorts of old favourites and new tastes - Lasagne, macaroni cheese, curries, hot chocolate pudding, cheesecakes, cooked breakfasts....



After breakfast, mornings began with singing, followed by a talk. Each of these was based on a different chapter of the book of James. Stephen Turner spoke on “A faith that perseveres” and “A faith that says ‘God willing’”, Fred Schaumkel on “A faith that speaks”, and Dafydd Hughes on “A faith that works” and “A faith that prays”. Each of the talks had really good examples, as well as a clear message and practical applications to follow.

Following the talk, the rest of the day was spent doing all sorts of activities - flying fox, rope swing, rock climbing and water confidence course at nearby Sonshine Ranch; kayaking and other beach activities; bushwalks and a treasure hunt; confidence and organisation skills development; a trip to nearby Papakura pools, and of course the camp concert.



Each evening we watched a video, followed by a short discussion: “To Kill a Mockingbird”, “Stephen’s Test of Faith”, “The Hiding Place”, “Through Gates of Splendour” and “God’s Outlaw”.

The campers’ ages ranged from thirteen to eighteen.

People came from many different areas - the North Shore, Mt. Eden, Clevedon, Hamilton, Taranaki and Christchurch. We all got along extremely well, and formed new friendships. By Tuesday morning addresses were swapped, and most of us were sad to see the others go. Next year promises to be even better!

**Youth Camp
next year (DV)
4-9 April 2002**



View the developing camp web site at: www.graceandtruth.rbc.org.nz

Singleness and Marriage

DAFYDD HUGHES

Some time ago I read a book in which the author wrote that “a truly Christian view of both singleness and marriage will honour both equally without disparaging one or the other” (Al Hsu, *The Single Issue*, IVP, p.48). That assertion is true and finds clear support in the Bible. However, the author went on to argue that since this is the case, the view that marriage is normative (the usual status) for adults must therefore be wrong. But it does not necessarily follow that because one thing is normal and another the exception, then the norm has greater value or honour than the exception.

We learn from the Bible that marriage is a desirable state for men and women *and* a legitimate expectation for young people entering adulthood. Marriage is normative. Yet, the Bible also shows that singleness, for a time or for a life-time, is a real possibility. When marriage is said to be normal for adults it does not mean that singleness is abnormal in the sense of being defective or unnatural. The Bible teaches that marriage is honourable and the norm while singleness is honourable and the exception.

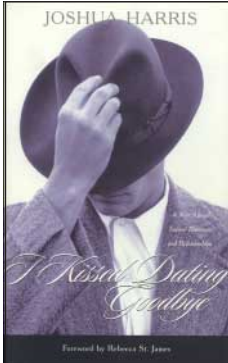
Since marriage is the norm it is reasonable that young people should make preparation for it in the expectation that they will one day marry. Christian young men should prepare to be godly husbands and fathers, while young women should learn to be virtuous wives and mothers. This should begin before wedding vows are exchanged and even before proposals of marriage are made and accepted. It is never too early to start cultivating proper attitudes and developing appropriate behaviour and skills. Yet while all this is going on in the legitimate expectation of one day being married, there must also be a realistic acceptance that singleness may lie ahead.

Acceptance of singleness does not come easily to many who occupy that state. Many tears may be shed, earnest prayers may be offered for grace to endure yet another day of ‘aloneness’, intense efforts may be made to fill evenings and weekends with activities to limit the sense of loneliness, and regular supplication may be directed to God for the provision of a suitable life-partner. It has been argued that the recent trend, particularly in home-schooling circles, of actively preparing young people for *marriage* has made the acceptance of *singleness* much more difficult. However, the difficulty of accepting singleness lies more in the lack of *proper* preparation for marriage which is itself the inevitable result of making no conscious preparation at all.

We live in a society where it is considered normal for a girl in her teens or even younger to have an exclusive boyfriend, and vice versa. A brief perusal of *Girlfriend* or other teen magazines will be sufficient to prove this point, and to show the degree of

physical as well as emotional involvement with which such youngsters are familiar. The dating scene, so common to young people inside as well as outside the church, is one of the great hindrances both to contented singleness and to successful marriage.

Joshua Harris has written two excellent books in which he shows the inherent dangers of teenage dating and describes the biblical alternative.



In *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* he describes the cycle that develops in dating relationships: 'falling in love', emotional and perhaps physical intimacy, and the almost inevitable break-up that follows when young people unready for marriage pursue exclusive relationships. This cycle can be both painful and destructive to the spiritual, emotional and physical well-being of those involved. It leads to discontent with singleness since the emotional thrill and physical stimulation of intimate relationships, once experienced, is difficult to live without. The effect on marriage is no less serious: the dating cycle accustoms young people to look for fresh stimulation with a new partner whenever the old relationship becomes jaded. This is hardly

good preparation for the commitment required to see a man and woman through the struggles as well as the joys of marriage. Josh Harris, himself a single young man, goes on in the book to lay down principles for maintaining physical and emotional purity while living a life where singleness is worthwhile rather than being viewed as a curse.

Joshua's second book, *Boy meets Girl*, picks up on the theme with which his first concluded: a biblical approach to finding a life-partner. It is an excellent treatment of this important topic, full of anecdotes from his own journey from singleness to marriage. Unlike some other books proposing an alternative to the dating game as a way of meeting and marrying Mr or Miss Right, this one is realistic in its advice. Josh recognises that we live in a sinful world where our families' expectations or our own personal circumstances may not fit neatly into a perfect courtship scenario. The principles he presents are practical and, if applied, will go a long way to helping a young man or woman to approach marriage purposefully.



These highly readable and extremely helpful books are recommended reading for all teens who want to please God in their developing singleness and their probable future journey into marriage.

I Kissed Dating Goodbye: \$25.50

Boy Meets Girl: \$22.95

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