



February 2011

"We can do no great things; only small things with great love."

Mother Teresa as quoted by Robert Fulghum in "All I Really Need To Know I Learned In Kindergarten"

In the first 6 weeks of the year I had travelled just over 30000 km and had spent half of that time away from my New Zealand family.

Train

We ran our first SUPAkidz camp in the Wellington Region in the second week of January at the Silverstream Retreat Centre. I went down as the team leader but it was very strange as most of the planning before the camp was done remotely using modern technology like Skype and Google documents. It was great to have Raewyn, our children and families staff worker in Wellington, on the team as she had done all the work recruiting leaders and children for camp. In fact she knew more than half the camp personally. As our theme was Go For Gold we looked at the life of Paul as our Bible teaching and it was amazing to see leaders growing in their own faith and leadership as they lead children in small groups.

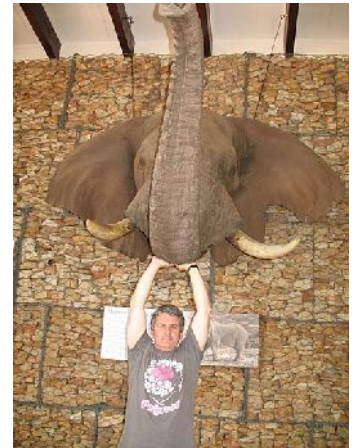
We shared the site with a group of 15 women from all over New Zealand who had gathered for three weeks to be taught by an American expert in quilting. I asked if the children might come and see what they were doing and for some children it was the highlight of camp.

The highlight for me was a train trip to a nearby park. As I sat on the train it was such a blessing seeing children with smiling faces sitting with leaders that they had grown to love and trust at camp. I have no doubt that that is the reason for eight boys staying to chat with their leaders after we had challenged them with the Gospel.



50 Years

The next two weeks of the time away from my New Zealand family was spend with my family in South Africa. My mum and dad flew me back as they were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. It was amazing leaving home at 3 am and travelling over 13000km at an average height of 10 km above the earth's surface and arriving in South Africa at 9 pm on the evening of the same day. It was really wonderful to see my parents. My brother and sister and their families joined us for a few days for the actual celebration which was a small event but really special. I enjoyed a great day with my mum and dad at the elephant reserve near the town where I grew up. It was amazing to see 150 elephant waiting to use a water hole. I left the country glad to be coming home but sad to leave family and a country that seems to be teetering on the edge of chaos, at times.



"Hap Oor" the elephant and you know who.

Coffee

I also spent some time with good friends, Wendy and Mike. who were both Scripture Union colleagues in South Africa, one of them my regional director. I was asked to speak to their regional executive and staff on how we do fund raising here. It was encouraging to see staff and volunteers encouraged by what I was able to share. Wendy gave me a bag of coffee to bring back with me and I have committed myself to meeting with at least two supporters or volunteers over coffee each week this year.

Thank you for being a part of the team that supports the work I do.

Blessings and peace



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Sunday 6 March

I am leading an **intergenerational faith service** at Ararua Community Church near Dargaville. It is also National Children's Day. Please pray for people around New Zealand who work with children and that all ages in the service will enjoy sharing and learning together.

Tuesday 8 to Sunday 13 March CANCELLED

I was supposed to be in Christchurch **cleaning** at the flower show, as I have done for the past two years, BUT is has been cancelled as a result of the tragic earthquake in the region. Please pray for the people of Christchurch and New Zealand as this will have far reaching consequences over the next few years.

Home

We went away as a family the week after Christmas to Tairua on the Coromandel Peninsula. We had a lovely time walking and resting and eating. The boys' uncle gave them some surfing lessons and they tried to out surf their cousins. On our last full day of holiday we received some really sad news that our neighbour, who has been a third grandma to the boys, had passed away unexpectedly while visiting her daughters in Europe. She will be greatly missed, in particular by Gill.

The same day that I flew to Wellington for camp Gill and the boys flew to Nelson to visit family in Blenheim. They went camping and also went down to Hanmer Springs for the weekend which is where the photo below was taken. While away though more bad news – we heard that the school the boys go to had 12 classrooms, including two resource rooms razed to the ground.

While I was in South Africa it was amazing to hear how the local community banded together to help get the school up and ready for the start of the new school year. Gill spent a few days helping move desks and other things, including hours labelling and covering books. It is amazing what a community can do when disaster strikes, as is happening in Christchurch with the earthquake that has occurred there earlier this week.

Fire

Twelve classrooms of our school burnt down during the school holidays. I was hoping that they would cancel school for a few weeks but they managed to rebuild 12 prefab classrooms before school started. I am now in my last year at the school as I am a year 8 student. James 11

Feet

My feet, we discovered, are now a centimetre longer than James' who is 3 years older than me. He was very quick to say that he would now be getting "hand me ups." My big feet do come in handy when I am skateboarding, which I love. I am also nearly as heavy as James which will be great when playing rugby. Chris 8

Sharing



Now that James is a senior at school I have been moved out of my room to share with Chris so that James may have his own room. At first I didn't really like sharing with Chris. Now I quite like it. The other night he got up to go to the toilet and when he came back he got into my bed as it was his bed when he shared with James. Thomas 5



The boys in the pools at Hanmer Springs with their cousin from Blenheim.

For more pictures of our holidays check out

<https://picasaweb.google.com/ramsbottomfamilynz>

Monday 14 March

Bible in Schools training for new teachers in South Auckland on story telling and drama.



Friday 15 – Sunday 17 -Thursday 21 April

Kings and Queens camp at Mangawhai Heads

Leaders training and preparation Friday to Sunday.

Camp from Sunday to Thursday.

Please pray for team leaders Carl Douglas and Ruth Elliott as they plan and prepare for camp.

real kids//real faith//real world

Invercargill

19 March

Auckland

26 March

Wellington

9 April

Please pray as we prepare for these events

