



LIBERTY Matters

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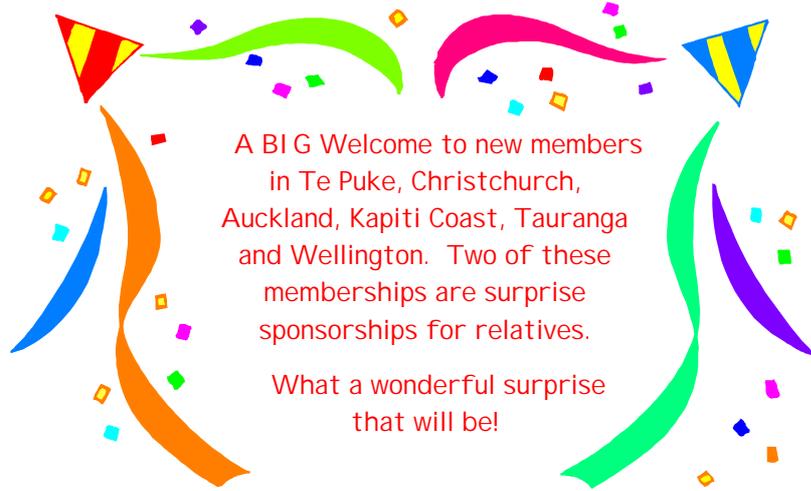
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A BIG Welcome to new members
in Te Puke, Christchurch,
Auckland, Kapiti Coast, Tauranga
and Wellington. Two of these
memberships are surprise
sponsorships for relatives.

What a wonderful surprise
that will be!

Money—A popular reason to argue

Apparently 36% of arguments between spouses are about money. This compares with only 2% about children, 10% about sex, and 11% about the in-laws!

When two people are managing money together, it's only natural that there'll be differences of opinion. Make sure you talk about your finances openly and honestly. And be prepared to compromise with each other.

"God is not unjust;
He will not forget
your work and the
love you have shown
Him as you have
helped His people
and continue to help
them." Heb 6:10

Read more hot tips on www.sorted.org.nz



Liberty Trust have been very pleased to recently assist two churches to recover from disastrous fires.

Throughout the year we have also donated to a welfare trust in Papakura and a national teaching trust, and two overseas church missions trips, and lent interest free to a Baptist mission in India.



CROWN FINANCIAL MINISTRIES

"Teaching People God's Financial Principles"

For about two years now we have been impressed by the quality of Bible teaching available at www.crown.org. You will already have read excerpts in our newsletters. Their ministry has now extended to New Zealand. It's aim is to teach 300 million people world-wide to handle money God's way by September 2015. This includes 5% of New Zealand's population.

We at Liberty Trust endorse the Crown small group training through churches and recommend its teaching to church leaders.

Reasons to be Debt Free

No one who is financially bound can be spiritually free. And the effects of financial bondage on a marriage relationship are devastating. Currently 50 percent of all first-time marriages fail, and the primary reason for the failure is financial incompatibility*. Therefore, it is to all Christians' advantage to strive to become debt free.

Read more at www.crown.org



* 1999 America



Sowing and Reaping

In November I attended a two-day seminar on Christian Finance titled “Business by the Book Conference”, hosted by Life Impact Trust. The speakers ranged from world-renowned business leaders to professional advisers, from a Bible College director to a pastor (Dr. Phil Pringle from Sydney). Throughout the seminar the principle of “Sowing and Reaping” seemed to become the theme of the conference, yet it obviously wasn’t planned as a common theme.

The scene was set on the first morning when the chief speaker, Jean Berdou, a practising barrister from South Africa and a regular speaker to churches and leadership conferences around the world, delivered a memorable statement. He said:

*The economy of the world is based on “Buying and Selling”.
The economy of the Kingdom of God is based on “Sowing and Reaping”.*

The parable of the sower is begun in Matthew 13 v 3. I always understood here that Jesus was encouraging the disciples to widespread evangelism everywhere. He seemed to be saying, “Don’t worry if some falls on stony ground, or some falls on people who embrace salvation for a time and then the weeds of sinful pleasure grow up and choke God’s word in their hearts. This is to be expected. There will always be some that falls on good ground and produce a hundredfold or more, so be encouraged.

After all, doesn’t Scripture say “My word shall not return unto me empty?” - No it doesn’t. That is an incomplete quote of Isaiah 55 v 11. The passage refers to “My word which goes out from **My** mouth” – not from ours.

The meaning of the parable is actually the exact opposite. Jesus is really saying: “Don’t waste valuable seed. Spend most of your effort preparing the ground before sowing seed, and then you’ll reap a bountiful harvest.” The parable is repeated by the New Testament writers in Mark chapter 4 v 3 and Luke chapter 8 v 5. In each we find that the reference to multiplication occurs only in the last verse.

Jesus deliberately chose to spend most of His parable teaching on the need for patient preparation of the soil.

If the farmer wants a bountiful harvest he has to put in the effort to prepare the soil. Seed is precious. (Ps 126 v 5-6) Don’t waste it. Every farmer had to carefully store his precious seed over the winter, no matter whether his family had enough food to eat or not, and protect it against vermin. Seed for planting was absolutely essential. Possibly he would store it communally in the town’s storehouse. Every one of Jesus’ listeners knew this.

What did the farmer have to do before he sowed? First he would have to fence the land to protect it. Then plough it so that the young plants could grow and obtain nourishment from the soil. And of course it required water (prayer) to obtain the nutrients. (How much prayer do we put in?) And talking of nutrients, the ground needed fertiliser, and weeding, before planting.

And of course there was the matter of ownership of the land in the first place. He either had to own it or lease it. Should we ask God for the right to use the land? We could claim that all land is His. Therefore we have the right to use it in his service without asking Him because He commanded us to “go into all the world and preach the gospel.” However I would rather ask the owner for His permission and blessing first. Although God owns everything, Satan is the “*prince of this world*” (Jn 14 v 30). It could be that the “spiritual” owner of that land is Satan. Have you thought about that? We may have to first bind the strongman. The farmer wouldn’t plant in someone else’s field. Do we? First we must pray. Then remove the stone trees etc. before we can plough. How often do we rush into sowing (evangelism) without first paying the price of preparing the ground?

Jesus’ real message here is that **the measure of response is directly determined by the quality of the soil**. We need to memorise this important principle taught by Jesus if we are going to have any success in evangelism. Preparation requires much prayer and tedious labour. If there is little prayer or follow-up, if there is no local church available for nurture and fellowship, if there are no Scriptures in the first language of the people, then the seed cannot put down root and young plants will die in the heat. The better we prepare before we sow the greater will be the harvest.



Kelvin Deal

Genesis 26 v 1 & 12:
In the year of the famine ...
I saac sowed and became wealthy.
Now that’s good sowing!

