

In our Christmas letter last year, we explained how as a result of a trip to USA last November, we had deferred our plan to have Christmas in PNG to March. By now, all of you who share with us in these annual year-end exchanges of family news and happenings, will be aware of the tragedy that overcame us on the 22nd of February with that fateful phone call that told us of **Richard's** death in a flying accident in PNG. Our world came to a shuddering stop. What followed was literally heartbreaking. We experienced the deep grieving of a different culture as many villages held their 'sori' ceremonies to express their grief to us. Their eyes were as red as ours, and the tears streaming down their faces wiped away the mud and paint that was a symbol of mourning. It seemed that every one wanted to hug us or at least shake our hand. And so it went on for many days – emotionally draining - until almost 10,000 people had attended memorial services in PNG and NZ.



The Accident Report answered some questions, didn't answer others, and raised new ones. Although the plane was being flown by two Captains, Richard and Chris, Richard was acting as First Officer on this occasion for his close friend. The plane did not have a Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR), but the cabin attendant had headphones and could hear the cockpit conversations. As they abandoned a third attempt to land at a typical steeply sloping airstrip, Richard was

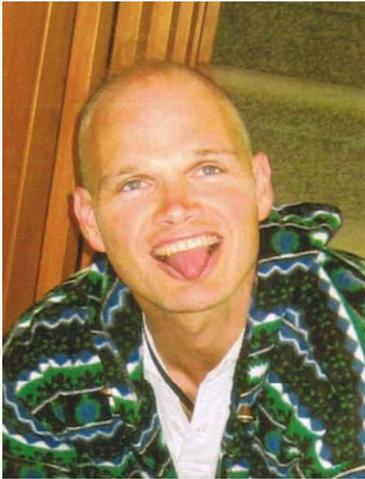
heard to call 'Power', but Chris did not respond. Richard then called for 'Climb Power' (a higher power setting) and again there was no response from Chris. Richard was then seen to effectively take control and apply power, but it was tragically too late in the unforgiving demanding and dangerous flying conditions common in PNG.



A few days before Easter, a Memorial Service was held in Auckland with many tributes to a wonderful son, husband and father. In mid July, we had a quiet family service to place his ashes in the North Shore Cemetery where the children released red balloons on which they had written messages of love for their father.

In September, **Cherie and the children** moved into a large family home in Mairangi Bay where they are close to Cherie's family and church support. The children are settled into the Campbell's Bay Primary school. **Larissa** has taken part in the National Youth Theatre Company production of 'Annie', and **Marcus** has numerous cups and awards for his first year playing soccer. Larissa now has a kitten, and Marcus a puppy - pets their previous itinerant life on the mission field denied them.

A week after Richard's memorial service, **Paul** left on a six month world trip that saw him backpacking in the mountains of India, bee keeping in France, travelling through UK, and Europe (sometimes on a moped supplementing the inadequate engine by pedalling up hills !), and home via Chile, a country he found most acceptable. Through texting, we were able to follow his movements and use the internet to view his localities. After a week with us in October when he bought a new motorcycle, he returned home to the West Coast. He does not intend to return to his optometry position in Christchurch, but plans to survive off his 'farming' activities.



Paul refuses to take a decent photo, and is always poking his tongue out at the world - literally. **Lyndell** and her partner **Smithy**, have at last bought a house in Nelson and move in at the beginning of December. Lyndell has been promoted to "Sous-Chef" in charge of her shift in the kitchen at the Lambretta Café and restaurant in Nelson, with a total staff of over 50. Her second item of happy news is that they plan to marry in mid 2006. We are about to spend a week in the South Island, hiring a campervan to visit Paul on his remote property as his facilities are 'basic', but we will be able to sleep in a proper bed in Lyndell's new home.



On 1st April, **Reg** officially 'retired' from the Comworth Group, but promptly returned in a consultant's role for approximately 50 hours per month to handle the personnel, property and legal matters for the Group. This arrangement allows him to mostly work from home to his own timetable, and he usually drives down to the city for a couple of days per week as necessary for meetings.

With Reg not travelling to Auckland regularly on a Wednesday, **Jan** has had to take herself to her embroidery group in the city, but usually follows this up with time with Larissa and Marcus after school. Her church based coffee mornings in Warkworth on a Friday organised with a couple of other close friends are popular with attendance of 20 or so from a group involving about 40.. In addition, once a quarter, they hold a special coffee meeting in the church hall with over 30 in attendance. Themes have included Mad Hatters Tea Party, Soiree and Teddy Bears Picnic.



In September, we took ourselves off to Hamilton Island in the Great Barrier Reef, and followed that with a cruise through the Whitsundays. We needed the break. We landed half way between Cairns and Brisbane, and drove slowly south, heading 300kms inland to Emerald to experience the dryness, then visited friends in Bunderberg - the same place as last year. We visited Reg's last living relative of his father. Reg was surprised to learn that the family tree had been researched back to Jewish connections of the House of David on one side, and a dalliance by Charles III of England with a Mrs Fitzherbert on another side. *(It's still Royal blood – Reg)*

Then in November, we spent a relaxing week at Opuia and Russell in the Bay of Islands with special friends from Australia. We hadn't been back to Russell since our honeymoon 43 years ago – and the old Post Office house we stayed in, was still there, now surrounded by more modern structures.



As you celebrate this Christmas, this comes to wish you God's richest blessing. May His presence bring you a special joy.

With our Love,

Jan and Reg