

Wheelchair Musings



Contents

[The Fish Tank](#)

[The Stool](#)

[The Boat Race](#)

[Cars](#)

[Time](#)

[The Pier Fire](#)

[Stuff](#)

[Information](#)



By Roy Collins
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Wheelchair Musings

The Fish Tank

I have restarted tropical fish keeping (I had a tank for several years before coming to Somerset). Sitting looking at the community I have established in the aquarium, the following thoughts came to my mind.

I call it a “Community” because the group is made up of several different types of fish, very much like our Church community, made up as it is, of a number of different types of people. Bear with me as I go through the list of what I notice as I sit in my wheelchair just observing.

There are those fish that seem to be very busy, bustling around, and generally contributing to the life of the tank and giving a good impression to the casual passer by.

There are those who get on with finding the good things around them, and keeping what they have found to themselves.

Then there are those who are only appear at feeding time (a special occasion in the life of a fish).

There are those who go about their business quietly and without a fuss and are often missed by the observer but would be greatly missed. Some of the group keep very much to themselves, and take little part in presenting the life of the community within the tank.

I must also mention the newcomers to the aquarium. Sometimes fish are introduced from outside and occasionally they are small fry. Unfortunately the majority of the group take little notice of these recent arrivals except to ignore them as if they had no right to be in the group. Such fish don` t seem to realize that these newcomers are the future of the Community. On the whole they all seem to get on well together without too many disagreements.

Just occasionally the keeper of the aquarium has to take a hand in renewing damage to the environment or making some minor adjustments to the look of the place.

Roy Collins

Acts 2 .vv. 42-47 NIV

[Return to Contents](#)

The Stool

Several years ago Jennifer and I visited a farm implements museum

I was fascinated because in the 50`s and early 60`s I worked in a Corn Merchants and came into contact with all sorts of farms. Some very large and modern, others very small and locked in a previous century. So I recognised many of the exhibits. Many were very primitive and crude almost home made affairs. A lot were ultra modern, in shiny new red paint: huge and awe inspiring by their complexity. I remember on that visit being intrigued by a simple small wooden milking stool. The building was old; an original old high roofed barn with a cobbled floor. One display was of a wax work figure of a milk maid sitting on the stool doing her work of milking a cow. An everyday task amongst many, I have no doubt, on a busy small farm.

Afterwards I thought about that milkmaid on her three legged stool and pondered why three legs? I soon realised that on an uneven floor a four legged stool would be unstable. It would be bound to wobble as always one of the four legs would not be in contact with the floor, the balancing act on the part of the milkmaid would soon give way to her falling off and spilling the pail of milk held between her knees. So she relied on three legs to keep her steady.

Rather like a Christian. We have three legs to rely on to keep us steady and so enable us to continue with our tasks in a busy life.

They are Father God, Jesus Christ the Son, our crucified Saviour, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter promised by Jesus. These Three will keep us steady as we rely on them to support us as we get on with our lives as active Christian Disciples.

Matt 28 v 19 NIV
Roy Collins

[Return to Contents](#)

Wheelchair Musings

The Boat Race

More musings which may, or may not, be relevant to those of us travelling along the path toward the Heavenly kingdom.

When I was a lot younger than I am now I was able to enjoy boating, that is, I used to hire a rowing boat for an hour or so on the local lake and spend a pleasant afternoon in the sunshine.

That all came back to me recently when watching the Oxford and Cambridge annual Boat Race.

In each boat there were eight men putting their all in getting their skiff to the eventual destination. None of the eight, once started could see where they were going. They could clearly see where they had been; see what they had gone through, rough water, difficult episodes in the journey, uncertainty about why they were where they were and whether it was all worth it. But they had little idea about what lay in front of them. Would it be calm water around the next bend? Would they have enough stamina left to finish the race? The one reassuring thing that they could rely upon was that the Cox could see the way ahead and was able and willing to guide the crew safely to the destination, was able to encourage and bolster the efforts of them all.

If we apply those thoughts to our Christian life and journey there seem to be several parallels. We know the destination but we know little of what awaits us around the next corner; will it be ill health, a lost job, financial difficulties. We don't know and being over anxious about the future could bring further worries and even upset the boat.

One thing that is certain for us Committed Christians we have a Cox in charge of our journey. He will not cause us to come to grief on our journey. Remember He has been on the same journey as we are on, He knows the future. He continues to encourage us to keep on putting our all into completing the journey.

Most of all think of the celebration we shall have when we get to the destination, just as the men of the Oxford and Cambridge boat race had on their arrival at the finishing post

Heb 12. vv 1-3 NIV

Roy Collins

[Return to Contents](#)

Wheelchair Musings

Cars

The recent celebration of the model T Ford's 100th. Birthday brought to my mind the days when I lived at home, not my home with Jennifer, but at home with my parents and two brothers. The elder of these was Ron. He died some years ago in Australia of a heart attack.

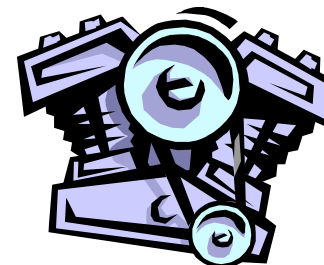
I recalled, as I watched the procession of very elderly model T Fords going to their celebration, the time Ron spent in the shed, come garage, at the bottom of the garden, tinkering with a broken down and very ancient Austin Seven Ruby tourer.

I have never been very interested in the insides of motor cars: as long as they went it was alright by me. Not with Ron and his friends Alan and Doug. They spent hours and hours renovating this, to me, worn out wreck. This went on for what seemed months, with my parents getting more and more annoyed with having bits of car littering the kitchen and Dad unable to get into his shed. At last the body seemed back together and the remaining concern seems to have been getting the actual engine of the thing sorted. No matter what they did, no matter where they went for another spare part, no matter what magazine they searched out and read, no matter what advice they got, the thing would not do what internal combustion engines are supposed to do: Start.

It was about this time I became a Christian and a text that I have remembered clearly from that time is in Psalm 51 and verse 10. "Create in me a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within me." That was the trouble, the heart of the machine. It needed renewing and until that was done it would not serve the ambition of the three young men.

Eventually they did get a new engine or heart for the car and they were able to travel forward to their chosen destination. Does your heart need cleaning out and renewing? The Lord can do it, is anxious to do it but we have to bring it to Him and ask Him first.

Roy Collins



[Return to Contents](#)

Wheelchair Musings

Time

Time seems to me to be a funny thing. You can't see it, you can't touch it, you can't smell it and yet we all experience it.

Something else I realized about time when I began to think about it – it can fly, it can drag, it can slip away, it can be good, it can be tough. You can be short of it. Sometimes it seems endless, it can be on your side and at other times it can be against you. You can use it and you can waste it. Some people can make it and for others there is never enough of it. For an exam candidate it can be up. A prisoner does it. You can spend it. You can tell it. You can fritter it away. But no-one can escape it.

In the Bible there are a lot of references to time.

Psalm 9 v. 9 tells us that “the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed and a stronghold in times of trouble.” Worth remembering when time is rough and tough

Again in Psalm 31 vs. 14 &15 we read, “I Trust in YOU O Lord, I say You are my God. My times are in your hands.” So we need not worry about time, it is in God's hands

Hosea said “for it is time to seek the Lord, until He comes” (Ch.10 v.12).

The New Testament also has time for time. In John Chapter 2 we find the story of the wedding in Cana. Jesus says to his mother, “My time is not yet come.”

And later Jesus prays to His Father, and ours, saying, “Father the time has come. Glorify your Son, that Your Son may glorify You.” Read on in John chapter 17.

In Acts Jesus is recorded in Chapter 1 saying, “It is not for you to know the times and dates the Father has set by His own authority.”

It seems to me therefore that whatever you think about time there is no reason to worry about it. Time is in God's hands. Whether we have a lot of time left, or not very much, we should leave it to the Lord. He is our refuge. We should trust Him in all things and at all times.

[Return to Contents](#)

(Bible quotes are from NIV)



Wheelchair Musings

The Pier Fire

The fire on the Grand Pier in August 2008 set me thinking. Did you notice how people from all over, including from abroad, commented on the happening? Everyone who saw or heard had an opinion, expressed a view, either to the press, the Media or to passers by, even complete strangers from out of town found that the Fire had an impact on them.

Sometime afterwards I noticed the large number of people coming to the pier to see for themselves the effect of the fire. Not only local people but coaches from far and wide. All to see the effects of the Fire. The Pier was crowded, a bustling multitude coming to see for themselves the results of the fire. Then we got the aftermath. How the fire on the Pier had effected them. Letters to the press. An outburst of feelings, of emotion.

Isn't that, I thought to myself, how it would be for the town if the many Christian people caught the fire of the Spirit? It should make a difference. Other people would see the results, would ask questions, express an opinion, be attracted to learn more about what made Christians tick, want to be part of the events going on and perhaps catch the fire for themselves.

Are we ready as a Christian Fellowship to catch the Fire of the Spirit and show the effects of being Jesus' followers to the people around us?. I wonder, if we did, what difference it would make, to ourselves, to our Church fellowship, to our local Community, to our Town. ??

1Thes.5 v.19 NIV

Roy Collins

[Return to Contents](#)

Wheelchair Musings

Stuff

You know how it is; over the years you gather a lot of “stuff”. Gradually, the stuff gets moved to the garage, shed or loft. After a while the stuff is largely forgotten. That is until the stuff gets in the way. Sometimes it hides something valuable and important that we were looking for, something we thought we had lost.

Amongst the stuff there are often things we thought were important, worth having at the time we acquired them. However in the light of present circumstances they are not only unnecessary, they are possibly an embarrassment.

Because the stuff gets in the way we tidy up, move it around, trying to remember why we ever got a particular item in the first place. In a way we get attached to the stuff and it becomes almost part of us. We get used to seeing the stuff as we go about our normal business. We feel comfortable having the stuff around. We know where it is and say, “It’s not costing us anything being there”.

Then, for some reason, perhaps a prompting from one’s spouse, a relative who comes to give a hand, or maybe a remark from someone, you begin to realize that your stuff is not only unnecessary but even an embarrassment.

So we decided to declutter our garage. It took a while to agree what should go and where it should go. A radical sort out followed, quite a difficult decision in some instances. Some of the things had become part of us, but now were getting in the way of our preferred way of life.

We set a date, advertised and the declutter went ahead. You can now get into our garage and we both feel better for clearing out the stuff.

Now that the Garage sale is past history I find that I’ve learned a valuable lesson. A lesson relating to our Christian life. As we go on coping with whatever life throws at us we accumulate a whole lot of stuff—habits, attitudes, relationships, which in the light of the way of life we should lead as Christians, have become an embarrassment; stuff which is a handicap in our walk with God.

Is it time to decide to declutter our lives? Time to get rid of those attitudes and habits that deep down we are ashamed of having, ideas we have collected as we have gone along and we now know really damage the image of Jesus Christ.

Mtt 6vv.19-21 NIV

Roy Collins

[Return to Contents](#)



Wheelchair Musings

(some of these have appeared in
recent issues of the Clarence Park Baptist Church Magazine
others are yet to be published)

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[Return to Contents](#)