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Dear Family and Friends,

Well, another year has begun and is almost 1/12 over - so that's only 11/12s of it to go! How are all the New Year's resolutions going? Anyone keeping to any of them? I'm guessing a few, it not most, have been pushed to the side somewhere after not being met or kept. I'm not too sure that I made any really, having long ago realised that they were barely kept - why leave to New Year's what you can leave off or change today! Sounds good if nothing else.

So with January almost over it is already possible to be getting a bit of a feel on how 2007 is shaping up in expectations. So this is where I could very easily head off on one of my great rambling tangents - but I will seek to be restrained in my comments, not being able to completely leave the subject alone as I probably should :-)

EXPECTATIONS DASHED OR REALISED?

I'm not really sure just what my expectations for 2007 were in relation to my health. It began with the forebodings of bad times ahead, but thankfully that has proven to be the case. My health has improved tremendously in the last couple of weeks, even to the point where I can feel reasonably comfortable in stating that I'm near 100% well (the illness lurks in the background ready to come out of hiding at some point in the future however). Now that is something I didn't expect to be able to say.

So what about other expectations? Have they been dashed or realised? Again, a difficult question to answer when you didn't really have any expectations as to what you would be expecting in the New Year. I know at the beginning of last year I had many expectations and they were almost immediately dashed, so this year I didn't really come into it with any expectations. How is the saying, 'have no expectations and you won't be disappointed.' I guess I approached this year a little like that actually. In one particular area I had to look at things that way, though I was leaning toward the expectation of being disappointed as I had always been in the past - you can't escape experience I guess. So now that I have more of the same (if not worse than before), I guess I shouldn't be too disappointed - I should have expected it. Still, I am very disappointed and really should have been able to expect better.

So in 2007 so far, if there is one thing I would say as to how I would describe my experience of it, I would have to say that I see 2007 as promising nothing special. Now don't think I'm really down, depressed, or the like - I am far from it in fact. In life there are some things that dominate the way you see things and even though so much can and is going well for you, if something which you regard as being really important to

you is not, then it really clouds the brightest of days even when there are no other clouds blocking out the sun. Does that make sense? It does to me and I do feel a little bit that way. That big cliché about time fits in around about here and I'm sure that time will bring about a change in the way I perceive things in my experience of life and that which is casting a shadow over my experience of life in 2007 thus far.

Now aren't you glad I didn't really go off into one of my rambling tangents that you would have had no possible idea of knowing what I was talking about?

I have a friend who is currently repeating a type of mantra, the refrain of which is, 'pack them away and move on.' Now, that may not mean a lot to many people but it really encapsulates what the actual answer is to my little cloudy dawn that is 2007 thus far. Now this friend tells me that I always give good advice but rarely follow it myself, and that assessment is sadly true in many respects - but at least I have a kindred spirit in the acknowledgement that it is unlikely that she could do what she is counselling me to do. The scary thing is that her mantra is exactly the advice I would have given someone else (and probably will be what I will eventually have to do - much to my chagrin).

Now aren't you glad I didn't really go on with all of that??? :-)

HOLIDAYS

So at this moment in time I'm having a week off work, to just enjoy having a break while not being ill. Now this is such a rare experience for me and it may very well be one of the few holidays I had away from work which I didn't take off because I was sick - at least in the last couple of years. I don't know that I'm actually going where (haven't yet), but I am enjoying the 'feeling' of not being ill.

I have my 2007 work year planned out as far as when I'll be taking leave and hopefully there will be opportunity for a couple of actually holidays away in the wilderness. So I'll begin planning the first trip in the near future - just a short weekend trip for that particular one.

WORK

After an extended period of illness it is very good to be able to catch up and get back on track. Being a manager it is difficult to catch up with all the documentation, reports, etc, required after what has been pretty much a 9 to 10 months period of illness (especially since about July 2006). Anyhow, it is a great feeling to know you have just about got back to where you should be.

Our ever dragging on building project which has become 'bigger than Ben Hur,' continues to drag on. It may be completed by June 2006 - at least the majority of it. I am so looking forward to that. Normality in the work place will be a major blessing.

Toward the end of December 2006, the work vehicle was badly damaged in an accident and today I should be able to pick it up after repairs of at least \$10 600.00 (Australian). Though we have hired a vehicle during its absence it will be good to have our own Ute back, and this will help us in making further advances with the many projects underway.

OTHER MATTERS

Now even though these matters are referred to as other matters, doesn't necessarily mean they are not important or are of lesser importance than the rest - just thought I should add that disclaimer as I know how some 'Calvinists (and some will be reading this letter)' tend to think :-). It is quite likely I'll be at the Cardiff Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia this weekend, which should prove interesting as I re-enter the

mainstream of Australian Reformed intrigue (which is not meant as a slur on Cardiff PCEA by the way).

As most fellow sinners know I have no permanent 'spiritual home' at the moment - in the local church sense I mean. Australia is very much barren ground in this respect and local 'Reformed' churches (and there are not many in Australia) leave a lot to be desired. So 2007 is looking like a challenging year as I try to form some conclusions as to what I should do in this area. Please, no lectures about the need of being part of a local church, etc, I do know about that :-). There is a big difference between knowing what you should do and being able to actually do it in the local context. There are probably more Particular Baptist Churches in the Antarctic and above the Arctic Circle than there are in Australia, let alone NSW or Newcastle-Lake Macquarie. So as I say, it is very difficult to know just what to do, especially for a convinced Particular Baptist who cannot readily stomach other 'versions.'

Yeah, I'm probably too picky - been told that. But I find it very difficult to be part of a scene where the church is more Liberal/Arminian, etc, than Evangelical/Particular.

Well, there were 'other matters' I was going to discuss here, but I might leave it at that today. Until next time I guess. From drought stricken and fire-ravaged Australia,

Regards,

Kevin