

Warm new years greetings from this alpine basin where the last of this season's mountain daisies lift their glory to the sun. It's been the best blooming in many years. The days are warm and the skies clear and our pumpkins spread afar, our 6 lettuces give us salad leaves one by one, our parsley adds its bit, our 6 beetroot show promise and our super tom grows in wild leaps. Alas the climbing beans struggle but there is still hope. I write to share a big change in our life — it's going to get even better.

Some will already know that I struggled a bit last year with my health. And I know news of the very recent developments is moving out there. So for clarity we share the facts.

From March 2008 I had what seemed to be a chest infection. By September it had become so entrenched I was so breathless the condition threatened our planned two-month speaking tour of the North Island and the top of the South. However, a treatment for a 'silent reflux' brought some relief. The tour went ahead although it was difficult at times. I enjoyed the tour and was sustained by the enthusiasm of the organisers and those who came to the talks.

However, on arriving home I was still breathless and getting worse. We decided to look beyond the 'reflux' and in early January got the answer to the mystery from our cardiologist. While the reflux difficulty was real it was masking a growing problem with my heart. Two unrelated issues were overlapping. It seemed my bypass surgery of 2001 was now not enough.

In February an angiogram will be done to gather data. Meanwhile, the cardiologist offered a medication that he thought might help. He was right. The difficulty with health issues is not knowing what's wrong. With new knowledge I am managing very well, walking in the forest with greater freedom, finding a pace that suits and no longer trying to push through 'the breathing problem'. As I've written in the past — you can't push the river. It's time to remember to follow that path.

Friends and family who have been told of the situation have offered wonderful advice and brought to my attention cutting edge research that helps bring clarity to the path to follow. What's out there now is remarkable — studies by concerned scientists that review the old and open ways to the new. There is an impressive independence and integrity in the published papers we have researched. So we feel we have all that in hand.

This means postponing the talks we were tentatively planning for February — March. But we will keep in touch by email when we might travel again.

There is a way you can help. This brings me to another aspect of the change. We have taken a big step with our books. As you know some titles are now out of print and we lack the funds to reprint them. The October — November tour paid for a third of the cost of printing a new edition of *Song of the Stone*. However, *Song of the Whale* and *Greenstone Trails* may never appear again and only a very limited number of *Wisdom of the Four Winds* remain.

Why is the reprinting fund non-existent? A publisher has no future with no stock. Well it's very simple really — marketing our books through bookshops no longer works. For instance, *Wisdom of the Four Winds* has a retail price of \$84. GST on \$84 leaves \$74.38 of which the distributor receives \$13.89, the bookshop \$29.75 through the 40% discount and StonePrint \$31.24. While that seems a good return in fact it is absolutely unworkable. After the printing cost, insurance on stock — warehousing — accountant's fees — vehicle costs — internet website — phone bills — etc, are deducted our profit is only \$4.90 per copy. When a book selling for \$84 brings us only \$4.90, we are in trouble.

This is how it is with all our books when sold through bookshops. It's not their fault it's just the way it is, just the reality of today. Small companies like us cannot survive in these conditions.

There is of course another way. It's how StonePrint began and it's where we return. It's called direct marketing. Bookshops will receive no further StonePrint stock. Then the only way to buy the books will be through our website.

www.stoneprint.co.nz The cost will be the same, the service will be the same and StonePrint will gain. By the way our website is new. It's had a very professional update by a friend and even features links to two brief talks I gave to a visiting couple who wished to get something on film. There will be more pieces like that linked in soon. As an 'opening special' we are offering *Song of the Old Tides* (flexifold version) at \$45 (usually \$60) just until the end of February 09.

In addition I am now on Facebook and apparently have 5 fans of whom Tia, my granddaughter, is one. Unfortunately, Oliver, a new grandson born on January 8th 2009, is too young to sign in. However there are 10 other grandchildren to round up.

How can you help? We need to get word of this change out there, need to make it clear that the only way to our books is through the StonePrint website. Spreading the word is vital. Tell your friends, let the world know StonePrint still exists, put us as link on your website. The best publicity is 'word of mouth'— friends talking to friends.

We believe StonePrint still has much to do. I have almost finished writing 'Origins', the story of the Polynesians and the Pacific that I took on tour. And just for the fun of it, two weeks ago I began another book to give me a strong focus on the future. I've given it this title — Been there! Done that! But it wasn't enough! Some will remember I put that work aside six years ago when I was called to write *Song of the Old Tides*. Now I've taken it back up.

It's a challenging time for everyone. Yet, it's a wonderful time to be alive. President Barak Obama's inauguration speech was a masterpiece that shared a shift in consciousness that heralds a new dawn. Hope stands tall and the courage to win through to the world we want to see holds true.

Journey well friends.

Kia Kaha! Walk your truth!

Arohanui



Barry

StonePrint:
P.B. 55037, Castle Hill Village
State Highway 73, Canterbury 8020
info@stoneprint.co.nz
www.stoneprint.co.nz

Book Orders:
Technical Books
The Windmill Centre
184 Clarence St, Riccarton, Christchurch
Ph: (03) 348-0220, Fax: (03) 348-2220
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