

The Walk of Faith



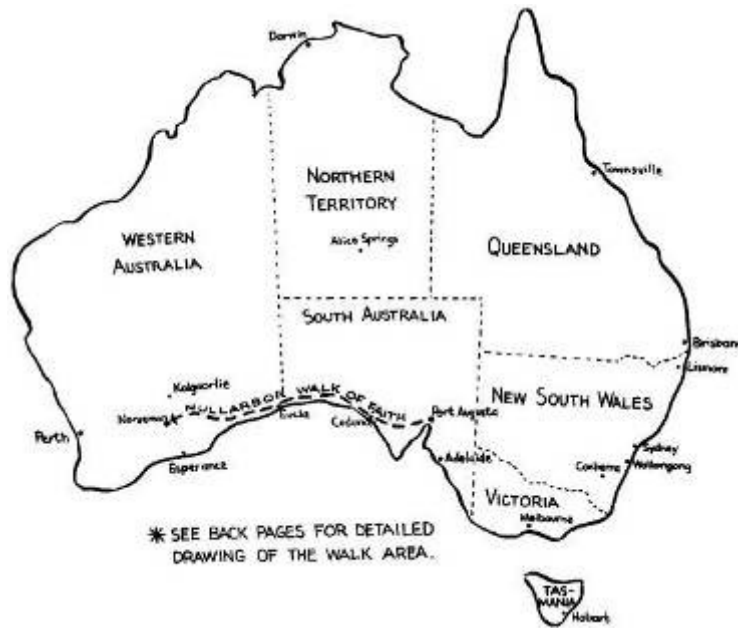
About the Book

The Walk of Faith tells the true story of a group of young people in Australia who walked across one of the most empty pieces of land in the world. They did not take food, water, money, or a change of clothes with them. The walk was over 1,000 miles long, and on the way there were almost no houses or people. Only about 20 -30 cars a day travel on the road through this desert, and most people are afraid to stop for anyone.

The youngest walker was 11-year-old Rachel Sukumaran, from Bangalore, India. At the end of the walk, Rachel said on television, "Many people in my country go hungry because people in rich countries like Australia are too greedy."

The leader was 15-year-old Christine McKay.

The reason for the walk was because the young people believed that Australians were losing their faith in God, and with it they were losing their interest in helping other people. They wanted to show the world that God is still alive, and that he can feed us if we put our faith in him.



Chapter 1: The Story

At 8am on Monday, May 6, 1985, six young people, one of them 12-year-old Rachel Sukumaran from Bangalore, India, started on a walk of more than 1000 miles across one of the most empty places in the world, where houses are as much as 120 miles apart, and each night the weather drops below freezing. They had no money, no water, no food, no blankets, no tent, no radio or other way of talking to people in other parts of the world, and no helper car to follow them. "Where God Leads He Meets the Needs" was printed on the front of one of the white robes they each were wearing.

Police in Australia, where the walk happened, promised that the group would die. If freezing weather did not kill them, then they would die without food or water in the Nullarbor Desert. Church leaders across Australia argued that the trip was the work of the devil, saying that the young people were trying to force God to help them with a miracle. Friends asked them to drop their foolish plan to show that God is real to a world that was not interested.

People were most angry about the danger that little Rachel was going to face on the walk, and some tried to take her away from the group and send her back to India.

When the walkers pushed to the side all the arguments and started their walk of faith, newspaper and television companies from all over the world sent reporters to write about how these foolish young people died because of the crazy things they believed.

But day after day, with helicopters above them, and reporters taking it in turns to walk with the group as far as each reporter could walk, the young people travelled on.

At first things went surprisingly smoothly. But as they walked on across the desert, weather, food, and water problems made their trip more difficult. But by this time the group was ready, both in their bodies and in their spirits, for each new problem as it came up.

They cooked and ate kangaroos that had died beside the road, drying the skins to be used for clothes. They ate wild berries. And when they needed water, God sent rain to fill

holes that had been dry for many months. At night clouds protected them from the cold as all around them rain was falling on other parts of the Nullarbor.

But most of their help came through people. They had agreed between themselves not to ask for help from anyone, but their faith was winning the hearts of thousands. Whole churches were praying for them, and a number of people believed that God was telling them to travel up to 600 miles just to bring them a meal or a blanket. The few people who lived in houses or worked selling petrol and food on the road gave them hot meals and a place to sleep when they were close enough to receive this help. Bags or boxes of food were often left for them beside the road, or hanging from a fence, put there by humble helpers.

An older man, from Townsville, Australia, travelled 2000 miles to join with them on their walk of faith.

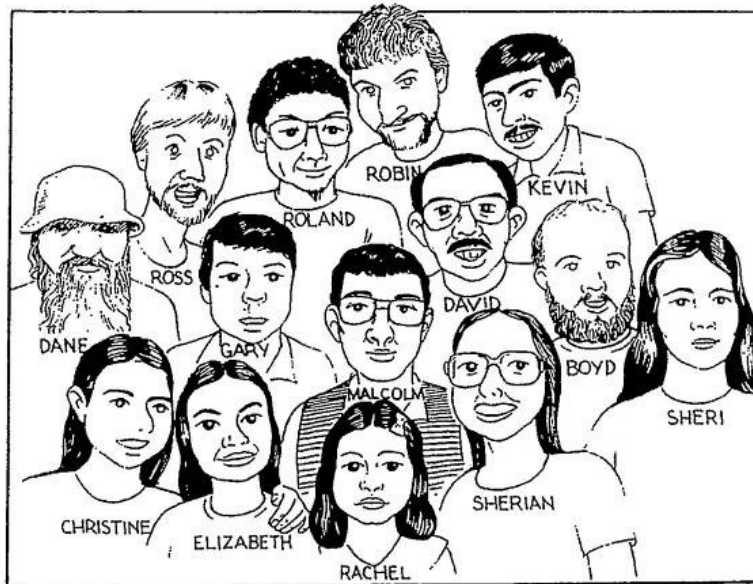
Less than eight weeks after they started the walk, all seven people, smiling and healthy, walked into Norseman, Western Australia, two days earlier than they had planned, to mark the end of the walk.

"We are not going out into the desert to die," 15-year-old Christine McKay had said in a television interview before the walk. "We are going out into the desert to show the world that God is alive."

And that is what they did.

In the following pages we will tell a little about the group before the start of the walk, and we will give a day by day report of their feelings and actions on the walk, from their own words, in writings that each walker made in a small book that he or she was carrying on the walk.

The people in this book



A map at the back of this book shows where the walkers travelled from day to day, and how much of Australia they covered. The place where they walked is very empty. The word Nullarbor is another word for "without any trees". The land there is too dry for trees or to grow other plants for food. That is why no one lives there. One road joins Norseman with Port Augusta and it is the longest perfectly straight road in the world. About 20-30 cars a day used this road at the time of year when the walk was made.

Chapter 2: Before the Walk

Late in 1981, and early in 1982, five of the seven Nullarbor walkers joined together in Melbourne, Australia. Brother and sister, Gary and Christine McKay, were only 13 and 12 years old then, but by that time they had travelled around Australia with their parents for nine years, talking to people in the towns, handing out Christian leaflets, and singing about God's love.

School friends, Robin Dunn and Roland Gianstefani were 15 and 18 at the time. They had been using drugs and having a few problems with police before they each had separate feelings that God was talking to them and leading them to change their lives. Their families did not follow any religion, and they were looking for some direction for their new faith when Gary and Christine came up to them on a road in Melbourne to give them a Christian paper. In a short time, the four were good friends. Robin and Roland's parents agreed for them to move in with Gary and Christine's family, who were living in a small house on a farm near the town of Albury.

These same young people travelled to schools in Melbourne to give out their papers. At one school they talked with 19-year-old Malcolm Wrest. Malcom was very interested in what they were saying. He did not agree with some of the teachings of his parents and some of the teachings of their religion, but he wanted to follow the teachings of Jesus

Christ from the Bible. A few weeks later he, too, moved into the little farm house. His parents were not happy about the change in his life, but they did not stop him.

A short time later, the group was joined by Ross Parry, a 21-year-old music teacher, and 22-year-old Boyd Ellery. As well, they were helped by Gary and Christine's older brother and sister, Kevin (16) and Sheri (14). Kevin had dropped out of school when he was 14 years old to take up painting. By this time his works were selling for as much as \$300 (Rs7,500) each. With money from Kevin's painting, his family had been able to pay for trips to Melbourne, where they talked about their faith in God with people who were walking to and from the shops there. Parents, David and Cherry McKay, had studied many different religions, and they had tried to teach the best from each of them to their children and to the people that they talked to in places like Melbourne.

By the middle of 1982, the group was finding that their farm house near Albury was not big enough, and the cold weather was giving David and Cherry too much pain in their bones; so they agreed to move north where it would be warmer. A friend had said that Casino is one of the warmest towns in the country. So they travelled to Casino. All that they owned was put into two cars, and anyone who was not driving a car went out on the road in groups of two to stop cars and ask for a lift 500 miles north to Casino.

David and Cherry were the first ones to arrive in Casino. That same day they learned that an old general shop in a very little town near Casino was empty and they could use it. It was a very big building, with one big room for all the boys, and separate bedrooms for the girls and for David and Cherry. The group moved in the next day.

David and Cherry then started the job of teaching their new family important Christian beliefs. To help the young people understand the teachings of different Christian groups, they listed all the churches in Casino, and some good points and bad points about each. Then they asked each person to choose the church that they wanted to go to each Sunday. The plan was for all of the group to go to different churches, and then to talk together about what they had learned when they returned to the house after the meetings. The young people agreed that they would help the churches that they were going to in any way that they could.

Sadly, the plan did not work from the start. On the first Sunday, the group returned to say that all the leaders in the churches had acted like they were afraid of these new visitors. It was not often that a little town like Casino had so many new young people coming to church meetings at the same time, and that without people from the churches having asked them to come. And when these new visitors said they wanted to help with any jobs in the churches, that was too much; the church leaders believed it was a trick. David talked to the church leaders on the telephone, asking for a meeting with them when the young people could talk about ways of helping the churches. But the leader said it would be a few months before they would have time for a meeting with the young people. Then, when the time came around for a meeting with the church leaders, those who went from the group said it was like they were robbers and the church leaders were the police.

"We were only trying to help, but they acted like we were in a competition," reported Malcolm. "They wanted to know how much money we had and they asked many other questions that were not important to our faith in God. Then they started asking us difficult questions about God that I do not think even they could agree on the answers for. After all that, they ended by saying that they didn't want our help!"

After this the young people stopped going to church meetings in Casino and they did their learning about God in the big living room of their own house.

In one of these meetings, David encouraged the group not to be afraid to say so if they disagreed with things he was saying. He talked about the problems they had had with the churches in Casino: "Many of the problems that happen in churches come because leaders will not listen to people who disagree with them, and followers are too lazy to work on having real faith in God themselves. They think they must go through their leader's faith, and when their leaders are wrong, they become wrong too. If you can see ways that we are not living up to our name as Christians, then you should point them out."

In answer to this, one of the boys said, "It would be nice if we could take the teachings of Jesus more seriously."

"The truth is that I was very surprised!" says David. "We had each left our jobs, our families, and all that we owned, and we were using all of our time to work for God. How could we do more than that!"

The shy follower said, "We still use cars, and take money and other things with us. Do you think it would work if we didn't have money and cars, the way the first followers of Jesus did?"

David said that it would if it was what God wanted, but that things are different today: Towns in Australia are not as close together as they are in Israel, and there is very little water in Australia. He pointed out that the Bible exercise in Luke 10 was only for a short time, and that Jesus and his followers had a house that they worked from most of the time.

But the question stayed in the minds of a few of the young people; they had a feeling that there was some truth in it. A few days later, Sheri said that the only way to find out if it would work would be to start walking. It was 20 miles to Casino from their house, and she believed she could walk the distance in one day; so she was going to give it a go! If it worked, she planned to keep walking in a big circle around the nearest towns.

"Sheri has a sickness in her lungs, and it is very difficult for her to stay with us when we go for a run each day, so I was a little worried about her ability to do it," says David. "I said I would walk with her just to see how it went, and she was happy with that."

On the way to town, the two needed a drink a few times, but each time this happened, they would find a soft drink bottle beside the road with a little soft drink in it. Some were new; some were old. Some were full; and some were almost empty. But always it was enough to keep them going.

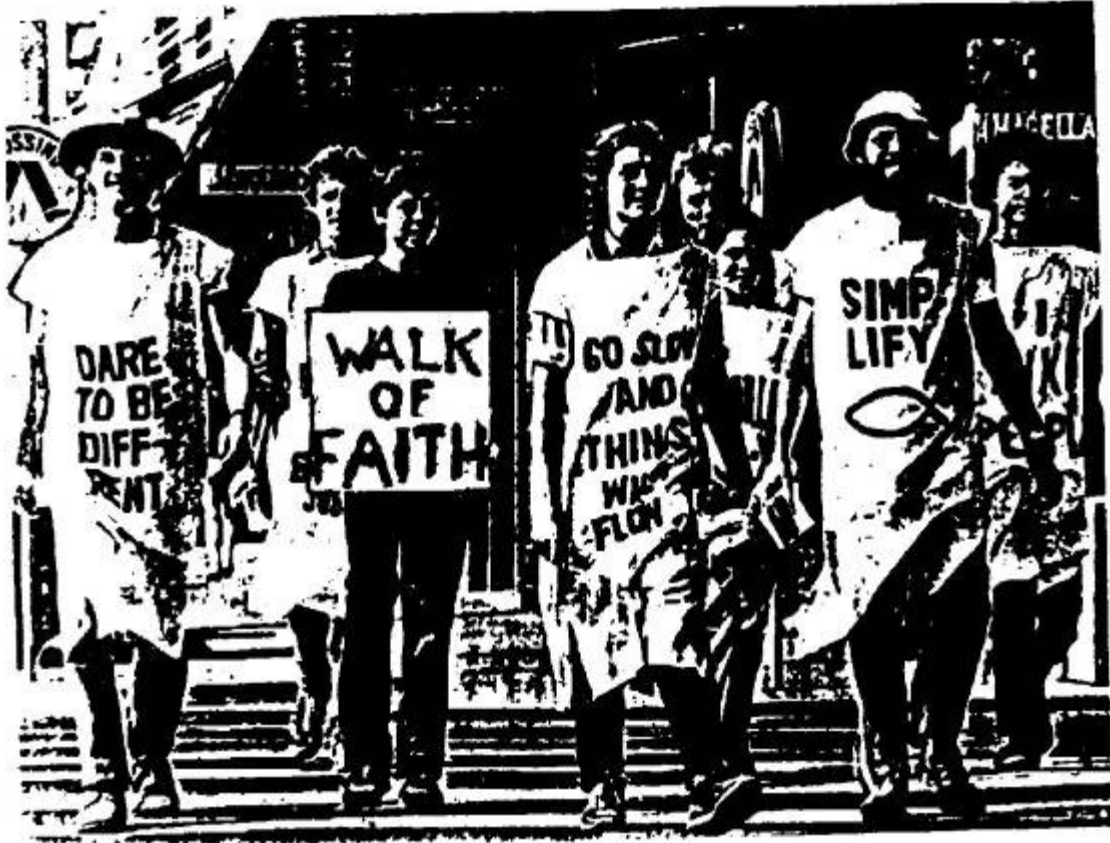
In the middle of the day they came to the only water hole on the trip, where they were able to drink their fill of water. They chewed on some very big seeds that Sheri was able to find near the water. The seeds were very filling, and they were not hungry again before coming to Casino. David and Sheri had some leaflets with them, and they handed these out to people going into and out of the shops in Casino. The leaflets helped people in the town to understand what the two walkers were doing and why. Some people gave them money to buy food.

David then telephoned the others to tell them that he and Sheri planned to keep walking for 100 miles to other towns that were close by. The others were so happy to hear that the walk was going well that six of them jumped into a car the next morning and went off to Casino to join David and Sheri in the walk.

They walked together for the next seven days. Some nights people on the way asked the walkers to sleep in their houses, but other nights the hard ground was their bed. On these nights they looked for timber to feed the fire before going to sleep and then worked in turns through the night, with different people feeding the fire for an hour or two at a time. The fire was all they had to keep themselves warm through the cold nights.

At one point in the walk, the group talked to a reporter from a small newspaper about the walk. The newspaper printed a picture and a report on the walk after it was finished.

The Northern Star, October 11, 1982



"We talked to people in the towns on the way about God and faith," says Sheri, "and through the newspaper we were able to say something to even more people. But we all agreed that the best thing about the walk was how it helped our faith in God and our love for one another."

A few weeks later they made a longer walk, covering almost 180 miles between Casino and Brisbane. Again they reported that all of their needs were filled.

At one time, Jesus Christ said to His followers that they should travel from town to town with no money and with no bags or other clothes - and that is what eight Rappville Christians have been doing.

Walking about 100 miles at 13 miles a day for more than a week is no easy life.

Their leader is 37-year-old David McKay. The small group, who say they try to obey all teachings of Jesus, finished the last leg of the faith exercise on Saturday.

The group walked without money or food, only the 'good news' they were giving out to interested people on the way. People from the towns helped with food and places to sleep.

Mr. McKay said the group is trying to put the teachings of Jesus into action in today's world. "We believe his teachings can work today," he said. "We were sick of running around so much, worrying about money. By taking God's word seriously, we are growing closer to him, and to each other."

The walkers ate wild berries, nuts, bananas, and wild lemons when people did not help with meals. "This walk is not very different from the way that we live our lives," Mr. McKay said. "We want others to take a look at the teachings of Christ.

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The walks were very encouraging, but the group believed there were parts of what they wanted to say that were not coming through clearly in the walks. They started making thousands of their own little 16-page books with pictures in them. Each book would say something different about life, truth, love, faith, and God.

Kevin, who did most of the pictures for the books, said, "Even with the books, we were not able to say all that we wanted to say. People will not read a leaflet if the writing is too small or if the book is too long. But by making our own little books we were able to say something in our own words, and not leave a newspaper reporter to say it in his or her words.



"By making many different books, we are able to cover many different parts of the truth. Each one has a little more teaching in it, and interested people come back for more. Some write to us, and we find that these people will read longer books; so we have made some longer ones, with fewer pictures and more teaching."

For a time, the group was giving out about 5,000 little books each week, and answering the letters that people were writing after reading them. The price of printing them was covered by asking people to give two cents for each little book. "We could give out more if we did not take the time to ask for two cents," says Kevin. "But we did not want people to throw the books away. If they give two cents, we find that they almost always read them. At times we give them away freely, but when we do, we find them all over the ground because people do not think they are important enough to read if they are not important enough to pay for."

But the little books were not able to help all the people. Many people are not interested in religion because all they know of it is the fighting and arguments between different religions. The group believed that this was keeping many people from even looking at what they had to say. "We needed some strong action that would show what we were saying about faith and love," says Cherry. "People who will not or cannot read about religion can still become very interested when they see faith in action."

"We were saying that Jesus talked of a world where all people work for love, and that God's Spirit in us right now can give us the faith to live a life of love. But people still believed we were all talk. So it was time for us to start doing something to help other people."

The group went to radio and television stations and to the newspapers to say that they would work for one day for free for anyone living in a fifty mile circle around Casino. People telephoned from all over that part of the country to ask for their help.

"We worked harder than any other workers would," says Gary, "because we wanted them to see that love makes people work much better than greed does."

Some of the people they worked for sent very nice letters to the newspaper telling others about their work, but little by little the number of new people asking for help dropped off.

"People were afraid," says Ross. "Some believed we would ask for money after we finished; others believed we would argue about religion. Because of this we tried very hard to do just the opposite."

"If they wanted to talk about religion, they would bring it up; and if they didn't bring it up, there wasn't much point in us trying to push them into it. Most people tried to give us something after we finished working, but we always said 'No thank you' to it. People were having enough problems believing that our work was really free without word getting out that we were taking money for it."

"I think pride was another thing that stopped people. We did what we could to tell people that we were not just working for the poor; this was for anyone. But some were afraid that friends would think they were poor if they asked for our help. We don't know what all of the reasons were, but we do know that fewer and fewer people were asking for help. People we had helped in the past often asked us to come and help them again; but the rules were that we only worked for one day for each family or company, and we were finding it difficult to interest new people in receiving our help."

Because of this, the group started to look for a new place to live. Wanting to go where the people were, they moved to Sydney, late in 1983, and again started telling people about their free work. At first they were afraid that thousands of people would want their help in a place the size of Sydney, but the opposite problem faced them. People from a very big town like Sydney were less interested than people living in small

farm towns. It was not clear if this was because people in the city had more fear or more money, but very few people were interested. The newspapers were happy to tell the story about them doing free work, but they did not want to print the telephone number that people needed to have if they wanted to ask for help. Big town newspapers are against people using them to sell things, and that is why they have rules against putting telephone numbers or addresses in their stories.

"We were happy to have so many people hearing about our beliefs," says Cherry. "But it was still a problem of more talk than real action. We wanted people to know that we were serious about working for them."

The group printed up 20,000 papers asking "Is anything really free in this world?" The papers said that they were serious about giving free work. They handed these out to travellers at Sydney's biggest train stations. A few telephoned asking for help, but not many.

They even tried walking around Sydney with chalk, writing on the footpath, "We work for love, not for money!" followed by their telephone number. A few more people telephoned after that, but most of them were asking for girls ... to come and see them in their hotel rooms! These were the only jobs that the group did not agree to do, and the chalk signs were quickly dropped from the plan!



One newspaper report did list the telephone number, and more than 100 people telephoned in two days because of it. But by March, 1984, all the jobs were finished, and the group was planning their next move.

Just before the move to Sydney, David had asked for a meeting of the group to talk about the question of receiving money from the government of Australia. The

government there will give money to people who are trying to find a job, to help them buy food and clothes. All they need to do is to ask for it.

"Up to that time, we had been leaving it to each person to choose for themselves," David says. "Some of us had asked to receive the money but most had not. The problem was that some people who did not like what we were saying, argued that we could not say God was feeding us if we were receiving money from the government. It was not good enough that some of us were not receiving the money; as long as even one of us was receiving it, people judged all of us by that one person. My plan was to get us all to agree not to receive the money."

The meeting did not go the way David had planned. Those who were receiving money argued that the people who judged them for receiving government money judged them for receiving money from anyone or even for selling things they owned before joining the group and using that money to live on. "We were not breaking any rules by receiving the government money, because we were trying hard to look for work, and we were helping the country more than most people who receive money from the government," argues Robin. "If the government was ready to pay money to feed people who are too lazy to work, or who only use it to buy drink or drugs, then we believed it was right for the government to pay money to feed us. Our faith was not in the government, but if God was using the government to help us help others, then we should not be afraid of people who are going to judge us even if we did not receive money from the government."

The meeting ended not with the whole group going off the government money, but with the whole group choosing to ask for the money, believing that they could use it to do something good for God.

By the time the jobs were finished in Sydney, the young people were seriously thinking about using their new wealth to do something in a country that was not as rich as Australia. Roland says: "Rich people do not really need our help; so they can listen to their fears and choose not to ask for help. But if we said to really poor people that we would work for them for free, we believed that it would be very easy to make them believe us. We studied different countries and learned that people from Australia could stay as long as they liked in India without special papers, so we agreed on India." [It is now much more difficult for people from Australia to travel to India.]

In a short time the group had enough money to send four people to Bangalore, India, where they were to look for ways to help the people there. They lived in a room in the small town of Dookanahalli, where about 3,000 other people lived. These four workers were later joined by four more, who lived there for the next year.

"We had not come to India to give people money," says Roland. "We were here to teach that money was not the answer. We looked for ways to make life better for people without spending money, because this way other poor people could follow us and do the same things. We learned that there are many things people can do to change the quality of their life without spending money. Most of our money was used to pay for the trip to India and back on the plane."

The group worked teaching English and doing other little jobs, but most of their time and interest went into the toilets that the Indian government had made for the people. Few people used the toilets at that time because no one would do the humble work of cleaning

them. The dung-covered floor (with live worms moving in the dung) was where most of the sicknesses in the little town started.

In the past toilet cleaning in India was the work of people that no one would even touch, so many people are too proud to even clean after themselves when they use a toilet. When these people from Australia started to do this humble work, the people in Bangalore were very surprised. Many Indians want to be friends with people from other countries because they believe these people can help them with money, jobs, or papers to leave India.

"Cleaning the toilets fixed two problems at one time," says Roland. "It gave us a job that would help many people and stop many sicknesses-much like Jesus Christ touching sick people that others believed were dirty-and it put off the people who were trying to be false friends for what they could receive from us. When people tried to say that they agreed with us, we would give them some rubber gloves and a brush and lead them to the toilets to do "Christian work" with us. That was the last we saw of most of them!"

After a year in India, all of the young people had to return to Australia, early in 1985, because their plane tickets were only good for one year. They returned to Australia in February, bringing two sisters with them from the little town: Rachel and Elizabeth Sukumaran (12 and 14). When some of the group had been working in India, others had been working in Australia. David and Cherry had started a job as house-parents in a Catholic house for boys having problems with the police, and Boyd and Sheri had been trying to make people think about greed by burning a piece of money in front of very many people and asking them to look at how people were acting when it happened.

"I could have poured a hundred times as much milk on the ground and it would not have made people as angry as it did when I burned just one small piece of paper," says Boyd.

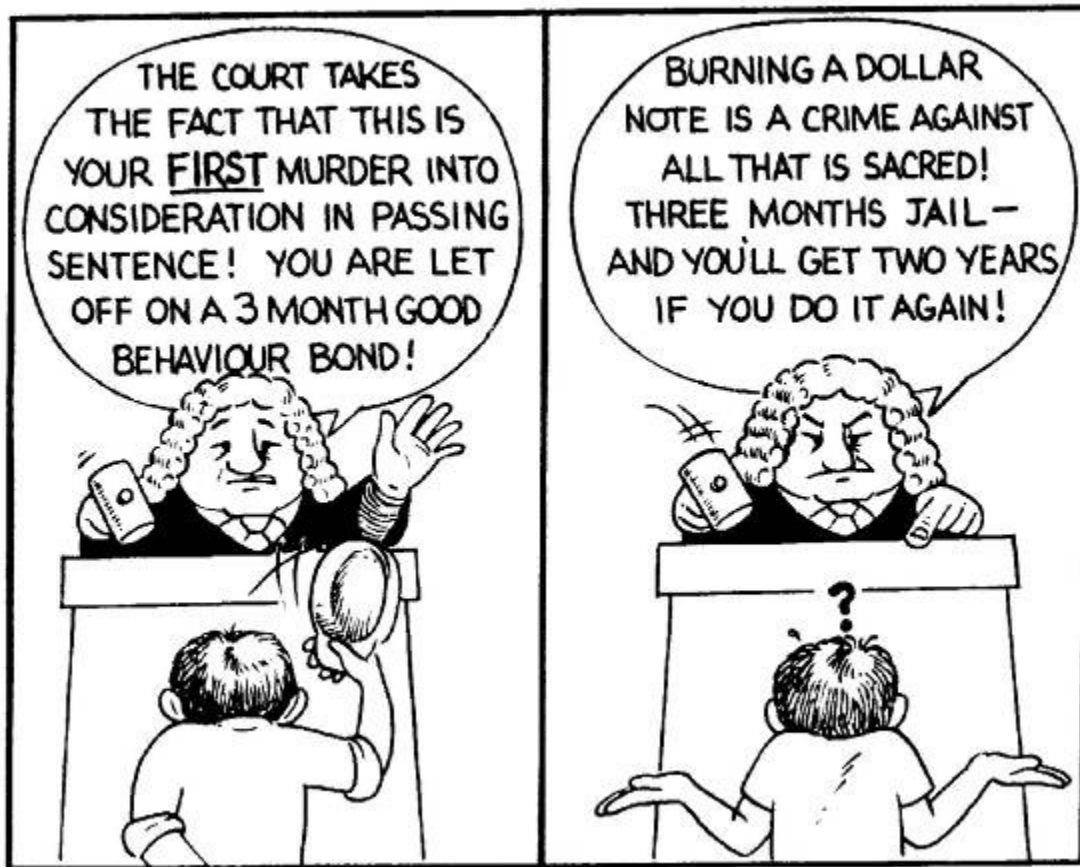
Because of this, a government leader tried to make a rule that anyone who burned money should not receive any money from the government; and a newspaper agreed with him in print. The newspapers were full of angry letters, most of them from church people, judging Boyd and Sheri for even thinking about burning money. The police and courts joined together to stop these two young people from burning any money. [They burned a sum of \$5 over five days.]

"We were trying to tell people that they have stopped using money and it's starting to use them," said Boyd. "They act like it is a god. But it was difficult to believe that the government would go so far in trying to stop us."

At that time Australia did not have a rule against destroying money. There was a small rule against cutting or marking money and then asking the government to give you new money in its place, but if the money was destroyed, there was no problem. This is what the police learned when they studied the rules.

But they were not happy with this. There is a rule against destroying anything that the government owns (buildings, planes, and things like that), and the police tried to say that the money Boyd and Sheri burned was owned by the government (because the government must give you new money if the old money becomes too dirty). For breaking this rule about destroying anything that the government owns, a person can go to prison for two years.

The judge sent Boyd to prison for three months for burning \$1, and said he would send him to prison for two years if he did it again. Sheri was too young to go to a prison for adults, but the police put her in a prison for young people for 16 days.



Amnesty International, a group that helps people in prisons all over the world who are there because of their beliefs and not because they have hurt anyone, sent a report to Britain, asking for action by the world body. At the same time, a report was printed in a newspaper in Britain, asking people to write to the government of Australia to say that they disagreed with what was happening. A lawyer from another group that helps people who are sent to prison for their beliefs agreed to help the two for free. He was able to get Boyd out of prison after Boyd had been there for one month.

The court meeting came up just after the others returned from India. The police lawyer said that he would not argue the line that the police had asked him to argue, because it was foolish to say the government owns a person's money. The judge agreed and said the action by the police against the two young people was worse than that of the robbers they should be protecting people from. He said the police must pay \$1000 to them. (The police never did give this money to Boyd and Sheri.)

Part 3: The Plan

After returning from India, the group tried doing more free work in Wollongong, Australia.

Robin and Christine were interviewed on a television talk show that showed people their telephone number if they wanted help.

"People telephoned us from all over Australia," says Gary, "but only three or four were from Wollongong. Most of the calls from around the country were just people wanting to know about our beliefs. A few were from church people trying to tell us that there was something wrong with working for free."

The group was starting to feel that they could never wake people up to their spiritual needs.

At 11pm, on Tuesday, April 9, 1985, in the house of a friend in Wollongong, Ross, Robin, and David were talking about the country's spiritual problems, as the other workers were sleeping near them.

"This country needs something like Elijah's competition with the false priests," said David. "Our country is full of people who do not believe in God, but the saddest part is how many of them are in the churches. If we could do something like Elijah did... where both sides had to do more than talk, it could start people thinking seriously about their faith in God."

In the Bible (I Kings 18) a man of God, Elijah, tells the false priests that he will meet with them on a special mountain. Each side was to kill an animal to give it to their God. Both sides were then to pray, asking that fire come down from their God to burn up the dead animal.

Elijah said the other priests could go first. When they had prayed for some time without any fire coming, he started to laugh at them.

"Pray louder!" he shouted. "I think your God is sleeping or away on a trip."

When it was clear that nothing was going to happen, the people turned to Elijah. He asked them to dig a hole around his dead animal and to pour many barrels of water on the animal, so much that it filled the hole. Then, after a short time of praying, the animals exploded in flames. The flames were so hot that they dried up all the water in the hole.

"But if we tried something like that, wouldn't it be forcing God to do a miracle?" asked Ross.

"It could be," answered David. "Elijah wasn't forcing God to do a miracle because he was only doing what God was telling him to do. But it's true that you can't just say God is going to do something and then tell Him to do it. You must be doing something he was telling you to do in the first place."

"That's it!" shouted Robin. "We could ask people to do something that God has asked us to do. For years we've been trying to get people to believe that God will feed them if they will just use their time to work for him. No one believes us, but we see God feeding us and meeting all of our other needs all the time. We can make it a test of faith, because we know that God will feed us."

"Yes, something like a faith walk," Ross added.

"Faith walks are too easy," David argued. "You would need something very big if you wanted the whole country to know that it was a miracle. You know how easy it is to believe it is not God doing it each time he feeds us; and these people would be trying very hard to say that it was not God."

"What about a very long faith walk, like from Sydney to Melbourne?" asked Ross.

"No, it's still too easy. Too many houses. Too many cars. Too many towns. It would have to be far away from people to show that it is God who is helping us and not just people."

Robin shouted: "I know! We can walk across the Nullarbor!"

"Now something like that really could work," David said, as he was turning it over in his head. "But you would want to be very clear that it is what God wants before you try it. It would be a bigger test of our faith than any of our other walks."

"Why not think about it for a few days, and see what happens," Ross said as he jumped into bed.

"Good thinking," agreed the other two.

The week was filled with plans for Boyd and Sheri, who were married on Saturday, April 13. But thinking about a walk across the Nullarbor was never far from the minds of the three planners.

APRIL 14

On Sunday, when all the visitors had left, and the house had been cleaned up, David called a meeting of all the young people who were left. (Boyd and Sheri were away for a few days.)

Together, David, Ross, and Robin filled the others in on what they had been thinking.

Kevin quickly pointed out that when Jesus asked his followers to travel without taking food it was to talk to other people about God. "If you're going to talk to people, you should do it where the people are... not in a place as empty as the Nullarbor."

"A few cars will drive by," Robin pointed out. "We can print up leaflets to give to any that stop. And we can give them to people at the petrol stations. But the way I see it, the people we will really be talking to will be all the people who will read the newspapers if the newspapers report it."

"And what if they don't?" asked Kevin. "Are you willing to go through with it just for the few people living or travelling out there?"

"I am," said Christine. "I've been wanting to go on another faith walk for a long time. Even if no one hears about it, it will still be good for us."

"But a walk this long could take months," said Kevin. "Do we have that much time to spend on it? What about returning to India?"

David opened up, "I've been thinking about how we need to say something to the whole world. Jesus never travelled to India, and he didn't talk to as many people as we have touched through our little books. But he had something that he was ready to die for, and people could see that in him. They can still see it today. He touched the whole world without even leaving Israel. And I think we can do the same if we are ready to put our lives on the line out there on the Nullarbor."

The others listened and agreed with David, but they agreed with Kevin too, that, if they were going to tell newspapers about this walk, it was very important for them to seriously pray about it more before they did. On earlier walks it would not have been a big problem if they had not finished. They were not in a competition. But if they started this one and did not finish, people could use it as a reason to laugh at God.

"And what is it that we're wanting to say through the walk?" asked Kevin, in his job as problem shooter.

"I'd like it to say something about miracles," said Robin. "Half the world doesn't believe in miracles at all, and the other half thinks God has nothing better to do than to jump every time they pray for some entertainment. I want to show people something about how real faith works with or without miracles. I get just as sick listening to Christians ask for miracles without thinking about what God wants, as I do listening to people who don't believe in God argue against him."



"And how are we going to teach people about miracles?" asked Gary.

"By showing them that we are not afraid to do a little work to build up some strength before the walk for one thing," answered Robin. "And by not dropping our plans if it becomes a little rough for another thing. But mostly they'll learn about real faith when God starts feeding us. You know how it was on those other faith walks; even the bottles of soft drink didn't look like they were made in space. It was so down to earth that it was easy to believe that it wasn't coming from God. People want to see a miracle? We'll show them some, so that they can see how easy it is not to believe."

"Yes, I think some of our help will come from people travelling on the road, like happened in the other walks," said Christine.

"Not much," Roland said, remembering the longest walk. "In ten days only three cars stopped."

"The point is that three cars are better than no cars," said Robin. "And God will come up with other ways too. He could help us with rain or with plants and animals on the way. It's not important how he does it. The point is that people will be able to see a miracle close up, and learn for themselves just how easy it is to say it's not a miracle even after seeing it."

"The difference between looking and sounding like you are crazy and looking and sounding like you are boring church people is important to remember when you come in touch with newspaper and television people too," pointed out David. "We have to sound interesting to pull them in. They love to have the last laugh when a crazy religion promises something that it cannot do."

"But if we sound too crazy they won't listen to us at all. They are not interested in really crazy people. You must show them that you are smart and in control of your emotions, but at the same time, that you are strange enough to make an interesting story."

Dave went on: "We will be the ones who paint the picture, and we must paint the right one. If we wear long white robes, it makes an interesting picture. But if we talk on and on about ourselves without listening to the arguments they will give against us, we will sound like know-it-alls. And if robes look too strange, then you can turn up at an interview wearing running clothes, or long pants and shirts to show that you can change for different needs."

"Are we going to do like Elijah, and make the walk a competition with people who don't believe in God?" asked Malcolm.

"I think that's an important part of it," answered David. "We could ask anyone to try the same walk without faith in God. And we could promise that they won't make it."

"I don't know if I have the faith to promise that," said Christine.

"Why not?" asked Malcolm. "If we believe that he wants us to make it a competition, we should have the faith that he's not going to help those who are fighting us."

"But what if someone wants to walk with us? How would people know if they were walking with us or against us?" asked Gary.

"We could say that people who do not believe in God should walk in the opposite direction, from west to east," said Roland.

"I think we're moving too quickly," said Ross. "We should all pray about it a little longer. We can have another meeting in a week and see what people think then. For now, we can start exercising... that way we won't lose too much time if we choose to do the walk."

Ross' plan was carried and they started running and walking twelve miles each day, six days a week. They did a few miles at a time, running at a few different times each day to protect themselves from sores on their feet.

When this was happening, Christine was making robes for the walkers to wear. The robes were planned to meet a few different needs. They would have sayings on them to help people understand the reasons behind the walk; they would make the walkers easier to see, and protect them from being hit by a car; they would all join together with special buttons to make a covering to protect them from the sun or wind at rest stops; and they would be made from two pieces of cloth with openings on the side, so that leaves, papers or any other material could be put inside them to make them like quilts on cold nights.

MONDAY, APRIL 22

The following Monday, running jumped up to fifteen miles a day.

That same day the group had a long and serious meeting about how much each person wanted to be a part of the walk.

After praying about it, David said that he had been very enthusiastic about the walk in general but that he now believed God was telling him to stay out of it, leaving the young people to do it on their own, if that was what they wanted. He and Cherry both believed that they should stay at the house as parents for the boys.

Boyd and Sheri were still not back from their time away after getting married. They had been planning to hand out leaflets in Adelaide before talk of the walk started, so they were dropped from the list too.

Ross and Kevin said they both believed they should stay to work on a dictionary that the group wanted to have ready to take with them when they returned to India. The dictionary would help them to teach English to people of any language. Kevin was making pictures for each word in a 900-word list, and others in the group were using those words to help people understand about 30,000 other English words.

Kevin was painting a picture for a big art competition too, and he wanted to stay back to finish it.

The group agreed that Rachel and Elizabeth should not be part of the walk, because they were only in Australia as visitors. Anything that would bring problems with the government could make it difficult for them to return to Australia in the future.

That left only Gary, Christine, Malcolm, Roland, and Robin. These five were interested, but asked for two more days before telling the newspapers, radio, and television.

At the end of the meeting the group had a "listening time", a time when each person tries to free his or her mind from any understanding or plans that they have, and then wait for God to "say something".

Rachel said she could see God telling her to run down a road. People on both sides were putting their hands out and shouting at her to stop her from running. After talking about this the group agreed with Rachel that God could be telling her (and the others) not worry about what others would say if she went. They agreed to Rachel starting the walk, even if she dropped out after a day or two.

In the same meeting there was talk about what to wear on the walk. Robin had studied the weather on the Nullarbor at that time of year. At night it often drops down to freezing, but in the middle of the day it can become very warm.

Malcolm and Gary believed that they could use plastic bags for blankets at night if the bags were filled with sand and put over the walkers. They wanted to test the plan that night by driving to a mountain and sleeping under sand-filled plastic bags. They did that, and returned the next morning cold and tired, saying that sand would not work, and more clothes would be needed.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

At Wednesday's meeting the six people on the list reported what they were thinking about the walk. Gary said that he would be happier giving out leaflets to people in big towns, because then he would know that he could talk to many people; but he said he was ready to go with what the others wanted. Roland was just the opposite. He said he believed so strongly that the walk was what God wanted him to do that he was ready to go by himself if others were not interested. Malcolm, Robin, and Christine wanted to go on the walk too, but they still had a few small questions that they believed God would answer in time.

The group did not feel that it was important for all of the walkers to finish the walk. What was important was that someone finish it. Because Gary was not very enthusiastic, Roland was having some problems with his knee, and this was Malcolm's first walk of faith, they believed that Christine and Robin were the strongest in spirit and healthiest in body. Because of this Christine or Robin were the best people to lead the walkers. It was agreed that Christine would act as leader with Robin as her helper.

Christine's first job was to call The News, in Adelaide, saying that four people would walk across the Nullarbor without taking any food or water with them. She did not give any names or say when the walk would start. This was to give the walkers room to change plans over the next few days. They secretly planned to start on May 6, less than two weeks away. They had six people interested in doing the walk (counting Rachel), but they started by saying that only four of them were going to do the walk. This would give room for two walkers to change their mind before the next report to the newspapers.

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

The next day, as they walked around and around the roads where they lived, the group started to go over all the questions that reporters could ask. They each had a turn at playing the part of a reporter and trying to ask difficult questions. This later was a very big help when reporters came trying to trick them with their words.

FRIDAY, APRIL 26

By Friday Malcolm, Gary, Roland, Robin, Rachel, and Christine all believed strongly that the walk was what God wanted them to do. They sent a letter to newspapers, radio stations, and television stations saying that they would meet with them in a park in Sydney the following Tuesday, and at that time they said they would tell what their plans were. That same day, the News report was printed in Adelaide, telling people that a walk was being planned.

The letter about the meeting on Tuesday did not give names. The group believed that what Rachel saw in the "listening time" was a sign from God that people were going to try to stop her from walking. They wanted to wait for as long as they could before saying who they were.

A telephone number was put on the letter to the newspapers, radio, and television, but no house number. The meeting was in a park because they were staying at the house for boys who had problems with the police or with their families, and they did not want the news people to think that the Catholic Church was planning the walk.

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

On Saturday morning, Christine telephoned a reporter from one newspaper in Sydney agreeing for him to be the only reporter to take a picture of the young people running at a park near the boys' house. Christine's first name was the only name to be used by this reporter. The picture in the Sunday newspaper was part of a plan to show the other newspapers, radio stations, and television stations that the strange letter about a meeting on Tuesday was from real people and it was not a trick.

Robin and Roland talked a company into giving a special price for expensive warm under-clothes to be used on the walk. Christine, Malcolm and Roland went to the mountains with the under-clothes on for another test at night. After sleeping on benches at the train station, they reported the next morning that they were very cold, but they were able to get some sleep, and it was not cold enough to be dangerous.

SUNDAY, APRIL 28

On Sunday, the report was printed in the newspaper and the young people received a call from Good Morning Australia, a television talk show that goes all over the country. The show asked if they would come and be on the show on Tuesday morning, just before the meeting at the park. Christine, Malcolm, and Robin agreed to go. This was what they needed to build up interest in the walk.

MONDAY, APRIL 29

Running jumped up to eighteen miles a day. The group asked the Tiger running shoe company in Sydney to give them some strong shoes for the trip. When the company learned that they planned to walk 1,000 miles in the shoes, they said that no shoes were strong enough for a walk as long as that. They agreed to sell their best shoes at half price, but would not agree to give the shoes for free.

TUESDAY, APRIL 30

The interview on Good Morning Australia was very short. But it was long enough for the three walkers to make it clear that their walk was to force people to think about how much faith they had in God. Gordon Elliot, the man asking the questions, did not understand that the walkers were going to follow the road and not cut straight across open country. Through the whole walk many people believed this, and many times people argued that it would be very expensive for the government to go looking for the walkers if they could not find their way through the desert. The truth is that they followed the road all the way, and believed that they could stop a car for help if at any time they were in serious danger. There was not enough time on the show to ask people who disagreed with the walkers to walk in the opposite direction. But at this point, no one was saying that the walk would be easy. The opposite was true. Gordon strongly believed that no one of any faith could make the walk without taking food and water with them, and he promised that they would die.

In the interview, the television camera moved in to show a close look at what the group was going to carry in their pockets: one army knife, two fire starters, a box of toilet paper, a bottle of oil, some tape for sores, six plastic bags, needles and thin string, six

pens, six books of writing paper, and six small pocket Bibles. Gordon laughed at these things and promised again that they would die on the Nullarbor if this was all that they were taking. His fears and his promise that they would not finish the trip had the effect that the young people wanted. It surprised the country and forced people to think seriously about what was going to happen. It made people want to hear more about this strange plan.

At the meeting in the park later that same day, an angry reporter pushed a microphone in front of Rachel and said, "Do you understand the dangers that face you in this walk?" Rachel, who was still learning English at that time, looked surprised for a few seconds and then answered, "I know God will protect me."

"It's clear she doesn't understand the dangers," shouted the reporter, who put a half-page report in a paper the next day saying the group was putting Rachel in serious danger and that the walkers should be stopped. Rachel's picture of people trying to stop her was coming true.

That same day, a doctor from Broken Hill called to say the group could use his car to drive from Sydney to Broken Hill on Thursday night.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

On Wednesday, newspapers around Australia carried reports of the group's plan. It was on the front page in Adelaide. A top church leader in Sydney was asked by one newspaper for his feelings about the walk, and he said that the actions of the young people were "testing God" and "almost showing hate for God". The walkers were surprised that an important leader like this should judge them so quickly and so openly without first trying to learn more about their reasons for making the walk.

All that day radio stations called up for live interviews. The group agreed to protect Rachel from interviews after her first sad meeting with the reporter in the park. But each of the other walkers had a turn at doing an interview. Even without Rachel talking, most reporters questioned how young she was and how dangerous it would be for her.

"If it had not been Rachel, they would have said they were trying to protect me," said Christine, who, at 15, was the next youngest walker.

But even with reporters trying to find something wrong with the walk, the walkers were happy that people were thinking. They had not believed there would be so much interest at the end of the walk and at this point the walk had not even started!

Christine, Robin, and Malcolm were on another Australia-wide television show. This time they were able to say more about the need for faith in God.

A company owner agreed to make leaflets for the walkers to hand out on the trip.

This is what they put on the leaflets:

"On May 6 we left Port Augusta, South Australia, without any food, water, money, or blankets, and we are trying to walk across the Nullarbor to Norseman, Western Australia.

We are doing this because we believe people in today's world do not have enough faith in God or even in other people. We believe that if people would put God first and do what they can to help others, then God will meet their needs. He often does it through

ways that we would not call miracles, but we feel we must take this very serious step to make people see that things like faith and love are just as strong in a place away from the help of others as they are in a very big town.

We pray that our action will help others to think about giving some of what they have to others. For only by doing that can we build a better world.

Thank you for your time. Christians.”

FRIDAY, MAY 3

After driving all night from Sydney, the six walkers and David arrived in Broken Hill on Friday morning to leave the car with the doctor who owned it. David had come to drive the car.

In Broken Hill, they joined up with Sheri and Boyd, who had been working in Adelaide handing out leaflets. Boyd and Sheri had a van that was big enough to hold all nine of them on the trip from Broken Hill to Port Augusta, where the walk was to start. They rest that day and started to drive to Port Augusta that night. They stopped beside the road at 10:30pm to try out their clothes in the cold weather of South Australia. They tried sleeping on the ground with just their warm under-clothes, running clothes, green army pants and shirts, and the robes to keep them warm.

Sleeping was no problem for Gary and Rachel, but the others were awake much of the night with freezing hands and feet. Malcolm was so cold that he went for a one-hour walk in the night to try to make his blood move more quickly through his body. In the morning, the walkers rubbed each other's feet to warm them up. Clearly, the weather in South Australia was much colder than the weather in the mountains near Sydney!

SATURDAY, MAY 4

The travellers arrived in Port Augusta at about 8am and went to a hotel that was very close to where they planned to start the walk. They said who they were and the owner said they could use three big rooms for the next two days for free. This kind act encouraged them all.

Emotions were running high for all of them, and being without sleep the night before did not help. Malcolm collapsed when he was in the toilet and was asked to stay in the room and rest when the others went for the morning run.

All of the running in Sydney happened when the town was having some of the wettest weather it had had at any time in the past, so the group did not see much of the sun in their earlier runs. Because of this, some of them were burned by the sun when going on their six mile run that morning.

David called the police in Eucla and a policeman there said that most of the water tanks in Western Australia were dry.

"We'll just have to pray for rain," David answered.

Part 4: Port Augusta to Ceduna

Most of this part of the book comes from what the young people taking part in the walk were writing in the little writing books they carried with them on the walk. The words in dark letters were added later.

CHRIS: (Sunday, May 5) Our "rest day" from running was not a rest from meeting people. Newspaper, radio, and television reporters were on the telephone, or in and out of the hotel all day. By 10pm, when the last interview was finished, we were all feeling more confident about talking to reporters. Even Rachel said a few words for the television cameras without problems.

**DAY ONE: Monday, May 6.
(Walked 15 miles from Port Augusta)**

CHRIS: We were up at 5:30am to wash, dress, and start interviews all over again. We started by singing a song before eating. We have been singing it for two years now but the words (by Robin), were very special today:

Give us today the bread we need.
Like Moses in the desert, you will feed.
It's not important what happens, we still have you.
We'll just try to do what you want us to.
We want you to know that we love you so,
And it's you that we follow.

After singing, Rachel did the Bible reading from Psalm 23, and it, too, was special this morning:

I will not be afraid, because God leads me to where food and water are... If I walk into a place of death, he will be with me there too...

* * * * *

Adelaide Advertiser, May 6, 1985, page 6

Nullarbor walk a waste of faith

By "FATHER" JOHN FLEMING

The plan by six young Christians to walk across the Nullarbor Desert without food or water to show their faith in God is wrong. I believe these are good people, but their action could make people laugh at other Christians who are not so crazy about their faith. I have five arguments against their action:

(1) The walk will teach nothing. If people help them, how can they say God is helping them?

(2) Jesus did not do miracles to show that God is "alive and well" as they are doing. He only did miracles to help people.

(3) People who do not have faith in God will not change because of the walk. They will say it was not God who helped them.

(4) God wants us to love him with our minds. That is, to be smart. It is not smart to do dangerous things.

(5) People will think that they are saying they are better than others. The walkers must think about what others will think.

The church is bigger and stronger than a few crazy people. People will not stop following the church because of this walk. But if these people are putting themselves in danger, we must ask ourselves if they should be free to do this. Should they be free to make problems for the police if they need help?

The walkers should think seriously about an action that could make people think badly of the Christian church.

* * * * *

MAL: Another important church leader (see facing page) strongly and openly judged us in this morning's newspaper. We worked together on a letter in answer to his arguments (see following page), and I sent it off before we started on the walk at 8:30am.

You would think we would have many different and strong emotions on this the first day of the walk, but no, our spirits were very quiet. We've had the walk so much in mind for the past week that its start could not live up to what we were thinking it would be. Many people stopped to take pictures of us, and almost all the cars sound their horns as they go by.

ROB: A television camera man turned up on the road just as the first car stopped beside us. It was a Christian woman who gave us apples, \$2 and water. A few other cars pulled up later in the day and gave us more apples. In the middle of the day a car stopped to give us a chicken.

GARY: We walked fifteen miles and stopped at 4pm at a place beside the road where cars can stop for a rest. We were resting under a tree when a bus pulled up. The driver and some people on the bus gave us a box of chocolates, apples, and fruit juice. Thank God! We did not ask people for a thing, but they are giving to us from their hearts.

ROLS: At 5:30pm, Mal, Rob, Rachel, and Gary went off the road to look at an old empty building to see if we could sleep in it. Chris and I stayed by the road. A sheep farmer stopped and said we could have a meal and sleep at his house. Our cup is really more than full! God is being very soft on us.

CHRIS: The farmer and his family were very friendly. We had some little problems between ourselves at the start of the walk, but after we talked it out, I think we feel better toward each other now.

* * * * *

Letters from our Readers - Adelaide Advertiser

'Living by faith'

From the Nullarbor walkers - Brother Fleming says people without faith will say it is not God who is helping us on this walk; but then he joins this group of people by saying the same thing himself. So where is his faith? If it is not God feeding us out here, then who can we say is feeding brother Fleming there in Adelaide?

He says people will laugh at the church because our action is dangerous and crazy. But what could be more dangerous and crazy than dying a cruel death on a cross to show your love for people? All that is good about the Christian faith comes from people who were not afraid of danger and not afraid to be called crazy.

Brother Fleming says the church is bigger and stronger than our faith and people will not stop following the church because of us. This is true. People have not stopped following the Jewish religion because of one crazy man who said he was the Son of God. But does that make them right?

Some of what he says about miracles is true. We are not trying to force God to do a miracle. We are just trying to obey him. God tells us not to worry about food and clothes, and to go into all the world showing this kind of faith. We are trying to do that.

The Nullarbor walkers

* * * * *

DAY TWO: Tuesday, May 7. (Walked 27 miles to Iron Knob)

ROLS: Interest in what we are doing is not dropping off. Like yesterday, radio, television, and newspaper people all dropped in from time to time today.

CHRIS: I pray that God will help the farmer and his family for what they did to help us! They do not call themselves Christians, but they just helped us because they believed help was needed.

At 10am, a car stopped to give us fruit. We did not feel right about taking it because we still had fruit from the farm family and we didn't want to be greedy. God has been feeding us so well! I feel we must be greedy to be eating so much.

A bar of muesli exploded through the window of a car driving very quickly by us. "YOU NUTS" was printed by hand on the paper covering the bar. But even this action in anger gave us more food to eat!

At 1pm, A policeman stopped to talk to us. He asked us to see him when we arrive at Iron Knob.

At 4:30pm a husband and wife stopped to say we could sleep at their house in Iron Knob.

At 5pm, Sheri and Boyd arrived from Port Augusta, where they had been handing out leaflets. They had stopped for a man on the road who wanted a lift. He just happened to be Dane Frick, from Townsville. What a surprise! Dane has been writing to us for a year, but this was the first time that we were able to see him face to face. He left Townsville to come and walk with us after hearing about us on the television. I'm really on a spiritual high. He says that he agrees with all that we say.

MAL: There was some talk between us about Dane joining. Would he be able to make the distance? Is it really important if he doesn't? It's difficult to judge these things quickly. But, our first feeling is that he is a true believer and will do his best; that is what counts in the end.

GARY: At 5:30pm, a Christian woman came and gave us a bag of food. She asked us to forgive her for judging us too quickly, and said that she now believes we are doing what God wants us to do.

This same woman later sent a letter to an Adelaide newspaper, saying:

"My feeling when first hearing of their plan was to judge them as bad for "putting God to the test". But after thinking about it, I came to understand that, as a Christian, it is my job to love these people without putting my rules on them. I had a nice meeting with these young "walking Christians" on their second day out of Port Augusta. I said that I could not agree with all that they were doing, but I asked them to forgive me for judging them. They were not angry with me. They hugged me and received me as a Christian too, without putting their rules on me."

ROB: When we were three miles from Iron Knob, the town people came out to meet us. We arrived in town very late at night, but we had a big group of people waiting for us.

CHRIS: We reported to the police station as we had been asked to do earlier today. Then we walked to the house of the people who had asked us to stay with them. The man said Dane could not come in because of his long hair; so we walked out, feeling angry toward them. We were able to find an empty building and sleep in it. It was a little cold.

MAL: The people in Iron Knob separated into two groups over us. The ones saying the most to our faces were in agreement with us. These are the people who came out to meet us, or who were waiting up late to see us when we arrived. One family, owners of the petrol station, were very friendly and helped us in a few different ways. Boyd and Sheri went to the hotel where people did not know who Boyd and Sheri were, and they listened to many people talking against us. But we never saw any of these people out on the road.

DAY THREE: Wednesday, May 8. (Walked 17 miles from Iron Knob)

RACHEL: We were awake at 6:30am. Some people from the petrol station gave us hot food and soft drinks to start the day. A woman gave me a blanket and a coat.

GARY: A few radio and television reporters did interviews with us before we left Iron Knob.

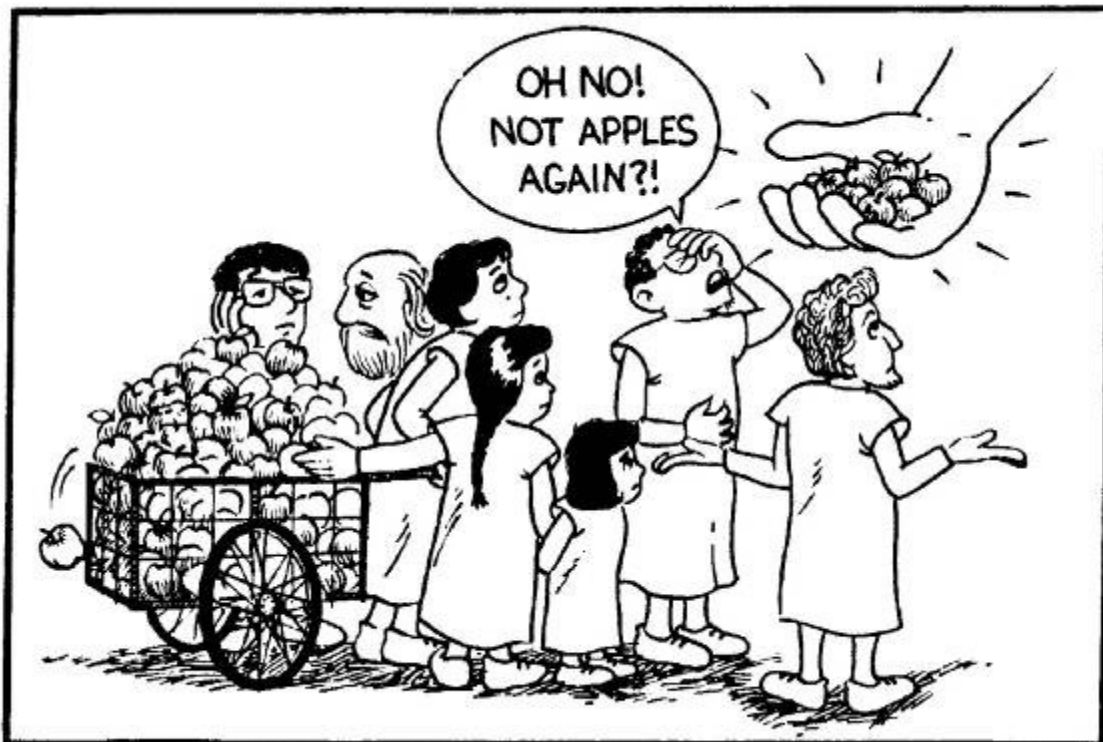
ROLS: We left Iron Knob at 9:10am. After leaving the town, a television reporter, started walking with us. She walked for twelve miles, to a house where a man asked us to stop for a cup of tea. She was friendly on the road, but she turned against us when the

cameras started. She said after it was finished that it was her job to act toward us the way other people would act if they were against us.

ROB: The television woman started asking questions about Rachel, and tried to make us look like a dangerous religion of death or something. I think she was trying to turn people against us.

MAL: The television interview was at a farm about 15 miles out of Iron Knob. The farm owner was not very friendly. I think he only gave us a cup of tea because the television people were there and he wanted to look good. It's easy to see the difference between people who are really trying to help and those who are putting on a show for the reporters.

ROB: When we finished the television interview and were back on the road, a truck driver stopped and gave us a big water container, but it had a hole in it. We have been filling little plastic drink bottles that we find beside the road each time we find a place with water. Rachel is becoming tired. Mal and Rols are giving her shoulder rides. A woman from the government came driving out to ask about Rachel. She was friendly enough. All we have for food now are apples.



CHRIS: An old man and woman stopped and gave us more apples. Oh no, we're getting tired of apples! But we should be happy that we have anything at all. We're growing more tired and less enthusiastic. We had cool weather the first two days, but it's hot now.

GARY: Today Rob and I walked off the road looking for some wild food, but we did not find any. We stopped for the day after walking seventeen miles.

MAL: I tried very hard to find some plants or animals that we could eat near where we stopped to sleep for the night. I wanted to show that people driving by in cars were not the only way that God could help us, because the television woman was arguing that

we could not say God helped us if people did. In the end I could see that it was not helping my spirit to look for food. We did not know or even believe that so many people would stop to help us before we started, and the reporters didn't (or they would not be out here following us now to see how God does it). From this, I now understand that people who do not want to see God at work will never see him. If God chooses to use people to help us, then he must think it is a strong enough way to show people that he is real. The people fighting against us don't even have enough faith in people to make the walk; so it still shows that without God's help no one can do it.

ROB: We plan on taking turns to keep the fire going tonight. At 7:30pm, a Pentecostal man arrived and gave us meat, bread, butter, and milk. Thank God!

ROLS: After dark a policeman from Kimba stopped to see how we are. He sounded like a nice person. I was only half awake, at 9:30pm, when some Adelaide reporters came and interviewed us... well, some of us. I didn't move; I was too sleepy to get up.

ROB: I'm on watch now, and it's 11:34pm. I should have started at eleven, but Mal stayed up watching the fire for half an hour more than he should have. It was very good of him!

**DAY FOUR: Thursday, May 9.
(Walked 35 miles to Kimba)**

CHRIS: We had a good sleep between two fires last night. Most of us were warm enough. We were awake at 5am, cooked the meat left from last night, and had a very nice meal. We started walking at 6:30am.

GARY: We had finished six miles when a man stopped and gave us \$20. We keep finding soft drink bottles beside the road with drink still in them.

CHRIS: At 9:30am, a young man and his wife stopped to encourage us. Just as they did, an interview with my father was coming over their car radio. It really encouraged me to happen to hear it when they stopped. We see the reporters here, but we do not see or hear their reports.

ROLS: Around the middle of the day, two Pentecostals, Brenton and Ken, stopped by the road and gave us coffee and bread. Thirty minutes later they came back with more food. They were kind, and said the walk encouraged them in their faith. One of them said he was praying when God talked to him and said he should come out here and help us. The other man had just finished a Bible study on Matthew 25:35 when he learned of what God had said to the first man, and these two things together made them drive out here to help us. Reporters still keep dropping in on us. A reporter from the Adelaide News, Tom Menzies, asked to walk with us today to understand us better. With all of the reporters coming and going, we do not get much time by ourselves. But we have never had so many people interested in what we are saying, so we have to make the best of it.

GARY: A bicycle rider went by us and said a few words. He was travelling from Darwin to Perth. The reporters asked us to stand with him for some pictures, to make a more interesting story.

RACHEL: A car stopped and gave us apples. The News man, Tom, walked with us for 15 miles to see how it feels. A man asked us to sleep at his house in Kimba. He said he would drive us to Kimba. We said it would not be right; we must walk all the way.

ROB: Fifteen miles from Kimba a reporter came to ask us about David and about the Children of God, a religion that teaches people to mate with people they are not married to. A church man in Perth is writing reports that we are part of that group.

ROLS: If the false church people cannot make us look bad one way they will try another. But this is only building up more interest in what we are really saying. I find the lies they are telling encouraging. Dane is working well with us, and he did a good job of handling the questions reporters were shooting at him. It's good to have a new person walking with us.

MAL: What a day! We started at 6:30am and finished walking at 10:15pm. No stop was longer than half an hour, and we're all very tired after 35 miles! A man from the Lions (John Bentley) stopped to say we can stay at his place in Kimba. Today I was seriously thinking about dropping out of the walk. All my strength went into pushing myself on, so I had no way of encouraging the others.

CHRIS: Today I needed a drink, and we had no water. I was becoming weak in my faith that God would protect me when some women pulled up and gave us juice, milk, muesli bars, and bread and butter. Another Pentecostal man stopped to talk, but it was clear that he was only interested in saying that he had talked to people who were in the newspaper. He didn't really understand much about faith.

DANE: Two times today some new Christians said that God was telling them to help us. This to us is the most encouraging part of the walk—not so much because it feeds our bodies, but because it encourages us spiritually. It is better to be cold and hungry with people who believe in God than to be warm and full with those who laugh at God.

DAY FIVE: Friday, May 10.
(Rest day. Walked 2.5 miles from Kimba)

RACHEL: We were up at 8:30am. We washed some clothes and dried them. We had a Bible study from Matthew 10.

CHRIS: John left for work when we were still sleeping, so we were by ourselves in his house. He showed faith in us by doing that.

GARY: We had a meeting to talk about arguments for and against having a rest day. Chris telephoned David, and in the end we agreed with him that we should have a rest day. We talked about some things from our Bible study too. We were trying to understand things like Luke 10:7 where Jesus says, "Go not from house to house".

DANE: We are trying to use Matthew 10 as a pattern for our present trip. But what does one do with money that people give to us? We agreed to receive the money, but to try to use it the same day that we receive it.

GARY: I used the money that the man gave us yesterday to buy food here in Kimba today, and to send letters to friends.

MAL: Today was a rest day. I'm very happy about that! We rested, washed clothes, finished off letters, sent them, and did a few other things. What a nice day. We're all in much better spirits now. There was a report against us in a Perth newspaper yesterday and today another church leader was saying things against us in an Adelaide newspaper. He'll finish up with egg on his face if God helps us to finish.

ROLS: At 4pm, we walked 2.5 miles out of Kimba to a parking place by the road. We finished eating by 5:30 and worked in turns on the fire. Late at night a group of loud young men who had been drinking came out and shouted angrily at us. They could not understand how tired we were, but it was a good exercise for us to be quiet and not return their hate. We believed that trying to say anything to them would encourage them to show more hate.

ROB: The young farmers came in two cars to wake us up. They acted like pigs, just wanting to argue. (2am) The angry men returned four times to argue with us, then a reporter came out to talk to us, and then a policeman. Because we are not sleeping, we are going to try to walk through the night.

**DAY SIX: Saturday, May 11.
(Walked 28 miles toward Kyancutta)**

DANE: Last night I had a very good interview with Tom (from the Adelaide News). He sounded very kind and loving, even had a little water coming from his eyes. Before the sun came up this morning we saw a very big falling star. We were able to see its tail for 20-30 seconds.

CHRIS: At 3:30am, we stopped to eat what was left of our food from yesterday. At 5am, we stopped to sleep for fifty minutes. At 6am some people from America stopped and gave us \$10 and more food.

ROB: After finishing 15 miles, we stopped for a Bible study under some trees by the side of the road. As we were reading Matthew 11 together, some church people stopped and some people who don't go to church stopped. The church people prayed for us, and

the people who do not go to church gave us drinks. It makes me think of James 2:15-17! Later, an old man and woman in a car left some biscuits up the road for us to find when we arrived there. They didn't stop to talk.

GARY: In the middle of the day a van filled with people from Fiji stopped and gave their food to us. We talked with them for a long time and when they left they gave us \$20. After we walked about 20 miles, another Christian man and his wife stopped and gave us some cold drinks and biscuits. They were very encouraging too. As they were talking, we saw a truck driver throw a glass bottle of drink out of the window for us. It didn't break!

MAL: You could write a book about the people who are stopping by the road to meet us. Some are very beautiful, and they are almost all friendly and encouraging. The two policemen (from Iron Knob and Kimba) were both friendly too. The part of the country where we are stopped now is very beautiful, and it was even more beautiful as the sun was going down tonight. But I would feel much better about looking out on it if my feet were not so sore.

ROLS: We ended up walking twenty-eight miles before stopping in a parking place beside the road today. We started to make our fire at 5:30pm, but being so tired, all we wanted to do was to sit; so that is what we did. It was dark; there were no cars; and we were out of food, so it looked like we would go to bed without eating. I must say that I was worrying a little about food, and I think the others were doing the same. Dane was a little angry at us about how easily we started worrying. Then we could hear the noise of a car in the distance, coming toward us. A few minutes later it stopped with two men smiling at us. One was Brenton, the Pentecostal (see Day Four). His friend's name was Tony. Brenton asked how we were. He went to the car, where he pulled out a box with meat, tins of food, fruit, and tea in it. I almost dropped over backward with surprise when that happened. Brenton and Tony even cooked the meal for us, and said, "Thank God, not us." They gave us some space blankets and spoons too. God is always there, but we forget, just like the followers of Jesus were afraid a short time after seeing God do a miracle to feed five thousand people.

**DAY SEVEN: Sunday, May 12.
(Walked 25 miles to Kyancutta)**

ROB: We stopped sleeping at 6am. The sun was beautiful coming up this morning. At some time last night a truck driver left us a bag of apples. In the middle of the day a line of cars pulling caravans stopped and gave us food. We talked for about an hour and prayed together with them.

MAL: The flies yesterday were the worst on the walk so far – armies of little devils that test your spirit. But it's cool today, with clouds in the sky and the best thing is that there are no flies!

GARY: A reporter from the first meeting in the park in Sydney (see page 39) stopped to talk on his way to Perth. When we were close to Kyancutta, we tried to rest by the side of the road. Some foolish young men pulled their car up close to us before hitting the motor as hard as they could to make the wheels turn quickly and shoot stones up in our faces.

CHRIS: Mal's becoming tired. Dane's sores on his feet are bad, but he's pushing on all the same. The heat today made blood come from my nose. Some Pentecostals gave us water and said we won't be able to find water out on the real Nullarbor.

MAL: It's encouraging to hear of the effect we're having through newspapers, radio, and television. We see little of this out here. Mostly all we can think of is the walking... on and on day after day. Reports from cars going by help to keep our spirits up.

DANE: I'm really happy travelling with Christians. It's nice not to have to argue about your beliefs all the time, but to be around people who agree with you. When we were nearing Kyancutta, a young boy walked with us for a mile. Others shouted angrily at us. We have now covered 150 miles from Port Augusta.

ROLS: There were no reporters today. A family of church people from Kyancutta stopped and gave us water. The father was saying there is no way we will get across the Nullarbor because people out there just don't stop. (The worst part of the walk was after Nundroo, where there are almost no houses. See Day 22.) He showed no faith in God being able to help us.

CHRIS: We came into Kyancutta at 7:15pm. The shop owner opened the shop for us and we were able to buy some food with the money we had received today. Some young men talked with us and gave us \$10. They put some fruit and nut chocolates in our bag when we were in the shop too. When we were eating, a woman pulled up in a car to say Rachel and I could sleep in beds at her house. The others were sleeping in the church, next door to the woman's house. She and her family were poor, but they gave of what they had. I was full of thanks for the soft bed. We went to bed at 8:45pm.

DAY EIGHT: Monday, May 13.
(Walked 18 miles from Kyancutta)

RACHEL: The woman that Chris and I were staying with was very friendly. We were awake at 5:30am, and started to walk at 6:45am.

GARY: Before we started walking, we saw the most beautiful falling star shoot half-way across the sky. We washed our socks at a petrol station in Wudinna, seven miles from Kyancutta.

CHRIS: We called Sydney from the petrol station. A car stopped to say a radio report said we had not called Sydney for three days. We should have called yesterday, but we couldn't find a telephone.

ROLS: About half a mile out of Wudinna I looked and my watch wasn't on my wrist. I ran back to the petrol station, then back to the others on the road only to find the watch was in my pocket all the time!

RACHEL: A leader of the church in Wudinna gave us some cakes, and bread.

GARY: At a parking place about twelve miles from Kyancutta, a family of Christians gave us a bag of food with a picture of a cross and writing saying "food for the Christian walkers" on it.

CHRIS: A woman stopped to say we could sleep at her house tonight. At her place I stitched the space blankets and Gary fixed a broken pram that had been left beside the road. Rachel was sad and angry today because people are telling her when she does things wrong, but not encouraging her when she does things right. We studied Matthew 12 together and went to bed at 9pm.

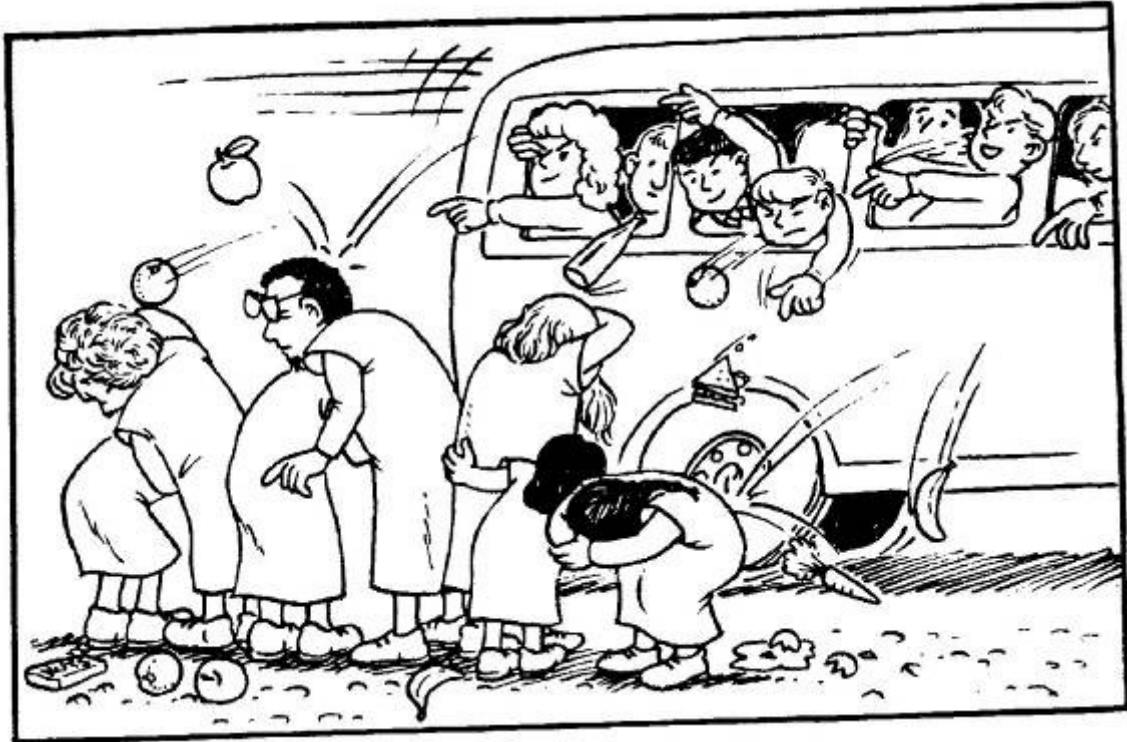
MAL: I am very happy that the group agreed to slow down to 18 miles today. My feet are very sore! Over night is not long enough for the pain to go away. We finished at 3pm today. With the added time to rest, God may give me strength to get across.

DANE: My feet still have sores on them and I have a pain in my right, lower leg.

**DAY NINE: Tuesday, May 14.
(Walked 24 miles toward Poochera)**

ROLS: We left the farm house at about 8am. When we were 3 miles from Minnipa, a family pulled up in a car and asked us to come for a meal cooked in the open when we arrive in Minnipa. Above us was the sound of a helicopter. It was television camera men. They landed and gave us a friendly interview. The reporter was surprised we had walked this far.

CHRIS: Walking into Minnipa, some Aboriginals asked us to stay the night with them. It was nice of them, but it was too early to stop for the day, and another family had asked us to come for a meal.



DANE: The people we ate with talked to the head teacher from Karcuttaby school, 12 miles out of town. He said we could sleep there. On the way, I was hit on the shoulder by an apple from a school bus.

It rained just enough today to give us exercise in being ready for it.

CHRIS: We left Minnipa at 3:30pm and arrived at the school at 8pm. The head teacher showed us to the exercise room. It has two mattresses in it.

MAL: The family in Minnipa made some changes to our pram that will help it to work better.

Some friendly people who do not believe in God, said they like what we are doing, but they said that they do not see that it is God who is helping us. I'm surprised, because we really could not go on without God. We never have more than enough food for two meals.

ROB: Rachel is becoming more open about talking to people. It could be good or it could be bad. She is becoming a little foolish at times.

**DAY TEN: Wednesday, May 15.
(Walked 21 miles to Cungena)**

DANE: We had a nice night at the school. Chris and Rachel gave up the only two beds to Mal and me, as we're in the worst shape. The head teacher's children fixed a meal for us this morning. The television people said yesterday that their story on us would go out to all the world. There is news of rain across the Nullarbor, that has filled up the water holes. Things are looking good!

MAL: I saw this morning that I have the start of new sores growing between my toes, and heat sores are now covering my feet in general. I cut out the toes of my shoes to give my feet more air. My sores and sicknesses are enough for ten people. Today was the first real rain that we have had so far. We used the plastic "space" blankets that Brenton and Tony gave us on Saturday to cover ourselves as we walked. The rain only made the lower part of our robes and pants wet.

CHRIS: We were planning to stop when we arrived at Cungena, and just before we arrived at Poochera, a woman from Cungena asked us to stay at her house tonight. Thank God! At Poochera we used the money people gave us on the road to buy food.

GARY: After Poochera, a car with three Aboriginals stopped and gave us fruit and biscuits.

MAL: When we were walking to Cungena, a bus pulled up. Out stepped fifteen or so people with cameras to take pictures of us. This is the second bus that has stopped for its travellers to meet us.

ROLS: It is interesting that the latest news reports are painting a picture of us as good people. Now, because of that, rich people are not afraid to give us a place to sleep. The woman's husband from Cungena was there to meet us with a car at the Cungena turn-off. He will return us to the same place in the morning. He is very easy to like, because he

doesn't think about himself. Now he's helping me wash clothes. It's beautiful when people really help freely.

ROB: A problem with Rachel, Gary, and myself started today. We called Chris in to help. Chris believed Gary and I were being too hard on Rachel. After some talking I agreed, but Gary still feels Chris is too soft. I can see that Chris is feeling tired and easily loses her enthusiasm. I will try to look for this more quickly in future, so I can encourage her.

DAY ELEVEN: Thursday, May 16.

(Walked 17 miles to Wirrula)

CHRIS: We were up at 7am. After writing letters we left at 10:15am. We left our wet clothes at the farm because the woman said she would drive them out to us after they dry.

ROLS: Christine is feeling very low. She just asked if she could step down from being the leader, because things are becoming too much for her.

RACHEL: People pulling a caravan stopped to give biscuits and drinks and take pictures. We saw more television reporters flying over. They landed in Ceduna before driving in a car to meet us near Wirrula.

ROLS: In Wirrula, another head teacher from a school asked us to sleep at his place and to talk to year 10 and 11 students at Mittaburra School tomorrow. The television station is enthusiastic about taking pictures of that. So far the trip has been easy, but it could become more difficult. Earlier today I was fighting the poor-me's, putting myself down into a spiritual hole by thinking about wrong actions in my past and not looking at the good things I have been a part of. This walk has been better than anything I have been a part of in my whole life, and I'm feeling very good thinking about it now.

DANE: On the road today Roland started thinking about and wanting Chinese food. What do you know! Chinese food was had by all at the head teacher's house tonight! We had a very rest-filled time together after eating.

ROB: Earlier on today Chris said she wanted a rest from leading, so I am taking over as "leader".

DAY TWELVE: Friday, May 17.

(Walked 14 miles from Wirrula to the school)

RACHEL: We had a good sleep last night, waking up at 7.

DANE: We had a ride to the school this morning with the television people. After half an hour we were asked to come into the head teacher's room where he said that he

had called off our talk because the town is very small and some people had strong feelings against us. Some parents and teachers said they would fight strongly against us talking, because people would think that they are encouraging us in our walk. The television people interviewed Mal who said we were a little sad about the feeling the people had against us, but we were not going to stop because of it. He said that we will be praying that others will be more open to hear the reasons for our actions. Rob did a telephone interview with a church leader who was trying to find reasons to disagree with us. People are saying we're in all the newspapers. Our job is to keep the light off us and on God.

MAL: After the closed door at the school, we returned to Wurrula, where we had a nice rest day at the head teacher's house. I used my time to write a letter to a newspaper near here. The newspaper printed a report asking if anything good at all could come from a walk like this. It looks like we do not have many friends in this part of the country.

CHRIS: I was very sad about the feeling of the other teachers at the school meeting, but still happy that we could say a little to some of them about our beliefs. The head teacher was still friendly, but a little surprised about how strong our beliefs are. We had a meeting to choose between buying stamps or food with the \$4.50 we have. We agreed to spend \$1.50 on stamps and \$3.00 on food. It was enough for a big meal.

ROB: We believed we would be asking too much to spend another night at the head teacher's house. The weather was below freezing, so we walked out to the school where the head teacher had said we could stay if we wanted.

MAL: It was late in the day when we started walking. Six cars stopped on the way, giving us muesli bars and other things to eat. It was a 14 mile walk, so we counted that as a work day, and planned to make tomorrow our real rest day.

CHRIS: We had a Bible study on Matthew 13 before leaving for the school. We agreed that we need to keep our "first love", and not just do things as a job. As we walked to the school, Rachel was teaching Rob to talk in Kannada, we were singing songs, and I was going over Bible sayings that I have learned in the past. At the school we stitched the space blankets together again, and went to bed at 11:30pm.

DAY THIRTEEN: Saturday, May 18. (Rest day at Mittaburra School)

RACHEL: Rest day! We were up at 7:30 and ate at 9am. We played ball and washed ourselves.

GARY: I gave Rachel some teaching in art, showing her how to make parts of a picture darker where the light is not on that side. MAL: A very good place this school. We all liked the big room to exercise in. A worker at the school fixed some food for us in

the second half of the day. We had a Bible study together at night, and after a general clean-up I returned to writing. It was after midnight before I went to bed.

CHRIS: Dane is having problems being in a group, as he walks away in the middle of meetings, not even knowing that a meeting is happening. We're all a little too foolish, but we're getting on well together now. This rest day has been very good as far as getting a good rest and getting together better as a group. I feel a new enthusiasm for the walk, and confident that God will help us when we start walking across the really empty parts after Ceduna. I don't know how many times I've said Thank you, God! on this trip, but I know that each time it was truly how I was feeling. We studied Matthew 14 today and learned from Peter's faith to get out of the boat and walk on the water even if people think that it is going too far. Even if we do not finish, people should be able to see that we have walked "on the water" this far, and that is better than doing nothing.

GARY: I think the most important teaching from Matthew 14 is how easy it is for people to lose faith (like the followers of Jesus did) even after seeing a miracle.

**DAY FOURTEEN: Sunday, May 19.
(Walked 20 miles from Mittaburra School)**

CHRIS: I went around waking people up at 5:30, thinking it was 6:30. People were a little angry, and it made me feel bad for a short time. We were on the road at 8am, after cleaning up the school. All of us are a little sore from using different muscles yesterday when playing at the school. A man who worked at bringing people to hospitals from road accidents when he was younger stopped and gave Mal powder for the sores on his feet. An army man gave us some army food, bananas, and special squares that you burn, to cook food.

ROLS: A man who is riding across Australia on a horse stopped in an old truck with his wife and child. He was an interesting person to talk to. Earlier on two young men had asked him to bring some food to us, so he came 35 miles from Ceduna to see us and give us the food. He said he had a strong feeling that he must do it now, or he wouldn't feel right.

RACHEL: The truck with two horses in it stopped and gave us drinks. After a little time he returned and gave us mountains of food, biscuits, and drinks. Today I was a little tired, so I was riding on the pram.

DANE: Food is still coming in. About 4pm, after walking 20 miles, Gary saw a farm house, and we talked about asking for a place to sleep. (Up to that time they had not asked for anything.) When Gary made it more in keeping with the Bible by saying we would try to "find a person who is good enough" to help us (Matthew 10:11), I agreed.

The people in the house were happy to help, and fixed up mattresses and sleeping bags for us to sleep in. They were not very rich, and we had more than enough food, so we cooked up our food for all of us.

MAL: The woman at the farm house was surprised at how close we all are and that there are not many arguments between us. How different are we really from the world? Off hand I wouldn't have said our group was closer than other groups in the world. I could be too close to see the difference.

GARY: After eating, we watched the news on television, then we went to sleep.

DAY FIFTEEN: Monday, May 20.
(Walked 25 miles to Ceduna)

ROB: We were up at 6am, ate, and left by 7am. At 10:30am, a man who works for the government in Ceduna came and gave us \$5, left, and then came back and said we could sleep in beds at his house when we get to Ceduna.

RACHEL: It was cold last night. An old woman stopped today and gave us biscuits. She said we are crazy, but she wants us to finish! Christine stitched my robe. I am getting a little tired, but I really like it here. We are eating more than we eat in Sydney. People are being very friendly. The flies are a little bad. My shoes are going better than anyone's. They are like new. Chris is teaching me the names of the towns where the government is for each country.

DANE: I think there was just a touch of ice on the ground this morning. I've been feeling less help from people in the cars today. An orange exploded at us from a truck travelling at 60 miles an hour. People argued against what we are trying to say. One old woman tried to get us into an argument about religion. But as we were walking into Ceduna I was moved by many nice actions. The Aboriginals were the most friendly.

GARY: Two people from Germany stopped and asked us what we wanted. We said, "Peanut butter and lettuce," so that's what they gave us!

CHRIS: When the man and woman from Germany were there, a police truck went by, then turned around and stopped. They asked for our names, and said they would take action against us if we walk on the road. They said we must walk on the stones at the side of the road. We think they are just trying to make things difficult for us (The road is much smoother and easier to walk on than the dirt at the side of the road. When walking on the road it was easy for the walkers to see cars and trucks coming long before they arrived, because the road is very flat, very straight, and there are no trees or buildings in the way. When they would see a vehicle coming, they would step off the road.) but we agreed to obey them. In the middle of the day, an old man and woman went by us and then returned from Ceduna with soft drinks and cooked potatoes that they made a special trip to the shop to buy for us. As we were walking, Rob, Rols and I worked on going over Bible sayings.

ROB: About five miles from Ceduna a reporter from the Ceduna newspaper came out to see us. It was a boring interview. He asked if we were worried about the hard part after Ceduna, where there will not be so many cars or houses. We said our faith is in God—not cars or houses.

GARY: Dane received a few strange looks from people driving by when he was standing on his head to help blood return to his heart from his feet!

MAL: In Ceduna one car followed us all the way in from the border of the town. We walked up to give them a leaflet, but they shouted for us to go away. They were not very nice!

ROB: We arrived in Ceduna at about 5:30pm. Many people were driving up and down the road, looking at us as we made our way through town. Two cars full of Aboriginals stopped and asked us to write our names on a piece of paper for them to keep! As Chris was calling Sydney on the telephone, a big group of people was growing around us. A very nice man asked us to stay at the Lutheran Church, but the church leader said he still thinks we are trying to force God to do a miracle. We were going to leave because we do not want to stay with anyone who is fighting against what we are trying to say. We talked about it with him and he said he was not against what we are trying to say, but he cannot agree with how we are saying it. Because he said people were making food for us, we agreed to stay. At 7pm people started coming to the church with food. A man from the Phillipines was open to what we were saying. Then a Pentecostal Aboriginal using all the religious words that often drive people away from real faith, was surprisingly open. But he didn't show much interest in putting faith into action. A man who had been asking for a ride out on the road came by and said he had been looking for us. He said he had wanted to walk with us, but he didn't know why and he had no clear direction. We talked it over and said no. We said he could stay the night with us, but he left (for Alice Springs) just before we all went to bed.

RACHEL: A few people came and talked to us tonight. A Catholic boy from the Phillipines came with a guitar. He was playing for a little, then he handed it to us to use. Chris and I talked to a few Aboriginal children. They were friendly.

ROLS: It was a good plan how God used the church meeting room for interested people to come to to talk to us. We had good interesting talks with all the people who came. After all the people left, we talked about Rachel and India. In three days her papers say she must return to India; but David and Cherry have asked the government if she can stay longer. We talked about who should go back to India with her, to do the work in India when the walk is finished. Boyd and Sheri will be going, but they need another person. We agreed that Rob was the best one for the job.

CHRIS: When we talked about India, Rob and I were both enthusiastic about it. The group ended up choosing Rob. I was sad for a time after this, because I wanted to go. When we went to bed at 10pm, I was feeling a little down in my spirit.

Looking for a spiritual answer

by Shirley Stott Despoja

I think I am not the only adult who has no religion but who still likes the Nullarbor children. I do not say this from a place far above them, for they are not weak or stupid. They are showing that they have answers for all the arguments people are throwing at them.

I do not have their faith, but I see that they are saying things that most young people today feel but cannot say. Surprisingly, it is the *churches* who are kicking them for their faith. It says something about our country.

With all our talk of owning things, we forget the spiritual needs of people. Young people, if they could say what they feel, would ask us to teach them about something more than buying and selling.

If there is a God, he must know how hard it is for young people to find faith in the churches today. Young people are able to feel love for the poor. They see the pain others feel and they look for a reason behind it all. The Nullarbor children are trying to say something to us, and we just laugh at them.

Worse than that, when reporters should be interviewing them, they are fighting them. We turn our backs on what they are saying and argue that it will cost us money if police must protect them from danger.

In the past the church believed that it was too spiritual to help the poor. But now it does something worse and hits out at a group of children for an act of faith.

How can young people say what we all feel, about the need for answers, the need for rules to teach us the difference between right and wrong, the need for something that lives on after material things are destroyed, if we are going to jump on them when they do open up?

We could start by listening to their questions, and by trying to understand what the Nullarbor children are trying to say, and by believing that young people are able to think about more important things than new clothes and the latest music.

If we do this, the cost of helping them (if it should happen that they *need* our help) will be small. We need to tell them that we are with them, that we adults want to find loving answers in our hearts and in our world too.

Part 5: CEDUNA TO EUCLA

DAY SIXTEEN: Tuesday, May 21
(Walked 12 miles from Ceduna)

ROLS: We left the Lutheran Church at 8:30am with the leader encouraging us. What a surprise! Dane's shoes are falling apart, so Rob and Dane tried to find some shoes in town but were not able to.

CHRIS: I am the leader again from today. I'm feeling much better after the rest. Six letters were sent to this town for us. One of them is from Papua New Guinea. We sent letters to the biggest newspapers in Australia, trying to push some people who are against us to try walking in the opposite direction if they want to show that what we are doing can happen without God's help.

MAL: We left town with a wall of young people taking our picture. Must have been close to twenty cameras, and one of them was from the Ceduna newspaper. I don't know where they came from all in a group! Police came by when we were out on the road (I think to see if we are walking on the stones beside the road like they said we should.) Little by little I am feeling stronger. It's good to be able to walk and have enough strength left over to encourage others. Robin is often at pains to encourage others (like Rachel). It's good watching him.

ROB: A big group of young people were talking to Rachel when we were waiting to receive the letters people sent to us. They had been thinking that we weren't going to eat for two months! When we left, some children gave us soft drinks, fruit, and some cooked meat and vegetable pieces mixed together.

RACHEL: Two old women stopped and talked to us and then went off. After a few minutes they came back and gave us some food. I was very tired, so we only walked twelve miles today.

GARY: A bag of vegetables was hanging on a fence by the road today. We tried asking for fruit from the people at the fruit fly station (where cars must stop and leave any fruit they are carrying, so that they will not carry fruit flies across the Nullarbor), but the man said the fruit must be destroyed and he wouldn't give us any. We looked through the letters as we were walking. Three were very encouraging. One person sent us \$2. The flies and mosquitos are getting worse. In the middle of the day we stopped to eat the army food, and some wheat flakes with dried grapes, sugar, and water. A car pulling a caravan stopped. The driver called us names and said we should get a job. At 3:15pm, a big car stopped and four Pentecostal women gave us drinks and prayed with us. Then they gave us \$100 (Rs2,500)! They said all 700 people from their church in Perth were praying for us! They are rich, but it was good to see that they were willing to help. It is 4:15pm and we have walked only twelve miles today. Rachel says she can't walk any more and the pram is broken. I can see a house in the distance, so Chris and I will run there. (5pm) It

was two miles each way. The wife of the owner was there. She said we could sleep in an empty building near the house. Chris and I ran back to the others who were waiting on the road.

ROLS: The people at the farm house gave us food and were friendly. They later came with some of their friends to talk with us in the building where we will be sleeping tonight.

CHRIS: We asked Dane to cut his hair and beard because people around here think anyone with long hair and a beard uses drugs and mates with women he is not married to, but he said that if we feel it is that important, then he would drop out or walk behind us a few miles, because he doesn't want to cut his hair. It was not that important to us, so we didn't push it.

DANE: I was asked to think about cutting my long hair. I said I wouldn't. I said it is part of a serious belief with me; and the others agreed for me to be different in this way.

**DAY SEVENTEEN: Wednesday, May 22.
(Walked 32 miles to Penong)**

RACHEL: We were up at 6 and ate at 7. The woman gave us some wheat flakes and tea after taking pictures of us. We were on the road at 7:30am.

GARY: I had a bad night. Water from my body was freezing on the space blanket then dropping on me from the blanket. I cannot believe how cold it was.

MAL: Surprisingly, I was able to sleep better than the others. Most nights I'm the worst sleeper. It was below freezing last night.

ROLS: I'm happy with how the walk is going. It'll be interesting to see what happens in the next few days. I'm not worried about the difficult part-the Nullarbor-and I feel strongly that we'll make it. I am confident, but I do not want to become proud.

RACHEL: I am feeling very well today. Not many flies today, but there are many mosquitos. We all have mosquito bites.

GARY: A man from Brisbane stopped and said he'd listened to reports about us in Brisbane. We rested for 45 minutes in the middle of the day to eat wheat flakes with water. Toward the end of the meal, a man and woman stopped on a motorcycle. They were Christians on their way to a Bible school in Perth. The woman is a nurse, and she gave us medicine for sores, an oil to make insects stay away, and mountains of food.

CHRIS: The man who owns the Ceduna newspaper and his wife stopped and gave us food. She said she would like for us to stop. She said God could use us in other ways. A

man who stopped to give us some fruit last week stopped again and gave us salt biscuits. He talked about how people should live day by day and not be worried about tomorrow.

ROB: At the rest stop a farmer stopped to encourage us. He said we could stay at his house, but it was only two miles up the road and we wanted to walk on to Penong. His father's brother lives two miles on the other side of Nundroo, so he talked to him about us staying there when we have walked that far. Thank God! A few miles up the road, he turned up again with \$20!

DANE: The farmer, Leon, said at first he didn't agree with us, but now he does, and he feels if one person finds faith in God by our walk it will pay for what we are doing. His father's brother's name is Allan.

MAL: We arrived at Penong at 8pm. When we were walking into town, we saw another of those special falling stars. This one gave off a very strong light in one place for more than five seconds before dropping down with a very big tail behind it.

CHRIS: Because we had money that we received from people today, we agreed to look into getting a room at the Penong hotel. Gary and Rob went, but were laughed out of there, so we went to the Penong church for free, because it was not locked.

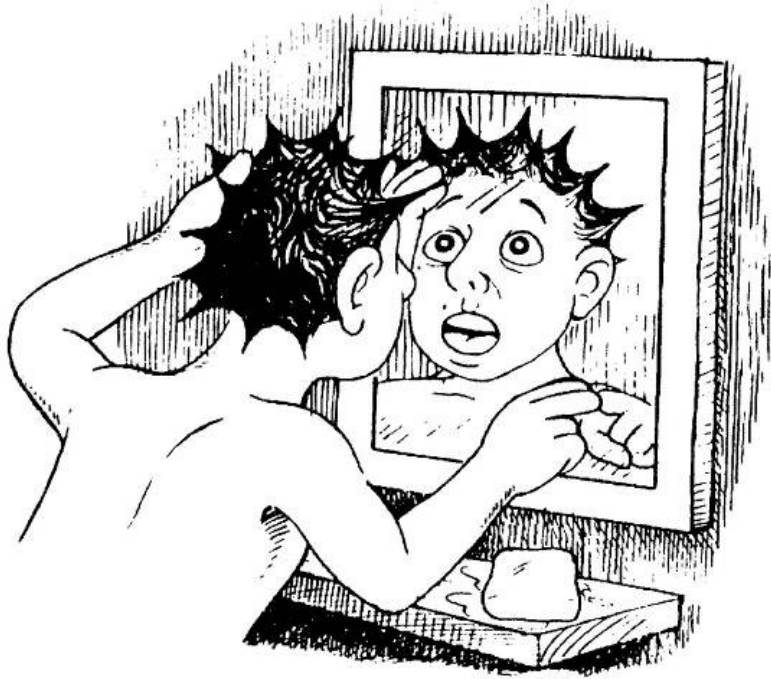
ROB: A friendly reporter from the Ceduna newspaper was at the truck stop, and she was the the one who showed us to the church.

GARY: Kathy and Bob from the Adelaide News arrived, and over a cup of coffee we talked about anything under the sun, but mostly about Rachel and India. We used some rugs for blankets at the church and had a very good night's sleep.

DAY EIGHTEEN: Thursday, May 23. (Rest Day in Penong)

ROB: We had a good sleep. The petrol station said we could all wash ourselves there without paying for it. (There is so little water in this part of Australia that people must buy the water they use even at petrol stations.)

GARY: We all look like punks now, because the salt water and soap did something strange to our hair.



ROLS: The Ceduna newspaper reporter (who lives here in Penong) has helped us by giving us the use of her clothes line to dry clothes on; and we were able to cook food in her house.

ROB: Other reporters turned up when we were eating in the middle of the day. Mal said we wanted to talk by ourselves, so they left for an hour or so. We talked about giving money to a group that is helping poor people in Africa, and about Jesus telling us not to tell anyone if we give money to the poor.

The group believed that if you give money to poor people, you should do it secretly. But this made a problem for them, because people wanted to know how God was feeding them on the walk, and they did not want to have any secrets from the newspapers.

GARY: We talked about buying blankets with the \$100, but after thinking about it we think it would be better to walk through the night if we get too cold. We tried to buy shoes for Dane here in Penong, but could not find the right ones; so we'll give \$80 to the poor in Africa. After paying for stamps and buying food for the day, we ended up with only 28 cents left.

CHRIS: Because all that we are doing is being watched by all of Australia, we agreed that we should tell the reporters what we're doing with the money. It's like Elijah receiving a match. If we throw the "match" (money) away, we should tell people we are doing it. We believe that it will be a strong way of showing that even out here with no way to feed ourselves, God is able to give us so much that we have enough to send money to help people who are really poor.

MAL: We want people to see how much God has helped us, and not for them to think that we are very spiritual by giving the money away. We tried hard to point this out to the reporters. We need to think and talk through important actions and beliefs like this first, so that we can say them clearly when we talk to the reporters. I find that when I write about what I am thinking in a letter, I often use the same words when talking to a reporter later, because my thinking has been made clear by writing the letter.

GARY: Reporters are back with news from Eucla that the police say they will put us in prison if we sleep by the road after crossing the border into Western Australia. They say we cannot make a fire at night to keep ourselves warm too... there is some rule against it. I don't think they will go through with it, but I can't see that it will be a big problem for God if they do.

CHRIS: Police from South Australia have been nice to us so far (apart from that one problem in Ceduna about walking on the stones beside the road). I think only the police in Western Australia are saying this.

ROB: We said we would do all that we could to make the fires safely, but if we are cold, I think it would be stupid and wrong for us not to make a fire. And if we are sleeping on someone's land, I think the farmer who owns the land should be the one to say so if they do not want us sleeping there.

GARY: So far not one of us is feeling bad about having started the walk. I know it's going to be hard work from here on, but I try not to think about it too much. We have been hearing two different stories about the Aboriginals around there. Most of the farmers say that they'll rob us and do many bad things to us. But a few other people have said much the opposite. They say the Aboriginals will be watching for us and will do all they can to help us. At Ceduna, the Aboriginals were the people who were most friendly toward us, and farmers had been telling the same stories about them being bad there too.

ROB: The whole group has been working hard, and Chris has been working the hardest. I feel like I should be trying to do more. Some people have said that I should slow down, but I can't do it with all of the work that needs doing. I'll just have to leave more for the others to do, or pray for more strength. I need to do a few things well and not do many things badly. I've been thinking about how David has been trying to encourage one of us to take over as leader of the whole group, but I don't know how one of us could handle all of the work that leading takes.

ROLS: Doors to show people the teachings of Christ are opening. Slowly we're showing more of the truth through newspapers, radio, and television.

MAL: The News reporter wants to take a deep look at the reasons for our walk and at what each of us believes - a perfect time to point to the teachings of Christ and not boring truths like how many sores we have or how many miles we have walked. By the end of the walk, we all want the truth to be clearer, with us standing for really strong faith, not just being a "nice" group of church young people.

DAY NINETEEN: Friday, May 24.
(Walked 22.5 miles to Bookabie)

RACHEL: Rob pulled my tooth out. We had a good sleep, waking at 6am. We left the church at 7:30am.

GARY: We went to the petrol station to call Sydney and to use the toilets. I fixed up the pram. The woman in the station asked us in for hot soup and bread. When we were eating that, an old man gave us a cup of coffee each.

ROB: When we were about six miles out, a big truck stopped and dropped off a bag from a woman in Ceduna. In the bag were a blanket, some biscuits, and some lollies. When we were eating, at the twelve mile point, Rols and Dane played chess with pieces Rols had cut out of some card-board.

ROLS: The Adelaide News came out to see us again after we finished eating, and Kathy walked with us. We talked more about living by faith.

DANE: Tonight a man came by slowly in his truck, saw Mal's robe with the words "Only when you are ready to die for your faith are you ready to live for it" on it, and said that could be what we're going to do out here. He said that he lives near here. We were thinking that he was trying to get us to ask him if we could stop at his place, so we didn't.

GARY: When we arrived at Bookabie, Chris and Rob went into a house to use the telephone to call Sydney. (All the telephone calls to David and Cherry were free, because David and Cherry were paying for them at their end of the call.) The people in the house said we should stay at a house a mile down the road, with a man who had asked us to stop by in a call over their two-way radio.

DANE: The house down the road turned out to be that of the man who had said something about the words on Mal's robe. He turned out to be very generous! Rob helped him with marking his sheep for an hour or so. I very much agree with actions like this.

ROLS: The family was generous. They gave us sheep meat to cook. Reporters were still around and they wanted pictures of us cooking the food. Kathy had wanted to sleep out with us, but not in a caravan, so she left.

ROB: Kathy was planning to sleep out with us "to see how cold it gets". In the house in Bookabie, we looked at her latest report. It started something like "Christian Walkers Face Death", and she was building it around something a farmer said about the freezing cold nights.

MAL: The News was sad that we were not going to spend a night freezing. Our freezing would make a good story. God's help with a place to sleep would not. What a mixed up world!

DAY TWENTY: Saturday, May 25.
(Walked 29 miles to Nundroo)

ROLS: Before waking at 6:30am, I was dreaming that a policeman and a shop owner were running after me. I had the feeling that my faith was making them angry. If I was strong in my beliefs, they would try to stop me; but when I acted like my faith was weak, they would cool down and not be angry.

DANE: A man walked with us for a time today. His family is Catholic and he had some friends who are Pentecostals. He wanted to know how important talking in spiritual "languages" is. We talked about what we believed, but after he left, we were thinking that we did not listen enough to him.

GARY: We had a short talk with the police today. They said the nights will be very cold out here.

RACHEL: The group had problems with me today. I talked with Rob, Chris, and Mal. I get out of the spirit quickly. But now I feel better. I am doing well with the walking; it is my spirit that is the problem.

CHRIS: A car stopped and a man and woman gave us a jumper and fruit. Later on we saw them stop far down the road, then go on. When we arrived at the place where they stopped, a bag was hanging on a fence, with a blanket, two more jumpers, shoe strings, soap, and a letter in it.

MAL: Today was the first time we had serious problems between ourselves. We had a talk with Dane about the need to show loving anger at times, after we said some strong things to a "goat" who stopped to laugh at our faith. (Dane believed it was wrong to judge people even when we are right in what we are saying.) There was a meeting with Roland about listening to people more and not doing all of the talking. And there was a meeting with Rachel after she argued about teaching me her language because she said it was too much work. I think Chris and Rob are the strongest in their spirit.

ROB: Chris is having problems being a girl with so many boys. She is planning to write more letters to Cherry in Sydney so she will not have to hold in all her problems. A truck driver pulled over in the middle of the day, and a woman from Adelaide (Sue) stepped out. She wanted to walk to Norseman with us! We stopped at the next mile marker to talk about it. In the few minutes up to that point we could tell something was wrong with her mind. We were strong in our feeling that she shouldn't come on the walk, but she was so mixed up in her thinking that we wanted to break it to her slowly. As the day went on she started acting more and more strangely. She is clearly out of touch with

the real world. About five miles from Nundroo, some Aboriginals stopped and talked a little. They had been looking for animals to eat, and were covered in dirt.

GARY: When we arrived in Nundroo, Sue went her separate way. Allan (see day seventeen) sent his wife, Joy, out to give us a lift to their house, but it was only two more miles, so we walked it. When we arrived, we had a big feed of meat, potatoes, pasta, and sweets. After that I had a wash and put medicine on a sore I received from rubbing between my legs. The others are playing table tennis, but I'm a little tired, so I'm in bed. Well, good night!

**DAY TWENTY-ONE: Sunday, May 26.
(Walked 13 miles from Nundroo)**

GARY: I was awake at 7:10am. It was the nicest sleep I've had on the trip.

CHRIS: Allan and Joy did much to encourage us and gave us blankets and a sleeping bag, food, jumpers, socks, and some almost new running shoes for Dane. Joy later came out by car and gave us \$35 and apples. Thank God!

ROB: God is so good to us! I'm happy we didn't buy blankets with the money we received, because God had it worked out this way. Twenty-five miles from Yalata, Mal saw three full tins of beer, just in the bushes where he was going to the toilet. We are calling this place "God's Beer Hill". Chris has been teaching Rachel how to use lines to show how we use words when talking, and how to work with numbers that are less than a whole number.

RACHEL: A few Aboriginals stopped and gave us a bottle of cold drink today.

GARY: A church man stopped and gave us some food. He saw us on television in Canberra.

DANE: We had a meeting to talk about how Gary should talk to Rachel when he disagrees with her. He's to do this through Rob from now on, because he is often too sharp in how he talks to her.

CHRIS: When we stopped to eat in the middle of the day we talked more about anger, from a problem Dane had about us talking strongly to a person who was laughing at God. He had believed hate and anger were the same, but later he agreed that it is good at times to show anger when a person is clearly laughing at God. Nice friendly police from Penong came out to see how we are going.

RACHEL: We only walked 14 miles today. It was an easy day. We saw a farm house at 4:30pm. Rob, Chris and I went to ask if we could stay there, but there were no people in the house. We went into an empty building by the house to sleep.

DANE: I was thanking God for the shoes and the generous spirit of so many farmers, and I asked God for rain for them; but, remembering our job, I changed it to, as long as it does not hurt what we are trying to say by the walk.

CHRIS: We went to sleep at 7pm! We were really warm. It rained through the night, so it was good that we weren't sleeping outside.

MAL: Looking over the building and around the farm started me thinking about how much work the early farmers had to do. Did they do it all for money? Living out here away from all other people must have forced them to think about God. Did they thank God for his help at all? Losing faith in God and being lifted up with pride are as much part of farm life today as they are of the very big towns.

DAY TWENTY-TWO: Monday, May 27.
(Walked 15 miles to Yalata)

GARY: We were up at 7. We ate salt biscuits, sweet biscuits, tinned meat, peanuts, and powdered milk. A man on a motorcycle stopped and gave us some chocolate. He was worried that he wouldn't make it across on his beautiful big motorcycle! Then a family from America stopped. They gave us a bag of food: chocolate bars, bread, lettuce, cabbage, corn, and more. When we were resting, a family stopped. The father could see the problems in the world, but said we were foolish to try to change things.

DANE: I had a piece break off a tooth this morning. Will it bring pain in the coming days? I have no way to fix it if it does. (Dane had no more problems with the tooth after this.)

ROB: At 12, we arrived at the wild dog fence that goes for thousands of miles from Queensland to the ocean at the bottom of South Australia. Here some young men from Britain stopped and gave us beer and talked seriously about what we are doing.

RACHEL: A car pulling a caravan stopped and the people in it gave us some fruit and drinks. They said they don't believe in what we are doing, but they still like us.

DANE: As we came to the side road leading up to the Yalata petrol station, a young Aboriginal girl shouted out, and, hands in the air, ran to tell those inside that we were coming.

CHRIS: Rob and I talked to the woman who owns the petrol station. She was not at all friendly toward us, telling us that we must not sleep in any place but on a small piece of sand next to the petrol station. She said it was very important that we not sleep with the Aboriginals who live near here, and that we should not even go to see them. She tried to discourage us from walking on too.

ROB: About five minutes after we arrived at Yalata, two television stations turned up. They mostly interviewed Chris and Mal. Rachel and I answered a few questions. Two blankets were by the road. One was very good, but they both were very dirty. More help from God! After we had started our fire, some Aboriginal children came to talk to us. The oldest one talked about what animals we will see on our way, and he showed us what wombat foot marks look like. At about midnight, it started to rain, so we moved closer to the petrol station. (It was closed by this time). About fifteen minutes after we moved, when we were just going to sleep, some whites who had been drinking, came and tried to make things difficult for us. They raced the motor of their car and shouted angrily at us. One woman (who was the worst one) pushed and kicked at me, telling me that I must talk to her. She returned without the others later and tried to argue with me for half an hour. She said she was an "f---ing good Christian" and that she was trying to help us. She left, saying that we didn't know our Bibles and she was "going to call the pigs" (pigs is a bad word for police in Australia) to lock us up for not staying on the sand in the open. (Some help!)

DAY TWENTY-THREE: Tuesday, May 28.
(Walked 29 miles from Yalata)

RACHEL: We were up at 5:30am and ate at 6am. Chris called David in Sydney at 6:15. We were on the road at 6:30. I am feeling very happy today. I was teaching Malcolm how to talk in Kannada. A car stopped and gave us many tins of food.

CHRIS: At times I forget to thank God for helping us. I think it's like the people in the Bible being angry when God gave them bread from the sky to eat day after day when they were walking through the desert. I was feeling sad for myself today. Roland helped a little, but I'm still feeling left out. Dane was teaching me the words to the song "Proud Mary". Rachel saw a nice sleeping bag with big burn marks on it in the bushes beside the road. Thank God! They say we do not know how cold it will be out on the Nullarbor, but God does and he's getting us ready for it!

DANE: There was much strong wind today.

ROB: The oil we have been carrying in our pockets has been good for our lips and dry faces as well as for sores from rubbing against shoes and clothes. A family who live near Port Augusta stopped. They gave us muesli bars and said they liked our answer to Brother Fleming in the Adelaide newspaper.

MAL: We had a beautiful meal today-not just the food, but the visitors too. We had only just started eating when I said, "It's too bad that we don't have any bread; we'll just have to pray for some." (I was half serious.) Less than a minute later a car pulled up and, without my asking, the people in it gave us, with other things, some bread. It was a beautiful start to a beautiful meal.

GARY: We now have three sleeping bags and seven blankets. Toward the end of our meal in the middle of the day, who should pull up but Ken (see Day Four), the friend of Brenton, all the way from Adelaide (where he now lives), just to ask us what we needed.

He has now returned to Penong to buy some things and to find a letter from my father that we did not receive when we were there.

Many people on motorcycles have been going by on their way to a big meeting of motorcycle riders in Perth. Two stopped to talk.

ROB: Ken had to drive for eight hours from Adelaide to see us. He did it because when he was praying he thinks God said to come out here; but he doesn't know what he should do now that he is here - just help us in some way.

MAL: Ken showed us Kathy's story; it was printed in a Sunday newspaper. It was very good! Yesterday Chris was feeling bad because some of us were thinking she makes too many rules; then David was angry with her over the telephone this morning for not telling people off more when they do things wrongly. She was crying, so I talked to her.

DANE: About thirty miles before Nullarbor I was having a difficult time staying up with the others. Mal, Gary, and Rob said they would run three miles up the road and start a fire before dark. A car stopped and a man and woman had food for us. We sent them on to Mal, Gary, and Rob with it.

ROB: Gary, Mal, and I ran more than three miles in 22.5 minutes. The man and woman bringing food to us had stopped to talk to us before, on our way to Kyancutta (Day 7). The woman was very interesting because last time we talked about some of the sayings of Gandhi. But this time we just had friendly talk that was not very serious. Just after dark, Ken returned to say he had not been able to take money out of the bank because it would not take his bank card, and now he has no money for food! He was laughing at it and at himself, because now God was feeding him through us! This walk has made me think about how I feel toward people in the churches. They can be right with God by showing love - just like a Hindu or a person who does not believe in God - even if they do not understand all of what Christ said. "Anyone who loves is born of God."

ROLS: Ken came back with a happy spirit, and we had a meal together. He still thinks like others in the church world, but because he went so far in trying to help us and obey God, it has lifted my faith that there are spiritual sheep in the different church groups who will drop their faith in governments and money when the mark of the devil starts.

(Roland was writing about a teaching that, in the future a world leader will force people to have a mark in their hand before they can buy or sell anything. The world leader will be the son of the devil; and all people who put their faith in money - not God - to feed them, will obey this leader. See Revelation 13:16-17 in the Bible.)

Before leaving for Penong a second time Ken said he would do anything that was needed. He is going to clean our clothes, and look for new wheels for the pram.

CHRIS: We're all very happy about how God is giving us all that we need. Finding the sleeping bag, and Ken's leading from God to come out here are special little miracles. We're all healthy, and our pains are all little ones. We are praying that God will keep it

that way. We cleared a big place on the ground before starting the fire tonight, and each of us has a turn to watch the fire through the night.

ROB: We changed watches at two hour breaks. Mal and Rachel did not have a turn at watching because they both have problems sleeping.

Rain was falling across South Australia on this night, but the walkers were dry. The clouds above them did not drop the rain that was in them, but they did act as a blanket to hold back some of the cold weather as the young people were sleeping.

DAY TWENTY-FOUR: Wednesday, May 29.
(Walked 29 miles to Nullarbor)

GARY: I had the last turn on the fire this morning, and it was my job to wake the others at 6am. We had one big bowl of wheat flakes between us. We all liked making it from a whole box of flakes. As we were walking this morning, a police car stopped, but they did not say much.

ROB: Some people who only go to church on Saturdays stopped to shoot us down with difficult questions about what we believe. They didn't even get out of their car to talk. The first car that stopped after that gave us water. Then a bus stopped. People on it said the bus driver had listened to a report on the radio that the head policeman in Eucla was going to stop us when we arrive in Eucla if we don't have enough food and water to get to Norseman. I don't know how true that report is, because it comes through three different people.

CHRIS: People on the bus gave us \$10. Then an older man and woman with a caravan stopped and gave us another blanket and food. We're now into the real Nullarbor Desert. There are a few trees, but not many. It's good that it's not hot, because there are not enough trees to hide under if we wanted to.

RACHEL: We played a Bible game when we were walking today. We saw the bones of a camel too. Chris is teaching me a new song. The wind is strong today. There are many hills here.

DANE: We walked more quickly on the second to last three miles, and this tired me out. After I said I was having problems, the others said I could say how quickly we should walk on the last leg.

ROB: A television station arrived and put a radio microphone on Chris, so they could hear Chris and Rachel singing "God Made Man, Man Made Money, and Money Made Man Crazy" (one of Ross' songs) as they were walking.

MAL: We had a very special happening tonight to show people how faith works. Just after the television people left us on the road saying they would wait for us at the

Nullarbor petrol station and restaurant, the owners of the restaurant pulled up to talk to us on the road. They were returning after being away for six months and they said we could have a free meal and a free room at a house near the petrol station for tonight and tomorrow. The television people were waiting for us when we arrived, and they couldn't believe it when we walked in and were received as special visitors. I think secretly they wanted pictures of us asking for help, because they can't believe all these people are giving us so much without us even asking for it. The timing was a miracle to show them that God is helping us.

ROB: The owners would not talk to the television people. They later pulled me to the side and said the reason they were helping was because they wanted to help, and not because they wanted to look good on television. We later learned that the workers were against us, and if the owners had not arrived back when they did, we would have been pushed out in the cold.

ROLS: The television woman asked us some questions, and we said something about burning money and a few other things that were not really important to what we are trying to say through the walk. We need to learn how to be as smart as snakes with these people. She'll be giving a five-minute interview on camera tomorrow morning. We will see if she uses what we said tonight against us.

ROB: The others were not happy with the way I handled a talk with the television reporter. They said I was not clear with my answers, talked about things that we had agreed not to talk about, was not in control of the way the interview was going, and generally not on the ball spiritually. I am not taking it well. I'm seriously thinking about not taking part in interviews in the future. They make you feel good when you do a good job, but it makes you feel very low when things do not go well.

**DAY TWENTY-FIVE: Thursday, May 30.
(Rest day at Nullarbor)**

GARY: I opened my eyes at 7:45am to see I was in a bed with clean blankets and pillows. I washed our clothes and the dirty blankets God gave us on the side of the road.

RACHEL: Malcolm went to the petrol station to get some food. On the way he saw a wombat. And last night he said he could hear wild dogs singing out on the desert. We all washed ourselves and washed our clothes. This is the best rest day we have had.

ROLS: The television people came for the interview this morning. The reporter went through what she was going to say first, and that was good. Then Malcolm did a very good job of answering some difficult questions.

ROB: It was a difficult interview with difficult questions, but it was handled well by Mal and Chris. We have been able to say so much through this walk, even with all the

wrong things that we do and say. Rols and I went to the petrol station to get writing paper and stamps, but they didn't have any stamps.

CHRIS: We received a letter at the petrol station with a \$20 cheque in it. We can't use it out here, but it was very nice of the man who sent it. A worker with the Aboriginals in Yalata came with a letter that had arrived there from a church woman telling us to obey the government. He gave us milk, and showed us how to help the sores on our feet get better. He said we could have come and stayed with them in warm beds when we were there if we wanted, but he didn't know we were there at the time and that the people at the petrol station were trying to keep us away from him. (See Day Twenty-two) He is a very nice man.

ROB: The Aboriginal worker asked what we needed, so we said stamps and he just happened to have four! Thank God!

ROLS: The restaurant owner had said we could have free food today, but when we asked for some the restaurant worker (who wasn't very friendly) said we could have only a little of the cheapest food.

DANE: When the worker said we were asking for too much, I could see by some of our red faces that we had been humbled. Just then, a man in the restaurant came over and said he would pay for more food for us. (I think God was playing a trick on us and then laughing when he showed that he had a second way to feed us!) Earlier, out where the cars were parked, this same man had been asked by Ken (remember Ken?) (See Day Twenty-three) where we were. He had said to Ken, "I know you!" It turns out that they had been friends ten years earlier, before Ken had become a Christian, and now God was throwing them together again over us.

GARY: Ken was out by the cars with a very big pram on two bicycle wheels. He made it yesterday with help from Allan, the farmer from Nundroo (See Day Twenty). It was perfect for our needs. It's difficult to believe it's real. We all talked together for 1.5 hours. Then they left. Ken and his friend both live in Adelaide now, and both work with poor people.

CHRIS: I called a reporter from Sydney who had asked us to call. She was close-minded toward us and argued over and over that our faith is in money and people and not in God. I was sad after the call, and went back to the house. A friendly worker came and talked to us. We're meeting many nice people on this walk. We talked with Dane about our beliefs on married people not marrying again if they break up, and he understands our thinking on it now.

GARY: I had a sore stomach tonight (from all the fruit we've been eating I think) and I was in the toilet for a long time before going to bed at 9pm.

DAY TWENTY-SIX: Friday, May 31.

(Walked 22 miles from Nullarbor)

Problems started to grow with Malcolm at this point. In the past David had said that Malcolm was too proud. Malcolm started writing a letter to David from Nullarbor, saying that he had been showing his ability to work well with others on the walk, and he believed that this showed David was wrong in saying that he was too proud. He said that because of this, he could no longer work with David and Cherry after the walk. He showed the letter to Christine and Robin, who asked him not to send it. He worked smoothly with the others after this, but did not write many reports to be used in writing this book.

ROB: This morning ten cars stopped in just three miles of walking. People in about eight of these gave us things. One person gave us a sleeping bag; another was carrying a box sent out from Ceduna, with a two or three man tent in it. People in most of the cars gave fruit.

DANE: A man dropped off another blanket for us today. It came from Nundroo.

CHRIS: Most of the food people wanted to give us we did not take, because we had too much. Many people are giving us fruit now because they'll have to throw it away at the fruit fly station down the road. We have so much fruit now that we will have to give some to people going in the other direction. We stopped to eat bread and fruit at 2pm.

ROLS: A bus stopped with many young people on it, and a few adults. A woman in her 40's showed that she had no faith, by arguing against God in front of the young people. If she could hear her own words coming back at her she would be surprised at how bad she sounded.

MAL: What she said was just foolishness. If I had been faster, I would have answered her arguments with more bite, for the good of those listening.

ROLS: Today I was pushing to have my way with Gary. So Gary asked others to help fix the problem between us. After fighting against what they were saying for a time, I agreed that I was wrong. Dane disagreed with them telling me that I was wrong, but later he came to understand that it is the best way to fix a problem.

GARY: It looks like rain tonight, so we will see if seven people can sleep in the one tent! After walking twenty-two miles, we stopped to put the tent up and start a fire. We had soup, bread, and cooked apples for our meal tonight.

DANE: It's difficult to find timber for the fire out here, but we were able to find enough after some looking. We had a difficult time getting it to burn, but after some time we had a nice warm fire going. An open fire makes food taste better than it does in a house.

MAL: It was strange going to bed with the sound of wild dogs singing to the moon near us.

ROB: Gary, Roland and Rachel are sleeping in the tent. Dane, Mal, Chris and I are each taking two-hour turns by the fire through the night.

**DAY TWENTY-SEVEN: Saturday, June 1.
(Walked 23 miles toward Eucla)**

CHRIS: It didn't rain after all, but Rob didn't sleep well last night because his sleep was broken up by his turn at watching the fire. We others had a good night's rest. People were trying to do things too quickly on the whole this morning and we had some problems with people becoming a little angry. Our water was low, so we filled up the bottles from a water tank at a parking place. A friend of Joy and Allan (see day twenty) stopped and said we could stay with them tomorrow night. We stopped for a meal at 1 pm with only half a cabbage and a few oranges.

From the Nullarbor Road House to Eucla is 123 miles, with no houses, towns, or shops. It is the longest part of the walk without any people on it. This is where people had been saying they would die.

ROLS: God is testing us now. It is so easy to think that we will never be hungry.

DANE: "Happy are the hungry, for they will be filled." A few of us are feeling sick and taking short rides on the pram. A family from Europe stopped and had a long talk; the husband had some problems and he wanted to talk about them with us. He gave us a few eggs, apples, and oranges.

CHRIS: The ocean is less than a mile to our left and we can see a little of it from time to time. Gary and Robin went running after wombats and had a look into their holes. They weren't planning on killing them for food, but were wanting to see if they could catch one if we needed food badly. They were almost up to one, but it arrived at its hole a few feet before them. We saw three wombats, one wild dog, and hundreds of rabbits today.

RACHEL: When we were walking, the left wheel of the pram was not working well. Roland tried to fix it, but he couldn't. So we had to stop here by the road for the night. We did not eat even one real meal today because we didn't have enough food.

CHRIS: We cooked the few eggs on the army fire squares (see day fourteen) and we ate the oranges and apples, but we all went to bed feeling hungry.

DANE: We went through the night without a fire because there is no timber on the ground to burn. We are in the real Nullarbor now!

MAL: Roland and I had a warm night sleeping in the open. There was some light rain, but the plastic space blankets were enough to keep us dry. The others squeezed into the tent. Cloud cover stopped the night from becoming too cold for any of us.

**DAY TWENTY-EIGHT: Sunday, June 2.
(Walked 20 miles toward Eucla)**

GARY: We were up when the sun came up. We had no food, so that made things easier. We put all our things on our backs, and Roland pushed the pram on one wheel for about ten miles.

ROB: A church man stopped and helped us fix the wheel of the pram. For a long time all of our trying was not fixing a thing, but then this man stopped to pray, and after that the crazy thing worked! Thank God! We didn't have any food up to 10:30am. Then, between 10:30 and twelve, about six cars stopped, giving us bread, tins of food, and many apples. They encouraged us too, and that was something we needed as much as the food. Later today, two old men from the West Australian newspaper stopped to take some pictures and ask a few questions.

CHRIS: All morning it rained lightly off and on. The plastic bags we have been carrying from the first day worked very well as rain coats. A small plane was flying over us at a low height this morning, so I think we will have more reporters here later today. I was reading Phillipians 2 today and I feel it's important that we all be happy doing what we're doing because so many people are hearing about us, and we're like a light to the world. We need to help others and not just ourselves too.

RACHEL: We had another meeting about Gary telling me off all the time. I was feeling sad before the meeting, but after the meeting I was feeling better. We have been having many meetings. I think God is teaching me more things through them.

DANE: Rain has been falling on and off all day today. Rainbows, rainbows, rainbows! We've been seeing some beautiful ones today. Allan's friend returned about 5pm. He works for the government fixing the roads, and was afraid that he would have some problems if the government knows that he is helping us. He asked us not to say anything to the reporters about his help. His place is a few miles off the road, so he said he would drive us to his place and drop us back here in the morning.

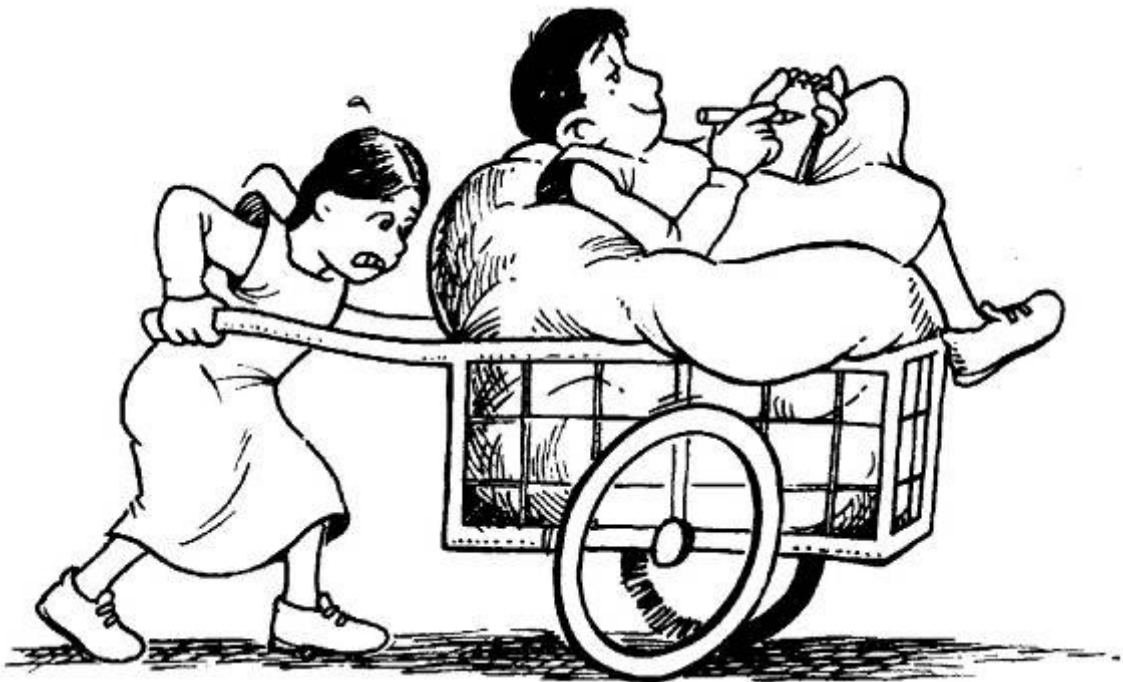
ROLS: Allan's friend really came at the right time: The wind was blowing, we were tired, and it started to rain heavily. I was feeling weak because the last few meals were very small. Mal had a sore foot, so we had to walk more slowly today.

GARY: Our friend with no name wasn't a good cook. He made pasta paste with something like meat on it that tasted very bad; but we all had three bowls or more and thanked God from the bottom of our hearts! I ate much bread with sugar paste on it too.

MAL: More serious problems with my feet. The ankle and front of my right foot hurt when I walk. Tonight I see that the front of my right foot is bigger than the front of my left foot. This is not good at all.

DAY TWENTY-NINE: Monday, June 3.
(Walked 18 miles toward Eucla)

GARY: It's been four weeks of walking today. We are back on the road and I'm writing now as I'm being pushed in the pram. It's just because I'm feeling lazy; I have no good reason to be here.



ROLS: Our friend without a name was very generous. We had more pasta in the morning, and he gave us dry pasta, carrots, potatoes, and fruit to take with us for later today.

DANE: Some of us have been carried in the pram. Others do not want to do this if we are able to walk.

ROB: We walked three miles and two cars stopped. People in them wanted to take pictures and gave us \$2, and some apples. At ten miles some Aboriginals stopped. I gave them some berries that I was eating from plants growing by the road. We have not asked for food so far on this walk, but today we asked if we could buy food from a few cars that stopped. They did not sell us anything, but I think our asking to buy encouraged them to give. Out here in the middle of the desert, you start to understand how money is nothing but paper and really cannot do a thing if people do not have faith in it.

CHRIS: A bus stopped and all the people came out to take pictures of us. One woman came up quietly later and gave us \$18. We think it was from all the people on the bus. When we were eating in the middle of the day, a church man and woman stopped and talked. Both disagreed with our beliefs about working for God and not for money (from Luke 16), but they gave us a bag of apples. Most of us are feeling really good. But Mal's foot is still sore. At one of the rest stops today I had a deep and serious talk with Rachel about some things that she disagreed with. I ended up agreeing with her.

ROLS: I understand that I should be happy with what God gives, but it was difficult feeling happy when it came to eating small measures of food today.

DANE: We stopped walking half an hour before the sun went down, and then started looking for timber in the small bushes growing here. At first timber was difficult to come by, but in time we were able to find some big pieces that we could use for our fire.

RACHEL: We see beautiful skies when the sun goes down here each day. They have many different colours. I didn't think before we started the walk that we would be eating as well as we have been. It was about 7:30pm when we went to bed. After five minutes three different television stations came to wake us up. The different reporters were arguing about who was going to talk to us first. They asked Roland, Robin, and Malcolm a few questions in front of the cameras.

ROLS: Malcolm answered the television reporters' questions very well, always bringing the talk back to God. If one isn't in the Spirit, it is easy to answer the boring questions with equally boring answers.

CHRIS: The reporters were asking about "problems" between ourselves that another report had talked about, so we said that they are problems that happen when any people are living together, and we are working on them. What they don't understand is that one of the most important reasons why we are able to fix our problems quickly is because we don't hide them.

**DAY THIRTY: Tuesday, June 4.
(Walked 23 miles toward Eucla)**

GARY: We were up at 6am. We are thirty-two miles from the border of Western Australia. Just before we were going to start walking this morning, one of the television stations turned up to shoot pictures of us. Then later in the day, a reporter and other workers from a second station turned up. Then the last group came out to take a few more pictures.

ROB: Some of us were not happy about the food today, but the only reason people have been hungry is because they were sick of apples and oranges. God gives what we need - not always what we want. A bus stopped and we talked about some serious things with some of the people on it. They gave us lollies, fruit, and a mix of dry fruit and nuts.

ROLS: God has lifted some of the hard times, as he gave us a beautiful meal this morning. And just as we were to have a rest in the middle of the day without any food, God talked a car into stopping and giving us some more food, followed by a second car with seconds. I was thanking God the most (because I eat the most) after a long time without filling meals. The same thing happened as we were putting up the tent tonight; two young men stopped and gave us a good healthy meal.

GARY: The young men were the ones who had sent some food to us through a man who is riding around Australia on a horse (see day fourteen). They wanted to take pictures of us when they stopped earlier in the day, then they returned later with a bag of things they had put together for us. One of them said at his church they pray for us at all their meetings. That was encouraging.

CHRIS: A leader from the Church of Christ travelling on a motorcycle stopped and encouraged us this morning. A bag of oranges was sitting on the side of the road for us today.

ROLS: Today a Pentecostal church leader from Victoria stopped to give us coffee and biscuits. He prayed out loud when a truck driver stopped to give us biscuits. The truck driver wasn't into praying out loud, but the Pentecostal still tried to make him a part of his praying show. The truck driver must have been really turned off! I don't think the church leader understands Matthew 6:5-6. Rob and I smiled at the truck driver to show we do not agree with praying out loud as a way of showing we are better than other people, like the Pentecostal man was doing.

GARY: A young man and woman on their way to Eucla stopped today to take a picture of us. They returned later from the border petrol station with bread and food to go on it. We've all had our fill of food today, even Roland, who has a stomach without a bottom in it!

RACHEL: We went to a place where you can look out at the ocean. We stayed there for 15 minutes. The ocean was very beautiful. I was on the pram for a short time today. Malcolm was on for a long time. He was having a good laugh when he was riding.

DANE: The sun going down was very beautiful today-like gold, with pink cotton-like clouds. We were able to find timber quickly for the fire tonight and had a good sleep under a warm, cloud-filled sky.

DAY THIRTY-ONE: Wednesday, June 5.
(Walked 17.5 miles to Eucla)

RACHEL: Last night Chris and Roland were out by the fire, and the others of us in the tent. Malcolm said he was not able to sleep well with five people squeezed together in

one little tent. We were up at 6am. A car stopped and asked if we had any food to eat. We said no. He said we could have a meal with him before we start walking.

GARY: The man was a Buddhist priest, and he asked us to come back to where he had a fire going. We had a good meal there and then he carried us in his car back to where we left off.

DANE: I think the important truths run through all the world's biggest religions: To love God (or Truth) with all that you have, and to love one another too.

CHRIS: We arrived at the border petrol station at 10:45am. We had a special fruit drink together as a way of thanking God for having helped us to walk this far. Some Muslim men from Pakistan came over to talk to us. They say they are not Christians, but they agreed very much with what we're trying to show by the walk. At the same time, some people who said they were Christians came over and argued with us, saying it is wrong for us to use the newspapers to tell people about the walk! They agreed that they were wrong in loving money, but then said that they do not have to change their actions because they are Christians. This is what made Gandhi not want to become a Christian.

GARY: The Muslims said what we are doing is the same as their beliefs. They were very nice. They are from a very serious branch of Islam. They gave us some special Muslim chicken, and eggs. We had some people come out with a Bible trying to show that we are wrong. It was just like the difference between the church leaders who were fighting against Jesus when he was on the earth and the people from a different religion who helped him.

DANE: A Buddhist gave us our first meal, Muslims gave us our second meal, and people with a Bible gave us arguments!

ROB: After talking to the Muslims and Christians we had a meeting with people who are riding bicycles across the country as part of an action to make people think about stopping wars.

GARY: From the border we still had eight miles to walk to Eucla. Then, less than a mile from Eucla, a man stopped and said we could have free rooms at the hotel where he works in Eucla.

CHRIS: It was 3:45pm when we arrived in Eucla. We stopped at the police station to receive some letters that were waiting there for us, and to tell the head policeman that we had arrived. This is the policeman that a radio station had said was going to put us in prison if we could not show him that we had enough food to feed us between here and Norseman (See Day Twenty-four). But when we were standing there in front of him, face to face, he acted like he was afraid of us and he didn't know what to say.

GARY: The man from the hotel (Stan) gave us the keys to our rooms when we arrived at the petrol station. He was very friendly. The owners, Mr. and Mrs. Volchk, live

in Perth, but they just happened to be in Eucla this week. Mrs. Volchk said we could eat at their restaurant for free at 6:30pm. We all had a wash and then a car came down with a bag of food sent to us by someone at Mundrabilla.

CHRIS: The person who put the food in the bag did a very good job. It had muesli bars, dry fruit, salt biscuits and sweet biscuits, cooked meat, bread, tins of beans, cheese, powdered milk, two shirts, big plastic bags, socks, and under-clothes.

GARY: After washing up we went to the restaurant for our meal. Mrs. Volchk and Stan showed special interest in us, bringing food to us themselves and doing all that they could to make us feel important. One worker even called Rachel madam! We were all surprised at the special love we received. But listen to this: On Sunday someone had said I should think seriously before asking God for something, because he often gives it. Laughingly, I had said, "How about cheese-cake and pasta?" I remembered it again and said something about it just before coming into the restaurant. Mrs. Volchk then said we could eat anything we wanted, so I asked for some pasta! Then she asked, "What about sweets?" So I asked for cheese-cake! And we received them both. They gave us two bottles of wine, one white and one red. The red one was very good mixed with lemon soft drink. Mr. and Mrs. Volchk were very nice, and they asked us to return for another meal tomorrow night. What a meal!

ROB: After drinking two glasses of red wine, I was called out to do an interview with a reporter from Adelaide. The interview went well, but I do not think I will drink before an interview in the future! It's too difficult to think clearly.

DANE: A government man came 600 miles from Perth to "look in" on us, with special interest in Rachel. He talked for a short time with Roland and myself after we arrived, and said he would see us later. We did see him when we were eating and drinking our fill of expensive food and wine in the restaurant, but that's all. No interviews. No nothing. I think he could see that we were all in very good shape, and Rachel was not in any danger.

CHRIS: I did a telephone interview with a radio station in Perth at 8pm. When I was on the telephone the friendliest of the women riding in the bicycle group gave us \$5 without her friends knowing. I pray that God does something nice for her for doing that!

ROB: We did not know if it was right to take the \$5, because we had just finished a five-star meal and were going to sleep in the best rooms in Eucla, and the bicycle riders were sleeping out in tents. In some ways they needed it more than us. Christine and I had a long talk with the hotel owners. It was about their life as prisoners of war and about the first white people to live in the middle of Australia.

ROLS: The owners are from Germany. They went through the war. They said the one important truth they learned was that you must fight to stay alive. Looking at how kind they are, it is difficult to believe that staying alive is really all they are interested in!

DAY THIRTY-TWO: Thursday, June 6.
(Rest day in Eucla)

RACHEL: We had a warm night's sleep in the hotel. Roland and Dane washed clothes this morning.

GARY: On our last rest day I used too much time washing clothes, fixing meals, and doing other jobs, so I'm having a full rest today. Malcolm ran down to the beach and back this morning and said it is nice. It's three miles away but I'm thinking about going.

DANE: All but Roland and I went to the beach at 1pm. Roland and I think an hour's walk each way is too much like work, so we played chess between taking a few short walks around here. I received a 45-minute call from my wife today. God is so good!

ROLS: Dane's wife works with people who argue against the walk. Some of her other friends are more understanding. I had a very easy day today. At one time I listened to the loud cry of a crow. It sounded so stupid that I asked why would God make a sound like that? I think he did it for a laugh.

GARY: Rob, Chris, Rachel, Mal and I went down to the beach. It was good to play on the sand hills. We pushed the pram down, hiding it in the bushes when we were playing. When we came back it had oranges in it!

CHRIS: We're now on the beach. We walked out on the jetty, tested the water (too cold to swim), and looked at shells and other things on the beach. It's nice out here listening to the waves and birds without any noise from cars or other people.

ROB: What is left of an old building that was out here in the past wasn't too interesting, but the sand hills are good. We are all going well spiritually. There are a few old problems that could come up again. But it's good to be over half-way through the walk.

RACHEL: We came back to the hotel at 6pm. We had another nice meal, then we had a Bible study. I am feeling happy after going to the beach.

CHRIS: When we were at the restaurant, a woman asked if we were the walkers. After learning that we were, she gave Rachel and me \$1 (Rs25) each.

GARY: Now people are saying the country from here to Norseman is even worse than the Nullarbor.

CHRIS: We find that we have more than enough time to talk about things when we're walking, but we're always short of time for things like writing letters and stitching and washing clothes. I find that much of the time when I'm walking I feel half asleep. I think it's because it is difficult to think about all that is happening all of the time.

Adelaide Sunday Mail, May 12, 1985, pages 22-23

I WALKED THE ROADS WITH GOD'S CHILDREN



Reporter Tom Menzies, second from left, steps it out with God's children.

And believe me... they believe

I walked with the Christian walkers for a day, three days after they started their walk from Port Augusta. And their spirit talked to me. With tired legs and sore feet I learned that this walk is not a trick. These people really believe in a loving God who can feed his children.

I walked 15 miles with them from Iron Knob, stopping on Wednesday night to make two fires for cooking and for heat. Food came from people going by in a car, who had been reading about the group in the newspaper.

At 6:30am on Thursday we were on the road for a 38 mile walk to Kimba. At the first rest stop, two Christians stopped to give us coffee. They said they had been praying and God had said to bring drinks to us. They left when we finished the coffee and returned an hour later with food. They said that when they tried to eat, God said, "How can you eat when my children are hungry?"

Other cars stopped to talk to the walkers. In the middle of the day a leader from the Lions (a group that helps people) in Kimba, stopped to say they could sleep at his house when they arrived in Kimba.

At 2pm the group was almost out of water and had nothing to eat. A woman from Kimba stopped. She said she saw the walkers in the morning on her way to Port Augusta and had a feeling she should buy them food and drink on her return trip. They happily gave some of the food and drink to me without keeping any of it for future use.

The youngest walker, 12-year-old Rachel Sukumaran from India, was often carried on the shoulders of Malcolm or Roland. The effect of her spirit on the group is surprising. When she is happy and enthusiastic, the others are too. When she becomes tired and stops asking questions, the group becomes quiet and loses enthusiasm.

Protecting Rachel is the group's first interest.

When cars stopped to ask questions about the group's beliefs, they were happy to take time for answers. Because of this, it was after 10pm when we arrived in Kimba. My legs and hips were sore and my feet were burning.

I returned to see the walkers over the following three days, and talked with the oldest walker, Dane, who joined them at Iron Knob. We talked very early in the morning, when the others were sleeping and he was taking his turn to look after the fire.

I asked if he believed the others were able to understand how dangerous the walk could become. He did not answer my question.

"The most difficult thing is to find out what God wants," he said. "If Rachel was in danger, that could be a sign from God. But for now, he is feeding us and leading us very nicely."



The only blanket goes to the youngest walker, Rachel, aged 12.

Part 6: EUCLA TO NORSEMAN

DAY THIRTY-THREE: Friday, June 7.
(Walked 21 miles from Eucla)

GARY: We were awake by 6:15am, put our things in the pram, then went up to the petrol station to buy some food. We have about \$20 now.

CHRIS: When we were walking out of Eucla, a "born again" husband and wife stopped to take our pictures, and then gave us \$5.

ROB: It was a nice walk down the road from Eucla. You could easily think you were living 100 years in the past. This land is not touched by time. Before we had walked three miles, we saw a big male cow on the road far in front of us. He did not look very friendly. We talked for half an hour about what to do if he started to run at us. But in the end he just watched us walk by him! I had a talk with Mal about his feelings toward David and Cherry. Leaving the group after the walk is one way to get away from the problem, but I said it would be better to fix it. He just bottles it up inside. The Western Australia roads are very poorly fixed and the mile signs are different, so we can't tell clearly how far we have travelled. The head policeman from Eucla just went by in his car. We do not want problems with him, so we are going to try to sleep without a fire tonight. We have all been eating lollies that a man from Victoria gave us.

DANE: A Christian family from Victoria stopped late in the morning. The father is head of a school. He thanked God for what we are doing. He and his family gave us food too.

RACHEL: There are many hills near Eucla. I have been looking for chocolate papers to make flowers out of them like we do in India. Malcolm is doing well in learning Kannada, but he has a difficult time trying to say Indian R's.

ROLS: Rachel was hurt in her spirit when I laughed at some of her mother's beliefs. It was not very kind of me.

CHRIS: At 12:30pm Gary did not think we needed a rest because we had stopped for half an hour with the family from Victoria. Most of us disagreed, saying the people who were tired should rest, so we stopped. After the rest, we had a few lollies, so I wasn't too sad about going to bed without a meal.

GARY: We stopped walking at 5:15pm. We had no food and there were some rabbit holes, so Rob and I had a go at smoking them out, but were not able to catch any. We went to sleep without any food.

CHRIS: The wind was very strong, blowing the tent around all through the night. We were not able to sleep well because of the noise of the tent hitting against itself in the

wind. Next time we'll try to find a place that is protected from the wind. There are many deep channels where the rain water has cut into the ground. If we sleep in one, we'll have to pray that it doesn't rain. After losing our toilet paper, some of us were forced to go to the toilet the way the Indians do. It was not very nice!

**DAY THIRTY-FOUR: Saturday, June 8.
(Walked 20 miles to Mundrabilla)**

RACHEL: We were awake at 6:45am. We do not have any food so we started walking at 7:30am. After finding some powdered milk in the pram we mixed it and ate it because it was all we had.

CHRIS: At 10:30am a van stopped and a man gave us a small bag of dried fruit. Thank God! Then a man and woman gave us a small bag of lollies. They tasted very good! And then a family dropped off some fruit. That was all the food we had for the whole morning.

ROLS: Through the middle of the day all that we had to give us strength were five tins of beer and two tins of soft drink.

CHRIS: The men who gave us the beer were surprised that we would drink it, being Christians! I can't think of anything Jesus said against beer... The danger with beer comes when people think it will fix all their problems.

When we were walking, I learned a Tamil song from Rachel.

ROB: We listened to Acts 5 (Chris was reading). It was good to remember that when God was behind the Christians nothing could stop them. They didn't stop talking about Jesus when the leaders in their religion said they must stop, and we too should not stop. This reading was like a dream that Gary had about standing up for the truth.

GARY: At one time today we were thinking that Mal was going crazy from the sun or that he was talking in another language, but he was only doing exercises to himself trying to say Indian R's! We had a good laugh about that. We did not take time for a long stop in the middle of the day, because we have no food to eat.

ROB: We arrived at Mundrabilla at 3pm because of short rest stops today. Not a bad day's work; we only walked for 7.5 hours. I talked to a family at the petrol station, and when they left, their 12-year-old daughter gave us a few chocolate biscuits.

GARY: We used our money to buy bread, cheese, and meat for today and fruit, milk, and wheat flakes for tomorrow. The man in the shop cut \$5 off the price. He said we could sleep by the petrol station. I made a small tent by putting a long piece of plastic over a bench. It worked well. Rob and I used it and the others used the big tent. A man

from Japan who is going around Australia on a motorcycle, put up a tent next to us and gave Rachel some chocolate.

RACHEL: The man from Japan is playing chess with Roland. Robin was teaching me a song today and Robin and I were teaching Chris a Tamil song.

CHRIS: We were reading Matthew 18 together before going to bed. We all feel that what it is saying to us at this time is to think of others as being more important than ourselves. MAL: Again we are not eating. We are not dying, but we have been hungry. I believe God wants us to be happy with what he gives (or does not give) and still we should be confident about telling others of his love. But we should do it without hiding the full truth, and that is that he does not always give us what we want.

DANE: Two or three times today some angry words were said. Being without food could be one reason for it. Robin has been telling us that being without food could be good for us, because it should make us more hungry to know what God wants us to do.

DAY THIRTY-FIVE: Sunday, June 9. (Walked 21 miles from Mundrabilla)

GARY: We were up early this morning, at 5:30, but it was good that we had an early start, because it was 7:10 before we were ready to start walking. We used the last of our money before we left, on chocolate bars and tinned fruit.

ROB: Gary and I filled our water containers from tanks by the road a few miles out of Mundrabilla.

CHRIS: The wind is blowing strongly, and it is against us. You wouldn't think it would make much difference, but it does. We saw a van beside the road after it had hit a big kangaroo. It had turned over on its top, breaking the front and back windows. It was a very messy accident but the people were not hurt. They were waiting for someone to return with a wheel.

DANE: A dead kangaroo was beside the road. Gary believed it was the one that had been hit by the van a short time earlier. He, Rob, and Mal wanted to get meat from it. Chris, Rachel, Roland, and I walked on after our rest stop, and the others stayed to cut up the kangaroo. At the end of our next stop, three miles down the road, Gary, Robin, and Mal arrived covered in blood and carrying a bag filled with meat. By running in front of us they were at the next stop well before us. They cut up the meat and started cooking it before we arrived. In all it added an hour to our trip, but it filled our stomachs, and I think the meat tasted very good.

ROB: By taking off most of their clothes, Mal and Gary were able to cut up the kangaroo without getting blood on their robes. After cutting up the meat, they ran in turns carrying the meat. I ran beside them carrying their clothes.

GARY: When we were cooking and eating the kangaroo, two groups of cars stopped. They believed we must be very smart at living in the wild, because we had killed and cooked a kangaroo by ourselves. We played like this was true. The first car gave us fruit, fish, and salt. The next one gave us soft drinks, fruit, and some sweet food in a tin. They were part of a church group. The motorcycle drivers who went by us on their way to Perth have just stopped again on their way back. Another group from the same church stopped. They gave us biscuits and oranges. A man gave us a report about the walk from a Perth newspaper. It was a full-page report about our past, and it was very good.

RACHEL: Another kangaroo on the side of the road had been hit by a car. Its back legs were hanging and it was in much pain. So Robin ran after it with a big stone. He hit it and used the pocket knife to cut its throat and stop the pain.

GARY: It was dark when we finished walking 21 miles. We had some meat left to eat before going to bed. Rols, Dane and Rob ate it, but some of us were afraid that it was going bad because it had a strange taste. We all went to sleep feeling a little hungry.



ROLS: Nothing much happened today.

DAY THIRTY-SIX: Monday, June 10.
(Walked 27.5 miles toward Madura)

ROB: Five weeks into the walk and God is still with us. We were up at 5:30am.

RACHEL: We didn't have any food to eat this morning before a car stopped and gave us a little cheese. That was all we had between seven of us.

DANE: This morning I disagreed with Roland about greed. We talked about the ability of a group to judge other groups or to judge other people. We agreed that a group must say what it thinks is right and what it thinks is wrong, but it cannot say strongly that anyone outside of it is bad. A car was stopped by the road and we were hungry. Someone asked if we should walk up to it and give them one of our leaflets. (Up to this point the walkers only gave leaflets to people who came to them first.) Mal and Rob said they couldn't do it without mixed reasons for doing it. (They were hungry for food and they would be thinking that the people in the car could give them food, when they should be thinking only of trying to help the people through what the leaflet was saying.) I said I could give the leaflet without thinking about food, and Chris said she could too. We gave them the leaflet and started to walk away. They asked us to come back so they could give us some food. From that point on, food started to come in from people in cars again.

RACHEL: In the middle of the day many cars stopped and gave us mountains of food. All of our stomachs were full. We were not able to finish all of it, so we had some to eat tonight. Dane is teaching Chris and me a song from Thailand. It is a nice song.

MAL: I believe God has been testing us to see how easily we would become discouraged. I was happy that I did not become angry or worried when the food was not coming in. We were all feeling some pain.

ROB: We had a group talk about greed today. Dane believes the greed of very big companies is the reason for most of the world's problems; but we disagreed. We said that we believe it is the greed of little people like us, who put our money into the big companies planning to receive more money back in the future. In the end we both agreed that greed in one shape or the other is the problem even if we could not agree about whose greed is worse.

CHRIS: I was talking to Dane about how I was not able to sleep well without a pillow last night and just as I was saying it, there was a pillow by the side of the road! But I later learned that it wasn't really what I wanted, as it was too much to carry; so I left it. It is good of God to teach me in this way.

ROLS: Mal, Rob, and Gary ran six miles in front of us tonight to put up the tent under a little metal roof with no walls under it. In the past the roof was over a water tank, but the tank is not there now.

GARY: It's just a roof, but the tent sides will keep the wind off. A truck driver stopped today. He had a man with him who wanted to talk to us. This man said a newspaper had said that Rachel had died and we were carrying her body on the pram! Can you believe that? He gave us \$5.

DANE: Some people who are against greed and who dress differently stopped today. They had two dogs with them. We talked with them about how the police often make

problems for anyone who is different. After a good meal tonight, we rested by the fire before going to bed.

DAY THIRTY-SEVEN: Tuesday, June 11.
(Walked 23 miles to Madura)

CHRIS: Rob was up at five to start the fire. He called us at 5:30am.

GARY: Robin, Mal and I did not sleep in the tent last night. I don't know what has happened to the freezing weather they said we would have. I had a beautiful night's sleep. Again we do not have any food, so we'll just put away our things and start walking.

DANE: We were off early in good spirits. A family from Asia stopped and Mal tried saying some of what he plans to say at the end of the trip to them. They returned a few minutes later, as we were saying to Mal that he should use easier words when talking to people who don't know English well. When we ran up to the car, they handed us \$100!

RACHEL: When Robin was teaching me about different countries today, three cars stopped at the same time. They wanted to take our pictures and they gave us food. I had a difficult time walking in the strong wind today. I had a pain in my head too, so I had a ride on the pram.

CHRIS: Each time someone stops and helps us, by feeding our bodies or encouraging our spirits, it pushes me on. I feel that the love these people are showing us is really God's love. I've learned to thank God for people more on this trip.

ROB: Today we talked about things to say at the end of the walk. We want to say some serious things, mostly about obeying the teachings of Jesus. We arrived here at Madura at 3:30pm today. When we were in the restaurant at the petrol station, a man came in and gave us \$10. After eating tonight, we were sitting around our fire and some men came and talked with us. They gave us a tin of pasta and some rice. We made them coffee using empty milk containers for cups.

ROLS: We learned today that workers at some of the Western Australia petrol stations are against us. We can see that this is true here at Madura. It must be why God gave us \$100 ... enough for tonight's meal and tomorrow's food, if we are to rest here tomorrow as planned. We put up our tent a stone's throw away from the shop, then gave each person \$3.30 for each of four meals.

CHRIS: After eating I telephoned my father. Howard Sattler, a Perth newspaper writer, is putting false reports in the Sunday Times about us not helping poor people, and about us being part of the Children of God. People who do not like us often say that we should do more to help the poor, but they won't do much to help the poor themselves, so David wants to take Sattler to court for saying we are part of the Children of God, and to show up the other lies in what he was saying. The plan would be to force him to give

money to the poor for what he is doing to hurt us. We would be doing it to show up the lies and not to hurt him, but most people would think we were not showing love toward him. I feel, too, that if we forced Sattler to give the poor any money that the court says he should give to us, it could look like we were giving our own money to the poor, and Jesus says we should do things like that secretly.

ROLS: Dane, Gary and I are strongly against David's plan. Christ had people telling lies about him, but the way he showed up the lies was with his life. We do want to show up the lies and help people to see the truth, if we can do it in some other way. I know that is what David wants too.

MAL: If our reason for taking action against Sattler was not to protect ourselves, but to use the action as a way to point people to God, then we would have the right spirit. But I am not clear that it is our only reason. On looking back, I believe the money we gave to the poor in Penong (see day eighteen) was not what God wanted from us.

GARY: When we gave money to the poor in Penong it had a good reason behind it too (to show how well God was helping us), but I now think it wasn't a good enough reason to go against Matthew 6:1. ("When you help the poor, do it secretly.") Last night I had a dream about giving the other side of your face to anyone who hits the first side. By doing that with Sattler's lies, we can say more than we could by hitting back. I think the "sheep" in Perth will see through his lies.

**DAY THIRTY-EIGHT: Wednesday, June 12.
(Rest day In Madura)**

CHRIS: Mal was awake at 7am and went for a walk up on the hill near here.

RACHEL: I was up at 7:45am. Robin had started a little fire so that we could sit around it to be warm. I finished a letter to my parents in India. Madura is a beautiful place like Eucla. We are by the mountains. I was happy to have a wash, because I was very dirty. I stayed under the water for half an hour!

ROB: The woman who owns the petrol station would not sell us stamps after a man who works here said we could buy some. She says the stamps are only for her workers! She didn't know Gary was listening when she was talking to a man about running us over with a car and then saying it was an accident. She was laughing when she said it. It's interesting doing our own shopping and looking for the cheapest things to buy, because prices here are very high; \$3.30 doesn't go very far at all. As we were sitting around our fire today, three separate groups of people came to talk. Two were bringing food for us, but all of them were interested in finding out why we are walking. They said that in their circles of friends they had been talking about us. That was very encouraging to me-that people are thinking and talking about what we are trying to say. I've been going spiritually at about a five out of ten most of the time. I'm becoming a little tired of walking day after day, but it's been good to be in on this. I wouldn't have stayed out of it

for the world. I've dropped out of talking to most of the reporters now, but I do an interview or two from time to time.

GARY: A young man and his mother came to see us. They don't believe in God, but the son said he wants us to finish, so we'll make more people think. One problem I can see coming up is a soft place on one side of one of the pram wheels. The rubber from the tube is projecting out through it. Surprisingly, I have not had one sore on my feet on this trip. Dane and Mal are the only ones who have had many problems with their feet and they are both almost 100% now. They have been airing their feet at each rest stop and this helps. We are all in good spirits and growing stronger each day. We are looking forward to doing free work in Adelaide when we finish.

ROLS: Two poor families travelling around Australia in two buses stopped to talk with us. There were some sayings printed on the bus sides, like "Why are you going so fast?" They were very friendly and said they wanted us to do well on our trip.

GARY: Alex, a truck driver from Greece, stopped to talk with us. He said he would give two of us a ride back to Adelaide in his truck when we finish the walk.

**DAY THIRTY-NINE: Thursday, June 13.
(Walked 19 miles from Madura)**

GARY: Chris called David again. He said he wanted to take court action against Sattler by himself, even if we disagreed. Mal, Dane, Rols and I believe that he shouldn't do this, and Chris and Rob did not take a stand one way or the other. So I called up Sydney for the others of us, to tell Dave what we were thinking.

DANE: Not long after leaving Madura, a fire fighter and his family stopped, said that they agreed with what we are doing, and gave us some food. We encouraged Rachel to receive lollies from his children as it was good for them to give. They are going to send our letters for us.

A short time after that, another husband and wife stopped. The woman said she is a Christian (Pentecostal) and her husband is not, but she acted less Christian than her smiling husband.

A few more cars stopped to encourage us and some gave food.

RACHEL: Some people gave me three story books to read as I am walking.

CHRIS: After we had a meal in the middle of the day a woman stopped and asked what our reason is for walking. We said that too many people are killing themselves worrying when they should stop worrying about where their food will come from and do what they can to help other people, and God will protect and feed them. She gave us thirty cents. Two reporters who stopped to take pictures of us for a Perth newspaper earlier in the walk (See Day Twenty-eight), stopped again on their way back to Perth.

ROB: One motorcycle driver shouted at us as he went by, but most of the people are very friendly. I think the truck drivers have separated into two groups, one for us and one against us. Some of them drive off the road on our side when coming toward us, to make us afraid, and then tell reporters that we should not be walking on their road; but others have been very friendly, and happy to help us in many ways.

GARY: A truck driver stopped and gave us fruit. He was very friendly. An old man and woman gave us a kettle to make tea or coffee in, so we can have a real coffee break now. We had a group of actors stop. They were a mix of Christians and people who were not interested in Christian things. They were very friendly and gave us food.

ROLS: We put up the tent at 5pm and made a big fire, the biggest so far. I tried to have a quiet time but my head was too full of myself. Many times foolishness has filled my mind. Believing that what I think is more important than what others think is just foolishness in another shape.

MAL: Something I have learned to like much more through the walk is the stars. Each night I stay awake on the ground just looking up at them.



DAY FORTY: Friday, June 14.
(Walked 17.5 miles toward Cocklebidy)

RACHEL: I was too lazy to get up at 5:30. All the others were up early, but I was still in the tent half awake.

DANE: We are getting faster and faster at putting up and taking down the tent, but we still argue as much as we always have. It makes me think the anger has a deeper reason.

ROB: We walked six miles before finding a dead kangaroo. Gary, Mal and I stayed back to take the skin off. It turned into a bigger job than we had planned and the others were worried about us. There were some problems that came from that... mostly between Gary and Chris.

RACHEL: There are many dead kangaroos on the road. The smell is very bad. No one stopped to talk to us when we were walking today. It was a boring day. You don't feel like it is boring when people stop to talk.

GARY: The pram wheel has a hole in it, so we stopped walking at 2:50pm. Just as we stopped, some Christians pulled up in two cars. They gave us another two man tent, two sleeping bags, food, a knife, and some teaching on how to dry the kangaroo skin. They were from Canada and New Zealand.

DANE: The Christians said that they would never try walking across the desert; but they really wanted us to finish the trip.

CHRIS: Not long after they left, a truck pulled up and the truck driver, a Christian too, came over and talked with us. He gave us some fruit, bread, jam, dried fruit, milk, toilet paper, butter, and a box of corn flakes. His name is Nick.

DANE: It turns out the truck driver is not a church going Christian, but he believes in love as the force of God. He stayed with us all night, sleeping in his truck. He ate with us the next morning before leaving. The feeling between us was close as we separated.

DAY FORTY-ONE: Saturday, June 15.
(Walked 20 miles to Cocklebidy)

CHRIS: Gary was not happy about people leaving all the work of putting things away each morning to him, so we agreed to try to do more to help him.

RACHEL: Last night Dane and Malcolm did not want to sleep in the tent; they wanted to watch falling stars. There were many stars in the sky. When we were looking at the sky before going to bed, we were able to find three satellites.

A few minutes after we started walking this morning we saw a kangaroo on the road that had not been dead for long. Robin and Malcolm wanted to skin it and Chris wanted to watch and learn how to do it. We said that they could stay back to do it and the others would keep walking.

ROB: It was three hours before we were able to join up with the others after taking the skin off the kangaroo. We ran some of the way and running made it difficult for Chris to breathe. At our meal stop Gary put salt on the skin. It rained for five minutes after we finished eating. We were wet, but we covered the blankets and things on the pram with the space blankets and they are dry.

MAL: Rachel and I both had problems with my language learning today. Some Kannada words must be said perfectly, or people cannot understand them. For the life of me, I couldn't hear the difference between Rachel's way of saying it and my way.

GARY: Almost no cars stopped today. Toward the end of the day, some people stopped who had been drinking far too much wine. They were friendly and wanted us to have a drink with them so we agreed. But when we finished the drink and it was time for us to start walking again, one of them wouldn't leave us and he wanted to argue. He followed us for three miles, all the way to Cocklebidy!

DANE: In Cocklebidy, some men who fish for a living wanted to talk with "the man with the beard". They gave us beer after beer. One man liked me; and he asked me, Gary, Rob, and Roland to spend some time in his caravan smoking drugs and listening to music. They were happy that we were not too good for them.

(When David learned by telephone that some of the walkers were drinking heavily and smoking drugs to show they were not "too good" for someone, he was angry and said the young people should not follow Dane when they could see that his actions were not right. After this, Dane, who had been arguing that the group followed David too much, started taking a stronger stand against David. The group rule is that they must not use drugs, and each person can have one or two drinks, but no more.)

ROB: Mal went to bed, and Chris and Rachel had a wash when the rest of us were drinking. One man liked Dane's long hair and beard and his interest in drugs.

RACHEL: One of the men was talking to me about India. Chris and I washed ourselves and then washed some clothes before going to sleep.

DAY FORTY-TWO: Sunday, June 16.
(Walked 16 miles from Cocklebidy)

ROB: The fishing men came to see us before we left this morning. They gave us three big fish that we'll eat tonight. I'm still having arguments with Mal and Gary, because I am not against David wanting to take action against Sattler. A meeting just ended with Gary going off crying and calling me a "goat". I don't know what to do to work it out.

DANE: We did more talking about why David tries to think for us when we have said that we disagree with him. Four of us are going to answer any newspaper or television questions by saying that we do not want to be a part of what David is planning. *(David had, by this time, changed his plans and had not said anything to reporters about taking action against Sattler.)*

GARY: When we stopped to eat in the middle of the day we had a good talk about taking action against Sattler. Rob and Chris still do not agree with us, but now they can see that we are not trying to fight against David; we are just trying to do what we believe is right. Kevin is meeting us at Balladonia, and he will tell us what David is thinking. There are now no bad feelings between any of us.

RACHEL: When I was walking I saw twenty cents (five rupees) on the ground. Before we finished walking another mile I saw another twenty cents. I want to use it to buy a picture to send to my friend in India. The wind was blowing strongly today. It was difficult for me to walk into it, so Gary and Rob were walking in front of me to protect me from the wind. I had a sore head again.

CHRIS: A husband and wife stopped and gave us food, and some oil to put on our kangaroo skin. At 4pm, a man and woman stopped to talk. They were not happy with the Christian religion, but believe in God. They agreed with our reasons for walking across the Nullarbor. We stopped for the day by a hill of stones that workers use for fixing the road, about 25 miles from Caiguna. I put onions inside the fish and oil all over them before cooking them in hot stones from the hill of stones beside the road. Mal cooked some rice and vegetables. It was a beautiful meal.

DAY FORTY-THREE: Monday, June 17.
(Walked 25 miles to Caiguna)

CHRIS: This morning we ate up the food that was left from last night and started walking at 7:30am. A few cars stopped this morning and gave us a little more food.

GARY: We had small measures of bread, beans, and oranges to eat by the middle of the day. We're all hungry still. We just had another hole explode in the pram wheel from the part that was projecting through the rubber. We've fixed it for now but it's not very strong. We may be carrying things on our backs before long. MAL: The wind today was very strongly against us. It made walking very difficult. We are all very tired. At one stop I left my glasses behind. I remembered them five minutes after we had started and walked back to get them. I was angry at myself and at God because of it.

DANE: Rachel walked part of the way without shoes today, as she has foot problems. After a small meal, with the wind still blowing, Chris is singing happily... It makes me think of St. Francis. Alex, the truck driver from Greece who stopped to talk to us at Madura (See Day Thirty-eight) stopped and gave us enough potatoes to fill up on tonight.

ROB: Caiguna is the first place for a long time that we have arrived at without money and with almost no food. We have sixty-four cents that we will use to buy a stamp to send our writings. It must be a sign that this will be a friendly place.

DANE: When we arrived at Caiguna, Rob, Chris and Rachel asked for a few things to make the potatoes taste better (salt, butter and a little milk), and the people from the petrol station gave them to us. They said we could use their hot water to wash ourselves with too.

ROB: We have tried not to ask for things, but we think it is something Jesus said we could do (see Matthew 10:11). This is the first time we have come straight out and asked

for something to eat (salt, butter, and milk), and the people at the petrol station were very happy to help. We had potatoes cooked in water, potatoes cooked in oil, and potatoes cooked on hot stones for our meal tonight, so we all ate well.

CHRIS: The people here at Caiguna are friendlier and more in agreement with what we're doing. I went to sleep not long after eating because I was tired and cold. After I went to sleep, the owner of the petrol station said we could sleep in a bus that has beds in it. Roland and I were asleep in the tents by this time, but the others moved to the bus for the night. It was wet and cold outside, but it was warm and dry in the tent. The days are growing shorter. The sun is only up between 7am and 5:30pm now.

DAY FORTY-FOUR: Tuesday, June 18.
(Rest day in Caiguna)

RACHEL: We did not wake up before 7:30am. Every rest day we wake up late. When we were up, a man who works at the restaurant in the petrol station came and said that we could have some hot food this morning. It was nice of them to give it. They gave us three different meals today. Most times I really like rest days, but at times I get out of the Spirit because I want to rest the whole day when the others want me to help with some of the work.

CHRIS: We talked about our plans for after the walk. Some of us would like to go to Perth for a short time before returning to Adelaide, where we would try to work for people for free.

ROLS: The argument about Sattler was on again today. Having received a letter from David, I now have a better understanding of the reasons behind his thinking, but I still feel against it. It is too bad that we cannot agree on this. (David had sent the letter before his change of plans.)

ROBIN: Things are not good between us because of this plan to take action against Sattler. The others are very strongly against the plan and say that if it wasn't for the walk they would leave the group over it. I feel that a big part of the problem is coming from bad feelings in the past on Mal's part. He strongly disagrees with me on this and feels hurt and angry that I could say a thing like this. I still think the others need to learn from his past problems and not follow him in this. We should not forget that it happened very much like this before. I think that taking action against Sattler is a good plan that would have the effect of showing up some lies that many people are using against us. I can see how people could take it the wrong way, but that could happen with our disagreeing too, or with anything that we do.

ROLS: I am not angry with David and I have not said anything against him. My belief is not strong enough to leave the group over it.

GARY: Dane, Rols, and Rob used part of their rest day to do some free work cleaning up papers in front of the petrol station. I made a bag out of part of the kangaroo skin. Mal did some washing. Chris and Rachel worked on writing letters.

MAL: At last I started making a hat from some of the kangaroo skin. I'm making it like the hats they wear in Russia. Gary has been helping with plans for it.

CHRIS: I started out writing letters but I ended up talking to people from the buses. Four buses stopped at one time and many of the people were interested in how we are going. Because Rachel and I were sitting outside the restaurant at the time, where I was trying to write, they asked their questions of us.

Malcolm has made a hat. With the cold wind, a hat will be a big help in warming our ears.

ROB: I went to buy some stamps with \$2 that a woman gave to Chris today and the people in the petrol station said I could keep the money; they gave me the stamps for free. I said we should spend the money for something, so I ended up buying chocolates, because I know we all like them.

The water here does not have salt in it because of the latest rain, so we were able to use soap to wash our hair.

I fixed up the wheel of the pram using some cloth covered with strong paste. Holding the wheel together now are tape, old belts, and pieces of rubber. But the rubber on the wheel itself is still breaking apart in places. We could finish up carrying our things into Norseman.

ROLS: Some of the workers here are able to see through some of the false thinking that most people have about money. One worker said he knows it is not good to use his time working for money, but he sees growing food as the only other way to live. He was friendly and liked what we are trying to say through the walk.

GARY: The walk is becoming more and more difficult, but I think we are becoming stronger each day too, so that it is having less effect on us.

DAY FORTY-FIVE: Wednesday, June 19. (Walked 23 miles from Caiguna)

CHRIS: We were awake at 5:30. I telephoned Sydney and was very happy to hear about Kevin winning the \$5000 Young People's Year art award.

At the same second when the telephone call came through in Sydney telling Kevin about the award, Kevin, David, Cherry and Ross were talking about the need for \$5000 to print a book about the walk. That is how this book was first printed.

Rob sent off some letters and then thanked the owner of the petrol station for being so kind to us. The workers gave us seven apples and seven oranges for our first meal today. We walked by another kangaroo that had been killed by a car. A dead baby kangaroo was next to it. I talked to Rachel about how kangaroos have babies. From this

we moved to talk about how some women kill their babies because they're too lazy or too greedy to stop working for money and spend time with their children. We finished today's school time by learning the most important towns in some countries, and by talking about the equator and how weather changes when you move north or south of it.

RACHEL: Today I was feeling happy and I was not tired at all. I was telling Malcolm an Indian story. The story teaches an important truth.

MAL: Dane was reading out parts of the Bible for me today as we were walking. Hearing him, and what the Bible was saying, made me forget the miles.

DANE: We're having a problem with a wheel on the pram. Gary and Rob have been behind most of the morning fixing it and trying to catch up.

It looks like rain, but our spirits are high. We feel like we can see the finish line in our minds now, and that makes a big difference.

GARY: Rob and I pulled the old rubber and tube off the pram wheel, and we made a solid rubber covering from an old piece of rubber from a truck wheel. We hammered it neatly into the border of the wheel. Then we used wire to hold the ends together. It was 2:30 before we were back with the others.

A police car raced by and one of the policemen shouted out "Get f---ed!" as he went by.

CHRIS: A woman gave us \$3.50 and said to use it for some special medicine to keep us healthy if we don't eat enough oranges. But the next place where we could buy this medicine is in Norseman, and by the time we arrive there we won't need it! Her husband must have secretly put some food on the pram without us knowing because it was there after they left.

A police car pulled up and the policeman asked (nicely this time) if we had any problems. We said no, and we walked on, stopping at 5pm today.

ROLS: Very few cars stopped through the day. We did not have a full meal all day, but I think we're growing stronger spiritually through this walk, and we are now confident that it is all under God's control. We went to bed hungry, but we were in happy spirits.

GARY: When we were putting up the tent, a car stopped. The young man in the car was the son of the brother of the owner of the hotel near where we lived in Casino. (See page 13) Kevin had painted a big picture on the wall of the hotel as part of our free work when we were living there. (See page 23) This young man saw it after we moved away and had wanted to meet Kevin. He was thinking that I was Kevin.

DANE: Roland and I are still playing chess on rest days and on long breaks. He is getting better or I am getting worse, because he is winning with less and less chess pieces to start with.

Malcolm and I are planning to sleep out again tonight.

DAY FORTY-SIX: Thursday, June 20.
(Walked 21 miles toward Balladonia)

RACHEL: This morning when we were getting up there was ice on the tents. It was very cold last night. When the sun was up, we started to walk.

ROLS: I had a dream that I was sleeping in a park with some friends. We didn't have any money. Then we saw a boy who lived with us in the past and he was not very friendly. Across the road there was a building. I went in to ask for some food. I had the feeling that no one liked me. When I went into the building I saw many past friends who were eating mountains of beautiful food. I tried to talk to them, but they acted like they could not see me. A policeman shouted, "You there! Get out!" I think the dream says something about my feelings.

DANE: We had food in the morning from people in three cars. A man from Germany was in one of them and he gave us some dried kangaroo meat. It was a little hard to stomach because it was not cooked. For our meal stop in the middle of the day we had mostly spiritual food... a Bible study of Matthew 20. No one was worried about not eating. When we were almost ready to leave, a man and woman pulled up and gave us food for our stomachs and oil for our skin. They asked if they could pray with us. The man said that in his mind he could see a tall cylinder of fire leading us across the desert.

MAL: I was really encouraged by these people praying for us. Often between ourselves, I feel that I am by myself in my walk of faith. I do not tell the others about my worst problems because I think they will all use them to believe the worst about me. It was a big help hearing someone say that they believe I am a Christian.

GARY: The fishers we had a drink with at Cocklebidy went by again on their way back to Cocklebidy. They had not been able to find any fish.

CHRIS: The leader of a big Pentecostal church in Perth encouraged us by saying his people are praying for us.

A truck stopped and the driver gave us food and matches. Another truck driver who had stopped before (see day thirty-nine) gave us some water, and promised some food on his way back in a few days. A family in a van talked with us when we were resting. We played a few songs on their guitar. It was nice to be able to sing and have an easy time of resting with them.

RACHEL: It was nice playing and singing, but I didn't play the guitar myself. At times when I am tired, I think of The Never Ending Story, where the boy was a prisoner in the mud. He was trying to help the world. I think the same. This is what I will say to the reporters when they ask me what helped you to keep going when you were tired. It was a nice day today. It is really good when people stop to talk.

ROB: We did not sing well together because we haven't played together for six weeks. We stopped walking a mile short of our plan for today because of that long music break. When we opened out the tent, there was still ice in it! That shows how cold it is. We are doing all we can to stay warm tonight.

**DAY FORTY-SEVEN: Friday, June 21.
(Walked 25 miles toward Balladonia)**

CHRIS: Generally we find enough timber to feed the fire all night, but we do not keep it going if it's not a really cold night. Last night was a very cold night. In the middle of the night, Malcolm and Rachel were too cold in the tents, so they moved out by the fire.

ROB: I was up at 4:15am. I called the others at 5:30. All we had left were a few biscuits. The last few meals have been very small. We could be getting too confident that we'll make it. We walked on and had very little food all day. When doing difficult work in cold weather, the body needs more food, so we are finding it more difficult to push our bodies on now.

CHRIS: A husband and wife who have been living by faith and writing the Bible in the languages of Papua New Guinea gave us some biscuits, and a sleeping bag for Rachel because she was cold last night.

DANE: As we were walking this morning we talked about using money. I disagree with the others because I think it's better to not use money at all.

GARY: Rols and I had a talk with Dane about Jesus saying "You can't work for God and money. You will love one and hate the other." Dane said it is saying that we shouldn't use money at all. I said that the word used for money here is talking about all the things that money can buy too, and we would have to stop wearing shoes or eating food if hating it is the same as not using it. I said that I understand it to be saying that we should hate the control that money has over people. I think we can use money, but it is wrong for it to use us. He doesn't agree with me and he thinks the others should not agree with me too. There's still a little bad feeling between him and us.

We have now walked seven miles. My hands have warmed up and I can write more neatly now. This morning my hands were too cold to write. I am very hungry too. It's hard to stop thinking about food.

RACHEL: At twelve we stopped to eat. All we had was butter, sugar, and some black tea. We mixed the butter and sugar together and ate them. Tonight, a truck stopped and the man in it gave us a few potatoes. We cooked them in the fire and we each had two. We are getting short on food. Yesterday we had a Bible study from Matthew 20:11. It says when the workers received their money they were not happy with it. It says we should be happy with what God gives, so I will try to be that.

MAL: I am not very hungry, but it is much more difficult walking on an empty stomach. I tried thanking God today for many other things that he does for us, to keep up my spirits. It helped. Tonight for the first time, Rob and I tried to get some cars to stop so we could buy food from them with \$7 that we had, but we could not get anyone to stop.

CHRIS: Many cars went by without stopping. This worries me a little. All through this trip we have been thinking that if we had a serious problem, we could get a car to stop and help us. But these drivers wouldn't know if one of us was dying or not. They are not interested in our problems, so they are not going to stop. It helps us to understand how much God has been helping us by bringing the right cars at the right time. In the end Rob and Mal stopped trying, thinking that it must not be what God wants us to do. Just after they stopped trying Alex the truck driver from Greece (see day thirty-eight) stopped with more potatoes and water. He talked with us around the fire.

**DAY FORTY-EIGHT: Saturday, June 22.
(Walked 22 miles toward Balladonia)**

DANE: No food this morning, and we're still trying to stop cars. Mal and I are against this for ourselves, but the others are not willing to go hungry.

CHRIS: We talked about the arguments for and against trying to stop a car. Most of us believed it would be stupid if we went really hungry just because we were too proud to ask when we had money in our pockets that we could give for food. At the same time, people could say that we were putting our faith in people and not in God. Most of us wanted to try stopping a car to see if we could buy some food with the money we had. One car stopped and gave us six thin pieces of bread, a tin of peas, and half a bottle of soft drink. It was all we had all morning. By one we were all feeling weak because we had had little to eat for two days. Then Robin stopped two cars travelling together. They gave us six tins of vegetables and some powdered potatoes. Malcolm and Dane ate with us.

When we stopped trying to stop cars, one stopped without us asking. The woman in it gave us some biscuits, bread, and cheese. Her husband argued with her that they needed the food for themselves, but she said, "You never give a cent to anyone." That was nice of her. Then a truck driver pulled up without us asking, and the two men travelling in it talked with us and gave us orange juice, apple juice, bread, two tins of food, a little cheese, eight apples, and two cabbages. Thank God!

We have learned how much we need God's help even to make other people help us. I think that is why God wanted us go hungry for a few days.

ROLS: The truck driver was very smart in spiritual things. He said things about the danger of the walk going to our heads; that we have an important job because all of Australia is watching us; and that we should take our time to think through things before giving answers to reporters, because they can use one little wrong word or action to destroy all that we are trying to say. He said that so far we are doing well. He said too that almost every religion follows their group's teachings more than they follow Truth,

and we should look out for that happening with us. He will be coming through with more food later.

GARY: We are all in much better spirits now with a little food inside us. Rob, Rols, Dane and Mal are into the white on the bottom of their shoes, but the girls' shoes are almost like new. I still have not had one sore or other problem in my body from the start to now. Not bad, is it?!

ROB: There is a big difference in how much strength we have now after eating. We were becoming very tired walking on empty stomachs. We put up the tent and went to sleep at 7:30pm.

**DAY FORTY-NINE: Sunday, June 23.
(Walked 22.5 miles to Balladonia)**

RACHEL: Last night I wasn't cold, because I had three blankets, a sleeping bag, and a quilt. Mal and Dane stayed out by the fire all night.

GARY: We were awake at 5:30am. We had tea and cabbage before starting to walk. There was no ice last night, but the ground is very wet. Today we are thinking that we could see Boyd, Sheri, Kevin, and Elizabeth (Rachel's sister), because they said they would be driving out to see us at the end of the walk. We can't say when they'll arrive, so we'll try not to count on seeing them.

Another truck driver stopped and gave us a big box of food. We had a very big second meal of corn flakes, muesli, milk, dried fruit, bananas, and other things. As we were eating, Janet, a reporter from a Perth newspaper, dropped by. She is going to walk with us today. A man with her agreed to take some of our bags on to Balladonia.

ROB: Janet is very friendly. She did a good story about us earlier in the walk. We're all happy to be so close to the finish. It's not easy to be humble and point people to God when so many people want to say nice things about us.

CHRIS: We all talked with Janet in turns. Today I was teaching Rachel about the names for different government leaders and about how different groups argue to become leaders of some countries.

MAL: About 115 miles is all we have left to walk now. Norseman is so close. We are all very enthusiastic. It was very quiet walking toward Balladonia today. I was in front of the others, pushing the pram. The others were singing, and there were no cars. We were walking through a place with many trees on both sides of us. It's very different after a long time without seeing trees. I could hear a bell bird as I was walking. It sounds just like a bell.

ROLS: It looks like we are through the worst part of the walk and still alive. On the way into Balladonia, two young men stopped and gave us a cup of coffee and a song on their guitar. The younger man was very happy to see us.

CHRIS: The two men were very surprised to see us still walking after seven weeks. They had listened to reports saying that we would not be able to make it when we started and were happy that the reports were wrong and that we had made it this far. We talked for a long time before walking on. We've been worrying about our shoes not making the distance, but really Roland's are the only ones showing any real signs of wearing out, and I think they'll get him to Norseman easily.

ROB: We had received some bad reports about the owner of the petrol station here but he was very nice and tried to help us. We received a nice letter from a friend in Sydney who said the walk was teaching him much about faith. We telephoned David and he encouraged us to drop plans to send a few of us on to Perth when we finish. We agreed with him and dropped our plans of going to Perth. Dane was very surprised that we agreed, and believed that we should have argued more with David.

DANE: We were sad that Boyd, Sheri, Kevin and Elizabeth were not in Balladonia when we arrived.

At last I had a win against Roland at chess, after he gave me his two biggest pieces at the start. In the middle of game number three, our friends and family (Boyd, Sheri, Kevin, and Elizabeth) showed up. It was a very warm happy meeting.

GARY: We talked for a long time with the others, laughing about some of the things that have happened on this trip.

DAY FIFTY: Monday, June 24.
(Rest day at Balladonia)

RACHEL: Janet tried sleeping with us last night and in the middle of the night some people who had been drinking came and tried to wake us up. They were kicking Janet.

Today is our rest day. I was happy to see the others. Elizabeth and I were talking in Kannada and Tamil.

DANE: I called my wife and learned that my letter to the Townsville newspaper was printed. It was talking to churches and others who help the poor.

ROLS: Janet left this morning. She thanked us all and said it was good being with us to help her get a true picture of how we are living.

After she left, we talked about taking action against Howard Sattler. We ended up understanding each other much better. I agreed that I was too ready to see the worst in what David was saying. It was good that we could talk it through, but there was still some bad feeling with Dane. He thinks that we are making David a god by agreeing with him too much. We have been over this with him many times but he won't change.

ROB: Dane said he thinks David is controlling us. He changed his arguments many times, always making David out to be bad. His arguments didn't do much for his ability to make us believe him on other things. Mal was the only one who did not disagree with him when he was talking against David.

GARY: We worked out the Sattler problem, but then went on to talk about my father, because Dane was saying that he is a very bad leader. We all showed him that we disagreed.

DANE: We finished our often heated talk about Sattler by Kevin asking me what I think we should do. I said that I feel the end of the walk should fix the problems on its own. God is my Father and all others my brothers and sisters.

MAL: There are many big black and white birds in Balladonia. Two of them confidently walked up to where we were sitting when we were talking. They came very close and then started singing.

GARY: The truck driver who stopped on Saturday and said many good spiritual things returned with three boxes of food! We talked with him for about two hours about the Bible. Much of it was about people getting married and then breaking up. We've had another group of reporters from a Perth Sunday newspaper come by. We were not very enthusiastic about talking to them, thinking they were from the same newspaper that Howard Sattler writes for, but they said they were not from that newspaper. The one taking the pictures is trying to do a perfect job of it. It takes much longer this way but it's good to see he is taking so much interest in his work.

Sheri is cooking some of the food that the truck driver gave to us. We've been feeding the others today, so people can't say they came here to help us! Kevin will take a bus back to Sydney tomorrow, and the others will be going to Koolgardie to hand out some of our leaflets. They'll return to see us closer to the end of the walk. Kevin is taking our writings with him to print up a book about the walk.

ROB: We have so many things and so much food that we're trying to put it all into the pram tonight so we can start more quickly in the morning. We put the tents in the pram and will be sleeping in a big building near here where small planes are parked.

DAY FIFTY-ONE: Tuesday, June 25.
(Walked 22.5 miles from Balladonia)

MAL: The building was warm without a fire last night. Some old mattresses in the corner were beautifully soft to sleep on too. We were up at 5am today.

RACHEL: At 6am, Kevin left Balladonia on a bus to Sydney. The reporters followed us for three miles out of Balladonia. They didn't sound very friendly, but when they

finished taking pictures, they gave us a box of food too. Some people stopped and gave us some chocolates. We all like chocolates, so we were very happy about that.

GARY: Mal said he doesn't want to stay with us after we finish the walk. He wants to go to Perth on his own, and then return to help with the free work in Adelaide, without living with us.

MAL: I talked with Christine and Robin most of the morning about spiritual problems I was having and they were trying hard to help me.

CHRIS: Robin and I talked to Mal about his plan to leave, and he is going to think it through more. I think he's going to come with us to Adelaide now.

GARY: I've been teaching Rachel about the first part of the Bible and how it goes with what we know about the past from other writings.

ROB: Gary says I take things wrongly when he is trying to help me. I could be getting a little proud, so I'll try to work on that. Gary cooked a nice meal at our rest stop today.

DANE: Two cars stopped and said the people in their Sunday school have been talking about us for their study each week. I left Roland's Bible in the trees, and had to run back almost half a mile to get it. The run did me good. We used most of the vegetables for our meal in the middle of the day, knowing that they would go off more quickly than the other food. And we ate celery and carrots as we were walking. Some of us had stomach pains because we have not had many green vegetables on this walk and our stomachs are not used to them.

CHRIS: A truck driver stopped to take a picture for his daughter, who works with a Christian group that helps poor people in Sydney.

Today we had to say "No, thank you!" when some people wanted to give us food, because we have no more space in the pram; it's full of food!

A big bottle of lemon soft drink that had not been opened was at the side of the road. A knife and a big book of writing paper was beside the road too.

ROLS: The days are hotter now. A man today said he was surprised at the strength we are showing. If I didn't believe God was with us, there's no way I would be here. When God leads, he never gives us more than we can handle. This one truth has helped me more than any other on this walk.

Reporters from a Sydney newspaper pulled up after we put up the tent. They wanted to take pictures of Dane and Mal playing chess, and one of Mal's hat. They were two older reporters, who were very friendly.

MAL: The land around here has changed surprisingly from what it was like for most of the trip. The red dirt is strange against the strong green colour of the trees. The trees are mostly young, and not tall, but they look big to us after seeing nothing but the little

bushes in the Nullarbor for so many days. There's much more bird life here too. Kangaroos are not as easy to see because they have more trees and grass to hide behind here.

ROB: We are seeing many more hills now, too. The hills make pushing the pram much more difficult.

**DAY FIFTY-TWO: Wednesday, June 26.
(Walked 22.5 miles toward Norseman)**

ROB: I was up at 5am and saw that Mal had been up for some time before me. I can see that he has much to think about.

RACHEL: The Sydney reporters walked with us for a short time today.

We saw some bicycle riders who are trying to ride all around the border of Australia in 100 days (to make money for people who have a sickness where the body does not use sugar well). There were two cars with their helpers in them. The cars will be following them all the way.

GARY: The reporters gave us a meal today. Reporters often help with food now. I think they now believe we'll make it, and they don't think it'll make any difference if they help. We were out of water, but when I looked behind some trees when I was going to the toilet, there was a water hole. So I filled up all of our containers.

The reporters later said that they did not remember to bring water with them and the walkers gave their last water to them. They had been watching to learn how the walkers were getting their water. They studied maps and learned that there were no water holes in that part of the country. So when Gary reported finding one, they believed that it was a miracle.

ROB: At our meal break we studied Matthew 23. From this we learned that it's easy to look good on the outside, but God sees our hearts. Mal said he learned something from Matthew 23:12, "Anyone who lifts himself up will be put down, and anyone who puts himself down will be lifted up." This could be a sign that he's working on his pride problem.

GARY: A Christian man and woman stopped and asked if we needed money. We said no, but they wanted us to take \$10.

CHRIS: I don't see how we're going to use it, but God knows. Mal left the pocket knife at the parking place half a mile behind us, so he started walking back to get it. Just then a police car came up and agreed to take him to the parking place. The police were leading 70 cars that were travelling together toward Norseman. The police called the people in the cars through their two-way radio to say that they would be seeing us on the road in a minute or less. Now the road looks like a big road in the middle of Sydney with

all these cars going by. About five stopped, giving us fruit and honey. Almost all of the cars were taking pictures of us as they went by.

DANE: Mal and I talked about good points and bad points of living in a group and living by yourself. We agreed that what is most important is where we see the most love at work. We put up the tent near the road, because we believed Boyd, Sheri, Elizabeth, and more reporters were coming and we wanted to be easy to find. I had a feeling we were not as close and happy tonight; I think it is because we are all tired.

ROLS: A group of dark-skinned Christian singers from New Zealand stopped to give us a song.

DANE: Boyd, Sheri, and Elizabeth arrived in the middle of the night. They did not wake anyone.

**DAY FIFTY-THREE: Thursday, June 27.
(Walked 22.5 miles toward Norseman)**

DANE: We are all happy to be back with Boyd, Sheri, and Elizabeth this morning. The four sisters are walking two by two hand in hand. Even the birds sound happier today. The trees are taller now. And real grass is growing beside the road.

GARY: A car stopped just after we were up this morning. The people in it had stopped before on their way to Adelaide. Robin and I had a deep and serious talk about our problems. It went very well.

ROB: Rachel was showing off to Liz a little. Liz returned to Norseman with Boyd and Sheri after walking with us for an hour. It was my turn to find a sleeping bag by the side of the road today. It is a very expensive one, filled with feathers.

MAL: I talked for an hour with Roland this morning. What he said was very good. Much of our talk on the road is not deep and serious. You must force talk around to something Christian. I walked out in front today, pushing the pram. The land around us is beautiful. When we walk through beautiful places, it's easy to not see it. We, as much as anyone, can be prisoners in the nine-to-five jobs that rob us of the beautiful things around us. It's all in our spirit.

CHRIS: We walked by a big water hole, so we filled our water bottles. We used chemicals that we had received to make dirty water clean, because the water was very dirty. The rubber on another wheel of the pram has a hole through to the tube. We cut rubber from a truck tube on the side of the road to tie around the pram tube. It is working very well.

GARY: I said to Rachel that Elizabeth's feelings were hurt because Rachel had put her down a few times when she was here, and because Rachel was showing off. Chris,

Rob, and I all agreed about this problem, but Rachel would not listen to any of us. She finished off by saying, "Don't talk to me." We said that if she was going to act like a child then we would think of her as one: We would tell her what to do and not talk things over with her if she wouldn't listen. She was angry and started walking on her own, half a mile behind us. At our meal break she said she would not sit with us. We agreed that we would hit her if she did the same thing after the rest stop, and she did. Robin hit her and she exploded in anger. The same thing happened three times. After that she walked with us with no arguments.

RACHEL: Robin and Chris said I was acting like a child. I said I wouldn't walk with them. Robin gave me a hit on the bottom. I ran away. He ran after me and give me another hit. I walked with them in the end. They said I could walk with them for now, but when Boyd and Sheri come, I must go back to Sydney. Boyd, Sheri and Elizabeth came when we were putting up the tent. Robin, Chris and Gary talked to the others about my problem. They didn't say anything about me going back to Sydney. I talked to Elizabeth about it. After talking to her, I wanted more to follow God. It was nice talking to her.

DANE: I think the others did a good job of fixing the problem with Rachel. If it becomes worse, it could lead to Rachel dropping out of the walk, and it could hurt what we are trying to say. A television reporter did a good interview with Chris earlier today.

CHRIS: The television reporters returned, and a radio reporter arrived too when we stopped walking for the day. The radio reporter asked me to sing the song "Where Are You Going?" Roland played a game of chess with one of the reporters. He's always trying to find someone who will play chess with him!

ROLS: I was interviewed by the television reporter, but my answers were not as strong as they should have been. I was feeling a little sad because of it.

MAL: I was happy spending time with the television reporters tonight. They are good people, and interesting to talk to. They are sleeping out on the other side of the road.

DAY FIFTY-FOUR: Friday, June 28.
(Walked 22.5 miles toward Norseman)

CHRIS: Robin was up at 4:30 and a man who had received a lift with the television reporters came over to the fire and talked with him. We're out of water, so we'll need to look for some more today.

DANE: Boyd, Sheri, and Elizabeth stayed the night with us, ate with us this morning, and then left to fix the car and to make a big flag with writing on it for the end of the walk. The television people left after taking a few more pictures of us.

GARY: Boyd and Sheri have been eating our food up to now, but our food is getting low again. We gave them \$50 from the money we have received. They will use it to buy food in Norseman. Rachel's spirit is very much better.

RACHEL: I was talking to Gary this morning about the problem we had yesterday. I am feeling much better from what happened. I am still feeling left out and I get the poor-me's, but I am working on it now. All my problems are teaching me things. Many important talks happened today. We are all happy because it is not very far to Norseman. We won't even want to go to sleep tomorrow night.

ROB: The devil has been trying many little tricks to turn us against each other. It shows that we are having a good effect in what we are saying and he's getting worried! Rachel is very happy now and wants to talk and talk. She said she thinks it was good that she was hit yesterday.

I am the leader today, but a few times this morning others have had to tell me to do my job. I must pull my socks up! It was not easy for me to receive the truth from Chris, but we talked it out.

CHRIS: We walked by another water hole and, because we're out of water, we tried to get some; but we were not able to because the water was just mud. Then we came on an old bottle of soft drink on the side of the road. It was old but very good. After that, two caravans stopped and gave us potatoes, biscuits, bread, honey, and they filled up our water bottles too. We talked with them for about 25 minutes and washed our very dirty hands. A farmer talked with us when we were having a break. He showed us where we can get water tonight and he gave us some bread and a little fruit.

GARY: At our meal stop in the middle of the day Boyd, Liz, and Sheri arrived with some food, and fruit juice. Elizabeth walked with us for the second half of the day, and Boyd and Sheri stayed in the van beside the road, making the flag they plan to hold up at the finish. It'll say: YOU CANNOT DO IT... WITHOUT GOD!

DANE: Many cars have been stopping today, talking to us like we are finished now and saying that they are happy for us. Some have been giving us food too. I've been feeling a strong calling from my wife and son and I talked to Boyd about that.

GARY: Boyd and Sheri returned when we stopped at the end of the day and we all had a meal together. Sheri cooked some fish from some tins we had received. After eating I was feeling a little left out because I did not have time to talk with Boyd or Sheri. They left for Norseman after the meal to telephone Sydney. Elizabeth stayed to sleep with us tonight so she can walk with us tomorrow.

CHRIS: We went to bed at 8:30. At 9pm television and radio reporters came. The radio reporter did a short interview with Roland, who was still awake.

ROLS: Strangely enough, some of us started getting sores on our feet today, and pains in muscles and bones. I'll be a little sad when the walk finishes.

DAY FIFTY-FIVE: Saturday, July 29.
(Walked 23 miles toward Norseman)

ROB: I was up at 5:30am. Mal and Dane were up before me. We are feeling very high in our spirits as we get closer to Norseman. The television reporters did an interview with Roland. They did one with Boyd about him writing Christian sayings on money that he spends in Norseman. Boyd did not think anyone would want to talk to him, but he did well. Chris had an interview with a radio reporter.

DANE: After one of the warmest nights of the trip we were happy to start the last full day of walking. Elizabeth is walking with us again. Many church people are stopping; some are even kissing us!

ROLS: The television reporter asked some difficult questions and tried to push me into saying that we need money. I handled the interview much better than the last one, and this made me feel much better. Dane was interviewed too. It's difficult to believe that we have almost covered the distance.

RACHEL: We were all very happy this morning because we have only 30 miles to go. Chris was teaching Elizabeth a song today. Robin gave me some teaching about how plants and trees get water when it doesn't rain. Boyd and Sheri finished making the flag. It looks very good. We will be walking under it at the finish. Chris and I will each give a talk before the reporters asks us questions.

GARY: We saw Boyd and Sheri again at our meal stop in the middle of the day. An older man and woman who had stopped just before Eucla, gave us some bread and other things that we ate for our break. After the reporters left, we had a talk on how to handle difficult reporters and about being more together when reporters are around.

ROB: Strangely, we are having more problems with our feet. Christine has some bad sores on hers. Chris put in something about living by faith in a radio interview today. It is difficult to believe that we're going to finish after walking for so long.

CHRIS: We had enough food for Boyd and Sheri again, and I gave them \$78 that I had in my pocket from money that people gave to us over the last few days. Elizabeth still feels enthusiastic about walking with us, so we agreed for her to walk with us all day today. When we stopped for a meal break, a policeman came out from Norseman to see how we were doing. He said he had received many telephone calls asking about us. After the meal, a family from Norseman came out to ask how we were going. A newspaper reporter from Norseman came to take a picture of us just before we stopped walking for the day. He said six radio stations are waiting for us in Norseman.

GARY: After we put up the tent, seven miles from Norseman, I talked with Sheri in the car as I helped her stitch the flag. For entertainment we turned the car radio on, but

we left that when some television reporters arrived with tins of drink and dried fruit. I was talking to Boyd and he asked me what I was thinking about the walk. I am very surprised that we have made it. I find it hard to believe that we are only seven miles away from Norseman after so many days of just walking on and on one day at a time without thinking about the finish.

RACHEL: Gary washed his shoes tonight, and helped me wash my shirt. Dane washed his hat. It was really dirty. Now it is nice and clean. And my clothes are clean too. When we were walking today Malcolm saw a fox tail on the side of the road. This tail looks good. It feels nice too. Malcolm was going to make something out of it, but we think it will take too much work and time. This should be the last night that we will be sleeping out on the road. It is time for me to go to bed. Good night!

MAL: At last I have finished the kangaroo skin hat! And I had been thinking that taking the skin off the kangaroo was the difficult part! I was a very long time tying it together with string. We don't have much free time for things like that.

I used much of my time today talking with Dane. I really liked talking to him and I feel closer to him now than I have on the whole trip.

Reporters often ask me what my feelings are now that the walk is almost over. The truth is that my emotions are not very high. I was feeling high at Caiguna and at Balladonia, but now it's just the job of finishing. On top of that, I don't feel like the walk will be over when we arrive in Norseman. Many reporters are waiting for us to get back to Adelaide before they talk to us. After that, THEN I can rest!!

DANE: I said to the others that I plan to return to Townsville at the end of the walk, without stopping in Adelaide. They received it well.

(David had asked to meet with Dane and the others in Adelaide, so that any problems between Dane and himself could be fixed then face to face.)

Nick (see day forty) pulled his truck up tonight and ate and talked with us. He was very quiet, but so were we. He later quietly gave Mal \$100 without any of the others of us knowing about it.

The television reporters showed up again and did a few pictures of us around the fire before the others went to bed.

It's now after 10pm. All the others are asleep. I'm thinking back over the most important thing I've been a part of in my whole life. I'm both happy and sad that it's about to end. I feel that changed lives are what it's all about and that people we saw on the trip received a strong word from God through us and we through them.

ROLS: The interview the television station did with me this morning was not used. They said it was because what I was saying was not important to the walk. I feel a little angry about it because the interview went so well, with me pointing each thing back to God. If God is not an important part of the walk, then why did we do it?

The reporter left, saying they would see us in Norseman tomorrow. Because this is our last night on the road, he must understand that we need a little quiet time to bring our

minds together for the big finish. For a short time today I had a fear that reporters would try to say that what we have been doing on this walk is not important; but I was able to fight off this fear.

CHRIS: A husband and wife from America came out from Norseman and said we could use their water and washing machine to clean ourselves and our clothes when we arrive. They later returned with some food for us to eat in the morning.

Before going to bed, most of us talked separately to each other about how we are feeling. We're all tired from all the emotions we have been feeling today, but it is still difficult to get to sleep, knowing that tomorrow morning we'll arrive in Norseman (if it is what God wants).

Just after going to bed, some young people from Norseman came out to see us. They talked with Robin and Dane (who were still awake) and were very friendly... but they were a little loud.

DAY FIFTY-SIX: Sunday, June 30. (Walked 7 miles to Norseman!)

RACHEL: It was a really warm night with clouds covering the sky. More television reporters are here now taking pictures of us. Last night I had a dream that we were still walking and we had a long way to go. But the truth is that it is only seven miles. Isn't that good! We will read out Matthew 6 before the reporters leave.

ROLS: We arrived at a place three miles from Norseman an hour before we had planned, so we had a break of 45 minutes. I had a good radio interview there, and Chris handled two other interviews well. One woman reporter was against us. By accident she left behind the book she was writing her report in, and we were able to see some of the lies she is planning to write about us.

ROB: The book was full of lies! For one thing, she said that Boyd and Sheri were travelling with us in a van and feeding us, and so we weren't living by faith at all. (We should have been able to see the danger in eating with them when we were still on the road.) We agreed that when we arrive in Norseman, we will pull out the book and show how some reporters are not looking for the truth, but are looking for a way to fight against us because they hate what we are trying to say.

RACHEL: Reporters from all over Australia were waiting for us in Norseman. When we walked into town, we were singing "God is Walking On". Chris and I did our talk, and one television station interviewed me after that. It went really well. The people in Norseman were very friendly. One of the girls there gave me a little plastic Jesus.

ROLS: We separated into smaller groups and did a few interviews at the same time. Rob ended up with the woman who was against us. I came over and helped him. There was an angry church man saying we aren't following Jesus because we follow David.

They always take that line when they don't like what we are saying. One reporter encouraged me by saying that reporters do not take arguing church people very seriously.

CHRIS: It's very good knowing that God helped us through, and that many people are thinking about putting their faith in God and not in wealth. But I still feel that too many people want to look at us as a group more than Christ and what he and we are trying to say. The sad truth is that people won't receive you if you come in the name of God, but they will receive you if you come in the name of a church or in the name of a religion.

A young woman who had just become a Christian thanked us for encouraging her to keep making a stand as a Christian in her family. She was mostly encouraged by Rachel. She cried in front of the camera.

MAL: Norseman and it's over!

