

# Christmas Greetings from the Callaghans

*For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given.  
And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor,  
Mighty God, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6*



Hi there.

As we approach the Christmas season it is good to get in touch with friends and family and to reflect back on the past year. For our family 1997 has been a busy one with lots of highs and a few lows. We have known the blessing of God in many ways and are constantly amazed at how faithful He is to us.

**January** saw us visiting family in Auckland and Hamilton, then Ross and Kathy attended Girls Brigade Fonomarae for a week, just outside Rotorua (along with 600 others!). This was an absolutely wonderful camp where we enjoyed making a daily video and participating in lots of varied activities. On arriving home we found that we had won \$3000 of travel through our travel club. More about that in October! We were thrilled to find that Sarah had achieved a B Bursary.

In **February** Debbie and Sarah were pretty happy because we bought them an old Nissan Pulsar. Since then they have travelled 15500km and 'Maxine' is still going strong. Debbie, Fraser and friends went on one of their many trips around the country, enjoying the great outdoors. Debbie has continued the lifestyle she enjoyed in America last year with lots of travel and adventures. We had a big surprise when a very large window in our sunroom burst in a gust of wind. This turned out to be for the best as Ross put in a smaller window and a nice seat where we can sit in the sun. Philip started his fifth form year at Hutt International Boys School.

In **March** Debbie started back at Victoria University for the last year of her BSc and Sarah started at Training College. A major event occurred on the 21<sup>st</sup> when Ross turned 50. To celebrate he and Kathy went to Sydney, hired a car and drove down to Melbourne. We visited some wonderful places, especially Canberra, Albury, Echuca (yes we went on some paddlesteamers), Ballarat, and all the lovely little towns along the way. Ross had a special birthday present of a ride in a Tiger Moth which left him decidedly queasy. (You would too if you were looping the loop and flying along upside down!). This was a truly memorable holiday and we can't wait to go back.

**April.** Not too much happened this month, except for Philip getting the first part of his drivers licence. Ross was away quite a bit running training programmes throughout the country. (Typical of the whole year.)

In **May** we celebrated Debbie's 21<sup>st</sup> with a big BBQ at our place. Debbie had a wonderful time with her friends and family. At this stage in the year Ross was preaching in different Churches pretty well every Sunday (also typical of the whole year.) Kathy had a short period of being President of the Faultline Chorus. She continues to serve on the committee and has special responsibility for membership. She really loves her barbershop singing. Ross had a paper accepted for the International Council of Distance Education's world conference, but unfortunately the Open Polytechnic wouldn't pay for him to go to Pennsylvania and present it! You can read the paper on the internet.

**June.** Sarah and some friends went on a trip to Auckland: a first for Sarah and a test for Maxine! An important event occurred for Ross when he became National Chaplain for Girls Brigade. Kathy flew up to Auckland to be with him for the special occasion. During the year Ross was involved in many Girls Brigade activities. It is exciting to be part of a great team providing leadership for a dynamic youth ministry at a crucial time in its development.

**July** was rather traumatic for Ross. It saw the disestablishment of the Staff Training and Development Centre at the Open Polytechnic. Ross had built this up from scratch starting in 1990. Ross's job was also lost but he was offered a 6-month secondment to the Marketing section. He is now a "Development Consultant", responsible for providing training and consultancies for clients throughout the country. This is likely to continue next year. Another of our 'lows' was Kathy having a chest infection and a cough which hung around for some months.

Not too much of note happened in **August** and **September**. Just the usual work, ministry and family events. We did celebrate our 23<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary, though, which was special. Sarah started running a Sunday School for a Church which doesn't have the resources to do it themselves.

**October** was quite different! Ross and Kathy flew to New York and spent two wonderful weeks exploring the north-eastern United States and parts of Canada. We used the travel prize and really had a fantastic time: our best holiday ever. After a day exploring New York with a friend we joined a Cosmos bus tour and went to Boston, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara, Pennsylvania, Washington DC and Philadelphia, before returning home via New York and Los Angeles. We were in the north east during the fall and the colour in the foliage was just amazing. Special highlights of our trip were the guided tour of New York, re-enacting the Boston tea party, exploring the streets of Quebec (and dusting off our 6<sup>th</sup> form French!), the marvellous Notre Dame Cathedral in Montreal, beautiful Ottawa, shopping in Toronto and having dinner at the top of the world's tallest building, the Maid of the Mist boat trip under the Niagara Falls, visiting Amish country, experiencing the rich celebration of US history in Washington and Philadelphia, meeting President Clinton (I've got a photo to prove it!), and experiencing Broadway at night. This was a truly wonderful holiday. While we were away Debbie represented New Zealand in Gaelic Football, unfortunately being beaten by Australia in the last few minutes.

**November** was significant because Philip sat School Certificate (and is now awaiting the results), Sarah successfully completed her first year at Training College, Debbie completed her BSc and both girls got really good holiday jobs. On one of his trips Ross was able to visit his mother in hospital. She had surgery to fix the circulation in her legs and is doing quite well. Ross fell while manoeuvring our trailer and damaged his shoulder and neck and has had lots of physio, with lots more to come as his shoulder is frozen. Most of our spare time was spent preparing our garden for the Faultline Chorus Musical Garden Trail. Kathy organised this for the Chorus as a fundraiser. It was great to have hundreds of people in our garden listening to the Chorus, even though the weather was a bit unpleasant.

We finally bought a decent computer and everyone has been learning how to get the best out of it. We are on e-mail: callaghans@clear.net.nz if you would like to get in touch that way.

And that brings us to **December**. Special highlights were attending Debbie's capping and talking to the Governor-General during the Girls Brigade Queens Award ceremony. Otherwise we have been doing all of the usual end of year things. We will be having Christmas at home then travelling north to visit family while Sarah will be on an OJ and Debbie on another adventure with her friends.

Next year Kathy will continue to work part time at Soma, Ross will be back at the Open Polytechnic, Debbie will be off on an OE to visit her friends in Idaho, will visit Mexico and will then look around Europe, Sarah will be back at Training College and Philip will be in the sixth form. We expect that all our other activities will continue as well: chorus, Girls Brigade, ministry, youth leadership for all the children, gardening, adventures, study.... 1997 was busy and 1998 promises to be just the same.

We trust that you, too, have known God's blessing in what you have done this year and that 1998 will be prosperous, safe and fulfilling. We look forward to keeping in touch.

Love from Ross, Kathy, Debbie, Sarah and Philip Callaghan.