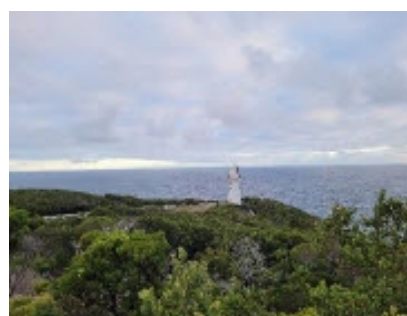

A Physical and Spiritual Trek

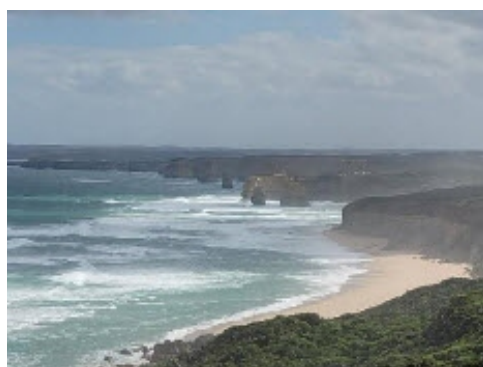
Recently, my husband David & I were fortunate to have completed the Great Ocean Walk in Victoria. We did a 100km walk across five days at the end of March, starting at Apollo Bay and finishing at the Twelve Apostles. It was a remote walk (we rarely saw anyone else on the path) and the phone reception and internet was very intermittent which was both a blessing but also concern if we did need to contact the outside world in a hurry. It was a wonderful experience, and upon reflection, those isolated five days were a little cameo of life. We had sunshine and we had rain, we had ecstatic moments of personal achievement and we had painful moments when feet and legs were aching, we had moments of breathtaking beauty of God's creation and also moments of acute anxiety with the potential danger of close snake encounters on the path. The five days were challenging but also incredibly rewarding and we felt very uplifted upon completion.

One of my favourite sites was the Cape Otway Lighthouse. Lighthouses have always held some fascination for me – they conjure up imaginative pictures of oceans, rocks, boats, treasure and adventures (no doubt influenced by one of my favourite early childhood books - Enid Blyton's "Famous Five go to Demon Rocks"). However, lighthouses also remind me strongly of the verse from Matthew 5:18 "Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your God in heaven." A lighthouse is a stable and comforting presence which supports others safely on their journey, a goal for me in my life.



Another aspect of the Walk was that we shared the with journey with two good Toowoomba friends. They were comrades on the path – we shared meals, laughs, aches and pains, light-hearted conversations, more serious talks, and also times of silence as we each had quiet times of personal thoughts and prayer. 1 Thessalonians 5:11 says "Encourage one another and build each other up." Sharing life with kindred spirits who possess similar beliefs and goals is easier than walking alone.

Another intriguing aspect occurred on the final day as we could see the Twelve Apostles as our final destination well in advance of reaching them. As we kept going, they were an excellent source of motivation as we drew to the end, despite growing weary. This also reminds me of the verse from Philippians 4:13 "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Not only was this particular holiday of great benefit to me physically and socially but it was also important for me spiritually. As I see so much turbulence



and trouble in the world around me and get caught up with my own concerns, it is easy to become overwhelmed. This time away has refreshed my soul and I feel renewed to keep doing what I can, as insignificant as it may feel, in my own small corner.

"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up". (Galatians 6:9).

Louise Buttsworth
