

Lost

MICK AND JOE set out for the fabled Pisgah Rock: four glorious days of freedom in the bush.

A long weekend! and let off Friday's school by teachers and parents since it was an *educational* expedition.

Joe's Mum drove them, via the Nepean Trail from Glenbrook, to the high ridge crest looking down on the youthful gorge of the Nepean River, so different from its senile spread on the Cumberland Plain near Penrith.

This lookout was named Pisgah Heights by the famous Hall brothers, as was Pisgah Rock itself. They had tramped the Blue Labyrinth nigh on 90 years ago, just as Myles Dunphy tramped and mapped the Gangerangs and Wild Dogs. *Pisgah* in Hebrew means a beautiful aspect: it was the name of the peak from which Moses viewed the Promised Land. Indeed, a poem by Furnley Maurice links Moses with the Nepean's Pisgah Heights.

THE boys scrambled down between trees on a ridge-back to the Nepean's junction with Erskine Creek. The huge Word Cave, hid in lantana, was opposite.

Here their tramping began in earnest — upstream in the Erskine. They hugged its right side to be sure of seeing Pisgah Rock high above them.

At the most, it should take two hours to get there, so they did not bother checking prominent landmarks on their map — the low saddle at the Rock Rollery, or the huge pool at an L-bend with its island of rocks, or the mouth of Big Crater Creek on the other bank.

The beauty of Erskine Creek was distracting them.

Its enchantments! its vitality, its pools, wild rapids, rock platforms, grey green trees and scrub, and more great cliffs and slopes in a wondrous untamed gorge.

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ON MONDAY NIGHT, anxious parents sounded the alarm. A flurry of phone calls followed.

At dawn on Tuesday, Ranger John and Father Jim were first away in the massive search. Search HQ was the end of a grassy track off the Nepean Trail, almost on top of Pisgah Rock, above the boys' intended campsite.

They scrambled down Tierney's Trail above Monkey Rope's Creek. It joined Lincoln Creek, which joined the Erskine at its irresistible swimming hole.

But nary a sign of the missing boys. A fire-place at this campsite was choked with rubbish. Fr Jim was sure these boys would not leave tins or rubbish.

They could not have stopped. By Search & Rescue radio they informed Search-HQ. Then true to their assignment, they continued onward upstream.

Ranger John forecast the worst. "We'll find their camp first, then the drowned bodies."

Fr Jim knew the boys better and was optimistic. "They're strong swimmers, they can navigate, cook and carry knapsacks in the bush. I think we'll find they've got slightly slewed for a couple of days."

"Slewled" is bushy talk for not completely lost.

Onward, ever onward, upstream. Hour after hour They checked the Dadder Cave on the other bank. No entry in its Log Book, no sign of them.

It was blisteringly hot. Mid-morning, Fr Jim drank two litres of tea and Ranger John a bit less.

The hellish din of a helicopter filled the gorge. It swept over very low to make sure the searchers were not the missing boys. And racketed off.

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IT WAS WELL PAST lunchtime that Ranger John smelled smoke. Half-around the Great Erskine Loop, where Erskine Creek semi-circles The Massif, the searchers found the boys. They were cooking left-overs. There was nothing wrong with them!

First things first. Fr Jim battled with the static on the walkie-talkie: "Boys alive and well. We'll walk them out by our quickest exit, south up Mount Hall. Ask Brother Rex to drive my International Scout to the Mount Hall Trail via the King's Tableland Road."

The helicopter returned. It hovered low but did not risk a winching, let alone a landing — "let 'em walk!"

By the time Rescuers and Rescued were tanked with tea and properly fed, evening was closing in. Maybe just as well — for darkness to hide the scary bits.

And Brother Rex was at Mount Hall to meet them.

Then a long drive home: via Wentworth Falls to the Western Highway, dropping off Ranger John at Glenbrook, finally to Ryde for the boys, in the small hours.

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AUTOPSY ON A WALK

MICK AND JOE had clung stubbornly to just one serious error: "We never *saw* Pisgah Rock."

They had no nasty navigating — no confusing spurs downhill on a main ridge; no confusion of big tributaries on upstream walking; no watersheds to cross unwittingly.

They missed prominent landmarks and landforms; they didn't use map and compass "dead reckoning". They ignored all common sense of travelling time and distance. They spent days on what takes hours!

At least they left their route at home in writing.

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SOME LATERAL THINKING

PROTESTANT Christians separated from the Catholic Church are like slewed bushwalkers. As for trendy Catholics, they're like "closet Protestants".

Some non-trendy Catholics react to both and to VCII as well. Some get so slewed they end up in irregular relationships with the Pope and the Church.

There are those who run in circles quoting Scripture, even against the Church who wrote it. Others say *yes* to the papacy but *no* to the actual Successor of St Peter.

They ignore the sacred landmarks and landforms, nor do they read aright their spiritual compasses and maps. Merciful search parties set out to lead back those who cannot see **THE ROCK**.

Found!

SOME of Henry VIII's "slewed" heirs to his protest against the papacy are finding their way home in Pope Benedict XVI's "search party" for the Traditional Anglicans in the Church of England.

Even for many High Church Anglicans, the pope's supreme spiritual authority over the Church on earth has been a sticking point.

Henry VIII's break with the Pope in 1534 was a far worse rerun of Henry II's, who murdered St Thomas A'Becket in 1170. Despite Henry VIII's earlier apologetics against Luther, he got himself "slewed" over not having a male heir — by fair means or foul.

Eamon Duffy, Cambridge historian, in his recent history (see his *The Fires of Faith*) on Queen Mary, 1553-1558, praises Cardinal Pole as the greatest leader in the counter-reformation. In 1535, Pole had written to Henry, denouncing his supreme error which was rejecting The Rock foundation of the Church.

FATHER Martin Luther was full of indignation against various abuses in 1517, but got himself "slewed": he exemplified that *enthusiasm* which Msgr Ronald Knox reckoned was at the heart of all the heresies down the centuries, in that they emphasized one truth at the expense of all the others.

Luther got "slewed" on *justification by faith* in St Paul to the Romans, and ignored vital Bible texts on the necessity of hope, charity and good works.

The Devil had already paved a way for Luther with Fr John Wycliffe in 14th century England, with his objections to the Real Presence, errors on the supremacy of Scripture, and challenges to Papal authority.

After World War II, many Lutheran clergy turned Catholic and Pope Pius XII let them be ordained priests, though they were already married.

DR DOLLINGER, a priest, was a leading rebel at Vatican I in 1870. He rejected papal infallibility. In spite of his brilliant scholarship, he had got himself "slewed", and was excommunicated in 1871.

His bad example is sometimes imitated. Though the highest endeavours of the human intellect are in philosophy and theology, the Devil makes mincemeat of many of them — perhaps intellectual pride?

FATHER FEENEY got himself slewed over "no salvation outside the Church." Pope Pius XII had to excommunicate him in 1953 — so he ended up *outside the Church* himself. The Devil alone gloated.

The Feeneyites continue to this day, chiefly in the USA, along with "slewed" post-Vatican II separatists.

TRENDIES TODAY continue the very Modernism that Pope St Pius X analyzed so effectively, and condemned, in his encyclical *Pascendi* in 1907.

They are "slewed" in demythologizing doctrine, desacralizing liturgy, relativizing morals, and muddling up scripture, theology, spirituality, catechetics, ecumenism, marriage and the priesthood. They are in a mess.

Some convert back to orthodoxy and even trace their dissent to the grip of pride and ignorance, exactly as diagnosed by Pope St Pius X in 1907.

TODAY'S Catholics include not only the embattled "regular" Catholics suffering from the trendies, but other somewhat "irregular" groups who are separated from the supreme authority of Pope Benedict, yet as Catholics they believe in the papacy.

They began with many genuine grievances over the travesties on VCI's *Constitution on the Liturgy*. They were shabbily and even shockingly treated by prelates and priests, and denied appeal or redress. Their grievances now extend to the *Decree on Religious Liberty*. They tend to justify their separation by making "arrows out of any bit of wood", and are manifesting an increasing shrillness and bitterness. They are "slewed".

Pope Benedict is showing them great compassion and understanding, and has to battle with the trendies in the Church who do not want them "regularized".

A SAINT FOR OUR TIME is John Henry Newman, with his *beatification* in September, 2010. God led him out of the increasing confusions of Anglicanism into the Catholic Church in 1845.

His conscience led him to submit his conscience to **all** that the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches. He was humble in his mastery of Holy Scripture and the Fathers of the Church and Sacred Tradition.

As a Catholic, he suffered grievously from misunderstandings and unsympathetic ecclesiastics, even from other converts. Yet he did not waver in following the Kindly Light and the Pillar of the Cloud.

Always the Pope

THE COMMON THEME with all "slewed" folk is not to heed the Successor of St Peter, the supreme Vicar of Christ, the Bishop of Rome, **THE ROCK for all to see**. "You can't miss it..." as the bushies say.

Separating from the Pope has never been a solution for any Church mess, *even if a pope presided over the mess, or was a mess himself* (it can happen). **"Two wrongs don't make a right"**, "The first thing to do is not to do any harm", not to make things worse.

LANDMARKS, MAPS and LANDFORMS

For Catholics, their supreme **landmark** is the Pope. Their **map** is Divine Revelation known by Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium. These are the easy-to-see **landforms**, the very shape of the religious landscape.

COMPASSES

Natural Moral Law makes **conscience** a compass: it aligns the map with spiritual north which is the Pope.

COMMON SENSE on TIME and DISTANCE

Like over-confident bush walkers, church folk get "slewed". The Devil prompts them to waver, wander off and split up the pilgrim group, leaving some **leaderless**.

Separatists have a long history of failure.

Stick with the Pope and you won't get "slewed".

Join the search parties for our "slightly slewed".

Father James Tierney