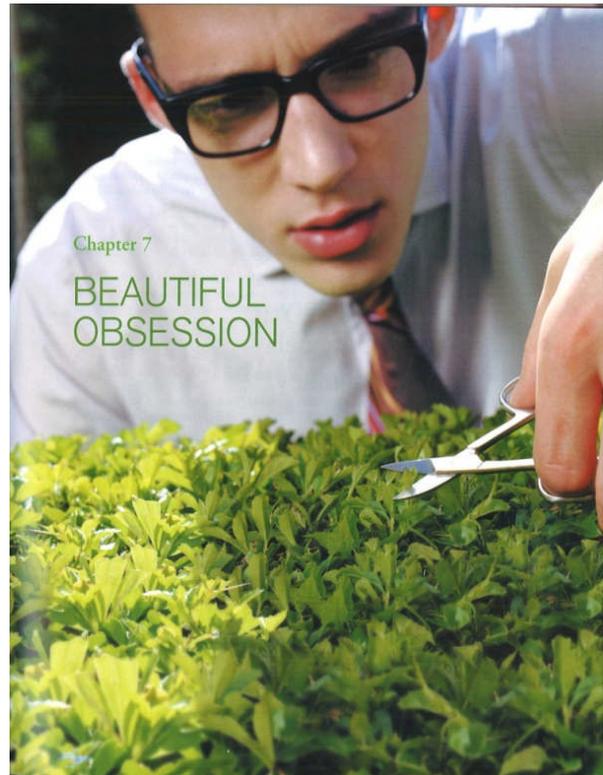


February 25th, 2012

Dear Friends

There is a picture in our department from the book *Lovemarks* that serves as a reminder if not an aspiration. For some reason Stephen finds it preposterous! Mzungus are crazy! In his African setting grass is cut using a slasher or sickle, randomly swung with little strategic attention while singing some doleful lyric under the mid-day sun. Though obsessive attention to our accounts has been our goal, various distractions (like building work) means that the ragged edges of our data need to be trimmed. This has been my 'beautiful obsession' of late partly to prepare for audit and partly in reflection on Matthew Gill's book - *Accounting Truth*.



To the uninitiated, one might presume that Treasurer's accumulate transactions, do the sums and then present numbers in some arcane table. This is partly the true, though the process includes a significant amount of interpretation and grouping of the data to tell a story about those who donate and those who use the donations for church enterprise. The data speaks of power and purpose, roles and relationships. It is about the flow of spiritual generosity from Our Creator, through the enterprise of the committed to our worshipful response and witness. The outcome is a '*created truth*'.

I confess to being offended by this notion. Can it really be, that 'truth' is fabricated? A story conveniently composed? I guess cynics do chuckle over the mantra - 'lies, damned lies and statistics', - and here I am piecing together a forty page document which aspires to be open, transparent and generous!

Crumbs, if accounting with its codes can turn out to be so subjective, what about the rest of our experience? How many of the stories we tell have been composed through our general world view, with selective grouping of means and ends, forms and functions? More pertinently - how many of our stories represent the generosity of our Creator and his work of redemption in the lives of people. Indeed if nothing else this should be our 'beautiful obsession' – thank you for making it so.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victor'.

Victor

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

John 17:15-17 (Jesus prayer for his disciples)