



Pastor's Page

"Man over board"

As I hopped on the coach it was now approaching 2.00pm Greek time and I'd been up since 2.00am British time following about an hour's sleep! So I was feeling pretty jaded! However part of my role was to chat with the holiday guests and make them feel welcome and put them at ease. So I slipped into 'extrovert' mode and introduced myself to a number of people and tried to learn some names. Soon I began chatting to a couple called Joan and Aubrey from Oxfordshire. They'd been to Samos before and this time they'd brought their daughter and grandson with them. (They also had great grand children.) We had a nice conversation about families and fellowships and before long we arrived at the Zefiros Beach Hotel. Following a warm welcome from the energetic Richmond staff we received the keys for our rooms and went to unpack. I saw this as a great opportunity just to test out the bed!! Later there was an evening meeting then a lovely meal before we all went for an early night.

Next day I worked at getting to know more people, so down on the beach I mingled with guests at the waterfront. Already there were people out on the briny in sailing dinghies, catamarans, kayaks, and windsurfs but it was hard to recognise individual guests in their wetsuits and sailing gear. However I chatted with those who were taking it easy on the beach whilst keeping one eye on the exploits on the water. I was hoping to see 'my friend' Aubrey again but there was no sign of him. I concluded that at 80 yrs of age it may be hard for him to get down to the beach so perhaps he's stayed up at the hotel reading or snoozing. Anyway I saw Joan (his wife) sitting on a sun lounger with a book so I went and said; "Hi, Aubrey not down this morning?" "Yes" she replied and pointing to the Aegean sea said "He's out there." Slightly confused I said "where?" "Out there" she said "windsurfing!!!" WINDSURFING???! I replied. "Yes, he loves it" she said "didn't start 'til he was 65 now I can't stop him!" "CAN'T STOP HIM?" I said (at which point she asked me to stop shouting!) So I sat down on a sun lounger and watched in stunned silence as this 80 year old great grandfather whizzed across the Samian bay on his trusty windsurf board. When he finished (he did a good 2 -3 hours every day!) I went over to chat with him. "Fantastic" he said "The buzz you get when the wind fills the sail and you're just zooming along on that board is amazing" Then he added "I think it's the nearest we can get to walking on the water like our Lord did!" He looked at me with a sheepish expression as if to say "I hope that's not blasphemous?". Well it's not in my book and I think a man of that age windsurfing is nearly as big a miracle as walking on the water! He then said, "You know Mark some people say *I'll do that- I'll have a go at that*, but they don't" He then said "Don't just say it – do it!"

I'd love to conclude by saying "I did it" But I didn't! Fear of failure (I tried it once and couldn't do it) held me back. I long to be more like Aubrey though, particularly regarding serving the Lord – to be 'going for it' now and by God's grace still 'going for it' when I'm 80. So inspired by this great grandfather and at the risk of you thinking I'm going a bit over board my prayer is this; "Lord please,

*Be the fire in my heart, Be the wind in these sails;
Be the reason that I live, Jesus, be the centre.*

6th June 2010