

Journey

By Robin Bailey

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Believe it or not 25 years ago Terry Fox was running another 26-28 mile day somewhere between Sault Ste. Marie, ON and Wawa, ON. I was in grade 6 at Meadowvale Public School 25 years ago, where were you? A lot of the young people just figured out how old I am. Every where you read about Terry Fox you hear about how he was just an ordinary human being with extra ordinary drive and determination. As Canadians there are few people that compare with the pride that he gave all of us in being Canadians. He was voted as one of the 10 greatest Canadians of all time and will forever be remembered for the journey he began.

Some 2000 years ago Jesus Christ was born in a small stable in Bethlehem. He is repeatedly noted as one of, if not the most influential person in the history of the world. He was born fully human so that, though he was God, he would be able to experience everything that you and I as human beings experience and thus be able to show us how we ought to live as his image bearers.

Truth be told, as with most historical events we often remember them far more fondly than how they actually played out. **Terry Fox Marathon of Hope** began with little fanfare on April 12, 1980 on a cold morning in St. John's, Newfoundland as he dipped his artificial leg in the Atlantic Ocean. Terry and his friend Doug Alward set out across

Canada in a van with eight pairs of running shoes, three extra legs and a few extra spare parts. They would start each day off at about 4am and Terry would run 12 miles before breakfast. He'd stop around 9am eat as much as he could and have a nap until noon. He'd awake and run another 14-16 miles in the afternoon depending on how he was feeling. At the end of the day they would pull out a little plastic bag and bury most of it under gravel and the next day would begin with Doug lining up the van so Terry's first step was on the bag from the night before.

Jesus began his training at the age of about 8 and by the time he was 10 he would have like every other Jewish child of his day have memorized the Torah or the Jewish Bible by heart. He was also learning the trade of his father, that of carpentry. He continued his learning and at the age of 12 we find him in the temple **Luke 2:42-52**. We know that Jesus continued on as an ordinary adolescent growing physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

Most people would say that Terry's goal was to reach the Pacific Ocean in the fall of 1980, five or six months after he began his trek across the country. Terry would tell you his journey was about raising one million dollars for cancer research after having seen day after day during his treatment and rehabilitation the slowly expiring lives of people with various forms of cancer. His goal changed in Port aux Basques, Newfoundland when the town of 10 000 gave \$10 000 to the Marathon of Hope, Terry's renewed vision: **"When I started this run, I said that if we all gave one dollar, we'd have \$22 million for cancer**

research, and I don't care man, there's no reason that isn't possible. No reason!"

As Terry left the Maritimes and entered Quebec, he was not greeted the way that he had hoped. He was asked to leave the Trans-Canada highway and to run along a less traveled road alongside the St. Lawrence River. For a 100 mile stretch through Quebec he raised a total of \$35 towards his Marathon of Hope goal. How could he go on, pounding out 24-26 miles a day, fundraising on average just under \$9 a day for four days? He faced this, after having already wearied himself from running for two months and over 2400km.

Jesus also faced trials after a long stretch that made him weary as we see in **Luke 4:1-13**.

Terry journeyed on and with dogged persistence reached Ontario where he was greeted by a crowd of 200 which was a sign of the recognition that was about to be heaped upon him. As he traveled through Ontario there were highlights and great days and lowlights and struggles on other days, but most days carried a mix of both. He met his hockey heroes, **Bobby Orr and Darryl Sittler**. He met a boy to whom he was a hero Greg Scott of Welland, Ontario, who also lost a leg to cancer. Terry said the day with Greg was the most inspirational day of his life, even though he had spent days with his heroes. **"Greg rode his bike behind me for about six miles and it has to be the most inspirational moment I have had! At night we had a beautiful reception in Terrace Bay. I spoke about Greg and couldn't hold back the emotion."**

Just after celebrating his 22nd birthday in Terrace Bay, ON, his health began to deteriorate and he began to ask how much further he had to go to get to Vancouver's Stanley Park. As soon as he began to ask this question both Doug his best friend and driver and his brother Darrel knew there was something wrong with Terry's health. He began to cough and even choke on his breath and they asked him if he needed to see a doctor, Terry refused and continued his journey for cancer research. As we continue to look at the journey that Christ tread on earth we see that he too knew that the end of his earthly journey was near. In **Matthew 26:36-46** we read these words.

On September 1, 1980, 5 153km into his run, Terry had to stop running, a 21 mile day ending 10km outside of Thunder Bay, ON. When he was forced to stop his dad Rolly stated "I think it's unfair. Very unfair" **"I don't feel this is unfair," Terry told him. "That's the thing about cancer. I'm not the only one. It happens all the time, to other people. I'm not special. This just intensifies what I did. It gives it more meaning. It'll inspire more people. I could have sat on my rear end, I could have forgotten what I'd seen in the hospital, but I didn't."**

There is a monument at the point that his journey apparently ended and it has been a deeply emotional moment for me each time that I have stopped at it. Not because the Marathon of Hope ended there, but instead that this is the point where the baton was handed off and a nation make that 58 nations took it from a 22 year old young man and have run with it. His journey continues and has raised over \$360 million for cancer research.

When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave he handed the baton off to his disciples and eventually to anyone that seeks out a relationship with God the Father. It's a journey that we are on, a journey that God wants to be a part of in each of our everyday walks through life. Now that's hope!

Video