

# The encourager

The magazine of ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

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## NATIONAL CAMP 2012





# A selfless life reaps



## HANDING OUR ANXIETIES TO THE LORD

### A devotional by Joan Davidson:

Two verses that have helped me are Philippians 4:6,7 about the peace of God. I can say that has been totally my experience. I am a person who, by nature, does get anxious, but I've learnt to give my anxieties to the Lord. I acknowledge that life is not always going to go my way and there are challenges.

He can change anything and make pure gold come out of the tinniest of tin, and He says don't be anxious about anything. So whenever I feel myself getting wound up, I recall those verses, and think, "Well, what does the Lord want me to learn through this experience?" What I try to do is to look at it and allow Him to minister to that worry and that anxiety.

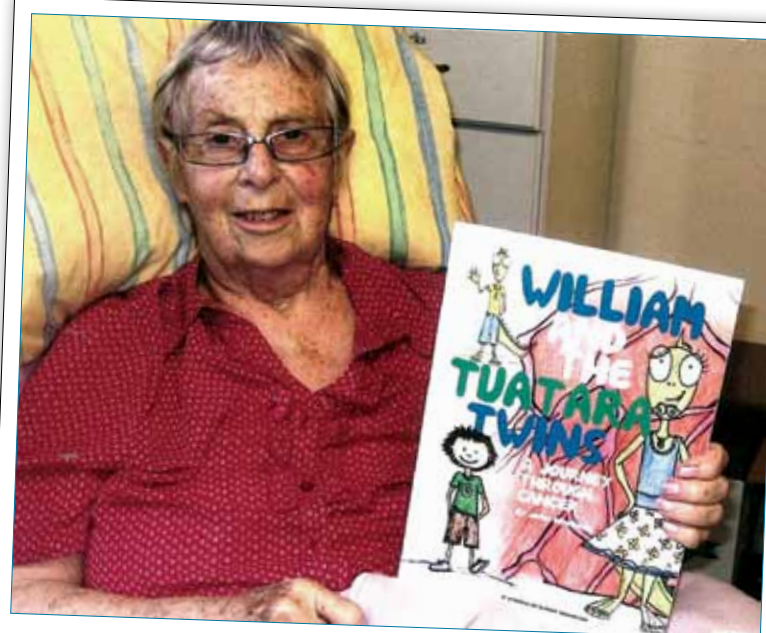
About ten years ago I had an opportunity for free counselling. During that time my supervisor helped me to face up to the fact that I am an anxious person, and helped me to sort out what things I could do to counter that. That was a most helpful time of my life. I would say that if anybody is bucking against having counselling, please don't, because you can always find something really worthwhile. It's been my experience, certainly in this instance by bringing the anxieties to the fore and really facing them. A lot of them have to do with fear, fear of the unknown; often fear of things that we shouldn't even be frightened of. Some of them are like mist in the sand; they just blow away as you expose them. There are other things that have been worrying that make me anxious. As soon as I get that knowledge that I'm worried I know that I need to go to that quiet place with the Lord, and say, 'Lord, can I hand that anxiety to you? Show me what You want me to do about it.' Often the Lord ministers quietly to that area and just changes my feelings towards it. That's a God-sent gift for me.

When it comes to thanksgiving, I often feel thankful, and yet don't tell the Lord. I mean, we feel we're thankful for a meal and good health, but how often do we think about thanking Him for it. Every breath we take, we have reason to be thankful to the Lord, and yet we breathe and don't even think about Him. And so my understanding now is that He just wants us to be thankful and to express that thankfulness to Him over all the little things, as well as the big things. It doesn't have to be anything huge.

*Philippians 4:6,7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Joan, who started the Christchurch CFFD Branch, was diagnosed with cancer some four years ago, and for a long time it seemed that the treatment was being successful, but the cancer returned and she died a month ago. Joan had started to write a book several years ago when she read that visualisation is a helpful way to counter the aggro of cancer treatments. The tedious drag of sleepless nights during her chemotherapy and radiotherapy turned into the joy of using those hours to write about a child with cancer. Although not a Christian book, it helps take away the fear of the treatment as they follow the story of two fictional creatures, Tua and Tara, who come to William, a young cancer patient in hospital, and tell him about the job they have been assigned to fight the cancer cells in his body.

Joan is shown here below with the book when it came back from the printer.



Joan Davidson

## IT WAS ALL SUCH VERY PRACTICAL TEACHING

Throughout the weekend at National Camp Pastor Geoff Wiklund brought a series of messages, each one followed by the campers forming a number of groups by combining 2 or 3 cabins or motels into one to share from what Geoff had just taught, then back for another message, and each of these followed by breaking up into very small groups of four or five to pray and minister to one another in the power of the Holy Spirit. Needs were brought to the light in the very practical illustrations Geoff gave, such as the deep hurts going back even to childhood. There was

the illustration of the young boy given the nickname of "rat" by the classroom bully, sadly followed by most in the class joining in, even to the extent of sneering as they spat out the odious word.

Then there was the girl whose father continually told her she would never amount to anything. But Geoff was emphatic – "That is a lie! And right now if you are in that or a similar position, you can be prayed for, to heal the ravages of the past."

## MINISTERING ONE TO ANOTHER







# Some minds are like concrete, tho

## WHAT DID *YOU* ESPECIALLY LIKE AT NATIONAL CAMP?

**Many awesome comments were made about the weekend that show clearly how God moved deeply. Here is a selection of some of them.**

>> It was a unique God-filled experience. I have never experienced seeing such special integration and worship.

>> The beautiful presence of the Holy Spirit reigned over the camp all weekend.

>> What a wonderful opportunity to serve and be blessed.

>> The people, the atmosphere, the Holy Spirit, and the spirit of unity and willingness to help the buddies.

>> Seeing the smiles on people's faces regardless of their disabilities. They were so happy.

>> "Elevate" is our extended family. Compassion and togetherness sum's up the weekend for me.

>> This is what God's love is truly about.

>> The focus was on God. Meeting with people of all walks of life was definitely a perspective changing experience.

## The fellowship of suffering

As I look around the new and familiar faces at camp – I marvel! Such diversity of age, race, colour, gender and abilities. All together, once again, happy to meet, chat, share the experiences of the past year, and worship the Lord! Here is the fellowship of believers in reality! In four days we'll be on our way home again, but refreshed from the experience, minds buzzing from everything we've heard, learnt and done. One day in Glory, we'll be the close inseparable family that we briefly experience here – forever!! Welcome to the Family of God and Fellowship of Believers.

But today the topic for discussion in groups is suffering and the causes of broken hearts and wounded spirits. After clear teaching on the nature and reasons for suffering we go into large groups. The mission: to find the brothers and sisters hurting from deep grief and wounding, and minister to them! I gulp!! As the leader of this group, I wonder how can I tell who's the most hurting of all these people I hardly know? A quick prayer to the Almighty...!!HELP!! Instant reply – "Aren't you ALL hurt and damaged children in this sinful world? Don't you all need comfort and healing from Me?" Of course! The load of concern at my impossible task of ministering to all the group vanishes – and with relief buddies

go into huddles with their friends and groups of two, three and four form – opening up their hearts spontaneously and sharing insights of our Heavenly Father's love and compassion to all His precious vulnerable children. I marvel at the serious listening going on in the circle, the trust and deep sharing and the hugs and compassion visible – and I realise – this is the fruit of the fellowship of suffering – empathetic hearts and wisdom as Jesus forms us into the image of Himself, the Great Shepherd of His beloved flock.

### AMAZING GRACE

Amazing grace, in the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

What an amazing time I've had at my first Elevate camp. There have been so many highlights, but the one which I would like to share is one which I believe will speak to many.

In a conversation over lunch I listened to a wheelchair-bound attendee who was praising God for his situation because it has allowed him to minister the love of God to others in a similar situation. He told me if he had been healed of his affliction he might not have had the same opportunity to share the goodness of God that he has come to enjoy.

**Praise God!**

## LEARNING TO BE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

In her talk at National Camp, Jean Griffiths shared how she learnt to depend on the leading of the Holy Spirit. Here is part of her message:

"I have now learnt to listen to the Holy Spirit most times without a doubt or waver. One situation was when I was looking for a job working as a teacher-aide. I applied for two at the same time. It wasn't until I was at the post box ready to post my applications that I distinctly heard the Holy Spirit say to me, "Just post this one, no need for the other one". So, I did just that. It wasn't an audible voice but a knowing that it was Him, and that I would get this job. Within a week I received a phone call for an interview. It went off really well and I was given the position on the spot. I was told that after reading my CV and meeting me that I was the first person the principal interviewed, and that there were 20 other applicants that wouldn't need to be interviewed now.

I tell you what, it was the hardest first three weeks I'd ever had. The little Iranian boy I was given was very difficult with behavioural problems. He seemed to hate me with fury, and played havoc in the class. He would aim his little fingers formed into a gun, pointing to me, saying he wanted to kill me. Most days I was in tears as I drove home, but in my heart I knew this was where God had placed me. It never entered my mind to want to leave, and I would ask the Holy Spirit how I could help this child. My little boy knew that I was a Christian, and after

a few weeks we established a trusting relationship and he started to ask questions about Jesus. At the tender age of eight, I knew he was beginning to get indoctrinated into the Muslim faith, so I was very surprised

when he began asking me questions about Jesus and what happens to us when we die. He in fact asked me many questions throughout my time with him. His parents were also going through a marriage breakup, and he would confide to me his fears and unhappiness. I loved him to bits and I now knew why I was working with him. I am so glad to have heard the Holy Spirit when I applied for the position, because the Lord wanted me to plant a seed into this little boy".



## HERE'S AN IDEA FOR OTHER BRANCHES

Shown for the first time at camp was this Northland CFFD banner, seen here with committee member James Nyssen. It resulted from the June meeting this year when the theme was "The Canvas of Our Lives", that focused on expressing our experiences of God as a

form of art. Helpers and disabled alike drew, painted or decorated a picture which expressed God in their lives. This was accompanied by a scripture/brief explanation. The A4 sized pieces of fabric were then sewn together to make a banner which can inspire others.







# Opportunity may knock once, but temp

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 30 YEARS OF CHRISTCHURCH CFFD



2012 Brian Congdon cutting the cake at the 30 year celebration.



1983 A visit from Founder Margie Willers



1987 Grant Allely comes down from Auckland



2009 10 pin bowling Camp



1996 The train trip to Weka Pass



Fun in the snow at the Hanmer Camp



2010 Thirteen come to National Car

## BETTER PEOPLE *By: Joseph J. Mazzella*

Mother Teresa of Calcutta was often quoted as saying: "I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish He didn't trust me so much." Over the years I have found myself often feeling the same way. I have had a blessed life, but it has never been an easy one. In my 45 years I have had to deal with sickness, injuries, accidents, and pain. I have had to deal with years of poverty and financial struggles. I have had to deal with my sons' mental handicaps, the death of loved ones, and being separated from those I love. I have had to deal with anger, betrayal, confusion, depression and at times even despair.

Like so many before me I have asked the question:

Why do bad things happen to good people? It is a question that has been asked throughout the ages. Books have even been written about it. It is a question that will never be answered completely this side of Heaven. Yet, looking back on my own life now I have to believe that at least part of the reason bad things happen to good people is to make them better people.

When I remember all that I have faced and gone through in this life, I realize that God has used all of it to eventually make me better. With pain came empathy. With grief came healing. With frustration came patience. With struggles came strength. With

# tation knocks on your door forever.

**Elevate Christian Disability Trust**



ing at the Blue Skies



A baptism in the open sea



The Mad Hatters Tea Party



mp



A "Walk in the Square"



Many drama presentations in church services



1988 Christmas at the Groyne

sorrow came joy. With depression came compassion. With anger came love. And with despair came trust in God.

Every test, challenge and tragedy eventually led me to greater goodness, greater love and greater Oneness with our Heavenly Father.

None of us likes the negative experiences in life. None of us enjoys pain. None of us wants to go through sorrow. Still, the truth is that "God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him." May each day here then help you to grow better and more loving.

## Camps and events in 2013

8-10 March	Joy Ministries	Ohope
15-17 March	Kids Connect CBM	Motu Moana, Blockhouse Bay
5-7 April	Christchurch CFFD	Abilities Lodge, Hanmer Springs
12-14 April	Auckland CFFD	Carey Park, Henderson, Auckland
13 April	Hawkes Bay CFFD	30th Anniversary
25-28 April	Torch House Party	Capernwray, Cambridge
26-28 April	Wellington CFFD	El Rancho, Waikanae
5-7 July	Leadership Camp	Totara Springs, Matamata
25-28 Oct	National Camp	Totara Springs, Matamata





# "Courage is not the absence of fear but

## Eight weeks with Joni and friends

*Kirsty Anderson writes:*

Earlier this year I had the privilege of being an intern with Joni and Friends, as part of the Cause 4 Life Ministry and Mission Academy. I had felt for some time that God was leading me to leave my job as an Occupational Therapist in a DHB, but I didn't know exactly what God was leading me to. When I found out about this internship it fitted me perfectly. There were ten Cause 4 Life interns and I was the only one from outside America. During our eight weeks with Joni and Friends we had classes, attended a Family Retreat, went on a mission trip to Haiti, and served in various departments and at a local church ministry.

Our classes were taught by various directors and executive management at Joni and Friends. They have such a wealth of knowledge and experience. I felt inspired every day, particularly during our classes for the Beyond Suffering course developed by Joni and Friends. I would highly recommend this course to anyone in the church. It covered an overview of Disability Ministry, Theology of Suffering and Disability, Church and Disability Ministry, and an Introduction to Bioethics. We also explored the Biblical perspective on topics such as violence, abortion, stem-cell research, justice and human

rights. There was so much to learn and take in; I feel that I am still processing all the information!

One of the departments I served in was Wheels for the World. I enjoyed seeing the wide range of work done through Wheels for the World, helping to organise a wheelchair drive and visiting one of the restoration shops in a prison. Who would have thought that I would be seeing the inside of an American prison! But it was encouraging to hear from an inmate who has helped to develop the latest model of the paediatric wheelchair they manufacture there, that the program has helped him find a sense of purpose and has given him opportunities to develop skills for life.



**The Family Retreat** (for families who have a member with a disability) was a great experience, seeing families encouraging one another and being supported by the volunteers. The atmosphere was similar to that of our National Camp but also different, as it is over five days, and volunteers are assigned to families only during meal times and camp activities. I especially loved the sibling support group which allowed the children to share about their experiences and feelings and to receive encouragement. After many years of being involved with organising the Trust National Camp it was very strange being in a camp setting, but not being one of the organisers!

**Haiti** was an intense but amazing experience.

In the mornings we ran a Bible holiday programme at an orphanage for children with

disabilities and at two churches who have a class for children with disability. In the afternoons we ran some educational activities for the children, provided some informal training for the teachers and staff, and sometimes just played with the children showing them God's love.

A particular experience stood out to me the most. I was given the opportunity to speak with the staff at the Orphanage, but after explaining my job and what I could offer, I was told that anything I could offer would be good. Well I could see a lot of areas I could help with, but having

only a few hours I had to choose what the priority was. As I was walking over to talk to the staff I still hadn't been able to work out what the priority was, so told God it was all up to Him as I didn't know what I was going to do. God came through and directed the conversation. I was able to assess five children with severe disability, and in liaison with a senior staff member set up how they will be positioned in bed to minimise the risk of further tightening of their muscles.



*Kirsty at an orphanage in Haiti*



Our internship was packed full of learning and a variety of experiences. Along with what I have already mentioned we ran an evening programme at a local church for adults with intellectual disabilities. The church runs a Friendship Class during term time for about 40 people. It was encouraging to see the volunteers mentoring the people assigned to them, and including them in activities outside of the class. After my internship I was able to visit the Arizona area

office which ran the Family Retreat we attended. I enjoyed hearing about the work they do with local churches and the community outreaches they have organised. I even had time to put together some gift packages for the Special Delivery programme. The whole experience was amazing and I know that I am more equipped for whatever God has planned for me. I am excited to see where this leads!

## I WAS HIT HARD BY EVERY TEMPTATION *By Tere Va'a*

Being a Christian has not always been an easy journey. In fact, when I gave my heart to God and confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord many years ago, every temptation from finance to marriage to children and addiction hit me so fast I almost gave up hope. In fact, I tried to leave the church by shifting house so that none of my Christian friends could find me, but a good friend prayed a special prayer to find me, and the next day God strategically placed us back to back in the same aisle at the Clendon Warehouse, and since then my life has never been the same.

In my life I've had many lessons. In 2005 a rheumatologist discovered that I had a degenerative condition called DISH (Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis) which in simple terms means I have an excessive amount of calcium in my body, causing bony growth spurs to grow rapidly in between my vertebrae and neck which fuse together, and eventually after a few years my joints stiffen up and the simplest task of trying to twist, turn and bend becomes painful and difficult.

In 2007 when rushing to get to work while running through my house I tripped and hit my head on a door frame. The impact was so very hard, and I heard something crack, and by the time I hit the floor my whole body went numb from my neck down to the tip of my toes as I lay in the middle of my hallway, paralysed. It frightened me. Rushed to hospital all I remember was the specialist saying, "Sorry Mrs Va'a, but you will not be able to walk again." That started an emotional roller coaster

ride of depression. I was devastated. However, I refused to believe what the doctors were trying to say, so when they transferred me to the Spinal Unit on Bairds Rd, two months of intense therapy and rehabilitation followed, and I went from being paralysed to walking for 20 minutes. In the evening I would gather my books and head off down to the kitchen to study. I could barely pick up my pencil, but I had tied a rubber band around my fingers so I could have a good grip, and away I would write.

You see, three months before my injury I had enrolled at Wananga O Aotearoa to do a degree in Social Work. That year I managed to pass my first year, but unfortunately, after being hospitalised and bed-ridden for a further five months in 2009, I made a decision to let go of my dream of returning back to my job as a Social Worker and venture out onto another journey. Eventually I passed my second year, but then decided it was time to let go and pray that God had something better for me.

In 2010 my pain level had dropped, and I was 70 percent reliant on my wheelchair. I determined I would go back to work, and I began job hunting. I spent countless hours talking on the phone with recruitment agencies, revamping my CV and applying for jobs. I went back to school to do a level 2, 3 and 4 course in computer IT. This I added to my CV, and I soon nailed a job for six months at a recruitment agency. I volunteered my services at the Spinal Unit under a programme that helps



*Tere Va'a*

people return to work. I signed up to be on the committee with TASC which led to my using my social work skills to advocate for people. Today I work at the front desk for Elevate Christian Disability Trust where I have had the privilege of being in the presence of some gifted and talented people. I have shared and inspired friends and family to have compassion and empathy for those with disabilities, and I have remained steadfast in my faith. I thank God for educating me and strategically teaching me how to be humble, and for the people He has brought into my life. My husband who was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy in 1999 has been my strength, and my three teenagers have amazing respect, compassion and empathy for people with disabilities.



# "Life is 10% what happens to me

## We are called to glory in our tribulations!

**Jacqui Gardner writes:**

I am visually impaired. I look forward to the day when my Lord heals my eyes. But to date, every time I come up the front and ask Him to heal my eyes, He shows me a vision of Himself holding out His hand to me. "Take My hand", He says. "I am your eyes." I know that if I don't see clearly in this life, the first face I will see clearly will be my Lord's. That is a wonderful thought.

But why would God allow us to suffer disability? Why would He allow us to suffer anything? A few weeks ago I opened my email and found the Bible Gateway Verse of the day. It was one of my favourite verses. Romans 5; 3 and 4. But instead of the RSV in my Braille Bible, "Rejoice in your sufferings, because suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope", it was in the NIV, "But not only so, we also glory in our sufferings, because suffering produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope". I checked it out in the New King James, and that said something similar. "And not only that but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulations produces perseverance, perseverance character, and character hope. Verse 5, "now hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." That filled me with wonder.

We're not only to rejoice in our sufferings, we're to glory in them!



Jacqui Gardner

That's like, to shine! When we suffer, we can shine, because we are growing in perseverance or endurance, which builds character and gives us hope, because the love of God is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us. When we suffer, the love of God is given to us so much more.

**We're not only to rejoice in our sufferings, we're to glory in them! That's like, to shine!**

It reminds me of something I heard on Rhema once.

Rob Holding was talking about the persecuted church. When he asks them what he can pray for, they always ask him to pray they will have the strength to endure, not to take away the persecution. Rob asked them why. They said, because the Love of God is so much sweeter in the persecution. I can identify with that. The sweetness of relying on God because of my disability is a privilege at times, not always a trial. That may seem an enigma to you.

When thinking about these verses I was reminded of the tree growing on the mountain top that weathers the storms. It grows strong roots. Then recently I heard the example of trees grown in a windless environment. When the protective glass house was removed, the moment the wind hit

the trees they toppled over because they had no root. We need suffering to grow the ability to endure; otherwise the moment the storm hits, we crumple.

## Disability Prayer By Tina Yows

*(I wrote this one night in response to an e-mail I received from a woman who was having a hard time with people and their response to Kids with disabilities.)*

**Let us pray for the vision impaired who can only see differences in people, not who that person is inside....**

**Let us pray for the speech impaired who can only speak with harsh and hurtful words, Instead of kindness and understanding...**

**Let us pray for the emotionally disturbed..who can not seem to care for anyone that is any different from themselves, instead of at least trying to love everyone, "different" or not....**

**Let us pray for the hearing impaired who can only hear the unspoken words, instead of listening for what someone is trying to tell them...**

**Please God... Help these truly DISabled people so that this world can become a better place for ALL of your children.....**

**AMEN!**



and 90% of how I react to it.”

~ John C. Maxwell

## BLESSED BY BURDENS

*Shout for joy, O heavens, rejoice.  
O earth, burst into song,  
O mountains! For the Lord  
comforts his people and will have  
compassion on his afflicted ones.*  
**Isaiah 49:13 NIV**

Comfort and prosperity have never enriched the world as adversity has done. Out of pain and problems have come the sweetest songs, the most poignant poems, the most gripping stories. Out of suffering and tears have come the greatest spirits and the most blessed lives.

J. R. Miller wrote, “Many of us find life hard and full of pain. We cannot avoid these things; but we should not allow the harsh experiences to deaden our sensibilities, or make us stoical or sour. The true problem of living is to keep our hearts sweet and gentle in the hardest conditions and experiences.”

Our eldest daughter married a Swiss. They had seven children and usually spent their summers in Switzerland and their winters in America. Sometimes when we visited them in Switzerland we took the children and went high up in the Alps on chair lifts. We crossed over miles of land, looking down below at some of the most beautiful flowers to be found anywhere in the world. Those flowers had survived the heavy snows of winter. The burdens of ice, snow and winter storms added to their lustre, beauty and growth. It was hard to believe that just a few weeks earlier these flowers were buried under many feet of snow. Our burdens can have the same effect on our lives.

As Christians face the winds of adversity and the storms of trouble, they rise like the skylark. They are like the trees that survive the storm

because their roots are driven deep. They are like the trees that grow on our mountain ridges in North Carolina – trees battered by winds, yet, trees in which we find the strongest wood.

The skylark, the flowers, the trees – all these illustrate Job’s words: *“When he has tested me, I will come forth as gold”* (23:10 NIV). The Christian who understands this aspect of God’s nature can find comfort in his suffering and peace in his pain. *“Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal”* (Job 5:17 -0 18) NIV).

Taken from the Billy Graham devotional book, “Unto The Hills”

## GOD HAS GIVEN ME GREAT POWER THROUGH THE INTERNET

Heydon Bailey writes:

I live by the Bible, its teachings, principles, and precepts. The wisdom of God supersedes all of human wisdom, philosophy, and ideology. I am nonverbal, and that is a blessing as it gives me time to think before I communicate whatever I am thinking. I regard the true beginning of my existence when I joined the Salvation Army Corps. Like an enigma I rose to become a new power in God’s army and Kingdom.

You might look at all my disabilities and wonder how I could possibly be a power, but God has given me great power through the internet, power to spread His Holy Word throughout the world. God created me for such a time as this with the technology to spread His message with just a few taps of my head-switch. Every day I try to send at least three or more encouraging, inspiring, thought- provoking messages, devotionals, poems and, stories via e-mail to as many others as possible.

I don’t seek the power of leadership or rank. The power I have is a silent power. A loving power.... but also a mighty power. A power to fight Satan.... to fight alongside my comrades in Salvation Army uniform and others in the Christian faith.

A power to encourage, comfort, admonish, and bless others with God’s love.... and hopefully bring souls to God through our Lord Jesus Christ into full salvation. To tell others that there is an absolute truth and that is Jesus Christ who says, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”



Heydon Bailey



*"A successful man or woman is with the bricks others have"*

## Launching of the new logo, opening of the new building & the other improvements.



The speakers included Phil Goff and Geoff Wiklund, the Trust Spiritual Oversight



Registration.



Many of the invited guests were given a copy of Hugh's book "On the Knife Edge of Faith"



Jenny Utting receiving a plaque for Eleos who paid for all the costs for the new building.



People came from throughout the country. Kaitia, Whangarei and New Plymouth members are seen in this photo.



In the afternoon the Centre was open for all to view the new building and see the changes.



And there was lots of laughter during the official opening ceremony.





# one who can lay a firm foundation thrown at them"

~ David Brinkley

## A HOME AT HEBRON FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES!

*Dianne Bailey writes:*

A few months back friends asked us if we would be interested in building a small home for up to eight children with physical disabilities. Some would come from very inaccessible places where nothing happens for them at all, but if they stayed here they would be educated, and later on help others just as Briccio and Leslie are doing. We wondered if we could build an annex on our present children's home, and the architects say it can be done! Briccio and Leslie are shown interviewing Nadine and her mother who are described in the next article.



## A SOURCE OF OUR JOY

*Nadine's mother writes:*

Having to raise a child with disability can mean and require a lot of sacrifice, but it is at the same time a big challenge that calls for a big heart and compassion to be able to go through it. My daughter, Nadine Ferleth, had been diagnosed with hydrocephalus when she was two months old, and had to undergo a shunt when she was barely four months to prevent the cerebro spinal fluid from accumulating in her

brain which could lead to further damage. The operation was a success and we were sent home, but with no clear promise that she could still walk because the part of the brain that was affected was the part responsible for her motor development. She had athetoid cerebral palsy secondary to hydrocephalus.

Her growing years weren't

easy. She had constant visits to her neurologist to check the functionality of the shunt implanted on her head, putting all our earnings mostly in meeting her medical needs. We never regretted every single cent we spent on her because of our love for her and because we wanted to give her everything she'd need to survive. Next to God, she was the source of joy for the whole of our family.

At the age of four she was still unable to walk. I had to carry her most of the time and so was unable to take on a job. My time was solely devoted to taking care of her. I brought her to physical therapy sessions, but after some sessions we had to stop because our resources were no longer sufficient to cover the costs

of her rehabilitation. Then came another problem, I bore another child which made it more difficult for me to devote my time in practicing her walking. When she was eight we moved to the province of Nueva Ecija, and just barely three months later, I was offered a job - to open a SPED centre to teach children with disabilities in the barangay. My qualification? I am a mother of a child with disability. A year after, my husband had training on making artificial limbs (prosthesis) in Davao. I thanked the Lord for giving us all the blessings. I even thought that was our prize for taking care of Nadine! We were given the chance to share to others what we have and make other's lives change too. Because of my being a SPED worker, Nadine went to school for the first time with no discrimination. I enjoyed it, but after three years we started anew here in Bulacan, leaving my eldest under the custody of my in-laws.

Much as we wanted to bring Nadine to school, we decided not to because we were still figuring out if we could afford the costs of both Nadine's and her sister's school fees. She needs someone to accompany her in school because of her condition. But things turned out wonderfully. I met teacher Dianne Bailey, and she instantly asked her to go to school. I had doubts at first, but since I did not want my child to be deprived of her right to have education, I grabbed the opportunity with high hopes. Deep in my heart I know that our being here is not an accident, that we are here for a reason, and that is what we are yet to find out. God is working on something for us, I thank the Lord for giving us Nadine. She has always been the source of light and joy in our home no matter how bad situations could be. And whatever is ahead of us, I know God will always be there to guide our way.





“Life is 10% what happens to

## A STUDENT REFLECTS ON HER COUNSELLING PLACEMENT

Dianne Everest writes:

To be honest this was not quite the area of counselling I had imagined myself in, as my real interest was to work with parents of challenging children. However, God has a way of subtly moving me in a direction often outside of my perceived comfort zone.

I found myself welcomed at the Centre, and accepted into a home-like environment. One of the many things I have appreciated in this placement is the authenticity of the staff and voluntary helpers. I like to get to know people on a personal level, so have engaged in conversations with most of the staff, and love their practical, humble and loving way of working. No task is too hard, messy or impossible – a solution can always be found. Each person who comes to the Centre is clearly valued in their humanity, and I love the way that no one is seen as less important, and the belief that each person has worth and is loved by God is predominant.

In some ways I was “thrown in the deep end” to begin with, but my new clients quickly built rapport with me, and I made use of the resources on disabilities that were available. I have enjoyed the counselling, both disabled and able bodied clients over the months, and have gained many personal rewards, many blessings and wise words. However, I am aware that I cannot become their friend due to the position I am in and the fact that I will leave. At times I wish this was different.

I have grown as a counsellor and also gained knowledge of a “new

language” including diagnostic terminologies, the implications for my clients, services available, homes and organisations, care giving, knowledge of work places, day programmes etc. Sometimes I am overawed by the challenges my clients face daily. In one case the decline of body functions was turned into a celebration as a new method to assist was used, something I cannot comprehend experiencing.

My clients love to try and shock me, and I wonder how they perceive me. Is it with trust or am I yet another person who may not hear them? I have seen and heard the struggles to articulate, communicate, be mobile and having to submit to relying on others for almost every part of their lives. I find myself wanting to protect and fight for justice and rights of those with disabilities.

Each client is very different. For one client drawing therapy works well to calm and express inner turmoil, another uses eye contact and a communicator device, and counselling can extend to helping with basic tasks of eating lunch or drinking tea. I have clients who simply come for a word of encouragement on days when time is short, and some struggle with sexuality issues. At times the counselling has taken on a practical nature, that of researching, encouraging new skills, assisting with preparation for meetings with caregivers, and having a voice and choice heard. From others I get deep questions which test my intelligence, and I am torn between giving a simple

answer and hoping it’s ok to try and to discuss further as to where the question has come from, but knowing the man cannot talk long enough at a time to ever tell me. The best gift I can give each client is that of listening and portraying that they are valued. I try to give them the time they require within the confines of a programme running alongside my availability.

In conclusion, the words “Open the eyes of my heart Lord” from a popular Christian song, have been my prayer, and He has done that, to the wonderful humanity of others and the realities of living with a disability whatever form it takes. I am not a caregiver, nurse, or centre manager. I am a small part of my clients’ current lives. I will find it hard to say goodbye, and recognise that I may become yet another loss in their lives. I will treasure a memory of each client and what they gave to me, and it will be a long time before I stop wondering where their lives have moved on to.

*We have never before put anything from the wonderful counselling students we have been blessed with over the years, so this article is rather special. God has provided this, with different students coming over the three days, each one coming weekly from Laidlaw or another college. What a blessing, a win win situation!*





me and 90% of how I react to it."

~ John C. Maxwell

Two photos from National Camp



The branch and ministries meeting



Vibrant worship

# GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD

"Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart"  
(Psalm 95:7)

## The steps to getting right with God are:

- >> Acknowledge that you have sinned in thought, word and deed and that this sin is a barrier between you and God..
- >> Agree and be willing to turn from your sin to God.
- >> Trust in Christ's death on the cross as the full payment for your sin, breaking down that barrier.

If you have done these steps, then thank God that you are now put right with Him and have passed over from death to life.

## CONTACT ADDRESSES

Magazine Editor and Ministries Director  
Hugh and Di Willis  
87 Deep Creek Rd, Waiake,  
Auckland City 0630, New Zealand

### CFFD Branches or Contacts\*

Northland - Jacqui Gardner	09 438 4952
Auckland - Jean Griffiths	09 555 1947
Coromandel-Hauraki - Don Watson	07 862 7174
Waikato - Andrea Botha	021 060 3337
Bay of Plenty* - Ken Miller	07 579 3003
Gisborne* - Sandra Crashley	06 868 8827
Hawkes Bay - Joan Parker	06 877 8026
Taranaki - Richard West	06 753 9466
Manawatu - Lyn Spencer	06 357 0045
Wellington - John Hawkins	04 569 9096
Nelson* - Lyn Harris-Hogan	03 547 2337
Christchurch - Dave Palmer	027 216 5743
Dunedin - Patsy Appleby - Morrison	03 482 2505
Southland* - Mike Hamill	03 217 2665

### Ministries

Emmanuel - Nigel & Penny Shivas	09 846 2046
Torch	09 636 4763
Joy Ministries National	
& Auckland - Jan Bridgeman	09 818 3858
Whakatane - Wanda Hughes	07 315 5012
Hawkes Bay - Brad & Karen Spurgeon	06 876 1106
Taupo - Wendy Emsley	07 378 1413
Masterton - Elizabeth Churchill	06 378 7584
Blenheim - Johanna Warren	03 579 1164

## THANKS

To the Auckland Council  
for their donation of  
\$1,000 towards craft at  
the Centre.

## WANTED

Anyone who feels a  
burden to reach out to  
visually impaired people  
with the Gospel.



If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to:

ELEVATE P.O Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland 1643

I wish to give \$.....for the magazine

\$..... for general running costs

Name:.....

Address:.....

# Around the country



**Former Trustees Brian and Jean Ferguson at their 60th wedding celebration.**



**John and Lyn Hawkins, and Chris and Prue Lusk, foundation members of the branch, at the Wellington CFFD 30th Anniversary.**



**Juliette Urqhart(79), a great supporter of our ministry, married Ian Kemp(86), a former pastor of the Baptist Tabernacle in Auckland.**



**Bob Lindsay, the very popular disability van driver, was married to Spenceley.**



**Dianne Bailey brought two others from the Philippines, Bhoi and Malou, seen here in a Filipino dance they gave at the Centre**



**There were wheelchairs in abundance at the above wedding, with half the guests having disabilities.**