

the Encourager



evangelise equip educate

MARCH 2012 ISSUE 134



Dramatic changes to the centre

Magazine of the Christian Ministries With Disabled Trust



*Any concern too small to be turned
...is too small to be*

A devotion by Joni Eareckson Tada

THE BREAD OF TEARS

*You are from God, little children, and have overcome them;
because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*
--I John 4:4, NASB

Years ago my missionary-friend Gesina was thrown into a communist prison in the Balkans because they caught her with Christian literature in the trunk of her car.

Sitting in that pitch black cell, surrounded by a sickening stench with filth and trash on the floor that she couldn't even see, she suddenly thought of a verse of Scripture. That very morning, she had read Psalm 80:5 in her quiet time: "You have fed them with the bread of tears."

The verse came back strongly to her heart in that dark moment, but it wasn't particularly comforting in her present circumstances! Frightened and overwhelmed, she had no idea if her friends would realize what had happened to her. Just then, the jailer opened the small food door and shoved through a stick of salami and a chunk of bread.

Frustrated that she couldn't even set the meat down on the dirty floor in order to tear off a piece of bread, she began to cry. Without thinking, she wiped her tears with the chunk of bread. And suddenly the verse she had read that morning flashed before her. She laughed out loud. God knew! He hadn't forgotten her! She could eat her tear-soaked bread knowing that He had specifically given it to her. She didn't mind being fed the bread of tears if it had come straight from His hand.

Today, Gesina has a marvellous ministry among the disabled in Albania. And to the end of her days, she will remember how - in the worst and darkest of circumstances - God came near and reminded her of His constant presence and care. Whatever your circumstances, difficult as they may be, remember: God knows precisely where you are and how to care for you.



Oh Lord Jesus, what joy this brings! Because You live within my very spirit, nothing but nothing in life can truly defeat me.

A SERMON WALKING

One afternoon in 1953, reporters and officials gathered at a Chicago railroad station to await the arrival of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner. He stepped off the train - a giant of a man, six-foot-four, with bushy hair and a large moustache. As cameras flashed, city officials approached with hands outstretched and began telling him how honoured they were to meet him. He thanked them politely and then, looking over their heads, asked if he could be excused for a moment. He walked through the crowd with quick strides until he reached the side of an elderly black woman who was struggling as she tried to carry two large suitcases. He picked up the bags in his big hands and, smiling, escorted the woman to a bus. As he helped her aboard, he wished her a safe journey. Meanwhile, the crowd tagged along behind him.

He turned to them and said, "Sorry to have kept you waiting." The man was Dr Albert Schweitzer, the famous missionary doctor, who had spent his life helping the poorest of the poor in Africa. A member of the reception committee said to one of the reporters: "That is the first time I ever saw a sermon walking!"

What a beautiful world would be ours if each one of us cared for the needs of others and showed our concern for them as we would show to a very close and dear friend! And imagine how fantastic it would be if we did this to those who do not like us, to those whom we consider as our enemies, to those who have hurt us! Let us not ever consider this as impossible! Let us try it just once, and see and feel the difference!

From 100 Motivating Anecdotes by Bishop Percival Fernandes, included here with permission

HUGE DONATIONS FROM TWO TRUSTS MAKE POSSIBLE A NEW BUILDING AND MUCH NEEDED RENOVATIONS



The Project Manager was Trustee Nick Abplanalp (seen here) who along with Jeanette Howden spent countless hours to oversee the construction and co-ordinate the many contractors over a 2 month period.



Looking from the Drop In room through the hatch to the new kitchen



A corner of the kitchen complete with new fittings throughout

The neighbours of our property in Mt Smart Rd would have been startled had they looked out in the early morning of 13 Dec to see a large 40 metre building lifted high up and over the existing building to give us much needed extra rooms at the Centre. These consist of two extra wheelchair toilets, the library, two small rooms and one big activity area. This was brought about through the generosity of the ELEOSTRUST who paid for all the costs associated with this, as well as the BARNABAS TRUST who also gave a huge sum to enable a greatly enlarged kitchen to be constructed on the old library site in the present building, along with 2 serveries, a new office, a server hatch, a reception office and 2 upgraded loos. We are indebted and very grateful to these two trusts.



Joy Pollock, Drop In Co-ordinator shows that she has many more talents than had been realised!

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP

We would be most grateful for any help you could give to help us meet the following costs: for the existing building: 23 chairs at \$75 each Carpet \$2000 Painting \$1000 and Wallpaper \$1800. Also a Projector \$1100, Laptop \$1000, and a pie warmer \$750. Also adjustable dividers for the new building.



Coincidence is when God

Andy Lyons from Dunedin writes,

OPENING THE BLINDS ON MY LIFE

I was born totally blind. For me, that means that I can't see anything: neither light, nor even dark. I have no concept of what colours are, and of course, I cannot read or write printed materials without some major assistance. Although I keep asking when we insure our family car, it would take a brave person to let me drive. So, in many ways God has made it easier for me to realise that I need other people and I have become more interdependent over the years because of that.

I had a fairly normal childhood. I rode my own BMX bike around the neighbourhood in 1980s South Auckland, climbed trees, broke bones (both my own and other people's), and generally had a lot of fun. Some of the recreational activities I indulged in were modified in some way to enable blind people to compete; but some just involved people whose eyes actually worked giving us a hand.

I first got to know about Jesus when I was at primary school with Religious Instruction classes and, my music and choir teacher who had quite a lot of input into my life at that stage. I read the Bible right through on cassette tapes, enjoying and preferring the Old Testament to the New Testament which I didn't understand very well. It seemed quite contradictory a lot of the time. All through my teenage years, my physical health was declining - I'd been diagnosed with a heart murmur when I was 13. This progressed until I was 17 when I was in heart failure, confined to a wheelchair, and given a matter of weeks to live. I was terrified of dying because I had no way of knowing what would happen when I died. During this time I listened to another Bible that my Uncle had given me, again on tape; as well as listening to any radio broadcast with spiritual themes. I was trying to find out what to do in order to be "saved".

I can now see that God preserved my life during those times, and when the hospital noticed I was still alive six months later, they offered me a heart transplant. Initially, my mind rebelled at the idea of having someone else's heart in my body and all the implications of that, which I felt would be too much for me to handle. However, my Uncle prayed with me, and when the transplant recipient co-ordinator pointed out that I could pull out of the assessment programme at any time, I felt safer and went through all the rigorous tests involved.

After the two weeks of physical and psychological tests, it was discovered that I would be an unsuitable recipient of someone else's heart, owing to the high blood-pressure from my lungs which would have caused the new heart to implode. However, during the test in which this discovery was made, it was revealed that another operation could be done as a stop-gap measure until the pressure from my lungs was reduced. Over twenty-three years later, although my heart is still only working at around a quarter of what it's supposed to do, no other heart operations have had to be performed so far.

Six months after this surgery, I began to venture out of the wheelchair I had been restricted to for the previous couple of



years. I liken this to the feeling of freedom we have in Christ's family. However, I still hadn't learnt the lesson that I believe God was trying to teach me about being interdependent with other people. I certainly hadn't learnt to rely on God any more than I had yet done.

Over the following couple of years I was diagnosed with a painful disorder called Lupus and turned to alcohol to solve my problems and lessen the pain of the loneliness I was feeling. I was living in a student hostel to enable me to study Business Computing at a technical institute, and while this initially only encouraged my binge drinking, it did lead in due course to me becoming a part of a good Christian Church.

One evening, near the beginning of my six year stint at this hostel, a student nurse invited me to come and watch him play tennis with one of his mates. You don't get many people inviting a completely blind bloke to come and watch them playing tennis, so I accepted with pleasure. Our friendship firmed and grew, so that it seemed quite natural to us both when he invited me to come along to the wee Christian group he had begun at the hostel. It was just an extension of all the other things we did together. I could tell it was a real, genuine friendship, just like that which I'd been craving for years. We did a lot of interesting things together, such as tandem biking around Lake Taupo and many other adventures of the ilk. The introduction to Jesus also came as a natural part of our own friendship. As I learned to submit myself to Jesus' authority, it was natural for me to want to tell other people about my friendship with the Creator of the Universe and everything in it. This was quite a turn-around from the ardent evolutionist I had been.

Another way I expressed my trust in God was to allow Him to use me in ministering to children at the beach missions that were happening in the mid to late 1990s. Also, when my friend became a practising nurse, he passed on to me the "mantle" of his ministry to the students at the hostel. At the same time, my then church trusted me with co-leading their older-youth group, in which we enjoyed a lot of fun activities, Bible studies, prayer and hopefully instilled in them the confidence in God they needed in order to share their faith in Him.

I had been involved with Campus Crusade for Christ's Student ministry since 1994, and they believe in the principle exemplified in the Acts of the Apostles - the second letter from Luke in the Bible. That is, beginning where you are currently, then moving out to other people-groups. So, when I felt God calling me, and had enough experience with talking to people of my own culture,

chooses to remain anonymous.



Magazine of the Christian Ministries With Disabled Trust

I began to tell other people-groups about His love for them. God's family supported me both financially and prayerfully. I started by using my own friendships with Korean, Indian, Japanese and Malaysian students at the hostel where I was still living. Then came the time for total emersion in another culture.

I continued working in "foreign mission" to end the last millennium, this time with the students at Otago University in the far flung land of the South. Dunedin has also been a great growing place for me as God keeps challenging me to try new and usually scary things, such as a Bachelor's degree in Theology. I just couldn't get enough of that University environment eh?

The other great love of my life was to be found in Dunedin too, she accepted my plight and proposal of marriage in 2002. She is my gorgeous, witty, clever and fun wife - Selina-Jane. We met in a Church History class near the beginning of our respective studies, and married within the year.

We remained childless for four years, so while we continued praying, we also sought medical advice. The day after we found out we were to have our first child we received an appointment with the fertility clinic which we had to cancel. God is in the business of producing miracles and has a quirky sense of humour too. Especially when you know that we had both been told it would be very unlikely that we would be able to have children.

When our little girl Rosie was not quite at the crawling stage I applied to train as a hospital chaplain. This was to fulfil a dream I'd had a few years previously, and cherished still. The first person I approached at the hospital was quite negative about my appropriateness for the job. When I actually applied for the training course I was told that I would be perfect for the job, but they couldn't see how a blind person could do it. Finally, after much prayer and letter writing, we managed to convince people to give me a chance to show them how I would perform. Fifteen weeks later I graduated and was released to the children's ward.

So, I can now spend half a dozen hours a week praying with and introducing some Christian concepts to children and their families. I visit all the patients in the children's ward, sometimes just to listen to whatever is uppermost on their minds, sometimes just to be with patients or their family to provide comfort, company and compassion. Selina-Jane always prays with me before I go, so I think of it as part of our family's ministry. Speaking of family, Tobi who is currently our three year old, came along next, three years after Rosie. I believe that children teach us at least as much as we teach them, so when Selina-Jane said she wanted us to educate the children ourselves at home. I was willing to give it a go. I can't admit to being instantly receptive of the idea. However, I have become her most ardent supporter. It is really cool to be a part of our own children's education and observe them doing the learning.

We have also experienced "the other side of the bed", by being parents in hospital, as Tobi was admitted thrice in a couple of months with asthma. One of those times was when he was ten months old, and we were all taken to the intensive care unit in a struggle to get him breathing properly again. Until that time, I hadn't realised quite how much I loved my children. Sometimes it is only when we face the loss of someone, that we are made aware of just how much they mean to us.

The experience of being with Tobi in hospital also showed the people I work with in the children's ward something of why I work with the chaplains there. I think it also assured them that I am not just a weird guy who likes to hang around children, but that I really want to bring them and their families something of God's Love and presence in their world.

I do hope that I bring the love that Jesus showed as He died on that cruel cross so long ago, into every situation that I encounter. I also thank you who have supported me and my wee family so well for at least the last decade, both with your prayers and with your sacrificial and sometimes even financial giving.



*Blend bits of LOVE in all you do
And you'll soon see a HAPPIER you*



**Prayer doesn't need *proof*
- it needs *practise!***



God is always

100% reliable

(Everything *else*
changes)

Don't bray, pray!

Praise + Poise + Prayer = Peace



Troubles and **trials** will make us -
either **bitter** or **better**.



Everyone can live in one of two tents:



contented or discontented



Forbidden fruits create

BECAUSE OF JESUS I CAN OVERCOME THE STRUGGLES AND HURTS

Hi, I'm Jason Forbes. I come from Australia where I am studying to be a minister in the Presbyterian Church. I came to New Zealand recently to do a training placement for 3½ weeks working with Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust, and you see me on the right talking at the Auckland CFFD Christmas dinner.

I have cerebral palsy, and this affects my speech and fine motor controls, especially along with overall movement. But that doesn't stop me from driving a car, riding a bike, sailing a boat, going camping, and doing things that most sensible people wouldn't do.

I grew up in the church, and heard all the Bible stories. But, it was a very traditional church where the benefits of the gospel weren't clearly taught. It wasn't until I was 18 yrs old I understood that Jesus died my death in my place for my sins. At that time, I knew I was right before God. It wasn't about what I did or didn't do. It's about what Jesus had done for me.



Jason out sailing

I don't suffer spiritually, because I know I'm right with God, forgiven and accepted. In Ephesians 2:10, the Bible says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." You see, this God says to me, "I love you, and I have saved you. And I want you to be part of what I'm doing. I want you to be part of bringing people back to Me. In fact, bring along your speech impairment and all your other impairments. We can use them too."

In time I matured as a Christian, and eventually went to Bible College to study to be a minister. But you may wonder, 'Why be a minister?' One may think I have enough struggle without being a minister. And I do have struggles. I struggle physically. I went to use an ATM one day, but by the time I had got out of my car, someone else had pulled up, jumped out of their car, made their withdrawal, jumped back in their car and taken off. The time and effort it takes me to do something is immense. I struggle emotionally. I find myself in a world where if you have a significant disability, you're pushed to one side and not expected to contribute. This is hard to take when you've worked so hard, for so long to prove yourself. IT HURTS!!! But, I think it's true to say I don't suffer spiritually.



Jason ploughing through the sand in the desert

The physical and emotional struggles are still there, and the hurt is real, and I certainly have my bad days when I feel intense sadness, bitterness and anger. But because of Jesus, I don't merely escape my struggle and all the hurt that goes with it. I can overcome it. Because of Jesus, I have a reason to get up in the morning. Because of Jesus, I have a basis for living that will never change, and the things I do for Jesus will last into eternity. That's the difference Jesus makes. And when Jesus has such power to save people, and transform lives, I want to do all I can do to tell them about Jesus, and to tell them what God has promised them in His word. That's why I'm studying to be a minister.



Jason's adapted bike.

I want to encourage you to see following Jesus is not just a nice idea. Following Jesus doesn't just affect some parts of your lives and not others. Following Jesus affects the whole of your life, no matter how impaired that life may be. And God's word has something to say to you, no matter what circumstance you find yourself in.

IT IS NO SECRET



Back in the 50's there was a well known radio host/comedian/song writer in Hollywood named Carl Stuart Hamblen who was noted for his drinking, womanizing, partying, etc. One of his bigger hits at the time was "I won't go hunting with you, Jake, but I'll go chasing women."

One day, along came a young preacher holding a tent revival. Hamblen had him on his radio show presumably to poke fun at him. In order to gather more material for his show, Hamblen showed up at one of the revival meetings. Early in the service the preacher announced, "There is one man in this audience who is a big fake." There were probably others who thought the same thing, but Hamblen was convinced that he was the one the preacher was talking about (some would call that Conviction) but he was having none of that.

Still, the words continued to haunt him until a couple of nights later he turned up drunk at the preacher's hotel door around 2am demanding that the preacher pray for him! But the preacher refused, saying, "This is between you and God and I'm not going to get in the middle of it." But he did invite Stuart in, and they talked until about 5am, at which point Stuart dropped to his knees and with tears, cried out to God.

But that is not the end of the story. Stuart quit drinking, quit chasing women, quit everything that was 'fun.'

Soon he began to lose favour with the Hollywood crowd. He was ultimately fired by the radio station when he refused to accept a beer company as a sponsor. Hard times were upon him. He tried writing a couple of "Christian" songs but the only one that had much success was "This Old House" written for his friend Rosemary Clooney.

As he continued to struggle a long time friend named John took him aside and told him, "All your troubles started when you 'got

religion'. Was it worth it all?" Stuart answered simply, "Yes." Then his friend asked, "You liked booze so much, don't you ever miss it?" His answer was, "No." John then said, "I don't understand how you could give it up so easily..." And Stuart's response was, "It's no big secret. All things are possible with God."

To this John said, "That's a catchy phrase. You should write a song about it." And as they say, "The rest is history." The song Carl Stuart Hamblen wrote was - "It is no secret."

*"It is no secret what God can do.
What He's done for others, He'll do for you.
With arms wide open, He'll welcome you.
It is no secret, what God can do"*

By the way... The friend was John Wayne. And the young preacher who refused to pray for Stuart Hamblen? That was Billy Graham.

taken from the newsletter of The Carers Christian Fellowship in England

**Have you been challenged by this true story?
Do you know Jesus as your Friend?
Have you ever acknowledged you too are a sinner?
What He's done for others, He'll do for you.**

**Jesus can save you by His Grace
I John 1 v 9 Rom 3 v 23 and 6 v 23 Eph 2 v 8,9
If you need help, contact your local pastor
or call our Centre 09-636-4763**

The Will of God never takes you to where the

SHE CAME IN LAST, BUT WAS SO PROUD OF HERSELF



"I was the last one to cross the finish line," commented seven-year-old Natalie Fowler at bedtime, as she reviewed the day's events. Her mother Karen – a marathon runner who still recalls with trepidation just imagining herself coming in last – asked how she felt about that. The answer surprised her: "I was so proud of myself because I ran my best, and I finished strong."

It was Natalie's first competition, and not long into the half-mile course she began to lose steam. Seeing everyone else in the home stretch before she even reached the halfway point brought the child near tears. Natalie was still running after all the other contestants – including her younger brother Alex – had finished. But as she rounded the last corner, the yelling started. Jogging alongside, Karen told her daughter, "They're cheering for you. They want you to finish." Natalie lifted her head and, with a big smile, bolted for the line. "We were so proud of her for finishing last!" Karen says. Completing the race was one more victory in a year of triumphs during those 12 months, she'd learned to snow ski and water ski, played soccer, and performed in her first ballet recital. **But what makes these milestones so remarkable is that it was also the year Natalie learned to walk.**

An unexpected challenge

Karen and Doug Fowler adopted their two children – Natalie, now 9, and Alex, 6 – from Korea. Before meeting their daughter, they knew she'd been born eight weeks early and, like all premature adoptive infants, was officially classified "mild correctable special needs." Karen recalls that, despite weighing only ten pounds, the five-month old was "very cute, healthy, and happy. She was a little stiff, (though) nothing alarming – but she just never met any milestones." Four months later Natalie was "still not doing anything. And she just wasn't happy on her stomach." The paediatrician's comment that such findings could indicate a child "with special needs" was the Fowlers first inkling of challenges ahead.

Doctors eventually confirmed the dreaded diagnosis of spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy – and later added "seizure disorder" to Natalie's problem list. Since U.S. medical protocol typically starts intervention after the first birthday, treatment wasn't offered right away. Nor was much hope: Natalie's parents were told to "get used to the idea" that she probably wouldn't walk. "Having a child with cerebral palsy rocked our world," says Karen. It also motivated her to investigate treatments. Natalie has tried physical occupational, horse, speech, and aqua therapies, but progressed most with a Hungarian technique called Conductive Education. (CE)

A different approach

Developed by Andras Peto in 1945, CE offers a non-traditional approach for treating cerebral palsy, spina-bifida, stroke and Parkinson's disease. Unlike common American therapies, Conductive Education helps motor-disordered children and adults adapt to their environment instead of the other way

around. So rather than developing more advanced wheelchairs, "standers," or suits, CE retrains the brain by pairing basic body movements with song, repetition and games. Building on skills already learned, each activity is designed to facilitate independent living. For instance, having the children touch a toy to the back of their head teaches them a motion necessary for getting dressed. While common elsewhere, Conductive Education is a relative newcomer to the U.S. It debuted here in the 80's and is offered at only about 30 locations nationwide. As a result, many families put life on hold for several weeks and stay in a hotel or Ronald McDonald House so their child can attend.

Hard work, family-style

Natalie was three when the Fowlers learned about CE. Since Georgia had no program then, Karen took her daughter to Canada, which proved hard on them both. "Natalie cried for five weeks, - nonstop!" her mom recalls. "And I cried too. But we knew it was best." Karen's choice was to sit in the parents' area – where she could hear her child's screams – or go outside. It seemed unfair for Natalie to feel she was the only family member who had to work hard. "And so," Karen explains, "I began to run." Another mom going through the ordeal joined her, and 18 months later, they ran their first marathon together. As a result of that session and a subsequent one in Florida, running and training became a lifestyle for Karen. The trickle-down effect was that Natalie got excited about her mom's medals and T-shirts and wanted to run races too. In addition, Natalie's progress encouraged the Fowlers to pray that God would bring Conductive Ed closer to home.

Starting CE in Georgia

Karen had absolutely no aspirations to start a business. Yet she saw a need and sensed God wanted to fill it through her willingness and availability. She recalls, "We had no real model to go by, so I kind of felt my way. I'm not an entrepreneur – and don't care to be – but God really took over." The project proved to be a massive undertaking, but the Lord kept providing. Ninety percent of the equipment was donated at no charge – a Conductive Education centre in Texas was closing, and Karen was told, "If you want it, come get it." Even more amazing was the generosity of donors. One supplied funds for constructing the entire building to the Fowlers' specifications, which included five classrooms plus customized structural supports to bear the weight and stress of the equipment. That presented the interesting problem of having a made-to-order structure with no place to build it. God provided the solution as only He can – in a way that met the needs of the CE project while multiplying to bless others. The Fowlers were able to donate the building to their church, which had available space on its campus.

Worth the effort

During the three-to six-week sessions, children spend six hours a day, five days a week at the centre. Though the program is intensive, there is a sense of comraderie, teamwork, and

My little girl brought Philippians 4:13 to life for me: 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.'

a contagious "can do" attitude. Laci – a mountain of a man whom the children obviously love – keeps up a constant patter of instructions, counting, praise, exhortation, and snippets of Hungarian songs. After a while, he announces, "You are working hard, and I'm so happy with that. So it's time for a little rest"

By the weekend, the kids are exhausted, but they're okay with that. They know the hard work pays off: Natalie and three others in her class learned to walk there.

The children aren't the only ones whose efforts are rewarded. Thinking back, Karen says, "Many times, I said, 'God, I cannot do this. But if you just hold my hand and walk me through, then You will get the glory.' And He has done just that. I truly believe that God won't put you in a position to do more than you can handle."

Karen knows there are still challenges ahead. "(But) on those days when I feel I can't make it to the finish line because I'm too tired, or it hurts too bad, or whatever other obstacles there may be, I think about my little girl and how she brought Philippians 4:13 to life for me: 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.' All her life, we've been praying that God would help Natalie to walk. And He let her run. Isn't that cool?"

Condensed with permission from an article by Sandy Feit in Charles Stanley's magazine, "InTouch"

VERY GRATEFUL THANKS

At the Centre people come and go. We are indebted to each one who has contributed and helped in different ways, including many students. We particularly want to thank Annette Hocking for her long service at the old and present Centres, primarily in her financial role as well as in other areas.

CONDOLENCES

To family and friends of Claudia Barnes, (the contact for the Eastern Bay of Plenty), Noeleen Mantell, Robert Smith and Nigel Norell from Christchurch, Glen Major (Hamilton), Robert Christie (the Centre), Jim Stallard (CBM in Australia), Daphne Patterson (Tauranga) and Doreen Jones (Auckland).

THE BIG EVENT

Health and Disability Expo
9-10 March
ASB Showgrounds
Entry Free

Explore the latest health and disability products, services, technology and resources covering all disabilities, along with product demonstrations.

You can tell how big a person is by

REFLECTIONS ON DISABILITY

Heather Vincent writes, "This poem I wrote is dedicated to all those who face the daily challenges of living with a severe, debilitating disability. It was inspired by my son David, who had muscular dystrophy, my Mum Florence, affected by a stroke, and my sister Kath, who had cancer."

There they ride in their swift wheelchairs
Taking on the world – except for the stairs!
Pushing past the barriers, whatever the cost
Making the most of what they've got.
Some can't speak, some can't see
Child or adult with a dis-ability.



Yet still they live fulfilling lives,
Though limited by limbs wasted in size.
Someone's daughter, someone's son,
Each enriched by the suffering that's come.
Some have always been this way
Not quite able to run and play.
Others came by it suddenly,
By accident, disease or heredit'ry.



Some cannot walk, they stumble and fall,
They long to play, skip, jump, catch a ball.
But their wheelchair seems to hold them back,
Or their blinded eyes miss the steps on the track!
Or they cannot hear the bird choir sing
Or the story I tell to those listening.



One finds it hard to read, write and learn.
She'll find it difficult some money to earn,
He loves Star Wars, science fiction, space flight
It's all he thinks about from morn till night.
They'll always need someone to help them to live
But oh what joy, and what love they can give!

What can these disabled ones give you and me
If we are to live interdependently?
With limited lives, taking much of our time,
God ministers His love through the warmth of their smile.



They teach us kindness, compassion, and patience,
And enrich our lives by their need for acceptance.
How much they long for this loving care,
Dependant and vulnerable, in need of our prayers.

Listening ears to hear their faintest cry,
Eyes full of compassion to see what others pass by.
"Who will care for these forgotten ones?
Who'll show them kindness for Me?
As much as you have done it to one of these,
You my friend, have done it to Me."

Disabled, yet still the same person inside,
It's the outer covering that withers and dies.
Though outwardly they're fading away,
Inwardly their spirit is renewed day by day.
If they could communicate, what would we hear,
Would we just listen and notice their tears?
"Don't look at my body falling apart,
Look deeper within, observe my heart.
I am a person who thinks, feels, and breathes,
Worthy to be valued, loved and esteemed."
Made in God's image, they're created to be
Reflecting His likeness, individually.

We too have this treasure in jars of clay,
Vessels perishing more each day.
But nothing can touch the treasure within,
God's power at work to make us like Him.

2 Corinthians 4:7 and 16 (NIV)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

ACTION IN THE PHILIPPINES



PCFFD (Philippines CFFD) join the International Day of PWDs

In celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a walk was held in December at the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Manila. It was attended by more than 3000 Persons with Disabilities and supporters. The theme was "Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development." We left early in the morning - 7 staff and 13 SPED (Special Education) students in the van. It was the first time for students and some staff to join this event, so there was lots of excitement when we joined the parade with different organizations around the Mall.

Groups of disabled gave their greetings and a presentation of their talents. It was encouraging to see big number of those with disabilities, and the government representatives were challenged to establish more programs for disabled people. Our deaf students benefited by the opportunities to greet other deaf people and socialize with them.

SPED Field Trip

January 27, 2012 was an exciting day out for our SPED students. When we arrived at our first destination, we were welcomed by personnel and workers of the Lamoian Corporation Company, the makers of Hapee Toothpaste and related products. We found that it was really true that there are many deaf people working in the company. We watched the commercial and after the program we saw the processes of how the toothpaste starts off and is completed as a finished product.



One very good thing about the field trip was the opportunity for some parents to join with their child, and so they had quality time together during this memorable educational tour. We saw how much they were enjoying the tour and having a happy time eating together.

When our students saw each other again in their classrooms they had so many stories to tell about their trip.

The Manila Ocean Park was a really enjoyable experience for all the students. It has a 225 meter tunnel which everyone could walk through. There are over 5000 varieties of marine creatures to see. It was first time for many to see these attractive living displays.



Another honour for Briccio

In February the Philippine Sports Association for the Differently Aabled National Games were held, and Briccio was selected by the Provincial Social Welfare Office to represent the Province of Bulacan in a chess game competition. "It was a new challenge for me" said Briccio "to mix with other disabled people who have been so developed in their sports skills that they compete overseas. It brought to mind Evan Clulee who had lots of similar experiences."

Finally, we want to thank all who have sponsored children, staff and our Philippines ministry



*Though no-one can go back and
Anyone can start now*

MIRACULOUSLY CURED OF CEREBRAL PALSY!!!!

From the moment of her birth in the early 1960s, Marlene Klepees' life was hard. Real hard. Weighing little more than a kilo at birth, this tiny child developed cerebral palsy as a result of the birth trauma. It's a condition that afflicts millions of people worldwide, to varying degrees and is often caused by oxygen deprivation at birth. As those affected grow older their conditions sometimes worsen – their bodies simply refusing to obey motor commands and becoming disfigured and twisted. Muscular spasms can set in, and although the person's mental capacity and IQ are usually unaffected, they are increasingly trapped in a condition from which they find it hard to communicate.

But for Marlene it was about to get worse. When she was just one year old, her parents were killed in a motorbike crash. Alone, afflicted and barely conscious of the world around her, the little girl was sent to live with her great-grandparents and – when they became too old to care for her – foster parents. She remembers her school years, and that she didn't have many playmates. Children, especially in the sixties and seventies, didn't understand as much about disabilities as they do now.

But she did have some friends who cared, and when a Christian youth rally came to her Missouri hometown in the early seventies those friends took 12 year old Marlene with them. Disabled and unable to walk, the message of a Father in Heaven nonetheless resonated with the girl who'd never had the chance to know her own father. She made a decision, at the age of 12, to pray the prayer of salvation and commit her life to Jesus Christ.

"I was His, and He was my Dad," Marlene told the US Christian TV network CBN earlier this year, "and that was it, forever. I just thought that if I was born with cerebral palsy, I must be born with it because God created me that way. I just thought 'Well, there's got to be a reason for it. He's smarter than I am!'"

Despite becoming a Christian, however, Marlene's condition worsened. Some of her muscular spasms during her teenage years were severe enough to leave her caregivers with broken bones themselves. Marlene became almost totally paralysed from the neck down with 'contractures' where elastic ligaments between joints and muscles turn fibrous and rigid, resulting in permanent, claw-like deformity, and she could no longer see without the aid of very heavy corrective lenses.



That was the frustrating part: trapped in a body where she could hear and understand everything, but communicate very little. With what was left of her endowment money following the deaths of her family, Marlene's caregivers turned to the world's leading research hospital, the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, as their final hope for Marlene. Perhaps there was some new experimental drug, therapy or surgery that could give the teenager a better quality of life.

In December 1980, Marlene Klepees was wheeled into St Mary's Hospital – part of the Mayo Clinic facility, where a barrage of tests and treatments began. But nothing worked. There was no improvement and, after four months, the money was running out. The decision was made to discharge Marlene into the care of a Missouri nursing home for the rest of her natural life – she was not yet aged 20. In despair, Marlene remembers crying out to God in tears, thumping the arm of her wheelchair with her clawed hand. And that's when she received a vision.

"In the vision," she says, "I first saw a young lady out riding her bike on beautiful green grass, then I saw myself inside a church. I didn't recognize the church, but I was still in my wheelchair. I had on rust-coloured corduroy pants, a striped velour shirt, there's a few people gathered around praying for me and there's one man in particular that God showed me in more detail – he was tall, blond-haired, had on a grey pin-striped suit, and then at the end of the vision in great big bold black letters it gave a date of March 29th, three weeks hence.

make a brand new start, and make a brand new ending - Carl Bard



Magazine of the Christian Ministries With Disabled Trust

There was no question. I knew it was from the Lord,(but) on the 28th March I was still laying there in a ward in the Mayo Clinic's St Mary's Hospital), and nothing had changed during that period of time." By this time, the three weeks had almost passed with no visible change in Marlene's circumstances, and the church in her vision may as well have been a million miles away. The following day, March 29, was supposed to be the day she would be healed. "I thought that God really wanted to heal me, but there wasn't any way He was going to do it, because I thought that I'd sinned or something? I knew He could heal me but I didn't understand how He was going to get me somewhere when there wasn't anybody to get me there." Again, she cried out in her heart to God, asking Him to deliver the miracle.

"(God) spoke to me, and He said to have the nurse get the Yellow Pages and He would give the name of the church and the person who'd be praying for me. And when morning came and the nurse looked through the Yellow Pages, there were two lines that glowed off the page: Open Bible, Scott Emerson, and a phone number. The nurse called the number and the pastor came down. He went looking for several hours before he found us. The nurse had given the room number and he didn't get the room number down right and he went looking from room to room until he found us." When the nurse opened the door, standing there was a blond-haired man wearing the grey pinstripe suit Marlene had seen in her vision. He came in, and agreed that the vision was the inside of his church. "But he didn't seem anxious to take us there at all. Finally we started asking questions and he says 'Yes, our church believes in healing but we've never had any, and you plan on me starting on this one?!'" Little wonder that Emerson was sceptical. As he looked at the racked and paralysed body facing him, he found it hard to believe that his prayer and his church could truly change Marlene's life, especially as he believed no one had ever been miraculously healed of cerebral palsy. But Marlene knew she would be.

"The nurse had already got a pass from the doctor and they loaded me in his car and took me to the church. They pushed me up to the front, anointed me with oil and started to pray. I really didn't feel anything. They asked if I wanted to stand up on faith and I didn't know what that really meant. But when they stood me up the contractures fell out of my body, my feet hit the floor and I felt the floor for the first time in my life. Now I didn't walk pretty, it was ugly. But every lap we made the better it got.

"I don't know there was anything going through my mind except 'God is so good!' He picked or chose me for a purpose, but my healing didn't have anything to do with that purpose. Everything worked. There wasn't anything that didn't move. I started off pigeon-toed, but we just kept on making laps. The people praying for me were screaming and yelling and jumping. It was non-stop."

Scott Emerson, the pastor who prayed for her that day, in a little church with only seven worshippers, remembers the event as if it were yesterday. "Her knees and her toes pointed together, and everything was pointed in," he told the CBN network. "But with each step that she took, they started to straighten out. And as her toes and her knees straightened out she got stronger and stronger. She took a few steps on her own, and then was literally running around the church." And in case anyone is still muttering coincidence, or the power of suggestion, there's still the issue of Marlene's near blindness: She said, "My eyesight was healed, totally. Instant. Prior to that I wore glasses, they were thick, they were prisms. My eyes got really warm and I took off the glasses, and instantaneously I could see. There wasn't anything I even had to do to get that to work. That was Sunday night. On Monday (Mayo) ran all kinds of tests on me, and on Tuesday I spoke in front of a whole bunch of doctors in this conference room. And they actually applauded when I walked in. They asked me questions and I started answering them, and I went home that afternoon. All of them admitted it was something greater than them. They knew it had been some form of miracle."

Today 25 years later, Marlene Klepees bears no signs of the cerebral palsy that kidnapped her childhood. She rides her bike through green fields, she runs a floral business, and she tells little churches throughout America about the day God healed a cripple and let the blind see. But it is the records from the Mayo Clinic that perhaps offer the last compelling word on this particular miracle: "You returned to the rehabilitation unit that evening walking, something you'd never done since your admission to the unit. And when I saw you back at the clinic some weeks later, you'd improved even more. All signs of previous abnormality were gone. You were able to walk perfectly normal, and your eyesight had improved so much that you did not need to wear spectacles. We were all very thrilled and happy with the outcome of your condition."

Taken and condensed very slightly from "The Divinity Code," with permission from Ian Wishart, the author.

Opportunity may knock once, but tempta



AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST - BECAUSE OF DISABILITY, NOT IN SPITE OF IT

Justin Howard is a wheelchair user and is non-verbal. How does he communicate? He expresses his thoughts, his needs, and his emotions by using a **communication board**. And recently, God used Justin to show families in the Dominican Republic how they can communicate with their non-verbal children!

After attending Family Retreats for three years, Justin wanted to give back by serving others. God paved the way ...Recently Justin and his parents brought their disability experience and unique giftedness to the Dominican Republic with Wheels for the World. There, they burst open a new door of ministry!

With his communication board, Justin can point to a picture that says **hungry** or **sleepy** or even **that's funny!** Using this tool, Justin expresses his love, his joy, and the light of Jesus that shines through him. "As Justin's mother, I know how important it is to communicate with him," explains Laurie. "Other parents of kids with disabilities long to know their children this way, too!"

Through Wheels for the World, Justin and his parents gave the gift of communication boards to 28 families who also received the gift of a wheelchair and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many parents had never realized their children could communicate at all until shaky little fingers began to point purposefully at the pictures Laurie offered. With tears pouring down their faces at the joy of "speaking" with their children for the first time, all they could say was, "Gracias! Gracias!"

Taken from the newsletter of Joni and Friends

SURPRISE! SURPRISE!

Large chunks of my time recently have been taken up with care and maintenance of my mum and Dad, both living in the Nottingham/Derby area, one born in 1922 and the other in 1914. Both are in the final lap of their earthly racer, both destined for a heavenly home, but one that does not include carers, high backed chairs, and mashed up food.

A bit about mum. She's now in her 88th year, and was saved just after me circa 1978, and in the autumn of her life threw herself into church activity with the vigour of a teenager, yet the serenity of an angel. So mum ran mother and toddler groups, prayer meetings, and mission events, but unlike the stereotypical overbearing church matron with odd hat, bulging handbag, and challenging attitude she was full of grace as well as huge amounts of evangelistic truth.



In her later years she served in a Christian bookshop in town, cycling two miles each way every day down a busy 'A' road, until an eye test revealed that much of her traffic skills depended on the same navigational systems used by bats, and her road safety was mainly thanks to heavy angelic presence. Now in the advance stages of dementia, and quite frail, she now sees out her twilight years in a cosy room in an excellent care home. Most afternoons my sister visits her to sing, read and pray with her. Occasionally I take over. Here is the surprise.

As soon as worship songs are sung, mum, usually confused, becomes word perfect, even though she cannot recognise her own children or her husband. She reads psalms accurately from memory, though she cannot remember her own name. Prays with vigour and clarity, sings both praise-fully and worshipfully. Although normally in and out of sleep, head down and eyes closed, as soon as we begin our devotional time together, I'm reminded of being on the flight deck of an airliner as the engines start, systems running up, watching lights come on, electrical devices come to life, gauge needles begin to twitch as she truly comes to life, obviously in anticipation of getting airborne with God (and eventually, never land back on earth again).

We were perplexed as to why God has not taken her home to him yet. It's hard to watch mum in the final stages of her earthly life. However, a West African Christian nurse got right to the point – 'Your mum is such a witness in this home – all the staff talk about her, how she is so different to the others even when she is distressed. Her room has a special "feel" to it – THIS IS WHY SHE IS STILL HERE!' she said. So on the last lap of her race mum is still making a difference and being a shining light.

Taken with permission from an article by Rob Govier in The English Carers Newsletter

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FROM THE BRANCHES



29 attended a meeting in Hamilton to gauge support for starting a new Waikato Branch



About 100 attended the Northland CFFD picnic celebrating Jacqui Gardner's 50th Birthday



3 dancers give a demonstration of Israeli Dances and then encourage others from the Branch to join in



A quiz in which everyone was given all the answers to the 50 questions on Jacqui's life BUT they were in anagram form!



The ever popular lolly scramble

